Making Sense of Everyday Dress:
Integrating multisensory experience within our understanding of contemporary dress in the UK

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Abstract

Multisensory perception is fundamental to the wearer's experience of everyday dress, yet this remains an under-researched area within fashion and dress studies. Dress is predominantly described in visual terms, while much less attention has been paid to other relevant sensory aspects such as; touch, sound, smell - and to a lesser degree taste - and to the ways in which these interact. Similarly, within the now established field of sensory scholarship, little attention has been paid to the topic of dress. One of the contributions of this thesis is to address the above gaps in relation to both male and female contemporary UK dress (and more generally, dress within a Western context). It also attends to the wider academic neglect of male dressed experience.

This thesis draws upon sensory scholarship to bring a fresh perspective to current embodied understandings of everyday dress, thereby contributing to the field of dress studies by explicitly focussing on the sensory nature of dress. This research aims to foster an inter-disciplinary research field of 'fashion, dress and the senses'.

A new body of data, based on individual testimony around sensory experience of dress, has been collected using life-world interviews with twenty participants, both men and women, incorporating material culture analysis. Contextualised within the specific social and cultural lives of the participants, the analysis of this data is distinctive in that it weaves together material, cultural, social, phenomenological and sensory perspectives.

The analysis explores how sensory engagement with dress affected both the materiality of the dress items and the participants by triggering behaviour, thoughts, memories and emotions. Felt on the boundaries of the body, dress is positioned as providing a sensory atmosphere for the wearer, one that negotiates the tensions between private and public experience, enabling the participants to push out into and pull back from the world. It is therefore argued that sensory engagement with dress is an integral part of the wearer's everyday negotiation of the self within social life.

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All photographs are the author's own or supplied by the participant and are digital, unless otherwise stated. Some are original prints or video stills from the interviews. Images are used with the written consent of the participants. Throughout the thesis, the images appear at the end of the chapter in which they were first referenced.

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INTRODUCTION

Dress in contemporary UK society is an everyday practice, worn from birth until death as we move through the world. As a form of material culture, what we wear is both a social, public activity and an intensely personal one, primarily due to its physical proximity to our bodies.

In their seminal definition of 'dress', Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne B. Eicher suggest that dress sits at the interface between the body and the macro-physical environment (1995:11) and is perceived by all the senses, not just sight (1995:9) but, in varying degrees, also touch, sound, smell, possibly even taste. Dress is often the first physical point of contact, the interface between the 'self' (as contained in the body) and the material, cultural world. Since the 1990s, the developing discipline of fashion and dress studies has demonstrated how through dress, notions of the self and identity are explored by the wearer and expressed to others. The body's social and cultural experience, of which dress is one aspect, is mediated through the senses. In sensory scholar David Howes's account, the body experiences, comprehends and constructs the world through all its senses (2005a:4), thus culture shapes the senses and sensory activity shapes culture.

How it *feels* to be dressed in all its dimensions and in particular situations is an intrinsic aspect of daily life. Interactions with dress constitute a sensory relationship between the wearer and what they wear, where each is affected by the other. Dress both reveals and conceals the body, changing its appearance, shape, deportment, and other sensory dimensions such as how it smells and sounds. In turn dress items can become stained and damaged through wear, or can mould to the body's shape and be left with other sensory traces of the wearer, such as their scent.

This study emerges from the premise that when researching everyday dress the unique and extreme closeness it has to the body must be taken into account. By examining the daily, intimate and sensory interactions between the wearer and the material culture of dress, this study uses sensory engagement as a tool, aimed towards a deeper understanding of the complex role dress plays in everyday life. The micro site of the research is therefore the wearer and how they are connected through their senses to the garments and accessories they wear. The macro site is

the wearer's life-world, including both their individual biographies and the wider social and cultural environment in which they and their items of dress exist, and which frames and shapes their sensory experience of dress.

The initial impetus for this study came through my own experience of wearing clothes, but also of designing and making garments, as well as through observations I had made on the multisensory nature of dress and how people engage with it on a daily basis. The touch, the feel, the very materiality of dress and the thoughts and feelings these aroused, for example comfort, sensuality, sexuality, sophistication, confidence, nostalgia, was from a young age as important to me as the look, style and fashionability of a garment, although this too was undeniably important. As a child and through my teenage years, these aspects were tied together in my joy of dressing-up and developing relationship with clothes. Influenced by my mother who trained and worked in fashion design, I experimented with making my own clothes and later took a degree in fashion design. This gave me a close interest in fabric, the construction of clothing and how it relates to the body.

I have strong sensory memories of dress and can recall vividly the texture of a favourite childhood swimsuit and the silky feel of the pages of my mother's *Vogue* magazines permeated with the heady, grown-up scent of their perfumed inserts. I recall the smell of my father's polyester and cotton mix dental lab coats being ironed whenever I iron a similar fabric. Memory and the senses are closely linked and anecdotal evidence abounds to suggest how smelling a loved one's clothes provides a connection to them. In a BBC Radio 4 *Woman's Hour* episode on the topic of grieving and clothes (*Woman's Hour* 2011), a widow explains how she kept her late husband's shirts in the cupboard after he died, spraying them with his aftershave so that she could walk in and be reminded of his scent.

More recently, as a fashion retailer, I noticed how clothes transformed customers' bodies and at times their emotional state, and how their bodies transformed the garments. It was vital when selecting the garments to sell in the store to consider how the samples felt on the body as well as how they looked - as it was in the changing room that customers usually made the final decision whether to purchase or not.

It was these types of intimate, sensory interactions with dress, as understood from the point of view of the wearer or perceiver that I wanted to articulate and investigate further, and which forms the empirical basis for this thesis. The questions that this thesis attends to are as follows: What are the different types of sensory interaction that make up everyday engagement with dress? How do the different senses work individually and together within the experience of being dressed? How does sensory engagement with dress affect the wearer bodily, emotionally and meaningfully, and how are these aspects of experience entangled? How does socio-cultural background shape the meanings of sensory dress experience? How does multisensory perception shape the wearer's relationship with their personal dress? How might a multisensory approach to understanding dress develop our existing understanding of the roles that dress plays in everyday life?

Through attending to these questions this thesis sets out to make an original contribution to knowledge in the following ways. First, it will contribute to existing knowledge in the field of fashion and dress studies, through presenting an original empirical study of everyday sensory dress perception within a contemporary UK context, based on the experience of a group of both men and women. To date no such study has been undertaken. This will address both a gap in knowledge within fashion and dress studies, which has paid attention to vision and touch but tended to neglect other sensory aspects of the wearers' experience of dress and a gap in knowledge within sensory studies, which has neglected the subject of dress. Second, this thesis contributes to the analysis of dress an original framework through combining a range of theoretical approaches: phenomenological, sensory, social, cultural and material - a combination that has not previously been applied to the study of everyday dress in this context.

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter one positions this study within existing academic work. Chapter two outlines the methodological approach taken, while chapter three reflects upon the particular methods of data collection and analysis. The sensory data analysis is contained in chapters four to seven, which consider in turn the senses of sight, touch, sound and finally smell (and

taste). Following this, chapter eight summarises the analytical findings under thematic headings. The contents of each chapter are briefly outlined below.

Within existing research and literature on dress and fashion, particularly in a Western context, there has been little discussion of the senses, and this is addressed in chapter one. It begins by unpacking and defining the key terms used, which is followed by a discussion of the existing sensory discourse around dress. First, testimony contained within the Mass Observation Archive (MOA) is discussed. Second, literary texts such as autobiographical writing, fiction and poetry, alongside writing from a feminist perspective, is considered. This latter section deals specifically with the gendering of sensory experience and of dress, and through a focus on touch and the emotions, considers the boundaries between academic and autobiographical writing in relation to dress and the senses. The senses are then situated within fashion and dress studies that draw upon existing theoretical approaches to the dressed body, emerging from the disciplines of material culture, sociology and anthropology. Completing chapter one is a discussion of the broader field of sensory scholarship that informs this study and this section is organised under the following headings: 'Sensory studies', 'Sociology of the senses', and 'Phenomenology of the senses'. As argued in the conclusion to this chapter, the academic literature points to a number of gaps within existing research that this thesis begins to address.

Chapter two outlines the sensory methodological approach taken through a discussion of the theoretical and practical concerns that underpinned the methodological choices. It is organised under the following headings: 'The wearer', 'Everyday sensory experience: the 'concealed' and the 'mundane'', 'Connecting dress, the body, mind and culture', 'Uniting the individual wearer's testimony with material culture analysis' and 'Sensory complexities'.

This study is based on analysis of new, primary data collected through life-world interviews incorporating object analysis. Twenty participants - ten men and ten women of differing ages - were interviewed. The interviews were designed to draw out wearers' testimony around their sensory engagement with dress. The methods of primary data collection and analysis are discussed in detail in chapter three. This includes sections on: 'Research context', 'Selecting participants',

'Interviews', 'Audio, video and photography', 'Reflection on the interviews' and 'Data analysis'.

Chapters four to seven contain the data analysis with each chapter focusing on a (Western) sensory modality, beginning with sight, which is followed by touch, then sound and finally smell and taste, which are included together in chapter seven. The sense of 'taste' did not warrant an individual chapter, as the interview data on this was limited. All these chapters map out the types of daily sensory interactions participants discussed in relation to that sensory modality, highlighting elements that were particular to individuals and aspects that were more generally applicable to multiple participants. The discussion within each chapter is arranged under thematic headings specific to that modality, as developed during the analysis of the data. Some of the themes thread throughout all the modalities and others are more particular to just one (or more) modality.

Following this, chapter eight summarizes the data analysis findings from the previous chapters under more general thematic headings of: 'Sensory entanglements', 'Sensory effects', 'Sensory mediation: Private and public, individual and social experience' and finally, 'Dress as sensory atmosphere for the body'.

The final conclusion to this thesis outlines the contribution to knowledge that this thesis makes. It also identifies future research pathways within this area and possible applications for this research, within not only the field of dress and fashion studies, but extending out to broader contexts.

CHAPTER 1. SITUATING THE SENSES WITHIN DRESS STUDIES

Introduction

This chapter situates the senses within dress studies and outlines the theoretical approach taken. It considers the nature of sensory discourse around dress and fashion, which has prioritized the visual over other sensory aspects. Through critically examining academic literature on dress that attends to the senses, alongside relevant literature from other related disciplines, this study is contextualised within existing scholarship. A sensory gap is highlighted within the field of dress and fashion studies that this thesis aims to address.

Before addressing the academic literature, the key terms are defined. These are 'Dress', 'Dress and fashion', 'Everyday dress', and the 'Senses'. Following this, initial research undertaken into existing discourse around sensory aspects of dress is outlined. The main aim of this initial research was to establish whether existing sensory descriptions and evocations of dress could provide a body of primary data for analysis. While some examples can be found within the Mass Observation Archive (MOA) - an extraordinary UK resource that has been collecting testimony on a range of topics concerning everyday life in Britain since the 1930s - and within mass media and literary texts, they were too sporadic and variable in nature to be viable as the primary data source for this study. However, this initial exploratory research was instructive in establishing an empirical basis for the research and in helping to shape some of the themes of this study. As such it is included in this opening chapter as an important first step in the research journey.

Definition of terms
Dress

In this study, the term 'dress' is used to refer to both items of dress that are worn and to the practice of dressing in everyday life. Items of dress include clothes and other items worn on the body such as accessories and jewellery, plus preparations that attend to the body, changing its sensory dimensions, for example scent and cosmetics. This follows the widely accepted academic definition and use of the term 'dress' which was developed between 1965 and 1992 by Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1995:7), who describe it as such:

According to this definition, dress of an individual is an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body.
(Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1995:7)

This definition was designed to cross national and cultural boundaries, be free from personal or social valuing and inclusive of all types of 'modification' and 'supplements' to the body. Of particular relevance is the classification system that Roach-Higgins and Eicher use to map dress types and properties in relation to the body, which highlights the multisensory nature of dress. In this system, properties of dress include: texture, odour, sound and taste, colour, volume and proportion, shape and structure, and surface design (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1995:8). By using this definition, dress is recognised and asserted to be more than merely appearance, as its aspects are '...recorded by all the senses – not just sight alone as the term appearance implies' (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1995:9). This commitment to the multisensory nature of dress inspires the sensory approach taken in this study.

The term 'dress' can refer to a single item worn and also to a range or 'repertoire of modifications and supplements' that a social group might wear, 'men's dress' for example (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1995:9), or a sub-cultural style such as 'punk dress'. The focus of this research is personal dress belonging to an individual rather than a group. However, personal dress is understood as always situated within the individual's social and cultural environment. Therefore how an individual positions their personal dress in relation to social codes or categories of dress, and in relation to 'fashion', in particular how fashion is made personal through sensory interaction and use, forms part of this enquiry.

As this research explores the sensory interactions and connections between the wearer and their items of dress, the definition 'dress' is useful as it refers to both 'material items' of dress, and the 'practice' of wearing dress. In Roach-Higgins and Eicher's (1995:8) classification system, types of dress are categorized by the part of the body they transform and the way in which they supplement the body, by enclosing through wrapping or suspending and by attachment through clips or other methods. Their system also acknowledges that the practice of dress is

specific to a 'particular time and place' or the context in which it is worn (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1995:9). Understanding dress as a practice therefore attends to both the needs of the social situation as well as the needs of the body. Roach-Higgins and Eicher describe these two functions of dress, first as 'alterant of body processes', for example woollen socks that keep the body temperature warm, and second, the function of dress as a 'medium of communication', an example being a (culturally determined) gender specific item or school uniform (1995:11). As a means of communication, the potential meanings of dress are dependent upon the wearer and perceiver's 'subjective interpretation' of them within a given situation (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1995:11). This notion of dress as a 'situated bodily practice' has been further developed by Joanne Entwistle who argues that it provides a theoretical and methodological framework for a sociological understanding of fashion and dress that accounts for the 'complex dynamic relationship between the body, dress and culture' (2000:11).

Within this study participants' dress was also, at times and in different degrees, a sensually pleasurable, creative or aesthetic practice. All of the participants discussed pleasures and displeasures experienced when dressing, and many had a distinct creative vision, or particular methods of assembling outfits, that related to their personal style. Participants enjoyed or disliked shopping, organising or maintaining and styling their clothes to varying degrees in different ways and these preferences appeared to cut across cultural categories such as age, gender, sexuality and ethnicity.

Within this study, although the experience of wearing dress is prioritised, the definition of dress as a practice also includes other types of physical engagement, for example making, modifying, storing, washing and maintaining dress, sharing or interacting with other people's items of dress. These aspects of multisensory experience also contribute to the role dress plays in an individual's life. For example three of the participants described cleaning and sorting their clothes as an enjoyable activity that prepared them for the working week ahead. In another instance, one of the participants, Susan, a knitter, described feeling a connection to nature through her sensory engagement with the material properties of wool, and in this way, the practice of knitting reflected her wider

attitude towards dress, culture and the environment (Susan Interview 1: 00:04:21).

Dress and fashion

As Entwistle has observed, most individuals living in the UK have to choose what they wear from a given repertoire of things to buy - from the 'fashion' on offer where they shop - so within a UK context, fashion always plays a part in 'dress' (2000:37). As a verb, the term 'fashion' refers to the creative act of making, 'to fashion something'. Material items of dress are 'artefacts', as defined by the material culture historian, Jules Prown as, 'objects made by man or modified by man', and therefore expressive of culture (2001 [1982]:71). In this study attention is also paid to how dress items are continually 'fashioned' through personal use.

As a noun, 'fashion' is used to denote an abstract aesthetic idea as well as a technological and economic system of production and consumption to which items of dress belong. Fashion therefore impacts on everyday dress choices and practices and creates discourses around fashion affecting how dress is understood and experienced by individuals. Yet some people do not think of or choose to describe their own personal dress in terms of fashion. Out of the twenty participants interviewed in my study, seven stated an interest in current fashion trends. However, for many of the older participants their clothes had belonged to them for a number of years and as such, were not 'current' fashion. For the younger participants who tended to buy cheaper clothes and wear them out more quickly, greater awareness of current trends was shown. Arguably, contemporary fashion and style in the UK is pluralist in nature, based more on individual mixing of styles and dress items, rather than strict adherence to changing trends.

All the participants described taking inspiration from other people on the street, only a few mentioned reading fashion or style magazines. Most described making clothing choices based on their own individual style (which had developed over the years), or to fulfil specific work and social requirements, rather than through a desire to buy into new trends. This reflects the contemporary focus on individuality within fashion. Most of the older participants had followed the latest fashions when younger but stated that as they became older they paid much less attention to fashion trends.

Some items of everyday dress do not neatly fall into the category of 'fashion'. For example, one of the participants, Paula, wore head wraps that reflected her Jamaican cultural background (Paula Interview 1: 00:17:33) and both Andrea and Robert who were sculptors discussed the protective clothing they wore in the studio or workshop (Andrea Interview 2: 00:13:31, Robert Interview 2: 01:24:45). Andrea can be seen sculpting in her boiler suit in Fig. 1.01 on page 61. The term 'dress' is therefore useful as it refers to all personal items of dress, that may or may not be deemed 'fashionable' by their wearer. Where the term 'fashion' is employed, it denotes the fashion system and the prevailing aesthetics and clothing trends within the wearer's culture.

While the fashion system is not the main concern of this study, how particular sensory dimensions are valued as part of everyday 'fashionable' dress and how 'fashionable' dress is recognised or created through all the senses, is considered in the data analysis. Entwistle (2000) describes how fashion and the senses are connected within the cultural construction of aesthetic 'taste'. She references sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) notion of 'cultural capital' in which people learn what counts as quality and recognise it in others within their social and class groupings, suggesting that the construction of 'aesthetic taste' in relation to dress is closely linked to the body and the sensual qualities of the dress items themselves (Entwistle 2000:50). Fashion and design scholar, Hazel Clark, when writing on 'slow fashion' as a possible antidote to the problems associated with 'fast fashion', has argued that '…a more frank recognition of fashion as being dependent on actual, tangible objects, not only their sign value' (2008:440) is required along with a focus on sensory design aspects if a more sustainable approach to fashion is to be achieved.

This study pays particular attention to how and when the things that we wear move *beyond* the fashion system, past the point of purchase, and become items of personal dress, because this change is enacted through daily physical use that involves personal and intimate sensory interactions. Framing this is design theorist, Judy Attfield's (2000) understanding of the purpose, definition and life of objects, including dress, as fluid and ambiguous. For Attfield, the meaning of everyday objects extends past the point of design, production and consumption as they are embedded in the chaotic complexity of life and constantly transformed

through their use. Entwistle also argues, echoing Fine and Leopold (1993), that studies on fashion and dress should consider the connection between production (fashion) and consumption (dress) or how 'fashion translates into dress in everyday life' (Entwistle 2000:3). As will be argued, the personal and public, individual and social aspects of dress cannot be easily separated, therefore attention is given to how these aspects interact in relation to the sensory engagement with dress.

Everyday dress

The research context to this study is 'everyday' dress within two contemporary urban UK sites, Brighton and London. These locations are discussed in more depth in the 'Research context' section of chapter three. The term 'everyday' refers to ordinary items worn in daily life and everyday practices of dress. However, what the participants regarded as 'everyday' wear varied and depended on their lifestyle. For example, one participant, Karen, collected second-hand wedding dresses to wear to parties and therefore in the context of her life a 'wedding dress', normally categorised and worn as a particular type of 'occasion wear' could constitute everyday dress (Karen Interview 2: 00:10:05).

Acknowledging that the term 'everyday dress' means different things to different people, the definition is suggested by myself as researcher but ultimately determined by each participant. I asked the participants to discuss what was important to them in response to the interview questions (see appendix four for the interview schedules), and suggested that this could include discussion of any items they possess or wear, either their own or belonging to someone else, and any type of engagement they have with dress within the context of their daily lives. I broadened the definition of 'everyday' further to include *memories* of everyday items that may not still be in the participants' possession, in order to explore how memory might be connected to the sensory dimensions of dress.

This study follows earlier scholarship that considers everyday clothing from within numerous disciplines and through a variety of perspectives. Those most relevant to this study are outlined as follows. First is Efrat Tseëlon's (1995) research on the presentation of women in everyday life. Building on Erving Goffman's (1971, 1990 [1959]) approach, Tseëlon developed a micro approach to

understanding worn dress through a social psychology lens, what she terms a 'wardrobe approach', focused on the 'mundane details of ordinary experience' (2016:154). As Tseëlon explains:

> This approach privileges ordinary clothes instead of historical costumes or designer garments. It studies the meaning of clothes and the reasons for choosing which clothes to wear, from the point of view of the wearers. Drawing on 'Symbolic Interactionism' I took on board the notion of meaning as socially constructed and negotiated through interaction. Symbolic Interactionism is a micro-sociological theory that views people as acting toward things based on the meaning those things have for them. These meanings are derived from social interaction. (Tseëlon 2016:155)

Added to this is a body of research within material culture based studies that attend to the micro nature of everyday social interactions with objects in general and dress in particular. Sophie Woodward's (2007) seminal study of women's clothing choices considered in close detail the intimate moments and practices of dressing, daily activities taking place at the wardrobe and in the bedroom. More generally the social anthropologist Daniel Miller has undertaken many individual and collaborative studies that focus on micro, everyday relations with material culture, notably, Miller's co-edited book on clothing (Kuchler and Miller 2005), his 'Global Denim' project with Woodward (Miller and Woodward 2011), and his micro-ethnography centred around the homes and inhabitants of one London street (Miller 2008). Attfield (2000) has also argued in relation to the design and use of objects, that analysis and theory should develop from a micro approach that begins with individual practice before macro social structures are considered.

> It is only through a micrological approach – a study of the particular – and its application to questions about the incorporation of meaning into people's material world as a means of self-creation, that it is possible to encounter some sense of the multifarious nature of the contemporary artefact. (Attfield 2000:90)

Other relevant research around everyday dress, upon which this study builds, is, as previously mentioned, Entwistle's (1997, 2000) sociological work on dress and the body. Added to this - from within gender studies - Ali Guy, Eileen Green and Maura Banim's (2001) edited collection of essays concerning women's relationships with their everyday clothing. Finally, from within fashion and dress studies, Lou Taylor's approach to dress history (2002, 2004) also argues for attention to be paid to the everyday, as does Shaun Cole's (2000, 2010) historical approach to both gay and straight men's dress. While most of this research attends to women's experience of dress, this study suggests that these perspectives can also be applied to all experience regardless of the gender identity with which a person identifies - whether that is female, male, any other gender fluid category or indeed no gender.

Moreover, and of relevance to this study, is a body of sociological and anthropological work that attends more generally to the everyday, the micro and mundane activities and action that is often overlooked within social scientific research. Most relevant to this study is the sociological work of George Simmel (1997 [1907]) on the senses, the pioneering micro studies by sociologist, Goffman (1971, 1990 [1959]) as mentioned above, the anthropological/material culture based work of Miller (2008), the visual and sensory ethnography of Sarah Pink (2004, 2009, 2012), the work of material culture scholar, Tim Dant (1999, 2005, 2010) and of sociologists Jennifer Mason and Katherine Davies (2009) who are based at the *Morgan Centre for Research into Everyday Lives* at the University of Manchester. How the approaches of these particular scholars has informed this thesis is discussed in more detail shortly in the sections of this chapter on 'Theoretical approaches to the dressed body' and 'Sensory scholarship'.

Senses

For the purpose of the interviews conducted for this research, it was important to define the 'senses' in a way that the participants would understand. Within UK culture, the senses are normally described in terms of the five modalities of sight, touch, sound, smell, and taste. As a result, during the interviews, these five sensory modalities are referred to individually, however,

they are acknowledged as working together, and alongside other types of sensory experience. An individual's body experiences perception through all the sensory modalities working holistically and in complex ways. This is a phenomenological viewpoint, as outlined by Pink (2009:26-28), and one that frames the definition of the senses within this thesis.

In relation to particular items and uses of dress, some of the senses are more relevant than others. How an item looks and makes the wearer appear both to themselves, and to others, is an important consideration for most people, as is how it feels on the skin and fits the body. These two sensory aspects threaded throughout all the interviews. On the other hand, specific discussion of sound and smell were less frequent or consistent, and often required prompting from me. These aspects in general provided a subtle, sub-conscious background to the participants' experience of dress, only coming into consciousness at particular times. Certain types of dress had a more noticeable sound than others, such as shoes, and smell had particular relevance in some situations, for example during hot weather or when laundering or in relation to specific materials such as leather, or in relation to body preparations such as perfume and deodorant. Items of dress are not normally placed in the mouth, so not surprisingly, 'taste' was rarely considered or discussed by the participants in relation to dress - the few exceptions being lipstick and when items of dress or pieces of fabric were used as comforters, and sucked. Through paying close attention to all types of sensory experience during the interviews, and to considering the different sensory modalities discreetly and as connected, the more hidden, taken for granted and less commonly discussed sensory dimensions of dress were revealed as still contributing to the participants' relationship with their dress and the role it played in their individual and social lives.

In some instances, participants explicitly stated sensitivities to, or affinities with, particular sensory modalities. At the beginning of each data chapter that considers a particular sense, these sensitivities and dispositions are summarized. It could be argued that the ways in which participants talked about particular sensory modalities in relation to dress, reflects the broad, historical and cultural hierarchy of the senses within the development of Western philosophy, and more specifically, the preoccupation with appearance within popular Western discourse

around dress. If visual discourses dominate, then participants may be more likely to stick to this familiar way of talking about their clothes. Underlying this may also be a view that particular sensory aspects of dress are more culturally important than others. With this in mind, in the following section on 'Existing sensory discourse around dress', feminist writing is discussed, as that has attempted to re-define discourse around women's lived experience to include more intimate bodily and emotional aspects such as touch - aspects that they argue have been denigrated and side-lined within dominant cultural and academic discourses. As this study will demonstrate, these aspects were also relevant to the male participants' experience of dress.

The interviews hinted at a lack of appropriate language to clearly articulate certain types of sensory experience. There were often times when participants found it tricky to explain their experience. This could be when multiple sensory modalities were implicated, and as a result they struggled to define individual sensory modalities, describing instead a more holistic overall 'sense', 'feeling' or 'essence'. In this study, how the senses differ but also interrelate is considered in relation to individual experience of dress, through examining both each sense in turn and then how they interact simultaneously. An example where this approach highlighted a difference between the senses and pointed to a linguistic deficit is when one of the participants, Karen, voiced an idea around the nature of sound. She stated that the sound of other people's shoes on the pavement was particularly annoying, as she could not turn sound off, whereas she *could* turn her head away if something offended her sight (Karen Interview 1: 00:31:00). Karen also says earlier on when asked to describe the sound of a dress, 'Yeah, I don't know, I'm really bad at describing sounds in English, even in Polish *(her first language)* it would be really weird' (Karen Interview 1: 00:26:30). During the second interviews, when participants brought dress items with them, further understanding was enabled through actual sensory engagement with the item.

In addition to the five senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting, there are other sensory modalities relevant to worn dress that Western science defines as discrete. In outlining a sociological approach to the senses, Phillip Vannini, Dennis Waskul and Simon Gottschalk discuss the importance of 'movement' in framing human action and all 'practical engagement with the world'

(2014:26). They outline two particular senses that natural scientists in the West define as involved during movement. The first is the 'vestibular sense' which 'allows us to perceive direction, acceleration, and movement in space', which also includes the means to 'perceive and achieve balance', or equilibrioception. The second is the 'kinaesthetic sense' or proprioception. This 'allows us to perceive the relative position and movement of different parts of the body' (Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk 2014:25). For the purposes of this study, these scientific definitions are problematic in that participants did not generally break down or describe their sense of movement using these separate, technical terms, but described it rather in more holistic ways, as whole embodied movement. Significant aspects relating to movement and dress that the participants described were: balance; rhythm; deportment; body style and attitude; and the feeling of freedom or restriction of movement, particularly in relation to specific activities like walking or dancing.

Movement, which is required to activate some of the sensory dimensions of dress, such as sound, framed the participants' sensory experience of being dressed in everyday life. Clothing and accessories move with and against the body and interact with other items of dress worn at the same time. The sensory aspects of the materiality and structure of dress items can change when animated, according to the types of movements made. Their look changes, they may make a sound, push or brush against the body (see the section on 'Contextualising appearance: Dress as a visual surround for the body' in chapter four). As the wearer moves through different environments, the external atmosphere, environmental structures and materials such as the ground, buildings and furniture, temperature, light, weather conditions and other dress items or objects which the wearer and their dress comes into contact with, inform how clothing is sensed by the body. In this way, clothing sensations experienced by participants were always in flux, relative to movement and context. This was particularly apparent in relation to the sense of touch. For this reason the term 'haptic' is used alongside the terms 'touch' and 'tactile'. 'Haptic' refers to both 'tactile' perception felt through the skin of the hands and body *and* 'kinaesthetic' perception felt through the movement of muscles and joints - for a discussion of movement and the haptic see also Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk (2014:26) and Mark M Smith's (2007:4) historical outline of the senses. For example the structure and weight of a coat felt upon a walking body would

involve both kinaesthetic and tactile aspects. The term 'haptic' therefore clearly articulates many types of touch engagement with worn dress, the weight of which is felt on the wearer's body in different ways, depending upon their everyday movements. More generally throughout the sensory data analysis (chapters four to seven), where sensory engagement involving sight, touch, sound, smell or taste is discussed, movement is acknowledged as an ever-present and important aspect of this engagement, and the analysis of this draws on the particular phenomenological approach of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1993 [1964], 1968), which is discussed later in this chapter in the section on 'Sensory scholarship'.

Other sensory experience that emerged as particularly relevant to participants' engagement with dress was pleasure and displeasure (irritation or pain) and feelings of comfort and discomfort. Again, these aspects thread throughout the data analysis. These additional sensory modalities have an internal dimension, 'providing information about the internal world of the human body' or 'mediate between conditions in the external world and internal body' (Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk 2014:6). For some of the participants in my study, items of clothing gave then sensual pleasure, but on the other hand, clothing could rub, pinch, scratch, irritate their skin, or make them sneeze. In relation to temperature, clothing comforted through warmth but could also make the participants sweat. One participant, Anne, told me about the onesie she had bought - in spite of her dislike of them - in preparation for a winter in a draughty flat with no central heating (see Fig. 1.02 on page 61). Some participants were limited in the type of clothes they could wear due to medical issues and resulting pain, such as Andrea, who had on-going problems with her feet. To her frustration, she could not wear heels and the discomfort she felt regarding her feet led to a tendency to hide her ankles beneath long skirts or trousers (Andrea Interview 1: 00:00:26).

In this study, attention is also paid to unexpected types of sensory experience which go beyond the 'tangible' and the notion of 'multisensorial' as the interconnection of the five (or more) sensory modalities. The data suggested examples of more intangible aspects of sensory experience that related to dress, such as emotional resonances and invisible connections and associations with 'mood' and memory that constitute what might be called an 'essence' or

'ambience'. A notion of the 'intangible', drawing on the work of Mason and Davies (2009) is therefore included within the definition of 'the senses'.

Finally, in defining aspects of sensory experience of dress, lack of sensation or sensory deprivation is also seen to form part of sensory experience. Dress can mediate the body's sensory perception. Sitting on the boundary of the body it can dull or enhance sensation. For example, and as is discussed further in chapter four on sight, clothing both reveals and conceals the body in relation to the gaze.

The terms used in this thesis have been defined based on a wish to treat the participants as knowing subjects. In this way, the individual wearer is given a voice. Their knowledge is brought to bear upon the research process and situated within their particular culture, life-world and background. These definitions were therefore developed to reflect the participants' testimonies. Tseëlon (1995) argues for recognition of the wearer's experience, because while this approach:

> ...departs somewhat from the tradition of studying people, or theorizing them without taking their own perspective into account. It adds a layer of meaning...given by the wearer to that superimposed by the cultural analyst. (Tseëlon 1995:3)

Existing sensory discourse around dress

> Our teenager marks her scent by leaving clothes and shoes lying about. (Evans 2010:7 in *The Guardian Weekend*)

The 'look' of clothes - how fashionable they might be deemed and how appropriate they are for the impression the wearer wants to give in a social situation - are important considerations in everyday dressing. How they 'feel', that is the material and structural qualities of dress, its ability to keep us warm or cool, to comfort us, to structure our deportment, the way it eases or restricts movement also frames clothing choices. However, it is the visual aspects of clothing that tends to dominate discourse around fashion and dress. In contemporary UK society,

dress and personal style are commonly understood and verbalized in predominately visual terms. The body's reflection is checked in the mirror after dressing and the latest catwalk 'looks' and 'trends' are displayed and discussed in fashion magazines and other media. Dress is a creative, aesthetic practice and also a means of communication, of presenting ourselves to the outside world. This is linked to the construction of self-identity in relation to social groups and categories. While undoubtedly visual aspects are of importance, in dominating understandings and discussions of dress and fashion, it has led to the exclusion of other sensory aspects of dress.

Despite this, testimony concerning non-visual aspects of sensory dress experience does exist. For example, sensory evocations of dress can be found in secondary sources such as the mainstream media and literary texts. The statement cited above was sent in by a reader to *The Guardian Weekend* magazine, for a regular section titled, 'Your pictures: This week's theme: Smell' (Evans 2010:7) and was accompanied by an image of a well worn pair of dirty white pumps. Initially, I considered whether this type of anecdotal evidence and other examples of testimony concerning sensory engagement could provide the primary data for this research project. In order to ascertain if enough existing examples were available, accessible, and in a form that was relevant to my particular research questions, some initial exploratory research was undertaken within existing secondary sources.

Sensory testimony can be found in various secondary sources on dress, for example, within discussion in the media, within relevant data archives and within literature and poetry. Examples from media texts, such as newspapers like *The Guardian Weekend* were few and far between, and would therefore not be practical to locate. Two other types of secondary source proved more useful as initial - although still limited - sources for sensory testimony around dress. First, in the early stages of this project, an exploratory search was undertaken in the MOA, which will be discussed shortly. At the same time, examples of sensory evocations around dress were researched within relevant examples from fiction and poetry. While neither of these sources provided a body of data suitable for the type of analysis I wished to make, they were useful in other ways, not least in suggesting

how sensory experience of dress had been expressed through language, and how a discourse on dress that moves beyond the visual might sound.

Mass Observation Archive (MOA)

The MOA is an unusual and on-going collection of ordinary people's written testimony around their everyday lives. It is looked after by the University of Sussex and housed at 'The Keep' in Brighton. The archive '...contains papers generated by the original Mass Observation social research organization (1937 to early 1950s), and newer material collected continuously since 1981 (Mass Observation Project)' (MOA). The continuing collection of data in the MOA is structured around particular dates and topics, gathered through 'directives' (a series of questions on a topic) that are sent out to respondents at a given point in time. The respondents, both men and women, then send back their hand written or typed responses to these set questions. The Directive that was most relevant to this study was the 'Spring 1998 Clothing Directive' (MOA 1998). It was useful in two ways. First, the questions posed and the wide range of answers given enabled a reflection on the type of questions that could be explored around contemporary sensory engagement with dress, and how I might manage a large amount of varied, qualitative testimony. Second, it was also useful in providing examples of male clothing behaviour and attitudes as these are often side-lined. Interest in fashion and dress has been generally assumed to be a primarily feminine concern both in the media and in academic research, the reasons for which I discuss at the end of the section of this chapter titled 'Theoretical approaches to the dressed body'.

However, the few mentions of sensory aspects or interaction with clothing that I found in the archive were contained within thousands of pages of other less relevant information. The topic of the directive - clothing - was too broad for the purposes of this study and there were further limits to the usefulness of the MOA as a data resource. It was bound historically by the date of its directive, which in this case was 1998, and lacked diversity, as the majority of MOA respondents tend to be of retirement age. It was also closed data so there was no means of probing further or validating any interpretation of the testimony.

Literary texts

Within fiction, poetry, biography and autobiography, examples can be found where authors have articulated either their own sensory experience of clothes (and material objects in general), or that of their characters. Creative forms of writing often call upon the senses in order to evoke particular types of subjective human experience in a way that will have collective resonance for readers. A recent e-special edition of the journal, *Theory, Culture & Society* explores how '...fiction can enrich and provoke our conceptual imaginations' (Beer 2015). The editor, David Beer argues that as a 'mode of "telling"' about the social world, fiction can inform social research (2015:2). One of the ways that it does this is as 'a direct spark for theoretical rumination' (Beer 2015:2). In agreement with Beer, the texts that are discussed in this section did provide theoretical 'sparks' in the early stages of this research project.

Poet, academic and literary critic, Susan Stewart positions the aesthetic form of poetic language as a 'means of making sense impressions intelligible to others' (2002:3). She argues that poetry relies on the senses of touch, sight, sound and taste because these frame physical encounters with others and 'recognition between persons', which is central to the 'creation of inter-subjective experience and meaning' (2002:3). In this way, Stewart suggests that artistic expression embraces the position of the senses at the margins of the body, experienced as both internal and external phenomena, the senses opening out or closing down the body to the world and the people and objects within it (2005:60).

Stewart is also concerned with the connection between narrative, objects, and nostalgia, or 'longing' as she evocatively terms it (2005). As previously mentioned anecdotes abound that link the senses to memory. Perhaps the most well-known literary study of sensory experience and involuntary memory and one often cited in academic writing on the senses is Marcel Proust's lengthy and detailed novel in seven volumes, *In Search of Lost Time* (1996) [1913-1927]), which he wrote in the early part of the twentieth century. Proust's articulation of involuntary memory evoked towards the end of the first volume when his character, Swann, tastes a 'madeleine' (1996:51) - a traditional, small sponge cake from northern France - suggests the depths of feeling that can re-surface through

sensory interaction with things. This underlined the importance of considering the connections between items of dress, the senses and memory in this study.

To turn to literary texts that take clothing as their theme or use it as a significant character device, one text that provided some early insight was Emile Zola's (2001 [1883]) *Au Bonheur des Dames (The Ladies' Delight)*. The eleventh novel in an epic cycle of twenty novels charting social life during the French Second Empire (1851-1870), it concerns the rise of the department store as a new commercial force during a time of socio-economic and industrial change. Zola's evocations of the seductive sensuality of the goods and clothing on display and offered for sale in the store, the effect it has on the women and the 'transfer of erotic desire' onto the goods themselves paints, as Robin Buss points out in his introduction to the novel, a picture of a new type of consumer society that was to later develop globally (Buss 2001:viii).

> In any case, the ladies had not let go of the lace. They were intoxicated by it. The pieces were unwrapped, and passed back and forth, making the circle tighter still, linking the ladies with slender threads. On their knees they felt the caress of a miraculously fine cloth and their guilty fingers lingered on it. (Zola 2001 [1883]: 82)

As Buss notes, due to its prescient prediction of global consumer society, the novel still feels relevant today. This new world of sensual objects so alluring to Zola's 'respectable ladies', that they even 'turn to thieving' is 'easily recognizable, since it was the birthplace of so much in our own' (Buss 2001:xxiii). Zola successfully articulates the pleasures and anxieties of fashionable dress, a tension that concerns much of fashion scholarship today, as fashion historian Rebecca Arnold (2001) has outlined. Zola also highlighted the duality of the bodily enjoyment of material sensuality and the symbolic structuring of gender, class and social status experienced through the new leisure activity of shopping. In this way, the novel both suggested themes and highlighted the potential social and cultural importance of considering sensory dimensions of dress.

Of more contemporary relevance for this study was a collection of autobiographical writing about clothes from established women authors edited by

Kirsty Dunseath (1998). This collection was particularly useful because it contained contemporary biographical accounts, that is, wearers' testimony around their clothes. Many of the essays included sensory descriptions and motifs, understandable perhaps, as the authors were practised in forms of creative writing. Threading through the collection was the concept, reminiscent of Stewart's (2005) articulation of the senses as working on the margins of the body, that clothing appears to inhabit the boundary space between body and world, between each author's subjective experience and the world around them (Dunseath 1998:viii). The notion of boundary objects is one that extends well beyond the object of dress. Sherry Turkle (2007) has pointed out in her introduction to an edited collection of essays on objects – which, like Dunseath's collection, is autobiographic in nature - that approaches which consider boundaries 'invite us to better understand…object intimacies' (Turkle 2007:9). She highlights theorists such as the anthropologists Victor Turner (1969), who developed Van Gennep's (1909) notion of 'liminality', and Mary Douglas's (1966) analysis of pollution and taboo and the social boundaries of the body, in addition to Donald Woods Winnicott's (1989 [1971]) writing on childhood transitions. An exploration of boundaries in relation to sensory engagement with dress is developed throughout the analysis in this thesis.

The essays in Dunseath's collection demonstrate that sensory interaction with clothing forms an important aspect of women's clothing experience, but is limited in that no male authors were included. However, their absence is perhaps unsurprising. Published by The Women's Press, this collection aimed to provide a platform for women's voices, to encourage writing on 'the diversity of women's experience' (Dunseath 1998:viii) which includes everyday aspects, in this case clothing, that are important to women but are often deemed too trivial a topic for 'serious' literature, a category arguably still defined and dominated by male authors. This reflects a wider move within feminist criticism and philosophy during the 1980s and 1990s that sought to assert a 'female voice'. Part of this involved 'recovering clothes' (Young 2005) and 'fashion' from a traditional mainstream discourse which positioned them as frivolous and 'superficial' (Miller 2005:3), and finding more representative ways of talking and writing about women's lived experience. The feminist philosopher Iris Marion Young (2005)

drew on continental philosophy, such as the writing of Luce Irigaray (1985) in her essays on womens' embodied experience, first published as a collection in 1990, and then later revised and extended in 2005. In her essay titled 'Women Recovering Our Clothes' (2005 [1988]), she considered womens' intimate bodily and emotional relationship with clothing, and how an alternative and more representative way of talking about this might, for example, embrace touch more than sight (Irigarary quoted in Young 2005:68).

Shari Benstock and Suzanne Ferriss's edited book *On Fashion,* framed within the feminist project, includes an essay by the French theorist, Hélène Cixous (1994) in which she reflects on one of her own jackets designed by the French fashion designer Sonia Rykiel. Alongside this is an essay written by Rykiel that explores the sensual nature of clothing (1994 [1988]). These essays are not traditionally academic in style. Rather, they bring the body, the personal, the emotional, the sensory and the imagination to bear on personal articulations of being clothed and designing clothes in a creative and evocative way. As such, they propose a different, more creative, sensual and emotional discourse on dress.

Although this study does not explicitly employ creative writing in its methodology, this type of writing highlighted some of the issues relating to how sensory experience of dress is articulated. The way that sensory aspects of dress are discussed in a cultural context is hierarchically structured, so vision takes prominence and gender is an underlying framework to the type of language and description used. As a result, it may be more difficult to articulate certain types of bodily and sensory experience, like the non-visual aspects of dress because they have not been assigned cultural importance, and so talking about them is unfamiliar territory for many people. As will be discussed later in the analysis chapters, at times the participants did struggle to clearly articulate certain aspects of their sensory engagement with dress.

Feminist writers have played a role in reclaiming the sensory pleasures (and pains) that frame women's understanding of dress and fashion as part of their identity. Remaining open to a fuller range of sensory knowledge and experience, allows one, as Rykiel puts it, to 'hear the rustle of fabric' (Rykiel quoted by Benstock and Ferriss 1994:11), move beyond the focus on dress and fashion as appearance and therefore explore more fully the complexities of the relationship

between the wearer and their clothes. However, and as will be demonstrated in the data analysis chapters, it is not only women who have a complex multisensory relationship with their clothing. For the men in this study too, appearance was not all. The sense of touch, for example was also important to them, a source of pleasure and discomfort, just as it was for many of the women. Indeed in Turkle's collection of autobiographical object essays there is one written by a male author, Mathew Belmonte (2007) about an object of dress, his childhood yellow raincoat (the remaining essays on dress are both on items of jewellery, written by women). In it he talks about how his raincoat represented his mother, both smothering and protecting him, but he also mentions the liberating feel of wearing it in the rain and the pressure of the raindrops felt through it (Belmonte 2007:73).

Indeed, literature and poetry can offer a freedom from gendered forms of representation in relation to dress, for male as well as female authors, evidenced in Pablo Neruda, a Chilean poet's, 'Ode to Clothes' (1975 [1954]). Here the narrator of Neruda's poem embraces and is embraced by his clothes, they are as one, in sensory bodily and emotional relations that begin at birth and end at an imagined death. Parallel ideas can be found within both Cixous (1994) and Rykiel's (1994 [1988]) aforementioned essays. Neruda's poem in particular was a useful source as it continued to resonate with the themes that were developing during the analysis of the data, articulating the close sensory connection between the body and its clothing. The poem is alluded to at various points during the analysis chapters, and a full version is included in appendix six.

In summary, creative forms of writing provided a source of sensory evocation around dress that sparked theoretical ideas and pathways in the early stages of this study. They suggested how more subjective, hidden and intimate sensory engagement with dress might be articulated and were at times helpful when reflecting on some of the themes and experiences that emerged from the primary data. Although useful in these ways, as with the archive testimony from the MOA, relevant examples were time consuming to locate because they appeared only occasionally and sporadically and were rarely discussed in detail. In order to attend to my specific research questions, as set out in the introduction to this thesis (see page 13), I needed to collate a new body of primary research data. This would also begin to address the 'sensory gap' in existing research data around

dress. The methodological approach and the methods used to collect and analyse this primary research data are discussed in detail in chapters two and three of this thesis. Before moving on to the methodology, the remainder of this contextual chapter situates this research within existing academic scholarship. It considers first to what degree the senses have been attended to in theoretical approaches to the dressed body, outlining the existing work that this research builds upon. Second, it outlines the sensory scholarship that informs the theoretical approach taken.

Theoretical approaches to the dressed body

Visual aspects of dress and their connection to identity became an important concern for new literature on fashion and dress that emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century. As outlined in Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson's introduction to their edited collection of essays - originating from the first 'Dress stream' at the 1995 Association of Art Historian's Conference – published in 1999, the study of dress was then a rapidly developing field as the disciplines of art and design history, sociology, anthropology and material culture began to converge (1999:1). The link between fashion, appearance and identity remains a concern today, apparent in Christopher Breward and Caroline Evans's edited volume *Fashion and Modernity* (2005).

Historically, approaches to researching fashion and dress had focused on an object's history, designer or production method. Items of dress deemed significant or special, as opposed to everyday wear, were of particular interest to dress historians, while sociologists like Thorstein Veblen (1953 [1899]) were concerned with the 'fashion system'. Later, Georg Simmel (1971 [1904], 1997 [1905], 1997 [1908a]), following Veblen, was one of the first sociologists to theorize, in the words of fashion and design historian, Peter McNeil '...the intersection of city life and modern fashion' (2016:63), although as McNeil notes, 'his work was not primarily about fashion' (2016:66). Simmel was concerned with the 'relationship of aesthetic and social forms' (McNeil 2016:66) and also the relationship between the individual and social structure. Within Simmel's writing on fashion this approach informed his focus on the changing 'style' of fashionable clothing, the

'paradox of fashion, of belonging and standing out simultaneously via sartorial methods and techniques (McNeil 2016:71).

Simmel (1997 [1907]) also theorized the senses, and at times these two areas of fashion and the senses collide in his writing. Simmel positioned micro sensory interaction as the building blocks or 'pulsating life' of larger social structures, as 'agents connecting individuals to social existence' (1997 [1907]:109). This leads him to consider the sensory impressions a person makes, 'the sound of a voice and the content of what was said, the appearance and its psychological interpretation' (Simmel 1997 [1907]:111). Additionally, in his writing on differentiation through 'adornment' (Simmel 1997 [1908a]) – by which he means extra-ordinary dress that is designed to impress - he concludes that:

> The radiations of adornment, the sensuous attention it provokes, supply the personality with such an enlargement or intensification of its sphere: the personality so to speak, is more when it is adorned.
> (Simmel 1997 [1908a]:207)

Following Simmel's consideration of the senses and sensory aspects of dress within social relations, this thesis develops an explicit sensory approach, and suggests that sensory aspects of dress - visual but also haptic, auditory and olfactory aspects - at times played into the participants' sense of 'belonging' and of 'standing out', the paradox of fashion and dress that Simmel identified. As will be demonstrated through the data analysis, the senses were integral to the duality of private and public, individual and social experience that framed the participants' engagement with dress.

Fashion and dress were later read as a 'practice' or way of conforming to - or resisting - social, cultural and political codes, tied to notions of identity by theorists such as Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (2006 [1976]) and Dick Hebdige (1979) in his research on sub-cultures. Additionally, it has been theorized as a means of communication. Roland Barthes (1985) proposed that fashion be understood as a complex system of signs and following this, Alison Lurie (2000 [1981]) argued that clothes can be read as one would a language. All these accounts, although theoretically different, are based on visual aspects of dress -

observations of either the item of dress or the appearance of the wearer when dressed. However, the reliability of accounts of what dress might symbolically or visually signify about the wearer in the eyes of the observer can be problematic. Colin Campbell's (2007) critique of Lurie's positioning of clothes as a 'language' suggests that observed meanings of dress are ambiguous and subjective, not necessarily shared between wearer and perceiver and therefore attempts to read what people wear as a form of language is unreliable and based on the observer's assumptions. Campbell argues that the focus on the visual pins 'meaning' to a singular visual appearance (2007:166). Arguably, this has led to a denial or marginalization of other accounts of meaning, in particular the wearer's own account, and experience relating to the other bodily senses and the body as a whole.

Building on the influential work of Lou Taylor (2002, 2004), who played a central role in the establishment of the discipline of dress history, fashion historian and curator, Alexandra Palmer illustrates how a 'close examination of fashion objects can shift and deepen our understanding of the meanings of fashion' (2013:269), challenging fashion history's tendency to rely upon 'ideal' visual representations of historical fashions for its data (2013:273). Palmer points out that, 'What was actually worn and what is depicted can be quite different' (2013:273), agreeing with Taylor who '…has cautioned against the "overuse" of undocumented fashion plates and drawing that are promotional, seasonal, idealized fashions, not necessarily a social reality' (Palmer 2013:273).

In the 1990s this visual dominance was beginning to be addressed, through attending to the dressed body, its social environment and the materiality of items of dress. In de la Haye and Wilson's (1999) words:

> It is therefore not surprising that in recent years the sociological study of dress has shifted to incorporate the study of the human body, itself a growing area of study. The body is now explicitly understood not as a biological given but as a social construct producing multiple meanings. Dress is clearly part of that construction of meaning… (and)…within museology and gradually within academia, historical and contemporary

garments are increasingly being used as primary evidence for broader based contextual studies. (de la Haye and Wilson 1999:3)

This study builds on this more recent work on dress that concerns the relationship between dress and the body and contributes new research to the field of 'dress studies'. The field of dress and fashion studies draws on a broad amalgam of work that concerns dress but emerges from many interrelated disciplines. These include dress history, women's studies, gender studies, cultural studies, and, of particular relevance for this research, material culture, sociology, anthropology, and more recently practice based research. Uniting the existing work most relevant to this study is a theoretical approach that brings together (in varying degrees and ways), the experience of the wearer, the body, the materiality of items of dress, and the social and cultural contexts and biographies of both the wearer and items. Most of this literature while not directly attending to the senses, does engage with the senses to some extent or at the very least acknowledges the multisensory nature of dress, suggesting the potential for more in-depth sensory-based research. The discussion of these approaches below situates this study in relation to them, highlighting the remaining gaps that this study attends to.

Material culture

From the late 1980s approaches to understanding the material culture of everyday life - that is the objects and spaces that people create and through which their culture is defined – emerged. These looked to position objects within the context of their use, the user and the wider economic, social and political environment. These approaches attributed importance to understanding the complex roles that objects play in contemporary life, emerging from within a number of disciplines. Of particular relevance to this study was work from within anthropology, notably that of Miller (1987, 2001, 2008), who was influenced by, among others, the biographical approach to understanding the social life of objects taken by Arjun Appardurai (1986) and Igor Kopytoff (1986), from within material culture, Christopher Tilley (1994) and Dant (1999, 2005), from within museum studies the work of Prown (2000 [1980] [1982]) and Susan Pearce (1994) and from within design studies, the work of Attfield (2000).

Attfield interrogated the nature of objects in use, post design and point of sale, describing the material objects of everyday life as 'Wild Things', or 'disordered everyday clutter' the meaning of which is not easily pinned down (2000:5). As objects are used in different ways throughout their lives they come to play mundane or undisciplined roles within an individual's life and in relation to the wider culture to which they belong. Attfield acknowledges that visual analysis of objects is useful but also suggests that it needs to be challenged by linking the object to its multiple, sometimes contradictory uses (2000:5).

Tilley's approach to material culture argues that objects can be read as having different meanings in different contexts, depending on who is using it, where and when the object is being interpreted, who is interpreting it and why they wish to do so in the first place (1994:72). In the case of this study, situating the items of dress in the context of the wearer's life, and acknowledging that the interpretation of the items of dress takes place within the specific research context of the study, is an important consideration. Tilley also pays attention to the many sensory dimensions of objects, stating:

> Objects relate to far wider perceptual functions than words, they have multidimensional qualities relating to sight, sound, smell, taste and touch enabling remarkably subtle distinctions to be made. (Tilley 2001:257)

This suggests that engagement with material culture is a phenomenological experience requiring all our senses. Indeed this study draws on the specific phenomenological approach of Merleau-Ponty (1962). Miller has been central in encouraging an approach to clothing that looks closely at the interweaving of material, sensual and aesthetic aspects of dress with its social aspects (2005:1). In his aforementioned co-edited book on clothing (Kuchler and Miller 2005), mass consumption of clothing is included alongside specific regional clothing and practices. This global view of dress (see also Eicher 2010) was developed further in Miller and Woodward's on-going *Global Denim Project,* that interrogates the everyday and ubiquitous phenomenon of denim across the globe, highlighting the relative lack of studies concerning denim jeans despite their vast, global popularity (2011:2). Miller's research into material culture within the home (Miller 2001,

2008) is also useful in terms of the attention it gives to the intimate, often private and everyday aspects of experience, which is also the concern of this study.

The home is a recurring theme within this thesis, as the nature of home as a sensory and material familiar space informs the analysis of dress. A comparison is drawn in order to propose a notion of dress as a sensory space for the body (see the chapter on touch). In addition to Miller's studies of the home (Miller 2002, 2008), Pink's sensory ethnography of domestic spaces and practices (2012), Gaston Bachelard's (1994 [1958]) exploration of intimate spaces and Young's (2005 [1997], 2005 [2004]) discussion of home and embodied identity inform this analytical positioning.

Possibly as a result of the close inter-disciplinary relationship between anthropology and material culture, analyses of dress have tended to concern non-Western dress. One notable exception is Woodward's study of women's everyday dress choices (2007). She adopted an ethnographic and material culture approach, observing and interviewing women in their homes where clothing choices were made. In particular, Woodward pointed to the importance for women of not just the 'look' of clothing, but also its 'feel' and how this fed into a sense of looking and feeling 'right' when constructing successful outfits. When deciding what to wear, women in her study asked 'Is this me?' in an attempt to achieve an 'aesthetic fit' (Woodward 2007:83). As will be discussed in the data analysis chapters, this understanding was useful in helping to unpack the interconnection between sight, touch and the other senses within the participants' engagement with dress.

This study is concerned with dress as both item and practice, as such it approaches material culture in *use*, building upon Entwistle's consideration of 'dress in everyday life as embodied practice' (2000:10), which will be outlined in the following section on 'Sociology and anthropology'. Additionally Dant's (1999, 2004, 2005) work on interaction with the material world in general, and his chapter on worn clothing in particular (1999), inform the analysis of touch. Along with Dant (1999, 2004, 2005), Attfield's (2000) work on human-object relations and Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden and Ruth B. Phillips' (2006) edited volume of articles on the senses and material culture position human sensory engagement with material culture as active and learned. This positioning frames the approach taken in this study to understanding the meanings of sensory engagement with

dress within the particular cultural, biographical and life contexts of the participants. All of these approaches are framed by an attention to the embodied practices and phenomenological skills involved in everyday material engagement within the physical and social world.

> The human senses can be seen, then, as part of the set of physiologically grounded human skills that render a world intelligible and workable. (Edwards, Gosden and Philips 2006:5)

Within studies of museology or curatorship, approaches to analysing objects have positioned them in the context of their use, biographies and cultural environment. In particular the material culture method of analysis developed by Prown (2001 [1982]) and Pearce's (1994) approach to museology have influenced the approach taken within the disciplines of dress history and curation, which advocates investigating and presenting dress in the context of its social and cultural settings, the wearer, and where possible uniting material culture analysis with oral testimony (de la Haye and Wilson 1999, Taylor 2002, 2004).

An early and ground-breaking example of this was the exhibition of Jill Ritblat's wardrobe at the V&A, *One Woman's Wardrobe* (Ritblat 1998), curated by de la Haye. This demonstrated how one woman's items of dress can be explored from different perspectives and how Ritblat's own testimony lights up these explorations, contextualizes the dress items within the life of their wearer, and at times contradicted what might be inferred from looking at the objects alone. Ritblat's wardrobe was considered in its entirety, but necessarily edited in order to inform the exhibition displays within a narrative framework. Having entered the context of the V&A - the national museum of design - and therefore interpreted as a 'collection', Ritblat's wardrobe appeared highly considered and thought out. However, she explained in the accompanying exhibition catalogue, edited by Robert Violette, how she was not overly concerned with or knowledgeable about 'fashion' – rather, her wardrobe grew organically and there were many different reasons behind her purchases (Ritblat in Violette 1998:14). Similarly Valerie Steele (1998) referencing her own study of the corset, argues for the value of object

analysis within fashion studies, suggesting how Prown's (2001 [1982]) method could be applied to garments.

In developing the methodological approach taken in my primary research, I have drawn on aspects of Prown's (2001 [1982]) approach. As will be discussed in more detail in chapters two and three, I have not adhered strictly to his methodology, but rather aspects of it have been tailored to fit the particular needs of this study, contributing to the development of an interview approach that brings together physical, sensory investigation of the material items of dress with the testimony of the wearer.

Sociology and anthropology

Within academic studies that concern dress practices in the West, since the 1990s increasing attention has been paid to the wearer and their embodied experience of dress within the social context of their lives (Entwistle 2000, Entwistle and Wilson 2001) and this has helped to overcome dichotomies between object and subject within sociological studies of dress.

Entwistle's (2000) theoretical work on dress and embodiment that is influenced by the phenomenological approach of Merleau-Ponty and draws on the micro-sociology of Goffman has provided the platform from which to develop the sensory approach taken in this thesis. Entwistle moves the study of dress beyond the visual discourses that have dominated, arguing for attention to how the practice of dress is experienced by the *wearer* within specific social situations. Dress is understood in relation to the body and the body in relation to dress, or as Entwistle simply states, '…human bodies are *dressed* bodies' (Entwistle 2000:6).

Within fashion and dress studies Merleau-Ponty's particular approach to phenomenology has been increasingly influential in articulating the embodied nature of worn clothing. His influence is discussed by Llewellyn Negrin who argues that while Merleau-Ponty does not 'specifically address the phenomena of fashion in his writings' (2016:130), his work has been recognised as providing 'the theoretical tools with which to address fashion not simply as an aesthetic or symbolic phenomenon but as a haptic experience' (2016:116). This understanding of experience as centred in the lived body acknowledges the corporeality of being dressed.

Particular garments are significant not just for the meanings they communicate or for their aesthetic appearance, but because they produce certain modes of bodily demeanour. (Negrin 2016:115)

While fashion and dress scholarship has begun to increasingly focus on the lived body in relation to dress, and utilised Merleau-Ponty's approach to phenomenology in this respect (Negrin 2016:129), it has not yet fully engaged with Merleau-Ponty's articulation of sensory perception, which this thesis does, and which will be discussed in the following section on sensory scholarship.

A sensory approach necessitates a close attention to the body, as does a focus on dress as worn and lived (see Helen Thomas 2013 for an overview of approaches to the body in everyday life). During the analysis, different theoretical approaches to the body were drawn upon in relation to different aspects of sensory experience. These are outlined below, and are further applied and developed in the analysis chapters.

As Entwistle has argued, Bourdieu suggests how 'social conditions of everyday life such as class, gender or the like as well as the 'rules' or norms governing social situations' (2000:37), structure an individual's practice of dressing in particular situations. She draws on Bourdieu's (1994) notion of the 'habitus' - that is how people acquire bodily ways of operating in the social world, ways that structure behaviour. Entwistle asserts the importance of analysing practice (not merely structure or texts) in order to understand the practical negotiation between the individual and social structures that actively constructs the meanings of dress for the wearer in particular situations. Within this study, Bourdieu's notion of the 'habitus' attends to the way that the individual biographies and cultural background of each participant contributed to the shaping of their sensory engagement with dress and the meanings they took from it. This frames an understanding of the senses as culturally constructed, which is discussed in the following section on sensory scholarship.

However, while this study pays attention to the socio-cultural meanings of sensory engagement with dress, it moves away from a purely symbolic

understanding of dress as social communication. As Agnès Rocamora (2002) has argued in her critique of Bourdieu's (1984) account of consumption as expressive of class distinction, in foregrounding semiotic or symbolic understandings of dress relating primarily to social status, other aspects that frame dress practices and meanings for the wearer are lost. These include the bodily 'pursuit of sensual pleasure' (Rocamora 2002:353) and how '...material artefacts' are 'consumed for their materiality' (Rocamora 2002:344). Within this study, these aspects come to the fore and are seen to mediate the social understandings of dress.

Within the analysis of touch in this study, Michel Foucault's (1977) articulation of the body as disciplined by socio-cultural forces was useful in analysing the way that dress tangibly pushed, through touch, upon the participants' bodies, shaping it to the needs of the social situation. Furthermore in relation to olfactory engagement with dress, Mary Douglas's (1966) work on dirt framed an understanding of dress, body odour and associated cleaning practices, which was a significant theme within the data on smell. Douglas's (1966) articulation of the boundaries of the body, along with Wilson's application of this in relation to dress (2003 [1985]) also threads throughout the analysis chapters.

Of particular relevance to the broader analysis of the data was Erving Goffman's sociological understanding of a 'presentation of self' within social life (Goffman 1990 [1959]), where clothing informs the impression made on others. Within this study, the ways that sensory dimensions of dress contributed to this impression are explored. Additionally, his notion of the personal space around the body, what he terms 'territories of the self' (Goffman 1971) provides the basis for articulating the way that sensory aspects of dress defined the boundaries of the body and the space around it.

As such, developing on from an embodied understanding of everyday dress, this study argues that a logical progression is to ask *how* the body experiences dress and that is through the senses. Woodward's (2007) ethnography of women's wardrobes and the act of dressing demonstrated how an embodied approach might encourage attention to the senses. In her study, the female participants described how their items of dress made them feel, in relation to why they chose to wear them and for what occasions. The tactile sensations of dress emerge as important and were embraced by Woodward.

Reducing clothing to its visual properties ignores the crucial tactile and sensual aspects of clothing as worn by people. (Woodward 2007:27)

Woodward interviews and observes women at the point of dressing. As a result, emphasis is placed on the decision-making process, although fit and how some garments have worn out are also considered. Less attention however is paid to the other senses of sound, smell or taste. Woodward's aim was to provide an in-depth, empirical study of how women negotiated ideas of femininity and identity when dressing and the anxiety that was involved. Although she did not draw on sensory scholarship directly to inform her study, by embracing the sensual nature of dress, I would argue that this suggests that a dedicated sensory approach to investigating everyday dress in the UK is timely and relevant. As previously set out, this study proposes that a sensory approach need not be confined to the experience of women, as Woodward's was. As will be demonstrated throughout the analysis, a sensory approach was also relevant to the male participants.

More recently in their study on dress, dementia and identity, Julia Twigg and Christina Buse (2013) have argued that sensory, in particular, tactile and material engagement with clothing can help to provide dementia patients with a sense of 'temporal and spatial orientation' as well as provide stimuli for evoking memories (2013:329), concluding that:

The maintenance of familiar items of clothing can thus be important in the provision of person-centred care, and to supporting embodied identity and personhood. (Twigg and Buse 2013:331)

Through the analysis of the data in this thesis it will be shown that for the participants, sensory aspects of familiar clothing were central to their sense of self and place in the world.

The examples of a dedicated sensory approach to dress that were most useful to my study were found within cross-cultural studies. Ethnographic approaches rooted in the related disciplines of anthropology (Weiner and

Schneider 1989) and material culture (Kuchler and Miller 2005) have traditionally taken an interest both in dress, adornment practices and textiles *and* in the multisensory dimensions of non-Western cultures (Howes 2005a).

Of particular relevance to this study is the work of Eicher, who has been committed to addressing the senses in relation to dress and to encouraging other work in this area. Donald Clay Johnson and Helen Bradley Foster point out that as early as 1973, Eicher had begun to think about the senses (2007:2) and in 1992 along with Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins she defined 'dress' in such a way that moved beyond appearance and took account of a multisensory body (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1995:9), as was discussed earlier in this chapter. For her retirement symposium in 2005 at The University of Minnesota, titled *The Senses and Sentiments of Dress*, Eicher:

> …challenged other scholars to find instances in which the remaining four senses – touch, smell, hearing, and taste – inform perceptions of dress, instead of the more usual sense of sight which we first use when assessing another's dress and until now the sense most often used to study dress. By including "sentiments" in the theme, Eicher also wanted another meaning of "sense" to be examined: the feelings, emotions, memories, impressions, responses, and sensations we associate with dress. (Johnson and Foster 2007:2)

A selection of papers from the symposium was developed into an edited book, titled *Dress Sense: Emotional and Sensory Experiences of the Body and Clothes* (Johnson and Foster 2007). Uniting the essays is the underlying premise that dress plays an active role in culture as a multisensory practice created through the relationship between wearer and object. In addition, by including emotional and other notions of 'sense', Eicher's call for papers remained open to both the tangible and more intangible aspects of sensory experience of dress.

This study draws on a number of these essays to demonstrate how, for the participants, sensory engagement with dress was integrated to their overall experience of dress and its meaning within many different contexts. In particular, three main themes emerged from this collection: the link between the senses,

dress and memory, how sensory dimensions of dress transform the wearer during life cycle changes, and the role played by sensory engagement with dress in social and cultural constructs and in acts of resistance to these. These themes resonated with the data from this study and demonstrated how a deeper understanding of the role of dress could emerge through a sensory approach. While some of the underlying principles of the essays in *Dress Sense* were broadly similar with those framing this study, they differ in their primarily cultural approach to the senses. This study is distinct in that it incorporates a phenomenological *with* a social, cultural and material understanding of sensory engagement and applies this within a contemporary UK context.

Summary: Marginalization and absence

The above collection (Johnson and Foster 2007) also pointed to gaps in research within this area that this study aims to address. Taken as a whole, they reflected the traditional anthropological focus on non-Western or what are perceived to be 'traditional' cultures. They pointed to a tendency in Western thought to denigrate sensory knowledge as 'innocent' or 'savage' - the antithesis to the sophistry of culture (Howes 2005a:3). Or, at the very least, to take sensory knowledge in the West as naturalized and therefore for granted – in both cases deeming it not worthy of study. For example, Heather Marie Akou in her essay on Somali refugees in the US asks, could the richness and subtleness to be understood from the sensory dimensions of Somali dress also '…be the case among other non-Western cultures?' (2007:21). Akou's question demonstrates the *assumption* that in Western culture people do not perceive dress through all the senses, only vision. This is an assumption that Miller (1987) has addressed through taking an anthropological approach to understanding 'modernity'. This assumption is also being challenged by sensory scholarship that has applied an anthropological approach within the context of Western society.

Conversely, dress as a subject matter, has tended to be overlooked in relation to the senses, despite its close relationship with the body. The 'home' on the other hand has been the focus of a number of sensory studies, a continuation perhaps of the existing material culture research in this area. Of particular note is Anne Hecht's (2001) essay on the tangible and sensory memories contained in the

home, and as previously mentioned, Pink takes a sensory approach to researching cleaning practices in the home, relating these to identity (2004). It was from this study and her work on visual ethnography (Pink 2007), that Pink developed an approach to 'sensory ethnography' (2009). Here she gives a comprehensive account of sensory scholarship across the social, sciences, arts and humanities in both non-Western and Western contexts. Noticeably absent, however is any reference to Eicher's symposium on dress and the senses, which took place four years before Pink's book was published in 2009, or the collection of essays emanating from the symposium published in 2007.

This may reflect the persistence of an historical tendency to denigrate or overlook dress and clothing practices within academic study (Kawamura 2011:11). Taylor (2002) has provided an account of the development of dress studies and the attempts to reverse this tendency. She acknowledges that since the mid 1960s, mainly American ethnographers such as Annette Weiner, Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, Jane Schneider, Justine Cordwell, Ruth Barnes and Joanne Eicher fought a campaign to win professional recognition for '…clothing's powerful and central cultural meanings' (Taylor 2002:197).

Much of the existing writing about fashion and dress concerns women, so it is unsurprising to find a distinct absence of male sensory dress experience within the existing literature. Refreshingly, male dress experience is included in some of the cross-cultural essays in *Dress Sense* (Johnson and Foster 2007) but it is still under represented. Out of the fifteen essays, four focus solely on female experience, three make only a brief passing mention of male dress, five are concerned with both male and female dress or non-gendered textiles, and one is concerned with the male experience of cross dressing, although the nature of this context has a significant 'female' element. This gap in the study of male sensory dress experience reflects a significant gap in the study of male dress in general.

More recently this imbalance has begun to be addressed. Christopher Breward has explored why, within the study of dress as a whole, a large proportion of the consuming population (men) have been written out of it (Breward 1999). A new generation of male fashion and dress scholars such as Frank Mort (1988, 1996), male fashion historians and curators such as Alistair O'Neill (2015), Shaun

Cole (2000, 2010), Andrew Bolton - the current head curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in New York City - and Ben Whyman, who is based at the Centre for Fashion Curation at LCF to name just a few, continue to work to redress this gender imbalance. With the launch of a new journal in 2014, *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion*, the first to focus exclusively on men's dress, this area of fashion scholarship is growing rapidly. However on the whole, contemporary male dress, and in particular 'everyday dress' still remains an under researched and often overlooked area in comparison with women's clothing. As Shari Benstock and Suzanne Ferriss (1994) state, fashion has been labelled as feminine.

> When we speak in this book of the body clothed, we are in virtually every case talking about women's bodies, fashion having served traditionally as the cultural sign of the feminine. (Benstock and Ferriss 1994:4)

For the participants in this study, while there were differences between the levels of engagement with or interest in 'fashion', these differences were individual and specific to each participant and related more to age than to 'gender'. As this study is concerned with personal dress items, the participants discussed them from an individual rather than a collective or gendered perspective. This thesis proposes that more research is needed that considers dress experience as not defined by binary gender constructs in order to move beyond assumptions and stereotypes, and to explore both commonalities *and* differences. This gap does mean that much of the existing theoretical analysis of dress is focussed empirically on those people identifying themselves as 'women'. However, as previously stated, this thesis argues that the theories drawn upon can also be applied to 'men' - and this will be demonstrated throughout the analysis - and potentially to other non-binary, gender fluid identities – although this aspect did not specifically arise within the interviews in this study.

In Miller's (2005) view the gendering of clothing is related to a denigration of surfaces' (clothing being a surface or covering for the body) as 'superficial', in contrast with the profound nature of the 'real' person inside or abstract and 'deep' political thought. More recently an emerging field of 'surface studies' (2016) has

further highlighted the relevance of studying surfaces and interfaces such as skin or fabric. In Miller's words:

> This denigration of surfaces has been part of the denigration of clothing and, by extension, of those said to be particularly interested in clothing, often seen as women, or blacks or any other group that thereby come to be regarded as more superficial and less deep. (Miller 2005:3)

There are also parallels to be made between the gendering of 'fashion' as female and the gendered hierarchy of sensory modalities that Howes (2005a) describes as such:

> In the West the dominant group – whether it be conceptualized in terms of gender, class or race – has conventionally been associated with the supposedly 'higher' senses of sight and hearing, while subordinate groups (women, workers, non-Westerners) have been associated with the so-called lower senses of smell, taste and touch. (Howes 2005a:10)

There is a contradiction apparent between these two examples of gender hierarchies, one that reveals them as nonsensical constructs, which as Miller suggests, can be used by one group to put down another (2005:3). On the one hand, as Miller points out above, women are still denigrated as superficial, linked to an over concern with appearance, yet if sight is designated a 'higher' sense, it would logically follow that appearance should be highly valued. However, this contradiction is then overcome through further layering of hierarchies, such as the denigration of 'surface'. Throughout the analysis of the primary research undertaken in this study, which includes an equal number of men and women, it will be demonstrated that the degrees to which the participants were concerned with appearance, and to which they paid attention to non-visual aspects of dress varied across individuals, but not necessarily according to the gender they identified with. This thesis therefore suggests that these hierarchies are indeed social constructions.

While, to date few studies of contemporary UK dress have drawn out specific testimony around the multisensory aspects of dress, to include sight, sound, touch, smell (and taste) as well as more intangible aspects of sense experience, in the last decade, some practice-based research has begun to do this. Of particular note is Kate Fletcher's (2014) work on sustainability. Fletcher's on-going project, *Local Wisdom*, begun in 2009, is an international fashion research project exploring the craft of use in relation to personal dress, in which sensory and emotional engagement is central. Additionally Fiona Candy's (2005, 2015) practice based research has looked to draw out sensory data around clothing. Candy's (2005) emotional and sensory study of denim revealed the many different and individual ways denim was worn and interpreted in the UK, but its sensory approach was limited. Candy used visual methods of video recording and then interpreted the recorded movement by copying it with her own body, so movement was the main focus. She also asked people to look at diagrammatic drawings produced from street photographs, and to interpret the personas they saw contained in the styles of denim dress and the bodily stance. Arguably this reveals more about the stereotypical assumptions around body and fashion imagery than the sensory experience of the wearer (Candy 2005:11). More recently Candy (2015) has researched the sound of shoes in relation to identity, in an exhibition in which she invited visitors to record themselves walking. Within fashion media, experimental photographer and filmmaker, Nick Knight has encouraged an exploration of sensory aspects of fashion in various projects as part of *SHOWStudio* (2016). It is perhaps not surprising that sensory aspects of dress are being explored through multimedia, and importantly multisensory platforms and practices, rather than traditional academic texts, as this can provide more creative ways of accessing and presenting sensory experience. This new interest will hopefully encourage academic theorists of fashion and dress to consider the senses and to develop ways of researching and writing about them, perhaps using novel research methods, inspired by, or through collaboration with, practice based researchers and art and design practitioners.

In summary, a sensory absence is apparent within theoretical approaches to the dressed body, in particular the male dressed body, mirrored by an absence

of research concerning dress within sensory studies. By bringing the two areas and approaches together this study suggests a new sensory paradigm with which to critique and build on existing work within dress studies. I will now turn to the senses and outline the academic literature and approaches that inform this study from the established yet still developing body of sensory scholarship.

Sensory scholarship

This study aims for a deeper embodied understanding of dress through a detailed analysis of sensory engagement. As stated, if the experience of dress comes from the body, then it is a natural progression to think about *how* the wearer perceives dress, and that is through their body's sensory apparatus, defined in Western culture as five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. Within many other disciplines, a similar progression from an embodied to a sensory approach to understanding aspects of cultural life is being taken.

The analytical approach taken in this study combines socio-cultural understandings of the senses – drawn from research within what can be broadly termed 'sensory studies', 'sociology of the senses' and the aforementioned material culture approaches that account for the senses (Edward, Gosden and Phillips 2006) - with a particular phenomenological understanding of the nature of sensory perception drawn from Merleau-Ponty (1962). The main sensory scholars to inform the analysis are outlined below.

Sensory studies

The majority of sensory scholarship has emerged from the now well-established discipline of sensory studies, which in turn has its roots in anthropology. Howes along with Constance Classen, has been pivotal in developing the field. Howes has described it as a 'sensual revolution' and outlines this growing body of scholarship around the senses in the book *Empire of the Senses*, part of Berg's 'Sensory Formations' series – the formation of which attests to the significance of the field - (2005a:1). As a result of this increasing interest in the senses, there is also an academic debate developing around the nature of sensory experience, whether or how the senses might be defined and understood as separate sensory modalities and how these modalities might interrelate (see Pink

2009 for a comprehensive overview). Untangling the way the senses interrelate in relation to dress forms part of this study.

Benstock and Ferriss describe the role of the senses and desire in relation to Western urban dress and fashion, questioning how fashion makes its appeal:

> How it calls first to the 'eye' (the gaze, the look, the to-be-seen) and plays into the psychic field of desire for exhibitionism and voyeurism. To look is to desire, to want to touch and caress, to slip a hand into a seam or fold. (Benstock and Ferris 1994:3)

Reflecting Benstock and Ferriss' statement above, Howes suggests that at times the senses seem to work together and at other times they appear conflicting, confused or working in sequence (2005a:9). Furthermore that sensory experience is multifaceted, the values we give to it are shaped by culture and the world is changed through sensory activity (Howes 2005a). Therefore, the importance we give to different sensory categories differs between cultures, individuals and specific situations. In this way: 'Sensory studies involves a cultural approach to the study of the senses and a sensory approach to the study of culture' (Howes 2013:np).

The cultural approach of various theorists and historians of the senses informed aspects of the analysis in this thesis. Some sensory scholars have considered the senses more generally, like Howes (1991, 2003, 2005) who has written extensively on many sensory aspects, and Mark M. Smith (2007) who takes a historical approach. These authors thread throughout the analysis chapters. Others focus on one sensory modality, such as Classen (2005) and Mark Paterson (2007) on touch, and Michael Bull (2006) on sound. Additionally they each have their own specific outlook, for example Paterson incorporates a phenomenological viewpoint, whereas Howes rejects this. They are all linked however, by an attention to the senses as culturally understood and experienced. Of particular relevance to this study is the notion of 'emplacement' - one that has emerged within sensory studies and threads throughout many of the essays in Howes' edited collection of writing on the senses (2005a:7). It threads throughout the

analysis in this study, and is developed in more detail in relation to the sound of dress. It is therefore outlined below.

Emplacement

Within sensory scholarship, in addition to unpicking the relationship between the mind, body and senses, there is a concern with how to address the sensing body's relationship with - and movement through - time, place and space. A notion of emplacement attends to this. Pink has suggested that in general, embodiment approaches have ignored the contexts of space and place, and therefore the notion of 'emplacement' is one that 'supersedes that of embodiment' (Pink 2009:25), although arguably this is not the case with Entwistle's (2000) embodied understanding of dress as *situated* practice (an approach that Pink appears unaware of). There are 'disagreements amongst scholars of the senses regarding how phenomenological understandings might be employed' in relation to the question of place and 'emplacement' (Pink 2009:28). In this study, I define 'emplacement' as a connection to a sense of place, time or an event that is evoked or re-experienced through sensory engagement with dress. Furthermore that this often involves a feeling of familiarity, belonging and comfort, and is therefore linked to a sense of home. It is argued that the notion of 'emplacement' has particular relevance for everyday dress. First because dress forms the immediate sensory environment or atmosphere for the body, which can be taken out into the world, and second, due to the close link between dress, the senses, emotions and memory. Conversely, 'displacement' can also be felt when sensory aspects of dress make the individual feel 'out of place' within particular environments or social situations.

Lisa Law, in her study of home cooking practised by Filipino Women in Hong Kong, highlights the way in which the senses are a 'situated practice that can shed light on the way bodies experience different spaces of culture' (2005:225). In relation to the marginalized experience of Filipino maids living and working in Hong Kong, Law points to the role of everyday sensory experience, cooking and eating food in particular, but also music and letters that every week transform a part of Hong Kong into 'Little Manila'.

The sounds, sights and aromas of Little Manila dislocate the authoritative

visual space of Hong Kong culture, and create a place where Filipino women

feel at home. In so doing, women find new ways of engaging with city life,

and their relation to the City is transformed. (Law 2005:239)

Law argues that the senses stimulate memories of home but also 'enable new perspectives on the past and the present' (2005:238).

In relation to dress within a migration context, Mary A. Littrell and Paff Ogle's (2007) research on Indian women living in the US suggests how the women connected to home through feelings of modesty evoked by the multisensory experience of dress. As a result, they developed a transnational identity. In response to Littrell and Ogle's work, Mario J. Roman and Charlotte Jirousek have drawn upon Howes's articulation of emplacement and argued, based on their own interviews with Indian and Pakistani immigrants, that they 'emplace' themselves not merely through connecting back to previous sensory experience of clothing, but rather they create new, blended sensory experiences of dress that attend to the displacing cultural context in which they find themselves (2013:np).

In this study, the notion of 'emplacement' through dress will be more broadly applied to include 'displacing' contexts that move beyond the diaspora experience, for example in relation to familial relationships, particular social situations and life transitions. As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, the touch, sound and smell (and taste) of dress is shown to 'emplace' the participants through memory work that connects them to other times, places, and people, creating a sense of home. Moreover, through evoking and re-performing past, present and imaginary selves, for some participants, particular sensory experiences of dress could contribute to a sense of self within the world.

Sociology of the senses

As previously stated, a sociological approach to understanding the role of the senses and sensory experience within social life was first taken by Simmel (1997 [1907], and then again only much later by others within the discipline of sociology, such as Largey and Watson (2006 [1972]) who focussed on smell and more recently, Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk (2014) who have proposed a

'sociology of the senses'. They highlight, as Paterson (2007) also does, the two meanings of 'sense'. One being the action of 'making sense', and the other a specific 'sensation or feeling' (Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk 2014:123), or put another way:

> The sense(s) is (are) both a reaching out to the world as a source of information and an understanding of the world so gathered.
> (Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk 2014:123)

As will be demonstrated in the data analysis chapters of this thesis, these two aspects are entangled. Additionally they also highlight the potential for using sensory experience as a foundation for researching and understanding the world.

In particular, Simmel's (1997 [1907]) understanding has - broadly and in more specific ways - influenced the analysis of the senses in this study. In a general sense, Simmel's (1997 [1907]) articulation of sensory interaction as the framework for social life informs the overall theoretical approach to understanding the social role of sensory engagement with dress in the analysis. He states: 'That we get involved in interactions at all depend on the fact that we have a sensory effect upon one another' (1997 [1907]:110). Furthermore he outlines how a 'person's atmosphere' makes a 'sensory impression' on others, and can effect either closeness or distancing within relationships. The notion of sensory 'atmosphere' and 'personal space' (Simmel 1997 [1908]) is developed throughout this thesis, particularly in the analysis of individual body scents, but is then applied more generally to include all the sensory dimensions of the dressed body. This also draws on Mason's (2015) sociological research on 'atmospheres', in which she argues that they play an integral part within social life.

> ...a smell, a taste or a snatch of music that 'literally' (I use the term advisedly) transports you to another time and place and conjures its atmosphere in your mind, body and senses. Atmospheres bring into play not only human interactions, imaginaries, and sensations, but a wider more-than-human world of things, lives, rhythms, energies, elements, forces, places and times. Atmospheres are conjured and perceived in

multisensory, extra-sensory, and ineffable ways. They can feel
simultaneously tangible and intangible. (Mason 2015:np)

As Mason's statement highlights, atmospheres attend to the tangible and intangible
aspects of sensory experience, both of which are a concern within this study.

Visual aspects of dress – that is dressed appearance – have been the main
sensory focus within fashion and dress studies, understood as a form of visual and
social communication within culture and social life. As a result the analysis of sight
in this thesis, draws on existing approaches to dress that considered how visual
aspect of dress were entangled with embodiment or with other sensory aspects
such as touch, as previously mentioned in the section on 'Theoretical approaches
to the dressed body' (Entwistle 2000, Woodward's 2007, Tseëlon's 2001, Eicher
and Evanson 2015). From a sociological perspective, Goffman's (1990 [1959]
articulation of the presentation of self was also of particular use in the chapter on
sight, but this was combined with Merleau-Ponty's (1962, 1968, 1993 [1964])
phenomenological approach to understanding sensory perception, sight and touch
in particular, which is discussed below.

Phenomenology of the senses

As stated previously, underpinning my analytical approach is Merleau-
Ponty's (1962) phenomenology that presents the body as the seat of all perception
and experience. This was particularly useful when trying to unpick the
complexities of the data, as it brings together the senses, the body, the mind,
movement, 'things' (in this case items of dress) and the external environment. As
will be demonstrated, all these aspects intersected within the data.

However, I also apply Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the nature of
sensory perception, which has not been explicitly considered in relation to dress.
The analysis draws on a number of specific ideas of his, first, Merleau-Ponty's
(1968) articulation of the interconnection of all the senses, and second, his focus
on movement as framing sensation (1993 [1964]). These ideas resonate with the
experience of being a moving, dressed body. Indeed, the importance of movement
to sensory engagement with dress is stressed throughout the data chapters. These

two aspects are discussed in the following chapter in the section on 'Sensory complexities'.

The analysis also draws in particular on his notion of a sensory crossover between people and things (1993 [1964]), which in this study, relates to the close sensory engagement between the participants and their personal dress. Additionally, the analyses of sight and touch draw on Merleau-Ponty's (1993 [1964]) articulation of the body's duality of seeing and touching. This notion is explained and applied in more detail in the chapter on sight, and then touch. Arguably however, this notion of duality can be extended to the other senses, and this is suggested in the data chapters on sound and smell (and taste).

For the purposes of this study, which aims to approach everyday dress as a sensory, embodied relationship between the wearer and their items of dress, within their particular social and cultural life-world, combining Merleau-Ponty's specific phenomenological approach with a cultural sensory lens enabled an exploration of the multidimensional nature of dress as worn in everyday life.

Conclusion

This chapter began with definitions of the key terms used in this thesis. Dress was positioned as both embodied practice and a form of material culture, in which all the senses are engaged. While fashion plays a part in dress within a contemporary UK context, the main concern of this research was outlined as 'personal' and 'everyday' dress. A phenomenological understanding of the senses as complex and entangled was proposed, and the nature of some sensory experience of dress as intimate or taken for granted was highlighted.

Following this, it was outlined how existing testimony on sensory engagement with everyday dress from the Mass Observation Archive (MOA) and literary texts was useful in suggesting theoretical and thematic pathways for analysis.

Through contextualizing this study within existing theoretical approaches to the dressed body from the broad base of fashion studies that includes approaches from the disciplines of material culture, sociology and anthropology - approaches on which this study builds - a sensory gap within existing academic

research was highlighted. It was argued that this study, through explicitly analysing sensory engagement, attends to this gap.

Finally, the sensory scholarship on which this study draws was outlined. Cultural, social, and phenomenological understandings of the senses were discussed as - together with material culture approaches to the senses - providing a nuanced framework that accounts for the complex sensory relationship between the wearer and their everyday items of dress.

This thesis builds on existing work from a number of different disciplines that informs an approach to understanding dress as micro embodied and sensory practice within daily life. It embraces both the social and cultural, but also the individual, subjective nature of much of this experience. This approach is reflected in the research methodology taken, which emphasises the need for an openness to all types of sensory experience and meaning, some of which may be hard to grasp due to its intimate, subjective and at times intangible nature. When discussing new paradigms within qualitative research, Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln (2005) suggest that they reject the search for objective 'truths' and instead are:

> ...increasingly concerned with the single experience, the individual crisis, the epiphany or moment of discovery, with that most powerful of all threats to conventional objectivity, feeling and emotion. Social scientists concerned with the expansion of what count as social data rely increasingly on the experiential, the embodied, and the emotive qualities of human experience that contribute the narrative quality to a life. (Guba and Lincoln 2005:205)

This study was similarly concerned with the experiential, that is, the entangled embodied, sensory and emotional nature of what it feels like and means to be dressed. This asserted the need to understand the connections between the wearer and their material item of dress. Thus, the experience of dress is approached as a physical, sensory and meaningful relationship between the two, a relationship that exists within a particular cultural and social environment.

Chapter 1. Images

Fig. 1.01
Andrea sculpting (2011)
Grey Boiler suit. Woven cotton and polyester mix. Bought in a DIY store in Brighton in 2010. £20.

'Very little aware of it, and that's how I want to be. It doesn't fit closely anywhere, but it sort of fits enough, around the waist; it's got nice big pockets that you can stick things in.'
(Andrea Interview 2: 00:47:21)

Text references:
Chapter 1 (page 20)
Chapter 5 (page 194)

Fig. 1.02
Anne's onesie (2013)
Grey and black animal stripe print onesie. Knitted cotton and polyester mix jersey. Made by Topshop. Bought in Brighton in 2012. £40.

'...pretty much when I get home (I) strip everything off and put it on straight away because then immediately I can curl up...I just feel completely relaxed.'
(Anne Interview 1: 00:40:08)

Text references:
Chapter 1 (page 27)
Chapter 7 (page 264)

CHAPTER 2. A SENSORY METHODOLOGY FOR EVERYDAY DRESS

Introduction

This chapter outlines the empirical and theoretical considerations that framed the methodological approach taken. These considerations are organised under the following headings: 'The wearer', 'Everyday sensory experience: the concealed and the mundane', 'Connecting dress, the body, mind and culture', 'Uniting the individual wearer's testimony with material culture analysis' and 'Sensory complexities'.

The chapter also incorporates a more detailed discussion of the academic work that specifically informed the methodological approach, some of which was touched upon in the preceding chapter. In particular, how a sensory awareness was brought to the interviews drew upon Pink's (2009) applied sensory ethnography and Mason and Davies (2009) sociological sensory methodology. In addition, dress history methodologies incorporating oral history (Taylor 2002, 2004) and material culture methodologies within museology (Prown 2001 [1982], 2001) informed the approach taken in this study.

The wearer

Underpinning this study is a commitment to prioritize the wearer's subjective experience of their everyday dress within the context of their life, and the interviews were designed with this in mind. This builds on existing scholarship that established the importance of investigating the wearer's perspectives on dress, notably the work of Tseëlon (1995), Entwistle (1997, 2000), Cole (2000), Taylor (2002, 2004) and Woodward (2007) among others. As Entwistle states:

> …dress in everyday life cannot be separated from the living, breathing, moving body it adorns. (Entwistle 2000:9)

In order to understand the participants' personal engagement with dress in everyday life, in my study a phenomenological approach to qualitative interviewing is taken. This focuses on the subject's own perspective and experience, as described by Steiner Kvale and Svend Brinkmann (2009:26). In my

study the subject is the 'wearer' and the experience is their 'sensory interaction with everyday dress'. The interview structure and themes were aimed at drawing out testimony around this, enabling an exploration of the transformations and meanings attached to this experience. Themes for discussion were therefore based around general attitudes to dress, everyday practices of dress, specific sensory experience of dress - that is the look, feel, smell, sound, and to a lesser degree taste - and to thoughts, memories and feelings that their dress items evoked. During the interviews, attention was paid to how the meanings given to these experiences had been influenced by the participants' particular life histories and social and cultural perspectives. The full interview schedules are provided in appendix four. In relation to the senses, within this study, the ways in which the wearer senses their dress are also considered to be culturally contingent. Both these positions were previously set out in chapter one. Howes and Classen argue that '...perception is shaped by culture and... society regulates how and what we sense...' (Howes and Classen 2014:5), and as a result, different cultures sense and 'make sense' in different ways (Howes 2003:50).

The participants taking part in this study (and I, as researcher) share in broad terms, a similar, British cultural understanding. All the participants live in one of two nearby and similar UK cities, Brighton and London (the particular nature of this research context is discussed in more detail in the following chapter). In this way, it would be expected to find some broad cultural similarities in sensory practices and understandings relating to dress across the participants and between the participants and myself. However, within a culture or geographical place, there are multiple ways of dressing, and of sensing. Sensory differences can be more pronounced in '...large, heterogeneous societies in which people with many different backgrounds or interests live together' (Howes 2003:55), such as cities like London or Brighton. Differences may occur relating to cultural categories such as gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, social background or status and political, moral and ethical beliefs held. These can be a result of learnt cultural models of knowledge and behaviour – a result of family upbringing for example (Bourdieu 1994). An individual's ways of sensing may also change as their life situation and experience changes. The interview themes were underpinned by an understanding of dress as shaped by the complex interweaving of individual

biographies with collective social and cultural practices and meanings (Tseëlon 1995:4). In this way both micro and macro forces shape an individual's sensory perception and understanding.

The participants in this study were aware of and tended to dress according to conventional, Western gendered codes, although some resisted these at times. During the interviews discussions emerged around binary feminine and masculine sensory aspects of dress. For example, in one instance a male participant, Corin, expressed his dislike at wearing pink, despite other people (mainly women) suggesting it would suit him (Corin Interview 1: 00:24:21). Aaron, on the other hand, told me about his polka dot T-shirt, which he liked, and his annoyance when someone commented that it was a girl's T-shirt (Aaron Interview 2: 00:19:56) as he contested the gendering of 'spots'. Howes (2003) points out that differences in how people sense may result from *resistance* to social norms, as well as from an individual's particular 'situation' or 'experience'. Although influenced by the dominant sensory model within that society, not all members conform to it all the time (Howes 2003:55). For this reason, it was important for the interviews to attend to the individual cultural perspective of each participant, to the particular situations and contexts framing the experience they were describing, not only to the broader culture in which this study is situated. The participants' sensory perception of dress was at times framed by the intersection of these various influences and contexts. For example, Karen, a vegetarian, describes feeling disgusted at the smell when she passes the many shops in Brighton that sell Moroccan Leather bags and other goods as it offends her moral stance on animal rights (Karen Interview 1: 00:31:45). There were also some differences in the sensory tendencies and sensitivities expressed by the participants, and these are outlined within the data chapters.

In Tseëlon's (1995) study of the construction of femininity through appearance, she points to the need to be mindful of the complexities of wearer experience, and that this can be done through paying attention to contradictory or inconsistent interviewee statements (1995:4). For example, in this study in relation to sound, many participants said they did not like their clothes to make a noise, but then mentioned instances when it was acceptable, or even positive. With this is mind, in addition to the interview themes unexpected aspects that emerged

and those that were important to the interviewee were probed in more detail during the interviews, to provide further clarification of their meaning and relevance. Patterns, inconsistencies and ambiguities within an individual participant's testimony were also considered at the analysis stage.

In summary, underpinning the interview approach was a focus on understanding the individual wearer's perspective by being attentive to the particularities, complexities and nuances of the participants' everyday sensory relationship with dress.

Everyday sensory experience: The 'concealed' and the 'mundane'

As discussed in the previous chapter, this study proposes an understanding of worn dress as a multisensory experience, which counters the overwhelming emphasis on visual aspects of dress with fashion studies to date. The methodological approach therefore attends to how the non-visual, as well as the visual experience of dress might have meaning in our lives.

Smith (2007) highlights the historical potential importance of non-visual sensory dimensions of clothing, personal dimensions - such as the touch of clothing against skin - that make up the experiential minutiae of daily life. These aspects may seem trivial or mundane, but can nonetheless have wider political, as well as personal value and meaning for the wearer, and for those observing them. He points out that historically:

> ...clothing was not simply and singularly visual; it was also tactile by definition, suggesting something important about the wearer's skin and, ergo, about his or her worth or social standing. (Smith 2007:106)

Smith outlines how the wearing of luxuriously soft materials like fur was, at times in history, confined to the powerful classes in a number of cultures, yet historians have failed to appreciate the importance of this due to a focus on the 'visual' (2007:106). He identifies clothing as having dual points of perception and meaning -making, the inside which is sensed by the body of the wearer and the outside which is perceived by the observer, but points out that the observer also brings to

their perception an empathetic understanding of how that clothing might feel to be worn.

> Clothes can, and should, be read inside out as well as from outside in so that the quality and feel of the clothing on the inside, how it was understood to either caress or rub the skin of the wearer by spectators, is appreciated thoroughly. (Smith 2007:107)

Interviews can highlight the non-visual sensory aspects of dress that are not easily discovered, that often happen in the intimate space between the wearer's body and their clothing, hidden from view. In this study, and as will be demonstrated in the data chapters, participants described private aspects of experience not accessible through external observation. These included how the inside of a garment felt against their skin, how a pair of shoes had become more comfortable over the years and how the appearance or smell of a dress item triggered specific memories. The importance of dressed appearance within social life has been well documented, but as will be argued through the data analysis, for many of the participants in this study, non-visual sensory experience also had significant importance in shaping their sense of self and position within the world. For example, Robert remembered being forced to wear shorts as a schoolboy, and how this sensation of pulling on long trousers for the first time felt like a transition into manhood (Robert Interview 1: 01:21:45). He describes how the very fabric itself seemed softer and better quality against the skin, which contributed to the physical sensation of having grown up and gained importance in the world. This and other instances in the data, demonstrate how the interviews drew out a type of sensory experience that was felt intimately by Robert, had personal significance within his life relating to his specific social and life situation at the time, and therefore would be difficult to access through a method that did not involve Robert's own testimony.

Connecting dress, the body, mind and culture

Robert's discussion of his transition from shorts to long trousers highlighted another empirical and theoretical consideration that the interviews addressed. This is the dual and interconnected aspects of 'feeling dressed' where items of dress are 'physically felt' or sensed through the body's sensory apparatus, but also how items of dress make a person 'feel' emotionally and are given meaning within their lives. This was explored by discussing with the individual participant, the physical, meaningful and emotional connections they have with their items of dress, and investigating the role of the senses in linking these aspects. For Robert, the long trousers have a symbolic social and cultural meaning and value, but it is also the physical sensation of wearing them that encourages and makes more powerful his actual transition to a new stage in his life. A parallel can be drawn here with the historical practice of 'breeching', which was prevalent in the Western world from the mid sixteenth century until the early twentieth century, describing the moment when a young boy moved from wearing a dress to wearing breeches or trousers, an important rite of passage in his life (see Rose 2010:158 for a discussion of breeching).

This consideration of dress as experienced phenomenologically by a mindful body also necessitated thinking about how the society in which we live, shapes the meanings we attribute to dress. The sensory experience of pulling on long trousers and feeling 'quality' fabric against the skin for Robert marks a rite of passage. It is tied to learning to become a 'man'. It signifies for him, a change from one position and role within his own biography and within society, to another. Here, his sensory experience of dress is shaped by his changing social situation, and is part of a transitionary process. A different person, for example a woman, or someone from another culture, or time period, would not necessarily experience the same feeling about wearing long trousers for the first time. Their experience would be framed by their particular biography, cultural context and knowledge. An example of this can be found in Cynthia Becker's (2007) multisensory account of Berber dress during life-cycle transitions (Johnson and Foster 2007). On reaching puberty, rural Berber boys in Morocco are given a hand-woven gown by their mothers to publicly mark their new status of manhood.

The act of wearing this heavy wool garment activates the sense of touch and demonstrates how dress involves the embodiment of gender roles. Boys had to be both literally and metaphorically strong enough to wear the heavy wool gown. (Becker 2007:76)

For the Berber boys the weight of the wool has meaning, and this is specific to their cultural context and practices of manhood. For Robert, it is the softness and covered nature of the trousers that has meaning in relation to *his* understanding and experience of manhood. While there are similarities in the gendered nature of the ritual, their respective cultures frame the particular and different ways in which sensory aspects of dress have embodied meaning for Robert and the Berber boys.

The interviews in this study build on Entwistle's concept of dress as a 'situated practice' which forms the basis of her theoretical and methodological framework for 'understanding the complex dynamic relationship between the body, dress and culture' (2000:11). Entwistle's approach addresses *how* people come to dress in certain ways, that is how they learn techniques of dress that attend not only to their body but to social roles and concerns within particular spaces and situations. She uses the example of her own research on female dress practices in a particular socio-political climate, that of women entering mainstream business, where women learned indirectly through experience, and directly through courses offered by image consultants, ways of dressing that limited the perceived sexuality of their bodies, in order to help them fit into and compete within these male dominated institutions (Entwistle 2000:32).

Similarly in this study, the individual's experience of dress is situated within their social environment and life experience in order to better understand *how* they come to give, often unspoken, meaning to this experience, and what influenced this meaning-making. For example, during discussions with two separate participants around the sounds of dress, there were both similarities and differences in how they experienced a particular type of sound – that made by the heels of men's formal shoes clicking on the pavement. They both described it as a powerful signal of intent, stemming from notions of power and authority that stated 'notice me'. However the values they gave to the sound were different. For

one of the men, Paul, it was a positive noise and action, and he himself wore this type of shoe and felt that it demonstrated he meant business in a work context. The sound was also a pleasurable reminder of when he wore hob nailed boots in the army. Conversely, for one of the women, Karen, who was involved with grass-roots radical politics, the sound was seen as an arrogant imposition made by men who wished to exploit their position of power (these examples are discussed in more detail in chapter six). How each participant experienced and valued sensory interactions with dress related to their particular background, viewpoint and situation, in addition to being linked to perceived social categories and rules of behaviour.

Uniting the individual wearer's testimony with material culture analysis

Everyday dress is the wearer's experience of being dressed within their daily life, society and culture, so arguably any analysis of everyday dress should address the material item, the wearer and the spaces they inhabit. Of particular importance is the relationship between the wearer and their dress, in which one affects each other. Drawing out intimate sensory engagement with items of dress requires a method of getting close not just to the wearer and their thoughts and sensations but also to their items of dress.

This theoretical position underpins a commitment to incorporating material culture analysis of dress items into the interviews and it draws on a number of similar, existing approaches within the study of dress. In developing this aspect of the methodology, I have drawn on Woodward's research that reconciles an '…understanding of the materiality of clothing with the focus on practices of wearing within wider relational and social contexts' (2007:33), and as previously stated, Taylor's (2002) approach to dress history and Prown's (2001 [1982]) approach to material culture analysis.

Taylor proposes integrating the examination of dress artefacts with oral history and archaeological research, suggesting that detailed analysis of this type can 'blow apart' assumptions (2002:51). Within this study, encouraging the interviewee to use all their senses, and to take their time to engage, in detail, with their own everyday items of dress, helped to go beyond both their common-sense understandings and my own assumptions. Prown (2001 [1982]) states:

The study of systems of belief through an analysis of artefacts offers opportunities to circumvent the investigators' own cultural perspective. By undertaking cultural interpretation through artefacts, we can engage the other culture in the first instance not with our minds, the seat of our cultural biases, but with our senses. (Prown 2001 [1982]:75)

While agreeing with his assertion of the importance of sensory and material investigation in helping to overcome the researcher's cultural assumptions, I would argue against the suggestion that the reason for this is because the senses are not culturally constructed, and are therefore more 'honest'. Prown does not appear to view the senses as directly influenced by culture, nor does he position the mind and sensory perception as linked. As a result, while his methods provide a framework for investigating the objects of dress within the interviews, which is discussed in detail in the following chapter, a different viewpoint is taken in relation to the nature of sensory experience.

I argue that material investigation of objects (which involves sensory perception) helps to overcome researchers' assumptions for two reasons. First, because it provides a unique type of detailed physical information. As previously mentioned, this is an argument made also by Steele (1998) in her work on dress in the museum, and also evidenced in de la Haye's dress curatorial practice (see de la Haye and Clark 2008), which is outlined in more detail shortly. Second, because material investigation enables an embodied, emotional engagement with the object, providing a different type of knowledge, one that cannot be easily accessed through representational or textual accounts *alone*. However, it is also necessary to reflect on how this sensory, embodied knowledge and emotional engagement is framed by the cultural history of the object and the cultural background of the researcher, as this affects the way that the object is perceived through the senses, whether some sensory aspects are given more importance or attention for example.

A number of issues arose when applying Prown's (2001 [1982]) approach to material culture in the context of this study, as opposed to the museum context in which Prown's methods are customarily employed. I have reflected on these at

some length in a previously published article (Chong Kwan 2012). In museology, the object is predominantly investigated outside of the context of its use, whereas in this study, the wearer was actively involved in the object analysis. Prown attends to museum artefacts belonging to past, or foreign cultures and his method is based on the premise that objects produced or modified by man, through their stylistic elements, reflect the values and beliefs of the culture that made and used it (2001 [1982]:70). He points out that, as all objects have a 'form' or 'physical configuration' relating to their function, it is the differences in the 'style' or the 'distinctive manner' of these objects that express cultural ideas (2001 [1980]:52). In this way the design of objects can be seen to reflect the desires and beliefs of the maker. But what of the user? Of significance for this study, Prown notes that clothing is a particularly personal form of artefact, strongly connected to a person's sense of identity (2001 [1982]:89), and as clothing embodies both function and style in a fairly simple way, it is relatively easy to distinguish style and therefore culture. He laments, in 1982, that:

> Although personal adornment promises to be a particularly rich vein for material culture studies, to date little significant work has been done with it. (Prown 2001 [1982]:89)

As I have shown, this gap was beginning to be addressed in the 1990s, but perhaps one of the reasons for this early lack of attention lies in the more personal aspects of dress, that work alongside the cultural. When the research aim is to explore the personal relationship between the user and the object, as with this study, rather than the relationship between the maker and the object, arguably the method of investigation should attend to the complex ways in which objects are transformed through their use - ways that do not always uphold the original intentions of the designer or maker (Attfield 2000).

Woodward (2015), in suggesting future avenues for material culture research, argues that a creative, mixed methods approach - such as the one she used to research worn jeans that incorporated object analysis with interviews and design workshops - can more fully incorporate the 'live', 'vibrant' and 'non-verbal...material properties of things' (see also Woodward 2015:1). Woodward

points to the lack of attention paid to both the material properties of things, and to the transformative nature of the entangled relationship between people and material things within 'contemporary qualitative methods for understanding materials and material culture' (2015:1).

Prown acknowledges that things wear out (2001 [1982]:70) and reminds the researcher that the meanings derived from material investigation depend upon the moment at which the object is being investigated, in other words, at what stage of its use (Prown 2001 [1982]:81). However, he is not explicit about how to deal with wear and tear within his method. For this study, wear and tear is an important aspect, one which is often discussed during the interviews and which is the material evidence of the sensory relationship between the participant and their dress – that is their interlinked biographies (see Appadurai 1986). Importantly it was only through that participant's re-telling of this wear and tear, and their attitude to it, that particular insights emerged as to the meanings contained or indeed not contained within these marks. Without the wearer's testimony they are interpreted only from the researcher's viewpoint.

In a museum setting it is usually, and out of necessity, the dress curator, not the wearer, often in collaboration with the conservator who investigates and documents the items of dress, developing a close - although not intimate - sensory understanding of it. However when considering dress in the context of its use, a means to bring the object closer to its wearer is required in order to facilitate a more fully nuanced exploration and understanding of the item's meaning.

De la Haye has curated a number of exhibitions that demonstrated how written or oral testimony could add unique and unexpected insights into individual dress items and collections. First, *Streetstyle: From sidewalk to catwalk (1994-1995*) at the V&A, co-curated with Cathie Dingwall and Ted Polhemus as external curator (see Polhemus 1994). Second, as previously mentioned in chapter one, the exhibition *One Woman's Wardrobe* (Ritblat 1998) also at the V&A, explored Jill Ritblat's personal wardrobe of worn clothes, and finally, an exhibition of the Messel family dress collection at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery in 2005, *Fashion and Fancy Dress: The Messel Family Dress Collection 1865 – 2005,* co-curated with Taylor and Eleanor Thompson (see de la Haye, Taylor and Thompson 2005).

As stated, in this study, the wearer chooses which items of dress to discuss and is present during the investigation of these dress items. This facilitated the participants' own sensory exploration of their dress, alongside my own, as researcher. It encouraged them to analyse their dress on embodied, sensory and thoughtful levels, to make their own descriptions and sometimes interpretations, during the interview. As such, the interview became a type of collaborative meaning-making event.

As will be demonstrated in the data chapters to follow, bringing oral testimony together with object analysis helped to elucidate the participants' micro dress practices and their engagement with the 'mundane' items of everyday dress, experience which is often taken for granted. Ordinary or everyday items of dress are not often deemed important or worthy of study, and are rarely found in museum collections. This is partly due to their fragility and habitual use - touched, worn, washed and eventually discarded - they are not often offered to museums, but also because museum collecting remits usually privilege rare, precious or economically valuable items. Yet practices involving everyday dress items form the very fabric of daily life.

Woodward (2007) notes the problem with investigating the commonplace, suggesting that women build emotional attachments to items through the continuous act of wearing. I would suggest that this is also applicable to the experience of men (and indeed other non-binary or fluid gender identities). It is the embodied and particularly sensual experience of being dressed that is felt over time and frames their clothing choices. Drawing also on Bourdieu's (1994) notion of the 'habitus', Woodward suggests that this embodied history of wearing becomes second nature, making it difficult for them to articulate why they love an item of clothing so much (Woodward 2007:32). However, physically exploring their particular items of dress with the participant in detail during the interviews encouraged this articulation. The interview situation is not part of everyday life, and in this way, by taking the interviewee out of the mundane, by investigating their clothes in a more reflexive way than they would during daily life, this helped them consider the learnt knowledge that structured and shaped their relationship with dress, that on the surface seemed to be 'natural'.

To summarize, by uniting the wearer with their items of dress during the interviews, this approach utilizes, as Jen Tarr terms it in a case study on embodiment and ethnographic research, an 'embodied research method' in order to research the 'embodied nature' and practice of dress (2004: 455). It also attends to both object and wearer. Taylor hopes that in the future within museums, 'donors'' object-related memories will be taped or videoed with a view to providing both museums and future researchers with unprecedented material cultural information' (Taylor 2002:245). By attending to both object and wearer in my methods I am contributing a body of such data.

Sensory complexities

Informing the sensory methodological focus of this study is the theoretical position that the senses and sensory experience plays an important role in everyday life and culture (Classen 1993, Howes 1991, 2003, 2005a, Pink 2004, 2009), and connects us to things in the world, through people-object relations (Edwards, Gosden and Philips 2006, Merleau-Ponty 1993 [1964]). In this case, the relationship people have with their everyday dress items. This acknowledgement that the wearer experiences, understands - and indeed transforms their dress - through the medium of all their senses, suggests that integrating multisensory awareness within research around dress may provide a fuller understanding of the role dress plays in our lives. However, taking a sensory approach was not straightforward (Mason and Davies 2009:588). As John Law (2004) has pointed out in relation to qualitative research more generally, dealing with the messy realities and complexities of the world is challenging. He argues that there is a pressing need for social scientific enquiry to re-consider new methods with which to approach this. He asks:

> If much of the world is vague, diffuse or unspecific, slippery, emotional, ephemeral, elusive or indistinct, changes like a kaleidoscope, or doesn't really have much of a pattern at all, then where does this leave social science? (Law 2004:2)

He suggests that new ways of knowing should embrace all aspects of bodily experience (Law 2004:2) as a valid means of enquiry, and the analysis in this thesis demonstrates the validity of this approach.

As mentioned in chapter one, recent developments towards a 'sensory methodology' by ethnographer Pink (2009) and sociologists, Mason and Davies' (2009) informed the methodological approach taken within this study. Mason and Davies (2009) in their study on family resemblances attend to the interplay between tangible and intangible sensory experience, the tangible being the physical, touchable, visible present and the intangible being the sensory imaginations of the ethereal and mystical, arguing that 'sensory intangibility is vital…to the practice of sensory methodology' (2009:587). Mason and Davies have argued that:

> …access to sensory realms is not guaranteed in the use of 'sensory methods' – so that 'the visual' is not straightforwardly or always best accessed by visual methods, for example. (Mason and Davies 2009:588)

To demonstrate this, within Mason and Davies' study, participants often felt that photographs of family members failed to show the likeness, suggesting that photographs, as static visual representations, could not always capture the 'moving, fleeting, changing or relational characteristics' that framed 'resemblance' and that:

> By using their imaginations, people can 'see', sense or evoke a person or a resemblance that is not actually there at that moment in front of them. (Mason and Davies 2009:593)

Pink has similarly pointed to the importance of the 'sensory imagination', whereby people imagine in visual, tactile and other sensory ways, both the past and the future (2009:39). Furthermore she has argued that visual methods can access and represent all types of sensory experience, not just the visual, as demonstrated in her video ethnographies of cleaning practices in the home (Pink 2009:124). Sociologist, Les Back, has also argued that the street photographs in his

'About the streets' project, '...invite a reading that transcends purely visual terms of reference within wider ranges of senses' (2004:145). Mason and Davies suggest that the reason why it is not helpful to investigate the senses with '...literally "matched" methods – visual methods for the visual for example', is because, following Merleau-Ponty's articulation of the interconnection of people, things and the senses, that the 'senses are entangled with each other' (2009:600). Demonstrated through examples from their study, Mason and Davies show how the senses are 'entangled' in three ways: first with each other, second with social, cultural and political categories, variables and experiences - in other words the senses are 'classed', 'gendered' and so on (2009:601) – and, third with other aspects of experience that they describe as 'intangible' sensory dimensions - the 'extra-sensory or ethereal'.

While it is acknowledged that the senses are commonly 'categorised' in the UK into the five modalities, in this study, attention was therefore also paid to how the senses are interlinked, and to more intangible ways in which people might 'sense' the world. As a result, during the interviews reference is made to the five sensory modalities, by discussing specific themes around sight, touch, sound, and smell and, to a lesser degree taste. These categories are familiar to the participants and therefore provided a way into the discussion that would not alienate them. In order not to close the conversation down to these five categories however, the themes were kept general, aimed at understanding how all the senses interrelate within engagement with dress. To give a few examples, discussions around shopping involved descriptions of embodied practices using sight, touch and smell and discussions around 'quality' in relation to dress explored how sight and touch were used together when determining the quality of an item. The interviews also included themes around less tangible aspects of dress, ones that involved emotions, memories, mood and essences.

When the participants discussed particular items of dress they had brought to the interview, they were encouraged to talk broadly about it and their relationship to it, to enable a more embodied multisensory discussion of it to emerge, rather than structuring the discussion around particular sensory modalities. In one example, the interrelation of tangible and intangible aspects in relation to dress was articulated by one of the participants, Karen whilst she was

showing, and telling me about a second-hand wedding dress she had. She explained how she sometimes kept a garment, but would not wear it again if it contained strong memories of when she last wore it (Karen Interview 2: 00:11:13). She described not wanting to override this memory with another. This suggests a complex interweaving of the intangible with the tangible, of the symbolic aspects of dress contained within her memory and imagination with the material and physical aspects of dress as worn. These types of sensory complexities are explored throughout the data analysis chapters.

Mason and Davies' (2009) study combines interviews with visual ethnographic methods such as observing and discussing family photographs and objects in the participants' homes. The photographs are used to help their participants evoke the sensory experience of resemblance, as they sometimes reveal fleeting elements not apparent in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, but 'captured' in the still image (Mason and Davies 2009:593). In this study, items of dress were used to elicit sensory responses and encourage reflection on often taken for granted daily interactions with dress. For example, an experience as seemingly 'mundane' as wearing socks formed part of the discussion with three of the male participants - John brought a pair of his favourite thermal socks to the second interview to show me (see Fig. 2.01 on page 85 and chapter five on touch for a discussion of John's socks).

Sensory aspects of dress were also able to evoke memories from the participants, memories relating to when and where they were bought or worn in the past, or to associations with other people. Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward and Jeremy Aynsley (1999) have brought together essays that consider the relationship between materiality, the senses and memory. Within this collection Edwards' (1999) writing on photography and memory suggests how physical and sensory engagement with objects, and photographs in particular, can evoke powerful emotions and memories. This is also highlighted in Susan Stewart's (1999) essay on touch in the museum. Gaynor Kavanagh (2000) has written about the importance of memory work and oral history using objects in what she poetically terms the 'dream space' of the museum. In addition Nadia Seremetakis (1994) has considered how sensory practice and memory has been globalized and Anne Hecht (2001) has demonstrated how one woman's sensory engagement with

her personal belongings in the home connected her to childhood memories. However, of particular relevance to this study on dress is Peter Stallybrass's (2012 [1993]) reflective essay on clothing and mourning, which is discussed in more detail in chapter seven.

Mason and Davies warn however, that over-relying on 'things' for elicitation sometimes means that there is on over-focus on tangible and physical evidence, yet narrative, imagination and 'feelings' also have a role in meaning-making.

> ...interviews can become closed down both to a discussion of less tangible sensory resemblances and also to the role of stories themselves in establishing resemblances. (Mason and Davies 2009:597)

During the interviews in my study, clothing was so closely bound up with memories which many of the participants told as 'life stories', that both tangible and less tangible experiences emerged unprompted and often, throughout the discussions. The interview itself was an opportunity for the participant to tell me the stories that had a role in establishing connections they had, may still have, or hope they may go on to have, with items of their everyday clothing. These verbal accounts and 'stories' also helped to situate the participants' sensory engagement with dress within their social and cultural world, and in relation to their lives both past, present, future and imagined. As will be demonstrated throughout the data analysis, material and sensory aspects of dress were integral to the recollection of past experience, and the stories told in the interviews. In this way, the combination of interview with object investigation, rather than closing down the discussion to the intangible (Mason and Davies 2009:597), in fact, often encouraged an exploration of the connection between tangible and more intangible sensory experience. Within this study, the relationship between dress, memory and the senses weaves throughout the data analysis. As a form of material culture, dress is shown to be particularly evocative and poignant due to the closeness of dress to the body within everyday life.

Sensory modalities

The order in which the senses are considered mirrors to some degree the cultural hierarchy of the senses in the West, which gives sight and hearing most importance, with touch, smell and taste traditionally regarded as 'lower senses'. As Howes and Classen (2014) note:

> Indeed, one clear sign of the cultural importance of sight and hearing in our society is the sheer volume of academic and scientific work dedicated to the exploration of these senses, compared to the vastly reduced interest in the study of the other senses. (Howes and Classen 2014:3)

In relation to dress, however, arguably a more appropriate hierarchy assigns most importance to the senses of sight and touch. Eicher and Evenson suggest that:

> Because clothing is easily seen and felt, sight and touch most quickly come to mind, as in making decisions about colour and texture in the clothes worn or cosmetics chosen. (Eicher and Evenson 2015:3).

This would be followed by smell, sound and finally taste. Certainly research in fashion and dress within a Western context has focused on appearance, visual representation, and symbolic production. There is a large body of work on the material culture of dress that considers tactility, but much less work considering smell or sound, although there are some notable exceptions - the aforementioned work by Stallybrass (2012 [1993]) for example that accentuated the role of smell and Candy's (2015) practice based research that explicitly considered the sound of shoes. Within a cross-cultural context there has been some consideration of smell and sound in the aforementioned cross-cultural ethnographies of dress and the senses (Johnson and Foster 2007). As previously mentioned, taste is not often directly experienced in relation to material items of dress which was reflected in the data, although a connection can be drawn between touch, smell and taste in relation to fabric comforters.

The decision to order the senses in this way within the interview schedules and within the analysis broadly reflects the Western cultural context in which this

study took place - and which frames the participants' lives. It also reflects the amount of discussion time around each of the senses that took place during the interviews.

The way in which participants discussed their sensory experience differed widely. Some who had an academic or artistic background brought up theoretical ideas, drawing their own speculations during the interviews. Some approached the interview as a therapeutic working through of feelings and emotions. Some were articulate while others struggled to convey their experiences through words. Some of the participants also professed to have varying degrees of sensory sensitivity. For example, one stated that they did not have a strong sense of smell and many participants had sensitivities to the touch of particular fabrics. Almost all of the participants expressed strong opinions around colour. The result, as will be shown, was multiple accounts that were particular to individuals and when brought together formed a body of complex, nuanced data.

Through considering the five Western sensory modalities discretely, aspects of dress experience particular to that sense were explored, and these often required a specific theoretical approach. However, much of the participants' testimony involved experience in which more than one sense featured. In acknowledgement of this, and following Pink (2009), the analyses attend to the ways in which the senses conflict or work together.

It is therefore argued and will be demonstrated through the data analysis chapters, that separating out sensory experience of dress into the five Western modalities was both useful and problematic, because sensory experience of dress involves the whole body, where all the senses are to varying degrees simultaneously engaged and entangled. This results in complex dynamics of sensory experience that are also constantly changing, as the body moves through the world. The entangled nature of the data, and what this might mean more broadly for research in this field, is reflected on in some depth in chapter eight that summarises the findings.

Movement and the senses

As previously outlined in chapter one a definition of the senses in relation to dress needs to account for movement as it framed almost all the participants'

sensory engagement with dress, adding a further layer of complexity to their experience. As indicated before, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of sensory perception and the 'strange system of exchanges' between the body and things (1993 [1964]:124) was particularly useful in developing a methodological approach that paid attention to action, to the practice of dress and how sensory perception is entangled with this. Here he describes vision as entwined with movement.

> I only have to see something to know how to reach it and deal with it, even if I do not know how this happens in the nervous system. My moving body makes a difference in the visible world, being part of it; that is why I can steer it through the visible. Moreover, it is also true that vision is attached to movement. We see only what we look at. What would vision be without eye movement? And how could the movement of the eyes not blur things if movement were blind? If it were only a reflex? If it did not have its antennae, its clairvoyance? If vision were not prefigured in it? (Merleau-Ponty 1993 [1964]:124)

Merleau-Ponty describes the nature of being a moving body within the world. Sensory perception influences movement and movement influences perception. As will be evidenced throughout the data analysis, movement is indeed central to the sensory experience of being dressed. When one of the participants, Elsa, posed for a photograph at the first interview, she could not help moving around, as she wanted to demonstrate the shape and fit of her jacket. As a result the image is blurred, yet it captures the everyday reality that people are almost always moving, and the importance of this to how they sense their dress (see Fig. 2.02 on page 86). The physical activity of shopping for clothes (as opposed to digital shopping online), which was discussed with all the participants, is one that involves walking, moving, touching and trying on. That is engaging the whole body in relation to items of clothes and the shopping environment. Participants used their sensory apparatus to move towards or away from items of dress and to bring them into a closer relationship to the body. This was apparent during the second interview with April, which took place at her flat. She finds an item at the bottom of

her wardrobe that she had forgotten about and says, 'And now I'm looking at it, I'm like, I really want to start wearing it again' (April Interview 2: 00:27:13).

In addition to this, as people move through time and space, the ratios of sensory experience change. At some points the wearer may become more aware of the touch of clothes against their skin, at others they may be more conscious of their appearance or the smell of their clothes or perhaps another person's perfume. The materiality of dress is dynamic in nature, and movement animates its sensory dimensions. Clothes appear to wait, whether pressed in the wardrobe or bundled on the floor, ready to be given life by the wearer. Neruda (1975 [1954]) articulates this at the beginning of his poem on clothes saying:

> Every morning you wait,
> clothes, over a chair,
> for my vanity,
> my love,
> my hope, my body
> to fill you,

This sense of suspended animation was also evoked at the second interview with Paul. In preparation he had meticulously folded and neatly laid out clothes from his wardrobe and laid them on his bed, along with his shoes and iron ready to show me (see Fig. 2.03 on page 86). When worn, dress is in a dynamic relationship with the body and the environment. It drapes from the body, squeezes it in, swishes around the legs, skirts blow up in the wind or trousers chafe against the thighs. Items become creased, stretch, and shrink back when washed, stiffening up when ironed or starched.

When dress is animated its form is constantly changing through movement. The malleable nature of some clothing gives it a particular materiality and way of interacting with the wearer's body. As the fashion designer Sonia Rykiel points out movement makes clothing shine, '…if the face is supposed to be radiant, clothes come alight only when the body moves' (Rykiel 1994 [1988]:103). This is a sentiment that Wilson has also noted in relation to garments, normally 'so much part of our living, moving selves' that when '…frozen on display' in museums they

become like 'souls in limbo' (Wilson 2003 [1985]:1). In removing the elements of the body and of movement, curators face many challenges in effectively displaying and analysing dress.

Movement creates material and bodily affects, but in addition to this the values, meanings and emotions that participants attached to their sensory experience also changed as a result of moving through different environments or social situations. Semi-structured in-depth interviews enabled participants to tell stories and narratives that described the biographies of dress items, which articulated these changes. For example, Robert, an artist, described with affection his old paint-splattered shoes that he keeps in his studio, but then qualifies this by stating it is a 'private' enjoyment. He wouldn't wear them outside as, 'I'm not really into shabby' (Robert Interview 2: 00:43:15). In the studio he takes pleasure in the worn out, comfortable shoes. The paint splatters provide a visual connection to his work and are fitting for a paint-splattered studio. When he takes them outside he is aware that their appearance may stand out, and the possible negative impression they might make.

By taking movement into account, the senses in relation to dress are understood to be unstable and fluid. They are in a constant balancing act with each other, with the body and mind, with the items of dress and with the environment. If sensory acts have multiple meanings and 'shades of meaning' (Howes and Classen 2014:4), then sensory engagement with dress can be a complex, polysemic and constantly shifting experience for the wearer. Contexts such as time and place, social situation and relations, the body, movement, their emotional mood and particular life stage affected *how* participants sensed their dress. Within the interviews and during the analysis attention was therefore paid to movement and to the context in which the sensory engagement took place.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that by prioritizing the wearer's perspective, the contextual, fluid and complex nature of everyday sensory engagement with dress and the particular, situated meanings that this had for each participant are brought into focus. In addition, it is proposed that through paying attention to the complexities of sensory experience and by uniting testimony with material culture

analysis, this helped to elucidate the concealed, mundane and intangible aspects of dressed experience, aspects that have been under-researched within dress and fashion studies to date. The methodological aim of this research was to produce a detailed and nuanced microanalysis of the participants' everyday sensory engagement with dress. As Pink states in relation to sensory ethnography:

> By attempting to become simultaneously situated to one's research participants and by attending to the bodily sensations and culturally specific sensory categories (e.g. in the West, smell, touch, sound, vision, taste) through which these feelings are communicated and given value, ethnographers can come to know other people's lives in ways that are particularly intense. (Pink 2009:50)

This aim, along with the empirical and methodological considerations discussed in this chapter, informed the use of a particular combination of research methods to collect and analyse a new body of primary data, and these methods will be outlined in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 2. Images

Fig. 2.01
John's socks (2012)
Blue and black thermal socks. Knitted 100% wool. Made by Marks & Spencer.
Bought in Brighton in 2012. £12.

'....when I wear these and I'm wearing these shoes, I feel like I'm bouncing, which is really nice, it's a nice feeling, there's nothing nicer than to feel comfortable in your shoes and socks, if I felt uncomfortable in my shoes and socks I would – it would be awful really, because that's kind of – comfort is a really main priority in the way I dress.'

(Interview 2: 01:19:18)

Text references:
Chapter 2 (page 77)
Chapter 5 (page 173)

Fig. 2.02
Elsa (2011)
Elsa posing for a photograph at the first interview.

Black jacket. Woven cotton and polyester mix. Made by Zara. Bought in London in 2010. £30.

Blue jeans. 98% woven cotton and 2% elastane mix. Bought in Zara in London. £29.

Black boots. Leather upper and rubber sole. Made by Rocket Dog. Bought online in 2010. £30.

Text references:
Chapter 2 (page 81)
Chapter 5 (page 181)

Fig. 2.03
A selection of Paul's dress items (2012)
A selection of Paul's dress items meticulously folded and neatly laid out for the second interview.

Text references:
Chapter 2 (page 82)

CHAPTER 3. PRIMARY RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter addresses the specific methods used to collect and analyse the primary data that forms the empirical evidence for this study, developed through the methodological considerations outlined in the preceding chapter. The discussion of methods is organised under the following headings: 'Research context', 'Selecting participants', 'Interviews', 'Audio, video and photography', 'Reflection on the interviews' and finally, 'Data analysis'. In the final section on data analysis, the methods of analysis are discussed in addition to the challenges that arose during this stage.

Once approval was gained from the University of the Arts Research Degrees and Ethics Committees, an initial pilot study was conducted with three participants in November 2011. This study tested recruitment methods and enabled the reflective development of the interview structure. These pilot interviews were subsequently included in the main study. A total of 20 participants took part. Informed, written consent was gained from all participants in this study prior to participation. As is common ethical research practice, participant identities were anonymised throughout this study, with new identifiers (names) given to each, with which they are referred to throughout this thesis. Charts showing participant demographics (gender, occupational status, location and age) are provided in appendix two and concise participant biographies are provided in appendix three.

All 20 participants were interviewed once, and second interviews were also carried out with 18 of them. In Elsa's case it was not possible to do a second interview due to her unavailability and in Pamela's case, having given a lengthy (two hour) first interview, she did not wish to do another, although this may also have been due to a misunderstanding regarding the interview topic, as discussed shortly. The remaining interviews took place over a period of 16 months, from March 2012 to July 2013. As previously stated, in total the data for this study is made up of 38 interviews across 20 participants, 10 men and 10 women. A full list of the interviews is provided in appendix five, given in alphabetical order by participant name. Where the interviews are quoted from or referred to in the text,

a reference is provided that includes the participant's name, whether it relates to the first or second interview and a time reference from the audio recording.

Each interview lasted around one hour. The first interview was based around general thematic discussions around that participant's personal attitudes to, experience of and practices around dress, with a focus on sensory aspects. The second interview built upon the first, incorporating material culture analysis of their personal items of dress. The interviews generated 37 hours of audio recordings. All the first and second interviews were audio recorded and 13 out of the second interviews were also video recorded. These audio and video recordings, the subsequent transcriptions of the audio recordings, and some accompanying photographs of participants' items of dress make up the data collected.

The primary research delineates various individual sensory experiences of dress that are personal and particular. These are qualitative accounts of the subjective sense individuals make of their dress. Each participant's data was analysed both individually and then comparatively cross-referenced with other participants' data using thematic coding. From this, some commonalities as well as some contradictions emerged. As such, this study does not provide a generalised overview of all people's sensory engagement with dress but rather an in-depth analysis of the nuanced, personal and complex ways in which this particular group of participants engaged in a sensory relationship with their dress.

Research context

To recap, this study is based within two urban UK sites, the main site is the city of Brighton, officially known as 'Brighton and Hove', where I live. The secondary site is the city of London, where I study and work. Together these sites provided access to a large, mixed population and enabled me to recruit through my own social and university networks, and in my local area, which was logistically easier to access. According to the demographic information taken from the 2011 census (*Census 2011 - Brighton and Hove City Council*) the City of Brighton and Hove has a similar ratio of men to women as for the national average, it has a high density of people living in the city, with a particularly large amount of 20-44 year olds, and a significant student population. In terms of ethnicity, white is the largest ethnic group with other ethnic groups represented to varying degrees. This

broadly follows the national average. Employment levels are also broadly similar to the national average.

There are some cultural differences between Brighton and London - for example London has a much larger population than Brighton - 8.17 million at the last census (*Census 2011 – London Datastore*) and is the most ethnically diverse area of England (*Office for National Statistics 2016*). Brighton, which had a population of 273,369 at the last census (*Census 2011 - Brighton and Hove City Council*) is known for its particularly vibrant lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender scene, with a high number of people in same sex civil partnerships at the time of the 2011 census (around five times higher than the average for the South East). The city is also known for its open attitude towards alternative and greener lifestyles. These aspects of Brighton life were mentioned by some of the participants as influencing their dress practices, for example James stated that among the things that attracted him to Brighton, was the varied styles of dressing that he saw on the streets. Brighton and Hove tends towards left-leaning politics, as borne out in the 2015 election results, when Brighton Pavilion constituency re-elected the Green Party's only Member of Parliament. Hove constituency also elected the only Labour Member of Parliament south of London, and again, this was reflected in some of the participants' interviews.

Brighton and London are connected in a number of ways. Londoners often move to Brighton when they begin families and many Brighton residents commute to London to work. Four of the participants lived in London, the remaining 16, lived in Brighton. The two students in Brighton were originally from London, and a number of the other participants had lived in London at some time or another in the past. One of the Brighton participants moved to London shortly after the interviews took place. In this way all the participants shared common understandings of culture in general and fashion in particular.

Selecting participants

The number of participants involved in the study was limited to 20 adults. When reflecting on determining the size of qualitative research projects, Back states that:

Interview data provides our basic raw material but how much we need depends on what we want to make with it. (Back 2012:12)

It will also depend on the potential of the research project to generate rich data and how effective the interviews are in doing so. This research had to be manageable enough to allow time to conduct and then analyse two in depth interviews with most of the participants within the timescale of doctoral research and to generate potentially rich data. At the same time it had to be large enough to provide a level of diversity. Mason (2012) argues that it is usually better in qualitative enquiry to have fewer interviews, analysed creatively and thoroughly, rather than more interviews, analysed superficially. In agreement with this, the number of interviews was limited, but 'enough variations of circumstance' was built into it, in order to, 'be able to explore different working of processes in different situations' (Mason 2012:30). Each of the participants had a personal combination of social and cultural factors and situations, specific to them, that influenced their sensory engagement with dress. These included their gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, family background and current life-situation. It is therefore not proposed that my 'interviewees represent similar categories of people in the wider population' (Mason 2012:30).

This study is also limited to adult experience. The youngest participant was aged 20, the oldest, aged 79. Whilst an investigation of children's sensory engagement with clothing could be a valid and interesting subject for future research, particularly in exploring how sensory knowledge around dress might be culturally constructed during formative childhood years, there was not the scope to include it here.

The aim of the selection process was to recruit twenty participants from within Brighton and London, to include an equal number of men and women, from a range of age groups and life-situations. To begin with, I made a list of accessible groups of people that cut across a variety of ages, life-situations, and occupations to help focus the recruitment towards a range of people. These included; students, full-time employees, self-employed, parents with children at school and retired people. Some social groups were not directly approached, for example the unemployed or homeless, and as a result these were not represented in the final

selection of participants. Initially I did not actively seek to recruit participants based on ethnic background, sexual orientation or political beliefs. Some diversity relating to ethnicity emerged through the initial recruitment. One of the early participants, Karen was born and brought up in Poland, however as the recruitment progressed I was aware of the lack of non-white participants, so I asked an acquaintance of mine, Paula if she was interested in taking part as she is of Jamaican origin. Some social, political and moral beliefs were expressed by some of the participants in relation to sensory engagement with dress, but regarding sexual orientation, none of the participants explicitly brought this up.

During the interviews I did not ask directly about gender, ethnicity, sexuality, or politics, but remained open to these aspects emerging if they were relevant to that participant's sensory engagement with dress. Ideas around gender were discussed by a number of participants and both Karen and Paula brought up their ethnic backgrounds. As previously stated there was some discussion of political beliefs. Participants did discuss their relationships with spouses or partners at times during the interviews, and two of the participants, Aaron and Laura, were in a relationship. Ideas around attraction, sensuality and modesty were brought up but sexuality was not explicitly discussed by any of the interviewees.

As a result of the limited size of the participant group there are inevitable gaps in the scope of this study. For example, as previously mentioned, how unemployment, homelessness or sexual orientation might shape sensory engagement with dress is not included. These gaps could be addressed in future research developing on from this thesis, as they may well throw up different perspectives and nuances of experience. The potential for future development of this research is discussed in the conclusion to this thesis.

Having located some broad social groups in order to encourage diversity in the recruitment, I then selected potential applicants through five pathways, and the resulting networks are set out in chart form in appendix one. These pathways were as follows:

1. My own personal social network such as friends, acquaintances, school parents and football parents.

   I recruited five participants this way. Paul, a colleague of my husband whom I had met at a work event and had shown an interest in my study was the first person I interviewed for the pilot study. Additionally through my own network I also recruited John, a friend of a friend whom I knew a little through socialising, Jill a mother at my son's school, whom I knew from the school playground but did not socialize with, Sam who I had known socially for a couple of years in the context of my son's football team, and Paula, a friend of my children's childminder who occasionally babysat for me, and whom I had known for a few years in this context. Sam was the participant that I knew the best, and following the interview with him, he suggested that I might interview his stepfather, Corin, whom I did not know prior to the interview.

2. My college network at the University of the Arts London.

   From this network I found four participants. One, Elsa, I knew from college as she was a fellow PhD student and artist. Simon was a bespoke shirt maker, the husband of a fellow PhD student, whom I had met a couple of times before the interview. The other two participants recruited this way I did not know prior to the interviews. These were April, a degree student at Brighton University, who was the daughter of a fellow PhD student, and Robert, a sculptor and the partner of a colleague at UAL. April also suggested that I interview her flatmate and fellow student, Dylan.

3. A friend's place of work, a digital consultancy, in Brighton.

   As my social network reflects my age and my situation – a mature PhD student and mother with school age children, most of the people I knew were also in their 40s, so I needed to find a way of accessing participants in their 20s and 30s and in full-time employment. I therefore asked my friend

to send an email around her office asking if anyone was interested in taking part in the study. From this pathway, I recruited two participants, Ryan and Anne, who worked at the company, both in their early 30s and following this, Ryan suggested that I interview James who was a freelance psychologist for the company. I did not know any of these three participants prior to the interview.

4. A local community centre, The Cowley Club in Brighton.

Moving beyond my own social and college networks, the fourth pathway I used to recruit participants was The Cowley Club - a radical, left wing social collective which undertakes outreach work for the whole community in the less affluent London Road area of Brighton. When looking for potential local groups and centres that I might approach for participants, I came across a regular clothes swop that took place at The Cowley Club, and this gave me an opportunity to ask local people if they would like to take part in the study within a safe setting, one relevant to the subject matter of clothing. I recruited three participants through the club. Karen, who worked at the club and gave me permission to recruit at the clothes swop, and Laura and Susan who had come along to the clothes swop. Having handed out information to people at the swop and chatted to some of them, taking contact details if interested, I later followed up by e-mail, and through this method, Laura and Susan agreed to take part. Following her first interview, Susan suggested that I interview her pottery teacher, Andrea. I did not know Karen, Laura, Susan or Andrea prior to the interviews.

5. A writing workshop I attended, unconnected to this study.

I met Pamela at the workshop and asked if she would take part as we had talked about my study. Pamela was the participant who had the most prior knowledge about dress and fashion, having worked in the past as a head of a fashion college, although Simon also had professional expertise in

tailoring as a bespoke shirt maker. I did not know Pamela prior to the workshop.

In summary, out of the 20 participants that took part in this study, seven of them (Paul, John, Jill, Sam, Paula, Simon and Elsa), I knew in some context and to varying degrees prior to the interviews. The other 13 participants (Corin, April, Robert, Dylan, Karen, Susan, Laura, Andrea, Aaron, Ryan, Anne and Pamela), I did not know prior to the interviews. In the later section of this chapter that provides a critical 'Reflection on the interviews', the issues around interviewing acquaintances are discussed in depth.

In addition to the aforementioned limitations to the range of participants interviewed, I was also aware of the problem of how to encourage people who might not think of themselves as interested in clothes to take part. It cannot be assumed that *all* people think of themselves as having a 'relationship with clothes' although some do. My recruitment at the clothes swop highlighted this. While there, I took along leaflets which I left for people to pick up and I also handed some out, chatting to people and explaining the study in order to obtain initial agreement and contact details from those who were interested. I explained the study using everyday terms. This, I hoped would make it accessible to most people. However, in one instance a man to whom I had handed a leaflet but did not explain further politely declined to take part, leaving a note to say that he did not 'have a relationship with his clothes' and therefore believed he would not be of any use to my study. This was reminiscent of one male response to the MOA directive on *Clothes* (MOA 1988) that simply stated, 'I have nothing to say on the matter'. The issue of how to broaden the scope of the research even further could possibly be addressed in future research, through recruiting or researching in collaboration with community groups, where all the members take part.

Although it was not possible to eliminate this potentially limiting factor to recruitment within this study, every effort was made to ensure that the language used to communicate the project was straightforward and non-academic, in order to make the project accessible and understandable no matter what the potential participants' degree of interest in clothes. Another important consideration regarding language was that clothing terms are often gendered and that gender

itself is a construct with multiple meanings that may differ between people. The term 'dress', while used as a generic term within many academic studies of fashion and dress, has feminine connotations in common parlance, perhaps due to the other meaning of 'dress' as a garment type worn by women (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1995:16). For this reason I tended to use more neutral terms such as 'clothing' or 'things you wear' during recruitment and the interviews.

The recruitment method may also have given preference to people who were interested in being part of an academic study and were in a situation that meant they had the time to take part. This may have excluded certain people and appealed to those in a stable life situation, with the time and resources to take part. It may also have given preference to those who had experience of 'research' or a university education, and therefore had an understanding of and empathy with academic study.

There were different possible reasons as to why each participant took part. Some participants may have agreed purely because I knew them, others because they were interested in the topic, or in thinking about their own clothes in more depth, others because they like taking part in studies. Susan for instance, told me how she liked to get involved with lots of local groups and projects such as this, as she is always interested in learning about new things. Pamela, who had worked in fashion, may have felt an affiliation with the topic and my own field of research. All of the participants, to varying degrees, had busy schedules and in some instances this did affect their ability to take part. One participant, Elsa, could not commit to a second interview due to time commitments, with others it took a long time to find suitable interview dates that fitted with their schedule or commitments.

To conclude, through using a number of different recruitment pathways, the final participant group included an equal number of men and women, from a range of age groups, life situations, relationships and occupations. In occupational terms, it included students, retirees and those in work. Some were in full-time employment, others part-time or self-employed and some were parents of school age children. The group also included those in a relationship, living together, married, divorced and single. All these, and other specific situations and backgrounds were reflected in their interviews. As such the resulting interview

data allowed for an exploration of '…how gender or age or other sets of experiences, can work in particular situations' (Mason 2012:30), in this case, contextualizing the participants' sensory experience of dress within their everyday lives.

Interviews

The interviews aimed to be ethically sensitive to the personal and intimate nature of my enquiry and to promote an in-depth understanding and a positive experience for the interviewee. The first interview focused on a general discussion around their personal dress, based on a series of themes. These interviews took place outside the home, either at London College of Fashion (LCF), at their place of work (in the case of Karen and Simon), or at an office in Brighton that I had hired for this purpose. The second interview built upon the first and was based around items of dress that the participant brought with them or had selected to discuss. Each item of dress was discussed in detail and they were physically explored during the interview. Some took place at the LCF, others at the office in Brighton, with most taking place at the participant's home, and two taking place at my home. Regarding researcher safety I made sure that someone knew where and when I was conducting each of the interviews.

First interview

The first interview helped to establish a rapport with the interviewee and attended to the macro site of my research, the cultural and social frameworks that informed the participants' sensory experience of dress and their general attitudes and thoughts on personal dress, particularly in relation to its sensory dimensions.

To formulate the interview topics, I referred to my research aims, as outlined earlier in the Introduction to this thesis and to my methodological approach, discussed in the previous chapter. I also located themes that had emerged during my initial literature review, in particular within cross-cultural ethnographies of dress that attend to the senses and emotions (see Johnson and Foster 2007), and through my early research into existing testimony around sensory engagement with dress, as was discussed in chapter one.

During the first interview a series of open-ended questions were asked, under the themes of; shopping, getting dressed, sensory dimensions (covering all five of the senses), followed by more intangible aspects tied to the sensory, such as 'mood', and finally the themes of memory and maintaining clothes were discussed. The questions concerned material aspects of dress, practices, opinions and values, feelings and emotions, and specific sensory experience. Full interview schedules are provided in appendix four.

I found that during the initial three pilot interviews, many of the themes were interconnected in the participants' experiences and testimony. Interviewees often brought up topics that I had planned to cover later in the interview and certain themes had particular relevance to some people. Where this was the case, they were followed up with improvised probing questions. The interviews therefore took on a slightly less structured format than initially anticipated, as participants were often eager to explore particular themes and 'stories' about their clothes in depth, and it was important to focus on what had meaning for *them*. More often than not it was through these in-depth 'stories' that new or unexpected themes emerged. All the first interviews undertaken included aspects of oral or life history, as these aspects were woven into the participants' relationships with their dress. The themes and ideas that emerged as significant to each participant were then explored further in relation to particular items of their dress in the second interview, which I will now discuss.

Second interview

The second interview built on the first and attended to the micro site of the research, that is the particular multisensory meeting points between the wearer and their specific items of dress. Prior to the interview participants were asked to choose between five and ten items of their dress to bring in and discuss in detail.

The structure of the second interview was based around a collaborative investigation of these items of dress and, as previously mentioned, drew on Prown's method (2001 [1982]). Prown's structure of 'description, deduction and then speculation' (2001 [1982]:79) informed the structure of the discussion in the second interview, however the focus of his method was adapted for this study, as the wearer was present and informed the exploration and analysis of the dress

items. The participant was encouraged to describe the item in all its material and sensory dimensions, reflecting the first stage of 'description'. This focused on what could be observed by all the senses in the materiality of the object itself, the colour, fit, feel, sound, smell, and occasionally taste. I added to this my own additional focus on marks of wear and tear. As previously mentioned, Prown does not specify how to deal with this, but within my study wear and tear provided an important insight into previous sensory engagement between wearer and item. The descriptive discussion was also deliberately kept open, so that more intangible descriptions were also included, for example aspects that related to the 'essence' of the item, such as 'freshness' or 'Englishness', both terms which some of the participants used to describe their clothes. The presence of the dress items themselves and the ability to handle them helped to elicit responses and facilitate the sensory description, and some of the participants tried on their items for me, although not all did. Often a participant's initial description led naturally onto a discussion about how and when they wore the dress item and the role it played in their life, and this reflects what Prown terms the 'deduction' stage, which he suggests should follow 'description' (2001 [1982]:81).

This second stage of 'deduction' is aimed at exploring the connections between the object and the perceiver (Prown 2001 [1982]:81). In this study the object is the dress item and perceiver is its wearer. This is distinct from Prown's perceiver, who would most likely be a museum curator. As a result, and as previously discussed, my application of Prown's approach is distinctive in that the wearer also contributes to the investigation and to the initial analysis. Participants talked about when they acquired the dress item, how they wore it on the body, the sensations they felt when wearing it and why and when they wore it. They also discussed their attachment to it, how and why they valued it and its sensory aspects, in particular how comfortable or uncomfortable it was. In addition they talked about how its use and meaning might have changed over the years. They also related this to material wear and tear and to their changing needs, desires and life situation. During this type of 'deductive' discussion, having the items to hand meant that some of the participants at times talked directly *to* the item, as if it had a life of its own. They played out their familial relationship with the items in front of me. For example, in one instance a participant pointed at and berated a pair of

sunglasses for breaking. This close relationship that some participants developed with their items of dress is discussed further in the data analysis chapters. During the discussions around their relationship with personal items of dress, emotions often came into play, as the participants described how wearing or engaging with the item affected them, whether that was through giving them a sense of excitement, pleasure, irritation or comfort, or through evoking specific memories, thoughts and feelings.

The final stage of Prown's method is 'speculation' (2001 [1982]:83), where ideas and themes that emerge during the description and deduction are speculated on and then 'tested' through secondary evidence. During the second interview some of the participants began to speculate, with me, on the meanings of their sensory engagement with dress. Having some reflection time between the first and second interview and the follow up opportunity of the second interview enabled some initial analytical themes to develop across the two interviews. The second interview provided an opportunity to probe further around ideas or stories that emerged as significant in the first interview, relating them back to particular items of dress. It also gave me an opportunity to cover any themes that we did not have time to address in the first interview. The more general discussion in the first interview around that participant's life experience provided evidence against which to test the ideas emerging. Once all the dress items had been discussed, the interview was brought to a close.

Although the second interview schedule was framed by Prown's methodological stages the interviews themselves were loosely structured, led by the aspects most important to the participant. Because of this, it was impossible to follow the sequential stages in the strict order that Prown suggests (2001 [1982:79). The discussion tended to be mainly 'deductive' with varying amounts of description and speculation. Different participants had different ways of talking about their clothes. Some talked about a few items in great detail, others wanted to tell me about many items. Some tried their clothes on, others handled them, and this was partly dependent upon where the interview took place and the type of garment. At the participants' homes, they had their wardrobe to hand so the interview was often longer and considered more items. These interviews were particularly intense and often exhausting for both the participant and myself.

Many of the second interviews were video as well as audio recorded and in some cases photographs of the dress items discussed were taken. It is this use of audio, video and photography in the primary data collection, which will now be discussed.

Audio, video and photography

All of the interviews were audio recorded. With two of the first interviews, the audio recording corrupted, and in those cases I made notes on the interviews from memory, and followed themes up in the second interview. As previously stated, I had gained initial ethical approval from the university research committee to undertake and audio record the interviews. However having begun to undertake the interviews, I then decided to video record the remaining second interviews where possible, in order to be able to record the physical handling and sensory engagement with the dress items that took place during the second interviews. I therefore went back to the UAL ethics committee to approve a revised participant consent form for this purpose. Where possible and with the participant's consent the second interview was video recorded. In total, 13 out of the 18 second interviews undertaken were video recorded.

As Pink states in relation to ethnographic interviewing:

Whether the ethnographer is doing a form of participant observation or interviewing, she or he is still participating in a material, sensorial and social environment. This invokes the question of how audiovisual media might become part of this process. (Pink 2009:105)

Pink describes her own use of video to facilitate a performative exploration of domestic laundry practices with participants in their homes, arguing that this enabled the participant to demonstrate their sensory, embodied engagement whilst simultaneously, '...also verbally articulating their meanings and decision-making processes' (Pink 2009:106). Similarly in this study, the aim was to explore both the physical sensory engagement participants had with their clothing and the meanings they made from this. The videos brought these two aspects together and

allowed for reflection after the interview event, upon the connections between the act of engagement with the item and the participant's testimony around this.

Pink was concerned with the domestic space of the home in addition to the laundry practices taking place within it, so her method was to use a hand-held camera and follow the participant around their home. In my study, the focus is on the material items of dress, rather than the space of the home. I therefore chose to use a static camera directed on the area where we were handling and discussing the items. An advantage of this method was that the camera did not provide a distraction for the participant, or for myself during the discussion. This encouraged the participant to act naturally and unselfconsciously, enabling the discussion to flow. However, one disadvantage of using a static camera is that it did not always capture the full action of the interview, especially when the interview took place at the participant's home. Here the participant often walked around to go and get clothes, moving out of the camera's vision, and the domestic spaces in which the interviews took place often made it difficult to find a position for the camera that caught everything within the frame.

During the analysis stage, which is discussed in more detail in the following section on *Data analysis*, both the audio and video recordings of the interviews were listened to and watched alongside reading and analysing of the interview transcripts, in order to reflect on the nuanced meaning of participant statements, which were sometimes ambiguous in the transcript. As some of the testimony dealt with emotions and feelings, a type of knowledge that is part of the interview, but not always straightforward to express in words, it helped to be reminded of the embodied interview situation through the aural and visual recordings. The emotional nuance of a statement was not always apparent in the textual transcript. In these cases, listening or watching the recording provided an embodied and sensory re-connection to the interview event, bringing back some of my own feelings during it, and reminding myself of those feelings expressed by the participants through the tone of their voice or their bodily movements. Pink argues that '…analysis itself should be situated in relation to the phenomenological context of the production of the materials' (2009:121) suggesting that:

Research materials can be used as prompts that help to evoke the memories and imaginations of the research, thus enabling us to re-encounter the sensorial and emotional reality of research situations. (Pink 2009:121)

The video was also specifically used to reflect upon the way in which, while describing an aspect of their clothing, the participants sometimes simultaneously handled the item or engaged bodily and sensorily with it, in some cases demonstrating how they moved when they wore it. This highlighted the ways in which the senses work together during dress interactions and movement, which as discussed in the previous chapter was an important methodological consideration. When showing me, or discussing visual aspects of an item, the participants would often simultaneously also touch, handle or stroke it. While remembering a garment from their past or discussing one they did not have to hand, they often rubbed their fingers together, imagining the feel of it. This demonstrated how embodied sensory memory forms part of clothing experience. In this way, video, in capturing human motion and activity, simultaneously captures 'gesture, emotion and sensual knowledge' (Dant 2010:np). In Dant's (2010) research on car repair, in which he analyses video data, he proposes that it is through the 'unfolding work that involves interaction between people and objects', and specifically bodily, emotional and sensory interaction, that 'cultural meaning' is made, and as a result, 'human knowledge cannot be reduced to its abstract, discursive or disembodied forms' (2010:np).

In my study, the video similarly captures the way in which physical, sensory and emotional aspects are entangled in the participants' interactions with their clothes, demonstrating how it is through this active engagement that dress comes to have personal and social meaning in daily lives. The experience of using video within this study suggested that it could be developed further in future research in this area. Stephanie Merchant's video research with underwater divers suggests how, through processes of 'embodied spectatorship and memory', watching themselves back enabled a reflection on their sensory experience (2011:59). In a similar way, video could be used with participants to explore the 'sensual shifts' of everyday dress. That said, and as previously argued in chapter two, I would stress

that in order to access the nuanced, subjective meanings of this engagement for the wearer, video should be combined with testimony. As Merchant notes:

> ...much of embodied experience isn't even outwardly expressed; for example, we can't look at a person and know that they are having a visceral reaction to something they have seen or done. (Merchant 2011:55)

As previously mentioned, the primary data collected also includes some photographs, mainly of the dress items being discussed, off the body, although some of the interviewees were happy for me to take photographs of them wearing the items. Some of the photographs were taken at the end of the second interview. However, this was often problematic. I found that when the interview had been particularly long or intense, which many of them were, the participant either had other engagements, so there was not time to take photographs, or, if the participant was tired, I did not feel it was appropriate to stay and take photographs. On a couple of occasions, as I myself was tired, I completely forgot about taking the photographs. On reflection, in future I would organise the photography differently, taking the images before the interview began and providing a form on which myself, or the participant could fill in information about the items.

Where I did not have photographs, I had hoped to be able to use stills from the videos, however I found that the quality of the video recording was poor, and because the items were being handled and moved around, it was difficult to capture images that were in focus. A few video stills have been included in the thesis, and while they are less sharp than the photographs, they do give a good sense of the interview as embodied event. I went back to the participants at a later date and asked if I could take photographs of the dress items we discussed. This was possible with a couple of them and a few others took photographs themselves, and some also, generously, gave me personal photographs to use. However, it was not possible to obtain photographs from all of the participants, as I was unable to contact some or they were too busy. Both the students said that they did not have most of the items we had discussed a year after the interview, which is in itself revealing as regards their consumption habits. On the other hand, all of the older

participants whom I was able to contact for photographs still had most or all of the clothes we had discussed. Where photographs of the items are available, and the item is discussed within this thesis, I have included the image along with some additional information. The images are interspersed throughout the thesis, appearing at the end of the chapter in which they were first referenced. This includes a description of the item, its material composition and where known the make and the place and year of its purchase or acquisition. Where the participant did not know this information or it was not possible to check this with them, this is stated. A page reference is provided showing where the image is mentioned in the text and if there was a quote relating to the item within the text this is also included next to the image.

The photographs, along with the video recordings, are a visual record of the material items discussed with the participants. De la Haye has argued that 'visual evidence is critical to the methodology and dissemination of object-led research' (2013:231). For me, as researcher, the photographs provided a visual, but also multisensorial and embodied connection back to the interview event, to the item being discussed and to the participant's testimony around it. For the reader of this thesis, it is hoped that the photographs will help to create a fuller sense of the relationship between the participant and their dress, bringing the testimony to life, and creating multisensory connections between elements of the data.

In Edwards (1999) aforementioned work on the printed photograph as material 'thing' and memory object, she explores the entanglement of the materiality of the photograph with its visual image. I would argue that although the images taken for this study are digital, presented on paper only as part of the written thesis, and not separate 'things' in themselves, a connection between sensory materiality and the image is still present. The materiality of the dress items they depict is entangled within and evoked through the image. When the image is combined with the participant's testimony around the object, the testimony also becomes entangled with the image.

Back (2004) has also proposed that photographs can move beyond the visual. When discussing the use of street photography in a project that aimed to 'produce a visual story reflecting the ebb and flow of metropolitan cultural life' in Brick Lane, East London over a period of two years, beginning in 2001 (2004:132),

he states that the still images capturing people going about their daily business in the area, 'contain voices that are present yet inaudible' (2004:135).

> The photographs also invite a reading that transcends purely visual terms of reference within wider ranges of senses. Of course photography is a mute form; there is no sound, no smell, or touch. But I think there is also an invitation being issued in these photographs. To hear the still voices of the citizens who inhabit these pictures we have to listen as we look at them. (Back 2004:145)

While the main subject of the photographs in this study are the dress items unworn, they still 'invite' the viewer to connect with the worn materiality of the item, suggesting an 'atmosphere' and sense of the lived quality of the item, in addition to 'hearing' as Back might put it, an echo of the wearer who has left their marks upon the item. Photographs of clothing can invite the viewer to re-imagine how they might feel to touch or to wear. As Pink (2009) argues, images have sensual qualities beyond the visual because they ignite the viewer's prior, embodied and sensory knowledge of the subject.

> Photographs have the capacity to bring textures, surfaces and sensory experiences they evoke right up close to the reader: they both invoke embodied reactions and offer routes by which, via our own memories and subjectivities, we might anticipate what it feels like to be in another place. (Pink 2009:136)

This was the case for the aforementioned feminist philosopher, Young who describes how, when looking at an advertising image of a woman in a wool suit, she imagines the feel of the wool swishing around her legs (2005:634). Throughout the data analysis, the way in which vision is connected with the other senses and materiality is demonstrated.

Reflections on the interviews

Whilst the methodological approach of this study focused on the wearer's own testimony during the interviews, it was necessary to acknowledge and reflect upon my own influence and role as researcher. Researchers have a specific cultural background, status, and position relative to the interviewee in each specific interview situation.

> The *way* in which we know, is most assuredly tied up with both *what* we know and our *relationships with our research participants.* (Guba and Lincoln 2005:209)

I will discuss in turn the two aspects that Guba and Lincoln point to in the above quote, considering how they affected the recruitment, the interview encounter, and the analysis, and how this was attended to. Firstly, *'what* we know' and secondly, 'our *relationships with our research participants*' (2005:209).

As previously discussed, the research participants and I broadly belong to the same society and culture, so '*what* we know' is interconnected. I share with them the experience of being dressed in everyday life, in the same cities that they inhabit. We are therefore united through the 'topic' of enquiry, everyday dress. So, what I *know* about dress, and how I perceive my dress through my senses, may have convergences with each of the participant's particular experience and knowledge, but there may also be differences. As previously stated, both cultural similarities and differences exist within one society. As a result, there is a potential danger in assuming that the participants will think about, and 'sense' dress in the same way as each other, or indeed, as I do. The introduction to this thesis outlined my background in fashion design and retailing and resulting interest in this topic area. At the start of this study, I had supposed that, at least to some degree, the participants would be aware of, and have something to say about, sensory aspects of their clothing. It was partly in order to address this assumption that I made the initial research into existing sensory discourse around dress and undertook preliminary pilot interviews.

All the participants interviewed - albeit in varying degrees and different ways - had a significant amount to say about their sensory engagement with dress.

I was aware that each participant's style of dressing or attitude to clothes had different relations to my own. As the clothed body forms the initial 'presentation of self' (Goffman 1990 [1959]), as stated, clothing forms an important aspect of the first impression of others in a social situation. Although there was an immediate sense of my own commonalities or divergences with each participant, in order to move beyond these first impressions and assumptions, the interviews focused in depth on *their* particular experience, and what was important to them.

Feminist studies (among other disciplines) have asserted the need for researchers to be reflexive about their own position and multiple roles relative to each interviewee, and how this might affect the research process and resulting knowledge. This responded to patriarchal approaches that did not account for gender hierarchies or discourse within research encounters. In this study, the principle of reflexivity is applied equally to my interviews with both men and women. The participants were aware that they were going to be talking about their clothes, and a few told me that they had thought about what to wear to the interview. As a 'fashion researcher' from LCF, with an implied level of 'expertise' in that area, it was important not to potentially intimidate them by coming across as overtly fashion conscious. I therefore wore fairly non-descript clothing to the interviews. Only one participant, Anne, commented on what I was wearing that day, saying that although she would like to wear structured clothes, similar to mine, she tended to fall back on more familiar and traditionally feminine styles of dress. Some participants were more comfortable talking about their clothing choices than others and so it was important to reassure participants that they had something of value to tell me about their clothes - even if they were unsure that they did. For example, Paul intimates that he feels his style of dressing is quite 'boring' (Paul Interview 2: 00:35:00).

The differences or commonalities of experience between each participant and myself whether related to sharing the same gender, age, background experiences or life-situations, created a particular type of relationship. I also found myself empathizing to different degrees with their attitude to clothes, to their clothing likes and dislikes and to their style of dressing. In particular when they were showing me their dress items, I would sometimes have quite a strong embodied and emotional response to them, if say, I liked them, or if they were an

item totally alien to my own way of dressing. These responses were acknowledged, but then put to one side. Additionally, when discussing more mundane items, for example a very simple t-shirt worn underneath other clothes, more effort from the participant and myself was sometimes required to engage with it in depth. This contrasted with the more special and unusual items that easily caught and held our attention. As Prown has noted, 'High style objects, sometimes of precious materials and fabricated with technical skill that elicits admiration tend to be preserved' (Prown 2001 [1980]:74), and also collected and researched. On the other hand, more rudimentary objects are discarded or overlooked as less important culturally and are therefore less well represented in museums and research. As this study concerns the everyday, it was important to explore these more mundane items of dress. It was often through focusing on the non-visual sensory aspects of them, such as the feel against the skin, the texture or evidence of wear and tear, that the meaning of these items became apparent.

As stated in the section on 'Selecting participants', the recruitment process may have preferenced those people with an interest in dress, and I attended to this as far as I could through using accessible language to explain the study and engage potential participants. However, this cannot completely resolve this potential bias. I would therefore agree with Shirley Harkness and Carol A. B. Warren (1993), who suggest in their discussion of 'The social relations of intensive interviewing' that:

> The topic's affiliative power generates the sample that then shapes the situated context of the interview itself. (Harkness and Warren 1993: 321)

It was important, therefore to be reflexive not only about how the 'topic' shapes the recruitment and selection of participants, but also how it shapes the interview context (Harness and Warren 1993:321).

In order not to close down the topic to 'fit' my own experience or assumptions, as previously stated, during the interviews I tried to be open to different types of experience that I had not considered or were unfamiliar and that might emerge. Therefore the themes and questions in my interview schedules (see appendix four) were used as guides, to ensure that the same broad themes were

covered, rather than as a formal structure. As a result, not all the themes were discussed to the same degree, or in the same detail across the interviews.

As researcher, ultimately it is I who pose the themes and questions, and complete the 'meaning-making' during the analysis, in order to answer my own specific research questions, which were outlined in the introduction. However, the interviews aimed towards a process of exchange between interviewer and interviewee, along with an openness and reflexivity on my part. Consideration was given to where my own cultural beliefs or assumptions converged with theirs or contradicted them and how this might affect my interpretation and analysis of their testimony.

The interview is a social event and therefore, to return to Guba and Lincoln's quote, in addition to '*what* we know', 'The *way* in which we know', is also tied up with, 'our *relationships with our research participants'* (2005:209). Harkness and Warren explore the tensions between rapport and validity in intensive interview situations, arguing that a degree of rapport, in other words, social relations and understanding between interviewer and interviewee, is almost always present before, or will develop during, the interview, 'since conversation promotes friendship' (1993:336). Thus, the, 'assumption of strangeness that underlies intensive interview research may be false...' (Harkness and Warren 1993:317). Rather, they argue that as rapport is a necessary and unavoidable part of the intensive interview, validity can be achieved not through a notion of scientific objectivity resulting from 'strangeness', but through:

> ...scrutinizing in every study the kind of personal knowledge interview participants have of one another in terms of effects on the conduct of the interview and the validity of results. (Harkness and Warren 1993:336)

With this in mind, I was aware that I might potentially make assumptions about those participants I was acquainted with prior to the interviews. I also knew people in common with another six of the participants (as they had been involved in recruiting them). Again, while I had very little, if any prior knowledge about these six participants, the social relations that framed their participation might have a bearing on the interview. In addition to this, my relationship with all the

interviewees developed over the course of the two interviews, and again this could have affected the interview and the subsequent analysis of the data. However, despite being acquainted with some participants, having not previously discussed their clothes with them before meant that all the interviews began from a point of unfamiliarity. Arguably, the increased rapport and the participants' understanding of the research topic and context that developed over the two interviews had a positive effect. It may have helped to put some of the participants at ease, and encouraged their own engagement with and reflection on the topic.

There are also benefits to recruiting acquaintances, as the pre-existing level of trust makes explaining the study easier at the outset. As previously mentioned, when recruiting at the Cowley Club, it was necessary, but difficult, and not always possible to gain the understanding and trust of the people I approached. It may also be the case that those who agreed to take part did so because they felt a connection with *me*, rather than, or as well as, with the topic. Notably, it was only women who were ultimately recruited through The Cowley Club. Although I did follow up some contact details from men that I had met at the clothes swop, none of these contacts came to fruition. While this was partly due to the fact that more women were at the clothes swop, it could also be a result of an existing sense of mutual trust and empathy that exists between women.

If relationships inevitably develop as a result of the interview process then, as Harkness and Warren suggest, strangers may become friends during the interview. Conversely, when interviewing friends, they may become uncomfortable as the interview unfolds, due to the unusual formality of the meeting (1993:332). As the topic of discussion was personal in nature, the interviews veered towards the informal, and acquaintances did not appear to feel uncomfortable. Many of the participants stated at the end that they had enjoyed talking about their clothes in a different context to everyday life. In the case of interviewing friends, Harkness and Warren also point to potential issues of validity if the interviewer already knows the answers or 'stories' that the interviewee has to tell (1993:332). In my case I did not know any of the interviewees well enough to know their stories or answers.

There was however, a significant breakdown in the relationship with one of the participants, Pamela, who had worked in the field of fashion. She did not want

to do the second interview, as she felt the first had been very long – it lasted nearly two hours, and on reflection the interview went on too long. However, as detected, when talking to her after the first interview on the phone, there might have been some confusion over the focus of my study, and the type of information I was interested in. Although the focus was on her personal dress, inevitably this included stories and information relating to her professional experience within the fashion industry. Prior to the interview, she had told me that she was considering writing about her life in fashion, and perhaps my subject was felt to be too close to this. She may have felt that she was revealing personal, biographical information that she herself wished to explore. As Harkness and Warren point out, and other researchers have found, problems resulting from issues around trust between interviewer and interviewee can result in '(at worst)…the elimination of respondents and interviews' (Harkness and Warren referencing Warren and Aherns 1993:336).

In the main, however, the interviews engendered enough rapport to enable trust and in-depth discussions of what is often a personal and intimate aspect of everyday life. Because the subject of dress is ubiquitous, a level of affinity between the participants and myself was always present, but this was balanced by the fact that I was unfamiliar with their dress practices before the interviews, so the conversations were 'new'.

To summarize, and as will be demonstrated throughout the data analysis chapters, the interview method taken was successful in generating rich and nuanced data around the participants' sensory engagement with dress, situating it within the particular aspects of their lives. The following and final section of this chapter outlines the analytical approach and methods, highlighting the specific issues encountered relating to the nature of the data.

Data analysis

The process of analysing and making sense of my research data began with a mass of rich, but entangled information, as would be expected of a qualitative research project, and the question of how to approach it.

As previously stated, the data consisted of 37 hours of transcribed interviews. The aim of the analysis was to create from this, following Clifford Geertz's (1973) interpretative approach, a type of 'thick description'. In attending to this aim, the first objective was to develop a set of conceptual themes that would frame the analysis. Themes 'that both reflected the initial aims of the research project, and took into account any unexpected issues that have emerged during data collection' (Seale 2004: 313). These themes would help to explain and order the contextual meaning making. The analytical approach taken in this study can therefore be broadly termed 'qualitative thematic analysis' (Seale 2004:314). Tim Rapley when discussing methods of qualitative data analysis, points out that researchers learn good analytical practice, not through reading a list of steps to take, but rather through the active doing of analysis. Indeed, with this study, as the analysis stage progressed, the specific methods used to analyse the data developed and adjusted as a result of my 'hands-on, empirical' immersion in the data (Rapley 2011:274) through responding to the specific challenges thrown up by the data and the research questions.

Synopses approach

Once I had transcribed the pilot interviews myself, they were read and analytical labels and comments were made in the margins against the text. This ensured familiarity with the detail and nuance of the interviews, and began the process of formulating analytical themes from the data - in addition to thinking about the best method to organise and then analyse the data. The data was labelled broadly against the sensory categories of sight, touch, sound, smell, taste, as well as other themes that the interview schedule had attended to, such as memory. The data was also labelled with new themes as they emerged inductively through reading the transcripts. From this labelling and note taking, and through listening and watching the interview recordings, a detailed analytical synopsis was then

written. These synopses were later developed as the remaining interviews were undertaken and provided a basis for the analysis.

Each synopsis included a general summary of the participants' interests and attitudes to their dress, alongside detailed analytical comments on their data. Quotes were pulled out and transcript time references noted on the synopsis, to enable a return to the corresponding section of the transcript at a later date. Bringing the analysis of both interviews with each participant together on the one document enabled comparison between the two. The synopsis also included notes taken from watching the video recordings, highlighting embodied and sensory actions that accompanied that participant's discussion of their dress items.

Transcribing

Due to the large amount of interview data, the majority of the remaining interviews were sent out for transcription and the transcripts were then checked for accuracy against the original recordings.

 The time involved in transcribing all the interviews was around 222 hours and from transcribing the pilot interviews, this worked out at around two months of solid transcription every day if I was to undertake this alone. Having the transcripts completed sooner enabled thinking about the data and writing the synopses earlier - while the interview events were still fresh in my mind. Arguably one of the reasons why researchers should transcribe their own interviews is to familiarize themselves with the data. However I found that while undertaking the transcriptions, my focus was on the transcription process itself, rather than the actual testimony. The synopsis provided an alternative and effective way to familiarize myself with the data.

Coding in NVivo 10

The labels and themes developed as more transcripts were analysed and each synopsis written. As the analysis progressed, themes that connected to or contradicted data in other participants' interviews was noted on the synopses. At this stage of initial analysis while writing the synopses, some exploratory coding of the interviews using NVivo 10, a computer coding software was undertaken, in order to explore this as an alternative method to labelling the transcripts by hand.

Having attended two courses on using NVivo 10 at the University of Surrey, two of the interviews were coded in NVivo 10 with analytical notes made on the computer. By now there were a large number of themes and codes accumulating. The initial computer coding along with the themes developed through hand notating the transcripts and writing the synopses, had generated codes and sub-codes, from which an initial thematic scheme was developed. I found however that it was confusing and overwhelming dealing with so many different and quite specific themes. In particular when coding on the computer, it was difficult to grasp the ways in which the different codes intersected, which they did in quite complex ways. Indeed, this reflected the nature of the senses as interconnected.

Another approach using NVivo 10 was tried, which was to code all the interviews under the five broad sensory categories. This was tested for the sense of 'sight' initially. Again, this generated large chunks of data that still required re-coding into sub-themes. As before these sub themes were often closely linked to each other in complex ways, making it difficult to then tie the codes back together and to note down the connections between different sensory aspects of the themes. In NVivo 10, detailed analytical notes highlighting these connections could be made, however these notes were not stored alongside the coded text, but in separate 'memos'.

Having compared the computer coding method with the thematic analysis undertaken through hand labelling and writing synopses, it was clear that the synopsis method provided more freedom to develop, visualize and organise the themes and explore more fully and clearly their complex intersections. Computer coding added layers of work that was easier to do simultaneously on the synopsis document. I could also re-read and re-annotate the synopsis documents by hand. As Rapley notes:

> Computers can overly constrain the options you have for marking up a text, whereas with paper and pen you can scrawl all over the text.
> (Rapley 2011:281).

The need to be able to visualize the 'messiness' of the data in one place reflects, as previously stated, the particularly messy and entangled nature of sensory phenomena.

Thematic analysis

The analytical themes developed from the synopses and initial NVivo 10 coding were refined and clustered together as each interview was analysed and reflections made on which themes were recurring across the interviews and emerging as most significant, or most closely related to the senses. As the data collected were rich and touched on many aspects relating to the participants' general relationship with their clothes - not only sensory aspects - it was easy to be distracted. Where relevant, sub-themes were amalgamated under larger themes, but many others – those that I felt to be less prominent, or not central to sensory engagement with dress - were put to one side. These themes offered up possible avenues for further analysis of the data in the future, but were beyond the scope of this thesis.

Rather than trying to develop a set scheme of codes, a more fluid thematic process was developed. This involved first ordering the synopsis notes under the broad, general sensory categories of sight, touch, sound, smell and taste and then within each of these sections, re-organising those notes under a few more detailed thematic headings. As the synopses progressed if new themes emerged as significant they were added. When doing this I found that some sub themes did not neatly sit within the five sensory categories. As a result, a further main category of titled 'other sensory aspects' was created. This included data relating to: movement, pleasure and pain, temperature, intangible 'essences' and sensory ambivalence and absence. In addition to this a category of 'sensory entanglements' was created. This category included both examples from the data and my own cross comparison notes suggesting how the senses were entangled with each other, and with emotion, materiality, the environment and social and cultural aspects.

In this way, the detailed synopses were working textual documents containing my thematically arranged analysis of the data. The analysis was further developed during the writing up of the data chapters that also formed part of the

'analytic process' (Rapley 2011:286). The synopses, alongside the transcripts themselves, which I was also constantly referring back to, were used to write the data chapter. These chapters are structured under thematic headings developed through the synopses. Before beginning to write each chapter, I collated together all the analysis in the synopses relating to that sensory category and considered it as a whole, noting which sub-headings recurred most across the interviews. The themes relating to each sensory category were further refined and developed at the writing stage through the theoretical reading which provided help with grasping 'the specifics of the phenomena', that is making 'sense of how, when and why specific processes, practices and structures happen' (Rapley 2011:283). By moving back and forth between the theoretical texts, synopses, transcriptions and recordings, some of the complexities were unpicked. For example when writing chapter four on sight, Merleau-Ponty's (1993 [1964]) essay 'Eye and Mind' was particularly useful when unpicking *how* and *why* dress made its visual appeal to the participants.

Making sense of qualitative data at the analysis stage involves detecting patterns and reducing the data down – a process of selective decision-making. Decisions were made around determining how important the different themes were to the participants, and regarding how relevant they were to the research aims. It was also necessary to consider how to order the themes that were emerging as most significant. In this section I have been as explicit as possible about the development of my analysis, because as demonstrated, the process of ordering the data was analytically challenging.

Conclusion

This chapter has documented in detail the methods used to collect and analyse the primary data that formed the empirical basis of this study, showing their development during the research journey in response to issues and challenges that arose.

Considering *all* types of sensory engagement, involved looking at each of the five, Western senses on their own, but also the ways in which the senses interrelate during sensory engagement with dress - within the many different and

changing contexts of the participants' everyday lives. As outlined, each of the sensory categories brought up particular themes and complexities, and some required specific theoretical pathways. These themes were then further complicated through their interconnection and through the way in which the senses are *connectors* themselves, entangled through the act of perception with material aspects of dress, with the environment, social context, with emotion and imagination. As a result, there was a tension between attempts to unravel the messy data, to give it some order so as to be able to best unpick the meaning, and the realization that the part of the meaning was inherent *within* the connections and entanglements.

Qualitative data can be complex by nature, however, as outlined, attempting to analyse sensory phenomena brings with it very particular complexities. Pink points to the lack of 'analytical explicitness' within more recent 'sensory ethnographic' practice, suggesting that this perhaps:

> …implies that the analysis of experiential, imaginative, sensorial and emotional dimensions of ethnography is itself often an intuitive, messy and sometimes serendipitous task. (Pink 2009:119)

In this way the process of data analysis in this study can be conceptualized as a pulling and pushing between connection and disconnection, order and mess, the discrete and the entangled, the concrete and the elusive. Reflecting upon the entangled nature of sensory data has highlighted the need to consider new, multi-method and perhaps more unconventional or creative means of enquiry within future research in this area, in order to embrace the complexities of the phenomenon being studied. This is discussed further in the summary of findings chapter.

CHAPTER 4. SIGHT

Introduction

The sense of sight was central to the participants' everyday engagement with dress. How dress items looked and their own appearance when dressed were important daily considerations, framed by aesthetic preferences and a self-conscious awareness of how others might perceive them within social situations. Participants learned what visually suited them and described different styles of dressing they had experimented with throughout their lives. Visual aspects of dress were discussed by all of the participants without prompting.

This chapter analyses the data within the interviews that related to sight and which included many different types of dress interaction. The analysis is organised into three main and interlinked themes. The first section concerns the way in which participants were visually attracted to items of dress, particularly when out shopping and within this section there is a further heading which contains a discussion around 'colour'. The second section discusses the self-conscious nature of 'Seeing and being seen' in the social world. This is organised under two headings that consider how, in social situations, participants used strategies of inviting and deflecting the gaze of others, and of hiding and revealing the body. The third section 'Contextualising appearance: Dress as a visual surround for the body' outlines how visual aspects of dress are mediated by the other senses that work in tandem or in conflict, and by other contexts upon which the visual is contingent. Within all these themes movement is central to the processes of seeing, being seen and how dress looks.

To demonstrate how these themes emerged in the analysis, I will focus mainly on the interviews with one participant, Ryan, although data from other participants will be drawn in where appropriate. Ryan's testimony is particularly useful in that he talks in depth about visual aspects of dress, touching upon all the themes above. It is also useful to understand how these themes interact with each other within one person's testimony and the broader context of their life. Ryan is in his early thirties. He is building a successful career in a young and dynamic digital business consultancy. At the time of the interviews, he was in a transition period between girlfriends, houses, cities and jobs. He was meeting many new

people and was aware of his changing status and how his life changes were impacting on him emotionally and psychologically. During the interviews he explicitly reflects on how his appearance and his engagement with clothes were playing an important part in this time of transition, as he was making considered decisions about the impact he would make through his clothes and how this might affect his changing sense of self.

Before moving on to the aforementioned sections, I will provide a summary of the main types of visual engagement that were discussed, along with an outline of the range of differing attitudes and dispositions towards vision and dress as expressed by the participants.

Summary of participant visual attitudes and engagement

All of the participants were aware of the visual aesthetics and meanings of dress, from fashion and other images and from looking at other people and at the clothing on offer in the shops.

When shopping, it was the visual dimensions of dress items – often the colour - that initially caught the participants' eyes. Two of the participants stated that it was only the look of the dress item that they were interested in, while ten of the participants said that they were drawn to items initially through vision but then liked to touch and feel them. Touch and vision often worked together during shopping activities and this is discussed within this chapter and again in chapter five. In order to determine if an item of dress or an outfit was right for them, participants would look at their dressed appearance in the mirror and ask questions such as, 'is it me?'. This related to both their appearance and how they felt wearing the item.

When describing items of dress, participants were articulate about and appreciated visual aspects. They all described certain likes and dislikes, particularly around the colours that they felt 'suited them', but also around specific prints, graphics, embelishments or shapes. For seven of the participants, creatively constructing an outfit and thinking about what went together was a pleasurable activity. Three of the participants also discussed visual details of clothing that were normally hidded from view but they saw and appreciated.

Appearance was a main consideration for the participants in social situations, particularly at more formal events when they were aware of the need to be appropriately dressed or to make an impression. They all expressed awareness that in certain contexts, other people would be looking at them and what they were wearing, although - as will be demonstrated in the following analysis - the extent to which they conformed to expectations differed. Additionally, dress was used to cover, reveal or accentuate aspects of their bodies depending on how they wanted to appear and the context in which they were going to be dressed. In the private space of the home, appearance was less of a consideration - although two of the participants said that they would still make sure that their outfit matched.

Some of the older participants discussed how their attitude to visual aspects of dress and their own appearance had changed with age. Two explicitly stated that when they were young, how they looked was more important whereas now that they were older, comfort and how the items felt on the body took precedence, although one of the older participants stated that his dressed appearance was just as important to him as it always had been.

All of the participants had memories of dress items from their past, and could describe them visually in detail. Over the years, they had learned what colours and shapes suited them (and fitted them), and while some of their preferences had stayed the same, some had changed according to the fashions, but also as a result of their changing life situation and as their bodies, needs and desires changed.

The visual appeal of dress: Catching the eye, calling out

> I just went into one of the shoe shops in Brighton. And they just kind of jumped off the shelf at me… (Ryan Interview 2: 00:02:55)

In the first interview with each participant I opened the questions by asking them to tell me about shopping for clothes (see appendix four for the full interview schedules). This provided a familiar entry point into discussing their dress practices and insight into their general attitude towards clothes and how they made clothing decisions. It encouraged reflection upon the first point of sensory

contact they had made with the items in their wardrobe, the beginning of their relationship with it.

Sight has reach - things are seen from a distance but can also be looked at in detail up close. When out shopping visual elements of dress catch the eye in shop windows or on rails and draw the shopper in for a closer look. In the quote above, Ryan is describing his bright, 'lairy' trainers (see Fig 4.01 on page 156). He wasn't looking for trainers at the time, but the colour stood out to him. He normally dresses in dark denim and big coats but does have a collection of bright shoes, which he says symbolize his younger playful side. For many participants colour was often the first aspect of an item that would catch their eye. Colour has impact from a far and close up. Ryan later states that sometimes when he is wearing the trainers they catch the corner of his eye like a 'siren' (Ryan interview 2: 00:02:28). Bright colour can have a particularly strong impact and energy, apparent in the way in which Ryan describes them as 'jumping' and as 'siren' like. In another instance, Paula talks about finding a dress in a dirty puddle at a car boot sale, how the colour shone through the mud and made her fish it out. For her, the joy in shopping comes at discovering things, she says 'My pieces speak to me, I think' and this is initially through their visual impact. She will see a shop window and visually assess it, 'Even the simplest window, you think, 'Oh, that looks a bit special'', and when asked if this is a 'feeling' she says:

A sense of energy. Yeah. Visuals and a sense that it has something in there. (Paula Interview 1: 00:01:34)

Although items initially call to her eye, Paula describes how the look of something is not purely visual. When she undertakes her initial assessment of a shop she says she looks at textures and patterns. Assessing items of dress involves looking but how they look is down to their materiality. They 'catch the eye' partly due to prior knowledge people have about what different fabrics look like, what they are made of, their texture and how they will feel on, for example whether they will be soft or might scratch. Paula checks her visual assessment through touch, although as she says here, this is not always necessary - even at a distance she can sometimes tell exactly what an item is like.

I don't check everything by look. I have to touch it. And for some - some things, you can just tell by the fabric that it's brilliant fabric at a million paces. (Paula Interview 1: 0:02:48)

This prior knowledge, learned through the body from years of wearing clothes informs how participants engage with new items of dress. This is an embodied learning process involving not just the sense of sight that has both continuity (participants knew what types of clothes tended to work for them) and allows for change (changing clothing preferences reflected changes in their bodies or lifestyles).

Merleau-Ponty describes things in the world as 'associated bodies', 'others who haunt me and whom I haunt' (1993 [1964]:122). He proposes an ambiguous and 'strange system of exchanges' between people and things, one that is hard to grasp, but in some ways by its nature reflects the more ambiguous aspects of experience, the often 'intangible' sense of connection participants had with certain items of clothing. As Paula says, some items of dress seem to call out to her through a 'sense' or an 'energy'. There is a recognition that participants describe when finding something they love, as if they already knew it, as if it existed inside them in some way. It feels like they have a prior connection with the item, as if they are related in some way. It is perhaps in part this prior knowledge of clothing that informs the participants' sense of connection with particular items. However the way they describe these connections is as a visceral and ambiguous feeling or 'essence' rather than a considered and rational thought.

Merleau-Ponty describes how 'vision is caught by or comes to be in things' and simultaneously things are caught by vision, and as a result brought into the body. Vision is embodied and made visceral. Through vision the body 'opens up' to the world, moves towards it and through their visuality things appeal to the body and move into it through vision. In this way he argues for 'the undividedness of the sensing and the sensed' (1993 [1964]:125). Memory and imagination provide part of the connective tissues between people and things, as sensory connections made with things become embodied and inform future perception. Dress leaves its mark and impressions on the body internally as haptic and somatic memory and these

are reignited in the future by other things and actions. Here Merleau-Ponty is suggesting a complex interweaving between imagination and 'inner' perception and essences and 'outer' perception and things. He uses the example of 'likeness' in relation to painting, how it is the intangible essence of the subject that artists strive to capture in their portrait paintings. This brings to mind Mason and Davies' (2009) study of family 'likeness' that takes a sensory approach and points out the 'intangible' nature of likeness. They describe how family members recognise family likeness in others, but cannot necessarily pin it down to one aspect of their appearance, the mouth or the eyes for example. Rather, the connection to the other person is perceived as just being 'there', an intangible and inarticulable essence. It is within the complex whole of the person that the likeness exists. It is embodied. Merleau-Ponty argues that the skilled artist strives to make visible what appears to be invisible, that is, the 'essence' of things that is felt within the body of the artist and which they make visible on the canvas. Visibility surrounds and exists through the body and things. In this way things are 'caught up' within the body of the seer and simultaneously the seer is 'caught up' within the thing seen (see also John Berger 1972). As a result the seer sees not merely the 'thing' but also themselves.

> Thus since seer is caught up in what he sees, it is still himself he sees: there is a fundamental narcissism of all vision. (Merleau-Ponty 1968:139)

Merleau-Ponty suggests that this reciprocity between seer and seen, this inhabitation of each other results in an ambiguity. Who is the seer and who is the seen? Here he explains it, using an example of artists who sense the things they are painting looking back at them.

> And thus, for the same reason, the vision he exercises, he also undergoes from the things, such that, as many painters have said, I feel myself looked at by the things, my activity is equally passivity - which is the second and more profound sense of the narcissism: not to see in the outside, as the others see it, the contour of a body one inhabits, but especially to be seen by the outside, to exist within it, to emigrate into it, to be seduced, captivated, alienated by the phantom, so that the seer and the visible

reciprocate one another and we no longer know which sees and which is seen. (Merleau-Ponty 1968:139)

Ryan articulated a similar sense of an item of clothing seeming to reciprocate an emotional response back at him. He has an unworn pair of boots that he was given by his ex-girlfriend. Ryan is still in the process of getting over the relationship, so to some extent he would like to throw the boots away but the fact that they are good quality and expensive prevents him. He describes them as having anthropomorphic qualities.

So they're kind of these spiteful pair of shoes in the corner of the room.
(Ryan Interview 1: 00:41:46)

There is a sense of not only the boots glaring, but also of his girlfriend glaring at him through the boots. Ryan recognises his own emotion embodied within the boots because they respond emotionally back to him. When they do, the boots have some element of agency, as Ryan becomes the passive receiver of their emotions. The 'spitefulness' seemingly contained in the boots therefore comes simultaneously from himself, his ex-girlfriend and from the boots themselves. This example illustrates Merleau-Ponty's notion of the perceiver's body, or in this case, bodies (both Ryan's and his girlfriend's) as being connected to or 'caught in the fabric of the world' (1993 [1964]:125), in this case the fabric of the boots. For Merleau-Ponty it is sensory perception that enables the connection. Being in the world is constituted through sensation.

A human body is present when, between the se-er and the visible, between touching and touched, between one eye and the other, between hand and hand a kind of crossover occurs, when the spark of the sensing/sensible is lit,… (Merleau-Ponty 1993 [1964]:125)

Ryan's words suggest that the connection he has with the boots may shift over time, allowing him to perhaps wear them one day. He says, 'So I'm just waiting until they're kind of neutral' (Ryan Interview 1: 00:42:55). Or to put it another

way, until he no longer associates the emotional relationship with his ex-girlfriend to the boots. This example of 'likeness' within clothes gives rise to negative emotion and a movement away from the boots. Ryan keeps them at arms length. Almost two years after the interviews, when I get back in touch with Ryan, (who had since moved to London) to ask for some photographs of the items we discussed, I ask him whether the boots did ever become 'neutral' and if he can take a photograph of them 'in situ'. He does not send a photo but says, 'The Ugg boots mainly remain in a cupboard, occasionally brought out for big muddy walks. I keep wanting to bin/ebay them, but something stops me' (Ryan via e-mail 15 December 2014). Returning to Wilson's (2003 [1985]) opening to her introduction to *Adorned in Dreams*, where she describes disembodied clothes in the museum, this echoes Ryan's description.

> Now, like clothes in limbo, they wait poignantly for the music to begin again. Or perhaps theirs is a silence patient with vengefulness towards the living. (Wilson 2003 [1985]:1)

The spitefulness that Ryan senses from his disembodied and, for the moment, discarded boots, waiting to be re-worn, reminds him not of the 'evanescence of life' as Wilson suggests museum clothes do, but the evanescence of his relationship. Wilson's observation, like Ryan's poses the notion of 'agency' in relation to clothing items, that is the active ability of dress to affect people, but also hints at the 'anthropomorphic' qualities of dress, the ways in which dress is at times treated by the wearer as if it had human qualities. Wilson asks what is the:

> ...source of this uneasiness and ambiguity, this sense that clothes have a life of their own? (Wilson 2003 [1985]:3)

She suggests, drawing on the work of Douglas (1966) on 'boundaries' that the answer may lie in the uneasy space that clothes bridge between the 'biological body' and the 'social being'. In so doing it questions what elements of the body are 'biological' and what are 'cultural'. At the boundaries of the body:

...pollution may leak out. Many social rituals are attempts at containment and separation, devised to prevent the defilement that occurs from one place - or category - into another. (Wilson 2003 [1985]:3)

For Ryan, his perception is that the negative emotion from the relationship has leaked from him and his girlfriend into the materiality of the boots that he wore when they were a couple, and he therefore has to keep the boots at a distance to protect himself from this. Here the boots can be seen to have a sort of malign presence. As previously discussed, Merleau-Ponty's articulation of the 'strange system of exchanges' between humans and objects bound together in the world, a world of relations suggests that the perceived 'boundaries' between them are less a point of division and more a place of 'undividedness' and of 'crossover'.

As will be discussed in more depth in chapter seven in relation to smell, Douglas (1966) considers the way in which dirt is culturally understood to be 'matter out of place' - a potential threat to the boundaries of the body - and in order to avoid pollution, the body is surrounded by rituals. To a degree, Ryan can be seen to be practicing ritual avoidance around the boots in order to avoid contamination. Additionally Miller has discussed in relation to the material culture of houses, how 'houses come to occupy us as we come to occupy it' through personal decoration and inhabitation and conversely, 'what we may not fully possess comes to some degree to possess us' (Miller 2001:11). For now the boots feel as though they have the residue of his girlfriend still possessing them, but in time Ryan may be able to assert re-possession.

To return to the notion of 'likeness', this example suggests how people crossover into things and things crossover into them. For Ryan, the sense of likeness makes him put a barrier of space between himself and the boots – reflecting the barrier that has arisen between himself and his ex-girlfriend, but 'likeness' can also create positive desire and action. As discussed at the beginning of this section, when shopping, some participants described being drawn towards certain items which 'caught their eye', and this involves a sense of recognition. A sense that it will be right for them, that there is a 'fit' between them and the item, or at least that there is a strong 'potential' for connection. This feeling of recognition that relates to the self-question 'is it me?' shapes purchasing decisions

and can be felt intensely. One participant described it as the sense that the item has actually been waiting there for them to find. This points to Merleau-Ponty's assertion of the 'fundamental narcissism of vision' as previously mentioned, but also to his assertion that knowledge of things already exists within the seer. Merleau-Ponty puts it this way:

> Things have an internal equivalent in me; they arouse in me a carnal formula of their presence. (Merleau-Ponty 1993 [1964]:126)

These seemingly 'strange' connections with some items of clothes punctuated a more everyday sense that participants had around clothes that were 'right' for them. As outlined in the definition of 'Dress and fashion' at the beginning of chapter one, participants were aware of fashion and of course, have to choose from the clothes available to them, however almost all of them stated that they did not follow the latest trends, reflecting a postmodern trend towards the individualization of style and identity, in which unique and individual styles of dressing are developed. There was also a difference between shopping for an outfit with a particular occasion or need in mind, and shopping for pleasure. However in both situations, a sense of personal style or what suited them provided the main guiding principles when making purchasing choices. For example, all participants expressed an opinion on the kind of colours that appealed to them or that 'suited' them and were drawn towards these.

Colour

Colour was a major factor framing participants' personal rules of dressing. It provided an initial means with which to quickly sift through the myriad of choices on offer when shopping and hone in on those items that were more likely to be 'right' for them, ignoring others. Jill, a mother, musician and care worker in her mid-forties, explains her shopping technique:

> So I guess I just sort of - it's almost like you scan, you know? You just have an eye and you just kind of - colours. I mean, colours are important. So for example, if shops have got things in - they're kind of colour

co-ordinated. So I'll hone in on colours that I like.

(Jill Interview 1: 00:03:13)

Whilst this knowledge of what appealed and what hopefully might suit them had been gained through experience and broadly framed their choices, it was open for negotiation. Colour preferences changed to varying degrees throughout the participants' lives as different colours were deemed to have 'suited' them at different ages – as defined by cultural norms, and according to fashion. That said, often underlying preferences were formed through childhood experience, relating to the environment in which participants grew up. Robert, a retired ceramicist reminisces often during the interviews, reflecting on the influence of his childhood sensory experiences (this was true for all the older participants and many of the younger ones). He uses colour in his art and describes a childhood v-neck jumper with a maroon trim that he thought was beautiful. He links his love of colour to a rejection of the grey landscape he grew up in.

I think it's because everything was grey when I grew up. Everything was totally grey… I have a strong visual memory of going to one of my grandparents on a Saturday afternoon, which is a grey interior…but looking out of the window - and they were next to a football ground - and all these men and they were all grey, they were all kind of … it was just a sea of uniformity… (Robert Interview 1: 01:23:45)

Robert then describes an uncle coming to visit who wore 'green, suede, brogue shoes' and him being 'gobsmacked'. This was an unusual sight for Robert at that time. He experienced a sensory punctuation or moment of intensity within an otherwise homogeneous environment and his reaction was visceral. This small instance had a far-reaching impact upon his later experience and life, as can be evidenced in the pleasure he gets from colour in his clothes and work. He arrives at the second interview wearing a bright turquoise cardigan and burgundy polka dot silk scarf (see Fig. 4.02 on page 157).

While Robert's attitude to colour had remained generally stable throughout his life, some participants' colour preferences did change to varying degrees. This

often related to the social context of their lifestyle and what they felt was appropriate for their age. Ryan, for example, wore bright colours at art college, later dressing more seriously when he had his first job in London. At the time of the interview he was more secure in his career and felt confident enough to wear *some* bright colours, such as his 'lairy' trainers. He states however, that while he would be happy to have the same style of dressing at age sixty, it is unlikely that he will still be wearing 'bright shoes' (Ryan Interview 2: 00:25:05). In fact, Ryan looks forward to conforming to a more 'classic' look as he ages. Robert on the other hand, who is in his early seventies, is resisting what he sees as the bland 'uniform' that persists for older men - one that to him, suggests little interest in appearance and fashion. As Robert articulates frequently in the interviews, he finds pleasure in the visual (and other sensory) aspects of dress, but cannot understand why, in his view, most men tend to deny themselves this when they get to his age.

Robert's uncle's 'green suede brogues' and Ryan's 'lairy' trainers appeal because they enable a pleasurable, bodily transformation. Ryan describes how his trainers 'embody' and bring out his playful side:

> And I think when I walk around town, I walk really quickly (laughter) and I quite like kind of jumping up and down steps and generally kind of springing around and they're good for that. (Ryan Interview 1: 00:00:56)

He states that, reflecting on this experience, he has started to value his position as the younger more playful person at work.

> ...I've started to realise that being someone that can have fun and can turn a boring work thing into something that people enjoy is quite valuable. Because a lot of work is boring. These shoes are my symbol of that.
> (Ryan Interview 1: 00:01:54)

As a result of their potential effects, Ryan develops a connection with his shoes. To refer back to Merleau-Ponty, the body 'opens up' towards things and they are 'caught up' in each other, in the 'strange system of exchanges' (1993 [1964]:124). For Robert too, the memory of his uncle's green suede brogues stay with him - as a

significant factor in framing his particular aesthetic feeling towards colour that helped to shape his art and life.

This section has discussed ways in which dress made its visual appeal to the participants. I have argued that items of dress have a form of agency through calling to the eye and visually impacting upon the participants. Furthermore, through drawing on Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception and examples from the data I have demonstrated how particular connections and crossovers between the wearer and items of dress are manifested through visual sensory engagement. Moreover the importance of colour was discussed.

The following section deals with the visual impact that the participants' clothes had upon others when worn in social situations, and considers in more detail how social and cultural forces frame visual engagement with dress. I will draw on Merleau-Ponty's articulation of the paradox of the seer as seen and the relationship between 'look and feel' in relation to dress as a self-conscious and situated practice. A practice that involves inviting and deflecting the gaze of others, revealing and concealing the body through dress when negotiating movement through the world and its social spaces.

Seeing and being seen

A number of empirical studies of women's everyday dress (Tseëlon 1995, Entwistle 1997, Woodward 2007) illustrate that for women, being dressed is a self-conscious practice. In my own data this was evident for both men and women. Arguably, this challenges theories of the male gaze, as Berger (1972) stated, the idea that, 'Men act and women appear' (1972:47). Participants described looking at themselves as dressed bodies, in the mirror when preparing to go out and also when out and about, catching glances of themselves in shop windows, or suddenly noticing a part of their body. They also looked at other people's bodies and what they were wearing. In fact the majority of participants stated that this was how they found most of their fashion or style inspiration. Implicated in this is the knowledge that other people will be doing the same thing - looking at them. So being dressed can be a highly self-conscious act, often involving a level of anxiety (Woodward 2007, Clarke and Miller 2002) as the wearer attempts to construct a

look that will both fit in with the required norms of dressing to suit that situation, while also expressing individual preferences. As Entwistle points out, her own study agrees with Tseëlon's suggestion that the level of self-consciousness is related to the type of social situation. She states, perhaps not surprisingly, that in Tseëlon's study:

> ...the highest degree of self-consciousness of appearance was manifest in very formal situations such as weddings or job interviews, while moving around the house, or doing the weekly shopping had rather lower levels of attention. (Entwistle 2000:31)

Similarly, in this study, participants, both men and women, expressed a higher concern with appearance in relation to social 'events' or work situations. Much of the concern centred on the need to find the right outfit. A process that involved looking at their reflection in the mirror in order to assess an outfit, but also attempting to put themselves into the position of other people looking at them. The participants could never be entirely sure of how they would look once out and about because part of this was dependent on other people's interpretations of their appearance. April says of her favourite trousers:

> ...if I can't be bothered to faff around and decide what to wear, I know that I'll just wear these and feel nice. And hopefully look nice.
> (April Interview 2: 0:02:38)

April 'hopes' she will look nice but 'knows' that she 'feels' nice. There is an inherent tension in the duality of appearance, of seeing and being seen, of the 'self' and the 'other'. Merleau-Ponty articulates the strangeness of being a sensing body that is simultaneously and paradoxically able to see itself seeing and touch itself while touching.

> My body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognise, in what it sees, the 'other side' of its

power of looking. It sees itself seeing; it touches itself touching: it is

visible and sensitive for itself. (Merleau-Ponty 1993 [1964]:124)

In Merleau-Ponty's account, as a result of the body's ability to sense itself as a thing among other things, sensory perception and self-consciousness is always derived from being a body in the world. This sensory reflexivity in terms of seeing other dressed bodies, seeing one's own dressed body and the awareness of other people seeing you was manifested in the interviews as a self-conscious awareness of dressing as a social practice.

Inviting and deflecting the gaze

All of the participants acknowledged the need to dress appropriately for particular social situations, and to take into account how other people might interpret their outfits, but they did not always comply with this need and sometimes challenged or subverted it. Indeed their consideration of how to attend to the situational requirements underwent a process of negotiation. Four of the participants described putting minimal effort into conforming to the social rules or expectations around appearance, that so long as they looked ok or acceptable this was enough. Three participants explicitly questioned the extent to which people paid attention to how other people dressed, even in formal situations.

More often the need to conform was balanced out through a choice of outfit that reflected the complex interplay of social requirements, personal preference for styles and fabrics, bodily anxieties and issues and the participants' emotional state at the time. Not forgetting that clothing choices were sometimes made for more prosaic reasons, such as whatever was nearest to hand in the wardrobe. How participants looked was a consideration but not the only one as other sensory aspects could play a role in balancing out uncertainties they might have over their appearance. As the previous quote from April demonstrates when she chooses an item to wear that she is familiar with, that 'feels' nice on the body. In Woodward's (2007) study of women's wardrobes that focuses on the point at which women decide what to wear, anxiety was a significant aspect of their experience. Woodward does, however, point out that this anxiety can turn to pleasure when a successful outfit is found that looks and 'feels' right (2007:71). Both the men and

women in my study described similar self-narratives employed when considering if particular clothes would suit them. This suggests that the private experience of being dressed, the way the inside of the clothes feel against, and moving upon the body and the personal values and emotions attached to the clothes co-exists with the self awareness of the outer, public presentation of the dressed body (Goffman 1990 [1959]). Together these sensory aspects sometimes achieved a holistic sense of wholeness and rightness, but reminiscent of an artist attempting to capture a likeness - or as Mason and Davies (2009) noted in relation to the 'essence' of a person that is not always captured in a photograph - this sense of 'me-ness' is not always easy to define. It is keenly felt but by nature often intangible.

In public situations, participants were aware of the impact that their appearance had on others, but again this was mediated by other sensory modes such as the feel of the clothes against their body, and by various factors and contexts. How they thought they looked to others and how others may have perceived them was at times 'in sync.', but at other times in conflict or more often than not, ambiguous. As events unfolded and the participants came into contact with different people and engaged in different activities, their appearance, and both their own and others perception of their appearance could change and became more or less of a concern. This was apparent in Susan's description of the wedding she recently attended, an event that she frequently returned to in the interviews.

Susan, by her own admission, has a conflicted relationship with clothes, particularly around the tensions between social expectations and her own enjoyment of dress. She is quite ethically minded and dislikes high street shopping, both on a practical and moral level, but loves to find a second-hand bargain. I met her at a local clothes swap held at the Cowley Club (as discussed in chapter three). The wedding that she described was a large family affair, taking place abroad and her daughter wanted her to buy a new outfit for it. Susan had talked about her daughters a number of times in relation to her clothes reflecting Woodward's contention that dress plays a role in mother-daughter relationships (Woodward 2007:101). In this instance, Susan resisted her daughter's suggestion and instead suggested wearing an old dress that she had picked up at a previous clothes swap, one she was not particularly fond of and had never worn because she disliked the

synthetic fabric (see Fig. 4.03 on page 158). To Susan's surprise her daughter thought it would be 'perfect'.

> I just felt like laughing because it was so ridiculous. I wore that and I was actually reading a poem out at the wedding in the cathedral and she thought it was all fine… Here's a dress that I have never worn, never really wanted to wear particularly - I didn't think it looked particularly nice, but she did - and it was a clothes swap (laughter).
> (Susan Interview 2: 00:27:51)

Susan realizes that:

> It was her idea of what I looked…it was perfectly ordinary, short-sleeved, polka dot. It was awful material I remember, Crimplene type stuff, but it didn't matter because nobody was going to come up and feel it, nobody cared. (Susan Interview 2: 00:27:51)

She is aware of the conflict between how she appears to others, how she thinks she looks and also how the fabric feels to wear. For her, Crimplene is both a symbol of the artificial and not something she likes against her skin. She is also aware of the playful irony inherent in the situation. Both conforming yet resisting, Susan appears to have made an effort, to be wearing something smart, something she likes, and something that is 'her', yet she would never normally wear it. In a double irony, she loves the fact that only *she* knows the dress came from a clothes swap, which is in fact a private expression of her inner beliefs. Susan experiences this tension not as anxiety but as a positive and satisfying revelation and confirmation. She realizes that the outfit is in fact 'anonymous' and fits the situation, precisely because it is a formal situation, which involves an aspect of 'distance'. So long as it looked 'presentable' that was enough. In the end, it affirms Susan's belief that people should not be so concerned with conforming to social expectations around appearance, in her words, what they think they 'ought to look like'.

...nobody really cares what anybody else wears, let's face it, unless it's absolutely fantastic and stuff. Nobody cared, they wanted to see me and talk to me, not the dress. There I was revealing my deepest belief to myself; it was really satisfying in all sorts of ways.

(Susan Interview 2: 00:53:10)

Susan uses her own emotional relationship to the dress to balance out the tensions she feels from the social requirements of the wedding and from her daughter. Visual aspects of dress and appearance are often framed by perceived social and cultural requirements. However, these requirements are mediated by other sensory aspects of dress such as the feel of clothes on the body, but also by more intangible emotional 'feelings' and connections individuals have with their clothing. In this example, Susan's sensory experience of being dressed embodies the interplay between the private and public, individual and social aspects of everyday life.

As the above example illustrates, dress can be used as camouflage, to blend in with others, as Susan's 'anonymous' dress successfully did. Participants cited varying reasons why they wanted to blend in, rather than invite the gaze of others through their clothes. Paul, who dresses in a classic style and tends to stick to staple wardrobe items in muted colours, describes himself as not wanting to stand out (see Fig. 4.04 on page 159). He links this to a number of factors. He works in the music business alongside people with big personalities who want to be the centre of attention. His role is as a facilitator, and he wants to do this discreetly, his style of dressing reflects this (Paul Interview 1: 00:42:00). However, he also stated that he would love to wear some loud clothes but as a relatively short person he doesn't think they suit him. So his feelings about his body also affect his choice to blend in. His outfit is balanced carefully in order to accentuate certain parts of his body and to detract from others. All participants did this to some extent.

Andrea, a sculptor, could only wear her rings if she had not been sculpting recently as otherwise she was aware of drawing attention to her calloused hands (Andrea Interview 1: 00:47:22). Jill on the other hand, like Ryan, related her wish to blend in to her mood. If she is feeling low, Jill keeps her clothes 'neutral' as she does not have the 'head-space' to make complex or adventurous decisions about

what to wear (Jill Interview 1: 00:37:05). For all three, blending in is a way of avoiding the possible negative judgement of others or indeed attracting any attention. Clothes are subject to interpretation, both positive and negative by others because they have symbolic social and cultural associations in relation to 'taste' and social status.

To make a strong visual statement through dress therefore requires confidence - the ability to handle the judgement of others. Ryan veers between feeling less confident, when he will dress conservatively, to waking up with a 'spring in his step' when he feels more 'show-offy'. On these days he actively uses his clothes to make an impact, to invite the gaze of others, and he enjoys the attention this brings. When participants received compliments on their outfit they enjoyed the sense of attention and shared appreciation. The gaze is shared and a connection made. Some connections are complex, involving an element of disconnection. For example, Ryan describes how he used to consciously, but playfully, annoy his father by wearing outlandish outfits.

> Yeah, he (Dad) was a builder, well he is a builder, and he's very kind of macho and no interest in clothes whatsoever. And I've always been a lot more kind of - I guess kind of emotional or - I've always kind of enjoyed coming back from uni and kind of prodding him with what I was wearing. (Ryan Interview 1: 00:33:24)

Through the visual impact of his clothes, Ryan tests out the reaction from his father. He plays with the tensions inherent in their familial relationship, using the 'disconnect' created through difference to re-affirm their own particular connection and roles within the family. In this way, the sensory dimensions of Ryan's clothing play a role in the complex negotiation between the duality of resistance and conformity, belonging and differentiation that frames his relationship with his father. There is a similarity here with Susan's experience at the wedding, where there are social tensions that come from the required formality of the event. For both the tensions are played out and negotiated through visual (and other sensory) aspects of dress. In both cases, the emotional dimension

to their experience is explicit, suggesting a strong link between the emotions and sensory aspects of dress.

Ryan uses the term 'prodding' here in relation to the impact his appearance has on his father. This is another example where the visual impact of clothes is described using words that traditionally refer to other sensory modes, such as touch or sound. As previously mentioned, clothes 'jump out' or 'call out' to participants, patterns and colours are described as 'loud', and Ryan also says that he sometimes dresses in a 'low key' manner. This suggests that the significant aspect for the wearer and perceiver is less about the particular mode of sensory perception and more about its intensity and effect. Sensations have a spectrum, based on their perceptual 'effect'. However the level of effect and impact is contingent on the contexts in which it is perceived. So what is garish and over-the-top to one person may not be to another. Ryan's outfit may not get more than a second glance at university, but at home, in the context of his close and particular relationship with his father, it seems to reach out and *touch* his father right where it hurts, albeit in a playful manner. This crossover between the sensory modalities could be seen as, what Stewart (2005) terms a 'complex kind of synaesthesia'. Not just a:

> ...mixture of sense impressions as in a 'bright noise', a 'cold colour' or a 'sharp aroma' but a synthesis of imagined and material experiences. (Stewart 2005:64)

The focus here is on the 'material experience' of sensing. Stewart is considering the thematic use of the senses in art and gives the example of Wagner's Tristan who '"hears the light" and the audience hears it as well' (2005:64). Ryan feels his visual appearance touching his father.

Ryan is using the visual aspects of his dress to make an impact, to invite and deflect the gaze of others in particular situations and to reflect his mood. Ryan, like Paul, Susan and to various degrees all the participants, is conscious of how he looks to others. The way he chooses to dress provides an element of control over this. So the visual aspects of dress (working in tandem with other sensory aspects) are used to help negotiate the participants' movement through the social world.

Revealing and concealing the body

In addition to mediating the level of impact, another means of controlling the gaze of others that emerged from the data was the practice of revealing and concealing the body through clothing. I will draw here in particular on the interviews with April, a student with a busy social life, who owned a number of sheer clothing items and talked in depth about the relationship of her body to her clothing. Returning to the notion of 'boundaries', the act of reveal and conceal will be theorized as a means of negotiating the space between the body and the external world, between private and public aspects of experience, between physical, social and emotional needs.

> I wouldn't just wear a bra under it because I would find it uncomfortable. But it's still, like, see - it's see-through but it's covered up at the same time. (April Interview 2: 00:23:42)

April describes a favourite faded green, embroidered sheer shirt that has a covered panel across the breast area (see Fig. 4.05 on page 159). Her self-conscious awareness of what this will allow others to see is linked to cultural expectations and the sexualisation of the body, and this in turn affects her sense of emotional comfort or discomfort. The design of the shirt, its sheer fabric and panelling, plus the other items she puts with it, allows her to simultaneously invite and protect herself from the gaze of others. At another point in the interview, April says that a garment is 'kind' because it is flattering and not too revealing, the use of 'kind' suggesting that being seen has an emotional dimension. That certain items 'look after her'. She also describes some of her clothing as 'conservative' (April Interview 2: 00:03:21). These particular clothes are less showy and also cover more of her body, conserving it from the gaze of others. They provide physical but also emotional and psychological protection.

Goffman (1991 [1961]), in his study of asylums, describes the admission procedure for new inmates where the removal of existing clothes 'with the midpoint marked by physical nakedness' involves initial dispossession of personal clothing before they are substituted with institutional dress. This removal of control from the inmates results in a feeling of vulnerability and intense unease.

The rules of the institution are imposed and the inmates' ability to negotiate these removed. He goes on to outline a process of 'defilement' one that he positions as 'another form of mortification in total institutions' where 'objects of self-feeling - such as his body, his immediate actions, his thoughts and some of his possessions' in particular those 'objects closely identified with the self' like clothes are no longer self contained and safe from contamination from others (Goffman 1991 [1961]:31). Goffman cites the example of institutional 'shoes and clothing impregnated with previous users' sweat' (1991 [1961]:33) which inmates complain about having to wear. Following Douglas's (1966) conception of dirt and the boundaries of the body, this can be understood to be 'matter out of place'. Here, the body is contaminated, an experience enabled through the porous sensory materiality of clothing and its closeness to the body, which emits substances. The bodily essences or sensory traces of a loved one left on clothing can inspire comfort and pleasure, but conversely those of a stranger can generate disgust. The notion of dirt and pollution is discussed, with reference to Douglas, in more detail in chapter seven on smell.

In Goffman's terms the protective nature of personal clothing is as a 'territory for the self' (1971:52-52) as well as the body, where dress and the body work as one in its visual appearance. It is the removal of control from the inmates, that is their ability to control the covering of their body, indeed the very choice to wear clothes at all that creates vulnerability. Foucault (1977) has also positioned in *Discipline and punishment*, the ways that the body is controlled, and this is discussed further in chapter five on touch. In Primo Levi's (1987 [1959]) account of his incarceration in the Nazi concentration camp, Auschwitz, he too describes the vulnerability and inhumanity of being deprived of one's own clothing, forced to wear ill fitting, shared and contaminated clothes and shoes. Clothes along with other personal possessions are, as Levi demonstrates not superficial but rather, an integral part of what makes a person human.

> Imagine now a man who is deprived of everything he loves, and at the same
> time of his house, his habits, his clothes, in short, of everything he
> possesses; he will be a hollow man, reduced to suffering and needs,

forgetful of dignity and restraint, for he who loses all often easily loses himself. (Levi 1987 [1959]:33)

Goffman's asylum - his study of which took place over half a century ago - and Auschwitz are extreme and historical environments. However, arguably not too dis-similar environments still do exist in the world, and even in less extreme contexts, the concerns still have some relevance today. As mentioned, a recent ESRC funded study 'Dementia and Dress: embodiment, identity and personhood' undertaken by Buse and Twigg accentuated the importance of clothing in 'endorsing their sense of identity at a directly embodied level' for individuals in institutional settings (2013:327).

Within the context of everyday dress, parallels can be seen with April's sense of protection she gets from her clothing and her ability to layer them in order to feel 'comfortable'. The shirt, and her technique of layering provide a physical barrier from and a means of negotiating the gaze of others and how they might judge her. Tseëlon, referencing Goffman in her discussion of 'the gaze of the other' in relation to feminine identity, states that, 'It is commonly accepted that direct gaze is a form of invasion' (1995:67). As a result, as Goffman has noted in public situations, strangers tend to politely avoid staring (Goffman quoted in Tseëlon 1995:67). If the gaze of others is taken as a potential form of defilement of the body, then the body must be taken as potentially vulnerable, as having boundaries to be breached.

Wilson (2003 [1985]) describes the boundaries of the body and its relation to clothing thus:

> If the body with its open orifices is itself dangerously ambiguous, then dress, which is an extension of the body yet not quite part of it, not only links that body to the social world, but also more clearly separates the two. Dress is the frontier between the self and the not self.
> (Wilson 2003 [1985]:3)

Clothing, provides a physical but also a 'symbolic' point of separation and joining between the body and the external material and socio-cultural world. Wilson is

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drawing on Douglas's (1966) notion around the boundaries of the body, and this is also discussed further in chapter seven on smell. Cultural categories relating to bodies and identity, such as gender, sexuality, age and social status are reinforced through the type of clothing that is worn and the way in which it is worn. But clothing can also be used to challenge these frontiers, to re-imagine what is the 'self' and the 'not-self', to move between and re-invent cultural categories that frame the body and identity. As Wilson (2003 [1985]) points out, in all societies, from the earliest forms of adornment:

> The bodies of men and of children not just those of women, were altered - there seems to be a widespread human desire to transcend the body's limitations. (Wilson 2003 [1985]:3)

By viewing the clothing of the body and its resulting meanings as part of the structuring of the body within culture, the act of revealing and concealing the physical body is a social and at times political act. However, it is also one that often has an emotional dimension for the wearer. Purposefully presenting aspects of the self to others through clothing is an attempt to create an external impression, but it is also a means of negotiating the wearer's own sense of self. After Ryan had broken up with his girlfriend, he describes how he:

> ...kind of went to town, kind of presenting myself well and presenting like a strong front, I guess. (Ryan Interview 1: 00:50:45)

Knowing that he might bump into his ex-girlfriend, he says that 'for both their sakes', he wanted to let her know he was coping alright, to reveal visually through his appearance and clothing his emotional recovery and social movement away from the relationship. Here, his dressed appearance does not merely represent the preordained fact that he is 'ok' - rather the very act of making the effort is part of becoming 'ok'. This is evident when he eventually does bump into her, and she comments that he looks really nice - allowing them both a sense of closure.

Both Ryan and April's examples demonstrate how through their dress they are negotiating the point where the individual body, sexuality, gender and social

relations meet. Ryan's management of his appearance through his clothing choices, in this situation, relates explicitly to human relations and a wish to look and feel both attractive and confident. When selecting her outfit for a night out, April is aware of the gendered and sexualised associations with types of clothing and how an outfit is constructed. Historically women have been predominately associated with sexualized forms of dressing, while men are seen to dress for status (Entwistle 2000:186). However as Entwistle argues and the testimony in this study suggests, *both* men and women dress for:

> ...different reasons and on some occasions women dress for status and men to attract admirers. (Entwistle 2000:186)

April tries to find a balance between looking feminine and sexy but not overtly so. Certainly, when 'dressing up', women have to manage the exposure of their bodies in a way that men do not. The types of clothing on offer to women when 'dressing up' tend towards the revealing, examples being April's short dress or sheer shirt, whereas men's clothing tends to cover more of the body, shirts and long trousers for example (see Eicher 2001 for a cross-cultural comparison of male and female public display of skin).

In Entwistle's study of women's dress in the workplace, she highlights the particular need for women (much more so than for men) to 'manage' their bodies in order to avoid associations with sexuality (2000:190). April wishes to look attractive but would not want people seeing her bra (April Interview 2: 00:20:50), an item of clothing often associated with sex and relating to the sexualized breast area. Underwear is there to support, protect and conceal intimate parts of the body and is normally concealed. To reveal it is either to make a particular statement, which may be sexualized or it is a potential cause for embarrassment. As Entwistle suggests, drawing on the work of Georges Bataille and Steele the act of covering and uncovering parts of the body with clothing can be erotic because it links sexuality and the body to imagination. Clothing infuses the naked body with sexual meaning, 'adding mystery and making it provocative' (Entwistle 2000:181).

The imagination is an important component in sexuality, and clothing which keeps parts of the body hidden can stimulate fantasy and increase sexual desire... (Entwistle 2000:181)

Entwistle also points out how the feel of clothing against the body can be the location of sexual feelings (2000:181). In order to explain why many fashion designers and brands are obsessed with sex, Steele has argued that fashion is a symbolic system linked to sexual behaviour and gender identity. Therefore in order to understand fashion it is necessary to explore fetishism (Steele quoted in Entwistle 2000:181). However, within this study, when discussing their everyday clothes, the participants rarely mentioned sexuality explicitly and only in relation to certain situations. Looking and feeling sexy, to the right degree, was a consideration when dressing for a night out for April (as discussed). A number of the participants talked of the sensuality of certain materials and garments, for example Pamela in particular discussed the sensual nature of clothing, which is outlined further in chapter five on touch.

The act of revealing and concealing the body can be used consciously as a means to negotiate the social world. However, when a 'reveal' happens by mistake, in British culture it can be a source of amusement to others (something which the 'Carry On' series of films exploited endlessly throughout the 1960s and 1970s). Participants often mentioned the potential for embarrassment when clothing failed to conceal parts of the body. The parts that required concealment by the participants came under two main criteria. They were often those parts associated with reproduction, sexuality or gender. So Ryan religiously checks his flies are done up in the mirror before he leaves the house, because he doesn't want to appear a 'wally' (Ryan Interview 1: 00:39:24). April says of a short shift dress she has but doesn't wear too often:

I'm aware that I can't - like my bum will stick out if I bend over or anything. But other than that, it's really comfy.
(April interview 2: 0:01:27)

Alternatively, the body parts requiring concealment were associated with social norms around ageing, body weight and image or related to health problems. Or to put it another way, these are the areas of the body that the participant felt to be 'abnormal' or fail to conform to the 'ideal' body image within their culture. Paul is conscious of his neck, his changing waistline and the blemishes on his skin as he ages so he tends to always wear a polo neck, avoids very tight fitting garments that reveal the shape of the body and wears long sleeved shirts (Paul Interview2: 00:10:00). Andrea has on-going health problems with her feet and therefore hides them under long skirts or trousers (Andrea Interview 1: 00:00:26). April is quite tall and will sometimes choose not to wear high-heeled shoes when she is out with other women (April Interview 2: 00:32:59), whereas both Paul and Corin are relatively short and avoid garments or outfits that would accentuate this.

Revealing seemingly less than ideal aspects of the body suggests a social faux pas or failure by the wearer to control their body and its appearance - to successfully achieve the socially constructed image of the 'body beautiful'. As the above examples illustrate and Susan Bordo (2003 [1993]) sums up in her study of feminism, Western culture and the body, the way we 'know' but also 'encounter' our body and that of others is never 'simple' and 'direct'.

> Rather, it seems, the body that we experience and conceptualise is always *mediated* by constructs, association and images of a cultural nature.
> (Bordo 2003 [1993]: 35)

The sense of trying to control the body was apparent in the example of April and her collection of scarves. She explains how she often tries to wear one in order to hide her greasy hair. However she can never tie the scarf right and describes 'faffing around' for ages but then always taking the scarf off just before she leaves the house, as it feels wrong, it 'annoys' her (April Interview 2: 00:26:00). She realizes that she will be more self-conscious about the scarf than about her greasy hair.

This demonstrates how techniques of concealment don't always work, indeed clothing has the capacity to let you down, and techniques are not always easy to master (this is a little documented area of dress studies, but as the data in

this study suggests, one that could be researched further). Alternatively the need to conceal may diminish. As bodies move through the world, situational needs and norms are apt to change; clothes ride up, our bodies get sweaty and as the physical and social environment changes and moves around us the need to reveal or conceal may change. April admits that she only wears short dresses when 'going out' at night.

> So like when I first put it on I'd probably be a bit self conscious, but then after I've had a drink, I wouldn't care anymore.
> (April Interview 2: 00:01:44)

Contexts such as the weather, environment and time of day (in this case a dark club or pub at night) and other changing social contexts which in turn affect the mood of the wearer and those around them (in this case a sense of loosening of inhibitions from alcohol) can affect how great the need is to conceal or how great the desire is to reveal. Context also affects how clothing appears to both the wearer and others, what seems appropriate or is embarrassing in one situation may not be in another and this is discussed in more detail in the following section on contextualizing the visual.

In the aforementioned examples, the participants are keen to demonstrate their awareness of social norms through what they reveal and conceal of their bodies. However, for one participant, Karen, the practice of revealing and concealing her body was a form of political resistance to social norms. Tseëlon (2001a) utilises the notion of masquerade in relation to female identity construction and outlines how the act of covering can be used to create or breakdown cultural rules.

> Masquerade is simultaneously an analytic and a critical tool. As such, it can be used both for identity construction, and for critical deconstruction. As an analytic category, it is a 'technology of identity' that deals with literal and metaphorical covering for ends as varied as concealing, revealing, highlighting, protesting, protecting, creating a space from where one can play out desires, fears, conventions and social practices. As

a critical subversive strategy it mocks and destabilizes habitual positions and assumptions, transgressing rules of hierarchy and order.
(Tseëlon 2001a:108)

Karen is articulate about her clothes and is known by her friends for her love of layering clothes together, it defines her and is part of her wider approach to the world. She is politically minded, a feminist and activist. Her dressing strategy involving layering, modifying and often pinning her clothes, provides a means to transgress social rules in which she does not believe and to protect herself from those who uphold them. She covers her body to avoid what she sees as men's objectifying gaze.

I don't really like women being (sigh) objectified by men, and women as well doing... I know that some women like wearing tight stuff because they feel comfortable and they like looking at themselves in the mirror, but I think really deep down in their heads the reason is because they want men to like them and I don't like that attitude, so that's why I wear lots of layers to cover myself. (Karen Interview 1 00:07:00)

Her clothes provide protection from the gaze of certain others. If, as Wilson (2003 [1985]) suggests, clothing marks out the fluid boundary between the inner and outer self, then Karen's layers of clothing can be understood to provide a physical and metaphorical barrier to the thoughts and beliefs of other, a means to prevent them from penetrating her body and psyche. This also suggests the way in which the mind is contained in the materiality of clothing (Prown 2001 [1982]).

Karen describes how she had an obsession with covering her neck often wearing high neck tops layered with scarves and necklaces.

I think it comes from the stuff I don't like showing here, cleavage and stuff and so I started wearing things higher and higher covering my neck so people don't see anything (laugh). (Karen Interview 1: 00:07:45)

She realizes this is quite extreme. In fact many of her dressing practices seem out of the ordinary, but they are ordinary and everyday for Karen. For a while her necklaces were never removed and eventually became so tangled together that she had to cut them off. At this point she felt extremely 'naked' and exposed. Her body had come to rely on the weight and sensation of the necklaces against her skin, not just the visual and symbolic protection they provided her. While Karen doesn't want to 'look too feminine' or expose herself, she is not totally adverse to 'prettiness'. It is acceptable on her terms, for her pleasure, but not for the pleasure of men. She will wear feminine things ironically, a second-hand wedding dress for example, but she wears it to make a statement about her ambivalence towards marriage (Karen Interview 2: 00:09:04). Additionally her layers of clothing often clash in colour, pattern and texture. She describes it as 'the clash of the clashes' (Karen Interview 1: 00:19:30). Rather than balancing her outfit she uses the imbalance to make a visual statement that is anti-fashion and breaks the rules, reminiscent of sub-cultural practices of resistance through dressing, as outlined by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (2006 [1975]) and also Dick Hebdige (1979).

While Karen's statement highlights the visual it is also more than this, involving other embodied sensory experience. As Paul Sweetman (2001) has argued fashion is not only a visual symbolic statement. The feel of clothing against the body, the way it makes the wearer move and act, that is, how clothing shapes a 'particular habitus' also helps 'to shape both individual and group subjectivities' (Sweetman 2001:67). This is apparent in the way that Karen's practices of layering are instrumental in the construction of her own embodied beliefs. She acts out her resistance through her body's physical and sensory interaction with clothing. Karen also gets pleasure from wearing layers that are seen and felt only by her.

> ...so mostly my favourite stuff is the stuff that I wear underneath something that people don't really see. That's because it's comfortable. (Karen Interview 2: 00:10:15)

In addition to getting pleasure from comfortable layers (the notion of 'comfort' is discussed in more detail in chapter five on touch), Karen goes on to describe an aesthetic pleasure she gets from little hidden details, a trim on a

petticoat for example. Paul also showed me detailing on his shirt hem that he loved partly because only he knew it was there (see Fig. 4.06 on page 160). This private, visual and tactile pleasure and knowledge provides a counterpoint to the external public aspects of the dressed body and is reminiscent of Susan's private feelings about her wedding outfit that contrasted with the public perception of her. Here it is particular aspects of the garment, rather than the body, that are revealed or concealed.

The inside of the garments are concealed from outside gaze, and this act of concealment can sometimes intensify the meaning for the wearer. Ryan too points out the hidden branding and messages concealed within certain items of his clothing. He avoids what he considers to be 'brash' logos and shows me the label inside his jeans with the handwritten names of the individuals who made them. It is only him that can see the label. It is only him (and possibly other people familiar with the particular 'artisan' denim brand), who would know that the jeans are handmade (see Fig. 4.07 on page 160). This hidden label gives the jeans an aspect of exclusivity, and Ryan a sense of 'being in the know'. Additionally it feeds into Ryan's sense of ethics around mass produced clothing. This is intensified precisely because the label is hidden and for the wearer's eyes only. It seduces Ryan, making a subtle but clever private visual appeal. The fact that only he can see it upholds the prestige and feeling of 'being in the know' - of appreciating something the masses would not – and his own ethical beliefs. Ryan admits he is a bit of a snob about his jeans and other similar clothes, an example of sensory aspects of dress upholding notions of social and cultural distinction through dress (Simmel 1971 [1904], Bourdieu 1984).

These examples suggest that attempts to 'read' the everyday dressed appearance of others as solely a form of visual communication or understand the practice of dress as primarily a form of social distinction denies the complexities of dress and the sensory and material pleasures participants also experienced (Campbell 2007, Rocamora 2002).

The practice of revealing or concealing the body has both private and public dimensions. As a means of mediating the gaze of others, it is, like dressing for impact or to blend in, a technique for negotiating the space and tension between

the individual and the social world. These techniques utilize visual alongside other sensory aspects of dress, in particular those of sound and smell, and these are considered in more detail in the following analysis chapters. As demonstrated through reference to the data, the experience of seeing and being seen in relation to the dressed body frames dressing practices and is complex and shifting. At various times and to varying degrees, participants wished to make an impact or to blend in, to attract the gaze of others or to deflect it, to reveal or conceal aspects of their bodies and selves. Sometimes awareness of appearance was intense at other times less so. The gaze of others can be desired, blocked or go more or less unnoticed. These changing requirements were dependent upon many factors and could change at both a macro (over the life course) and micro (throughout daily life) level. Appearance of the dressed body and how this is experienced by the wearer or interpreted by others is therefore subjective and contextual. The section below outlines these subjectivities and contexts.

Contextualising appearance: Dress as a visual surround for the body

> ...I have a very strong memory of her in the dress, on the common at Greenwich, on a very, very hot day - but very windy day - and the dress kind of blowing against her... (Robert Interview 2: 01:04:00)

This quote from Robert, when he shows me the aforementioned dress belonging to his partner (see Fig. 4.08 on page 161), illustrates how in relation to worn dress, vision always co-exists and is affected by the other senses, the materiality of dress, the moving body, emotion and the social and physical environment. When worn, the visual properties of clothes become transformed depending on the particular body they adorn in any particular situation. Clothing moves with the body, through changing environments and social situations. It is animated by the body inside and also by aspects of the external environment, like the wind. *How* it moves is dependent on the type of fabric, the type of activity, be that walking or dancing, indeed the mood of the wearer, and the type of environmental element, be that a gentle breeze or pouring rain. The day that Robert describes was early on in their relationship, around fourteen years ago.

They were going away for the weekend and had stopped on the common at Greenwich, and I could sense his pleasure when reminiscing.

Sara: A lovely day, yeah? So just to describe the dress...

Ok. It's a synthetic material. It's white. It's short. It's what I refer to as a flimsy dress. It has a pattern of - I'm not sure what they are - they're like purple rose heads...Yeah, it's very kind of summery...
(Robert Interview 2: 01:05:00)

Clothing moves in multiple ways and this affects both how it appears and the meanings that are attached to this. The materiality of dress items (like the flesh of the body) changes and ages through wear and tear, and many of the participants still had and wore clothes that were fairly worn out – often because they become more comfortable as the material softened with age. April for example shows me her favourite desert boots that she still wears in spite of the hole in the sole, because 'they're really comfy' (April Interview 2: 00:33:40). In addition to this, the emotional state of wearer and observer, affects the way in which clothing appears, and it can go in and out of awareness depending on the situation, for example moving between private and public spaces. Robert insisted on keeping his partner's dress, even though she no longer fitted it, because of its sentimental value.

I just couldn't bear it being thrown away because it was such a strong visual and emotional memory of that kind of particular day.
(Robert Interview 2: 01:08:00)

Robert's visual impression of the dress is linked to the sensual movement of the fabric working with her body and with the environment. Robert describes his memory as 'visual', but he draws upon other senses to explain the visual. So the image in his head is given form through sight but also touch, he mentions the heat of the day, the wind, the touch of the dress on her skin. Although he doesn't mention smell or sound specifically they are present in the background. During the

interview I find myself empathising with and imagining what Robert is describing and in so doing, place myself fleetingly on the common with the sound of the wind, the smell of the grass and the heat of the day. Visual impressions involve the other senses and also as Robert explicitly states, they are framed by emotion. In this case, like the aforementioned example of Ryan's girlfriend's boots, the emotional link is intense to the degree that Ryan cannot bear to look at the boots, and Robert cannot bear not to ever see the dress again. He keeps it crumpled at the bottom of his wardrobe and although he rarely gets it out he likes to know it is there as a memento.

Entwistle's (2000) definition of dress as a 'situated bodily practice' takes into account an active body moving through situations. However, less attention has been paid in sociological and embodied accounts of dress to the *relationship* between the movement and materiality of the body and the movement and materiality of clothing. As Robert's example demonstrates, the materiality of dress is in an active relationship with both the sensory body inside it and the environment around it. In his work on the material culture of dress, Dant (1999), like Entwistle, emphasises the embodied and situated nature of being dressed, but he also acknowledges the link between this and the *materiality* of dress. He describes how meaning is created through the 'material malleability' of clothing and its relationship with both the body and the situation. The meaning of dress, he suggests, can therefore result not just from pre-existing symbolic associations that culture attaches to types of garments, but through the wearer's 'engagement with the garment such as that they become part of each other' (Dant 1999:107). He argues that worn clothes are 'garments-in-a-situation' and therefore the contexts within which they are worn and the 'flow of action and interaction' must be considered in relation to the meaning of clothing. He gives an example below.

> Interpreting the meanings of clothing objects requires looking at them in
> the context of a lifestyle along with other clothing choices, objects and
> activities. So, for example, failure to follow a clothing code would disturb
> the flow of interaction - 'forgetting' to wear a tie to a business meeting
> may unsettle the other participants. The habitual wearing of a style of
> clothing, say a woman wearing fitting trousers and a bare midriff, may be

construed as a lifestyle choice to fit with the flow of action and interaction at her evening dancing in a club. In these instances the clothes have a meaning which are not properties of garments but of the garments-in-a-situation. (Dant 1999:97)

When the woman dances in a club, her movement and the type of interaction that this entails, contextualizes the meaning of her outfit, affecting the particular ways in which her appearance might be perceived by those around her. The visual appearance of dress items is unstable, affected by interactions with other items of clothing, with the wearer's body and with other sensory aspects, with other people's bodies and with the environment. An outfit that looks and feels right, on a practical and aesthetic level for dancing at a nightclub would probably look and feel entirely wrong when sitting at a desk in the office. For example, April has a pair of outlandish or in her words 'mental', leopard print, platform soled shoes that she loves and wears whenever she goes out at night (see Fig. 4.09 on page 162), but as she says, they are not everyday shoes.

Sara: What do you associate them with?

Like fun? Yeah. Definitely. Because you wouldn't wear these to like do something depressing (Laughter).

Sara: (Laughter) Yeah.

They're not really appropriate. I wouldn't wear them to uni or to the library (Laughter).
(April Interview 2: 00:32:11)

How participants thought they looked to others was subjective and contextually contingent, changing in relation to their body, time, place, social context and their emotional state. These transformations occurred at both a micro level when moving around throughout the day and at a macro level, as participants aged and moved through different transitional periods of their life. Sensory

engagement with dress allows for adjustments to be made between the body, clothes and the external environment.

Dress as a form of material culture is indeed exceptional in its malleability and closeness to the body. What it shares with all other types of objects is its multisensory dimensionality. In recent years, analysis of material culture in general has acknowledged all the senses and challenged the privileged position of vision that dominated previous approaches. Rather it is argued in this thesis that visual understanding and engagement with all cultural objects is contingent on the other senses (see Edwards, Gosden and Philips 2006).

Prown (2001 [1982]), in his approach to object analysis emphasised the need to analyse an object using all the senses in order to gain a richer understanding of what it meant to the culture that produced and used it. In relation to dress, as numerous studies have demonstrated, and examples from my own data suggest, visual aspects are tied into the wearer's sense of social identity and are an important aspect in how the wearer relates to an item of dress. However, as argued throughout this thesis, academic research has tended to over assert the importance of the visual while neglecting the way in which the other senses contribute to the wearer's experience of dress and may affect the way that dress appears, both to the wearer and to others. Paying attention to the ways in which vision is entwined with the other senses and materiality, which this study does, addresses this neglect.

Conclusion

In this chapter, through examples from the data, the centrality of sight to the participants' sensory engagement with dress was demonstrated. However, as was shown, appearance was not always the primary concern to all participants when dressing and look and feel were closely entangled in the participants' experience of everyday dress. It was furthermore argued that visual aspects of dress were contingent upon other factors, such as the other senses, the materiality of dress, the movement of the body, emotional needs and resonances and the particular situations and environments through which the participants were moving.

In the first section of the chapter, the ways that vision connected the participants with their dress items was considered. The visual appeal of dress - that is how items had visual impact upon the participants, seeming to reach out to them - was theorized through a notion of 'likeness', whereby participants came to recognise a 'fit' between themselves and particular items of dress. As demonstrated, these clothing preferences were often initially formed through childhood experiences and continually re-negotiated and assessed throughout the participants' lives. This notion of likeness drew in particular upon Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, suggesting a notion of reciprocity between seer and seen - a strange system of perceptual exchanges in which body and things in the world are entangled.

Dress and the body were positioned as working together, with the movement of the body animating dress and affecting both the participants' appearance and their mood. Developing on this argument, dress was positioned as sitting on the boundary of the body - bridging the biological and social self. Within social situations visual aspects of dress were shown to enable techniques of managing the social gaze, although these techniques were not always successful. Participants' bodies were revealed and concealed, and as result this invited or deflected the gaze of others, creating a sense of standing out of blending in for the participants.

While the wish to push out or pull back from the social world responded to social rules and requirements relating to dress, and to the participant's awareness of social identities as constructed through dress - such as gender - participants did not always conform to these requirements. Rather they were negotiated through and mediated by, personal preferences, bodily pleasures, discomforts and anxieties and also individual emotional needs. Examples of private and public acts of resistance were presented, demonstrating the importance of paying attention to how garments felt on the inside, sitting against the participant's body, as contextualising the public presentation of self and the meanings that might be inferred from dressed appearance alone. Additionally, emotion was shown to be an important dimension within visual engagement with dress. Emotional connections were formed with particular items, suggesting an interweaving between inner perception, imagination, intangible feelings and outer perception. Visual aspects of

dress could affect mood and were shown at times to contribute to wider transitions between life situations and relationships.

In this way, it was argued that dress as a visual surround for the body (contributing to the overall atmosphere of the dressed body) can be theorised as, following Goffman, a 'territory of the self' (1971:52-52) where visual aspects of dress worked alongside other sensory aspects within the atmosphere of the dressed body to create impressions, or not, upon others within social life, but also contributed to the participants' individual sense of self.

Chapter 4. Images

Fig. 4.01
Ryan's trainers (2014)
Red trainers. Suede and woven textile upper with leather trim and rubber sole. Made by Nike. Bought in Brighton in 2012. £50.

'I just went into one of the shoe shops in Brighton. And they just kind of jumped off the shelf at me…'
(Ryan Interview 2: 00:02:28)

'And I think when I walk around town, I walk really quickly (laughter) and I quite like kind of jumping up and down steps and generally kind of springing around and they're good for that.'
(Ryan Interview 1: 00:00:56)

'…I've started to realise that being someone that can have fun and can turn a boring work thing into something that people enjoy is quite valuable. Because a lot of work is boring. These shoes are my symbol of that.'
(Ryan Interview 1: 00:01:54)

Text references:
Chapter 4 (page 121), Chapter 6 (page 212)

Fig. 4.02
Robert's colourful outfit (2012)
Burgundy and white polka dot scarf. 100% woven silk with fringing. Made by
Aspinal of London. Bought online in 2010. A Christmas present from his daughter.
£80.

*'It's got sentimental meaning now, because when my daughter had her first baby and I
went to see my grandson and he was then, oh, about 4 or 5 months old...It's that kind
of thing when babies are exploring everything with their mouths and this would be
ringing wet because he was so fascinated with it. He really liked the taste or the
texture of it... There was something about it'.*
(Robert Interview 2: 00:42:30)

'So, as you say, it's acquired a kind of provenance'.
(Robert Interview 2: 00:43:45)

Text references:
Chapter 4 (page 128)
Chapter 7 (page 272)

Fig. 4.03
Susan's dress (2015)
Pale blue with white polka dot dress. 100% woven polyester. Label has the name 'Classics'. Found at a clothes swop at The Cowley Club in Brighton in 2012. Free.

'I just felt like laughing because it was so ridiculous. I wore that and I was actually reading a poem out at the wedding in the cathedral and she thought it was all fine… Here's a dress that I have never worn, never really wanted to wear particularly - I didn't think it looked particularly nice, but she did - and it was a clothes swap (laughter). It was her idea of what I looked…it was perfectly ordinary, short-sleeved, polka dot. It was awful material I remember, Crimplene type stuff, but it didn't matter because nobody was going to come up and feel it, nobody cared.' (Susan Interview 2: 00:27:51)

'…nobody really cares what anybody else wears, let's face it, unless it's absolutely fantastic and stuff. Nobody cared, they wanted to see me and talk to me, not the dress. There I was revealing my deepest belief to myself; it was really satisfying in all sorts of ways'. (Susan Interview 2: 00:53:10)

Text references: Chapter 4 (page 134)

Fig. 4.04
Paul (2011)
Paul posing for a photograph at the first interview.
Black jacket. 55% woven cotton and 45% nylon. Made by Dunhill. Bought in Oxfam in London in 2009. £50.

Text references:
Chapter 4 (page 135)

Fig. 4.05
A selection of April's clothes (2012)
Second from right: Grey/green embroidered shirt. 100% woven viscose. Made by Topshop. Bought in Brighton in 2011. £35.

'I wouldn't just wear a bra under it because I would find it uncomfortable. But it's still, like, see - it's see-through but it's covered up at the same time.'

(April Interview 2: 00:23:42)

Text references:
Chapter 4 (page 138)

Fig. 4.06
Detail of Paul's shirt hem (2015)
White shirt. 100% woven cotton. Made by a tailor in Hong Kong (a copy of Paul's Mulberry shirt) in 2010. £30.

Text references:
Chapter 4 (page 148)

Fig. 4.07
Ryan's jeans (2014)
Dark blue jeans. 100% woven cotton denim. Made by Huit. Bought in London in 2013. £230.

Text references: Chapter 4 (page 148)

Fig. 4.08
Robert's partner's dress (2012)
White floral print dress. 95% woven viscose and 5% elastane. Made by Nougat.
Bought in London. £60.

'…I have a very strong memory of her in the dress, on the common at Greenwich, on a very, very hot day - but very windy day - and the dress kind of blowing against her…'
(Robert Interview 2: 01:04:00)

'Ok. It's a synthetic material. It's white. It's short. It's what I refer to as a flimsy dress. It has a pattern of - I'm not sure what they are - they're like purple roseheads…Yeah, it's very kind of summery…'
(Robert Interview 2: 01:05:00)

'I just couldn't bear it being thrown away because it was such a strong visual and emotional memory of that kind of particular day.'
(Robert Interview 2: 01:08:00)

Text references:
Chapter 4 (page 149)

Fig. 4.09
April's shoes (2012)
Cream and brown leopard print platform heel shoes. Suede. Made by Top Shop.
Bought in Brighton in 2012. £40 in the sale.

Text references:
Chapter 4 (page 152)

CHAPTER 5. TOUCH

Introduction

The sense of touch - as with sight - was central to the participants' everyday engagement with dress. Feelings of comfort that came through tactile and haptic aspects of dress were an important consideration for the participants when dressing. As was outlined in the previous chapter, they tried to achieve a balance of looking and feeling right when dressed. During the interviews aspects of touch were discussed unprompted by all of the participants.

The extended length of this chapter reflects the extensive data within the interviews relating to touch. The centrality of touch is perhaps unsurprising because, as Paterson has observed:

> ...unless we have an extremely rare neurological condition, touch is present within every single interaction with objects, and a considerable amount of interaction with people. (Paterson 2007:2)

The many different ways in which touch was involved in the participants' sensory engagement with their dress - on and off the body - was broad. Their bodies were in close contact with dress items when worn, and they were handled during shopping, dressing, storing and maintenance. The participants' touch interactions with dress were framed by the particular ways in which their bodies moved, which as stated, is a central concern throughout this thesis. As Classen notes, 'Touch in fact relies on motion for its full expression, for both stroking and striking' (2005:3).

The way that participants sensed their dress through touch involved two, albeit interlinked, types of touch. The first is 'tactile', and refers specifically to cutaneous sensations felt through pressure on the skin or through handling and also refers to the surface texture of dress items. The second is 'haptic' which describes how the whole body experiences and is affected by the feel of dress moving against and touching or pressing upon the body. This includes the texture of dress but also its weight (whether heavy or light for example) and structure (see also the definitions provided in chapter one on page 26). Additionally through the

touch of dress upon the body and skin, the body senses that it is itself being touched by dress, creating an epidermic and haptic awareness of the bodily self.

Analysing the participants' touch engagement with dress was not straightforward. The immediate tactile and haptic contact was further complicated by another metaphorical sense of touching - one that involved 'the affective', 'the emotional' and the 'empathetic' (Paterson 2007:2-3). Paterson sums up the complexities as such:

> So touch, like vision, articulates an equally rich, complex world, a world of movement and exploration, of non-verbal social communication. It is a carnal world, with its pleasures of feeling and being felt, of tasting and touching the textures of flesh and food. And equally it is a profound world of philosophical verification, of the communication of presence and empathy with others, of the co-mingling of body, flesh and the world. (Paterson 2007:2)

Arguably, Paterson might have included the textures of 'dress' along with the other essential elements of 'flesh and food' that bodies are in daily, regular contact with. The aspects that Paterson points to - the dual physical and metaphorical nature of touch, the pleasures of touch and its role in exploration, learning, communication and social relations - were evident in the data and as such, thread throughout the analysis.

The analysis of touch is organised into three main thematic sections. The first concerns 'Learning through touch', and is split into headings relating to the different type of knowledge gained by the participants. These are: 'Dress knowledge', 'Environmental knowledge', 'Body knowledge' and 'Social and cultural knowledge'. The second section considers the participants' feelings of 'Comfort and discomfort' through dress, which is understood as a complex combination of physical and emotional touch framed within particular social contexts. The third section, 'Second skin: Dress as haptic space for the body', explores how haptic and tactile aspects of dress experience contributed to the sensory atmosphere of the body, affecting the mood of the participants. Within this section dress is also

positioned as providing a type of moveable, tangible home or second skin for the body.

These themes are by no means discrete, with many aspects connecting all three. As previously discussed (see chapter two), one of the methodological considerations framing this study was the connection between dress, the body, mind and culture within sensory engagement with dress. The analysis of touch brings these aspects together explicitly, through addressing the points of connection, of touching, between the world, the body and the materiality of dress. In doing so it draws on Merleau-Ponty's (1993 [1964]) articulation of touch as sensory crossover and considers how, through the touch of dress, participants came to know about themselves and connect to the world and the other people and things within it.

However, before moving on to the aforementioned sections, I will provide a summary of the main types of haptic and tactile engagement that were discussed, along with an outline of the range of differing attitudes and dispositions towards touch and dress as expressed by the participants.

Summary of participant haptic attitudes and engagement

When the participants were shopping, vision and touch worked together. Touch enabled the participants to assess the material qualities and feel of the dress items. When trying on clothes, the way that the item touched the body was a means to assess fit, and this was usually done in conjunction with visual assessments in the mirror. Seven of the participants used look and feel together when shopping and ten described how they would see something first and then needed to feel or touch it. One of those, Elsa did most of her shopping online, where it was impossible to touch the items when making initial selections. Paula was unusual in that for her the feel of clothes was the first and most important aspect when shopping, she says: 'I don't check everything by look. I have to touch it' (Paula Interview 1: 0:02:48). Two participants stated that it was just the look that they were interested in – Laura explicitly tells me that she is 'not bothered about material' (Laura Interview 1: 00:06:35) - although they both later discussed fit as a factor.

Physical comfort was – to different degrees and in different situations – important to all of the participants. Eight participants stated that comfort was very important to them. For most, the concern was to achieve a balance between 'look' and 'feel'. The most successful items that participants possessed were often described as visually appealing and suiting them, but also as feeling nice or comfortable. At work and at special or formal events like a wedding, looking 'right' and appropriately dressed was a requirement that all the participants adhered to in varying degrees, and in these cases they usually made a concession to comfort. In general, stiffer fabrics and more structured clothing were considered by participants to be 'smarter', and therefore more appropriate for formal occasions. Alternatively, in more private spaces, or when they were undertaking practical or informal activities, such as DIY, playing with their kids or, for the artists, working in their studios, appearance became less of a concern, and they were more aware of the way dress felt on their bodies.

There were both positive and negative opinions expressed by the participants, where the texture or weight and structure of dress could be highly pleasurable, but could also irritate. Not all the participants valued or paid attention to the tactile pleasures of fabrics and textures to the same degree or in the same way. Pamela for example, actively sought out the pleasure of silk (as well as other fabrics), and Andrea says 'I love the feeling of things against my skin' in particular silk, velvet and wool (Andrea Interview 2: 00:24:33). On the other hand, Susan appreciated the tactile quality of silk but would not actively seek it out, stating that while certain fabrics like silk and cotton felt nice, she was not so bothered as to go out of her way to put on a silk shirt (Susan Interview 1: 00:53:45). However Susan did talk at length about the pleasurable textures of wool yarn, as she was a keen knitter (Susan Interview 1: 00:04:21).

Four of the participants specifically stated that they did not like the feel of some synthetic fabrics against their skin. Laura hated the feel of garment labels and had to cut them out before wearing anything (Laura Interview 1: 00:13:58). Some types of wool were described as itching or irritating against the skin, other types like cashmere were described as pleasurable and soft. How a dress item felt was very specific to the detail of each individual garment - its fibre, construction and shape - as will be evidenced throughout this chapter. When worn as part of an

outfit, other layers of clothing also affected to what degree it touched the body. How an item felt on the body could also change depending on the season, weather and environmental temperature and the activity the participant was undertaking. In this way tactile and haptic experience of dress was difficult to pin down, always contextual and in flux.

The participants developed haptic and tactile knowledge of dress and from childhood onwards. They learned how materials and garments might feel on their particular bodies and how garments and dress materials wore out through the habitual touch engagement of wearing them. They also accumulated the necessary haptic skills involved in dressing and caring for clothes through storing, cleaning and laundering practices. A number of participants stated that they actively choose not to wear – that is touch – a favourite item of dress too often - in order to extend its life.

Participants also learned to associate symbolic cultural meanings with particular textures and with the haptic qualities of dress, an example being notions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. The way that dress touched and structured or freed the participants' bodies had haptic effects upon their deportment, movement and emotional mood. It made them *feel* in culturally prescribed ways. To give an example, Paula described how her sari made her feel 'girly' in a very particular way due to the wrapping of the garment - how it covered parts of her body and exposed others to the touch of the elements - and how it restricted her movement (Paula Interview 1: 00:45:11). This was Paula's own individual idea of what 'girly' felt like in relation to her sari. James, on the other hand, loved wearing American work wear because of its tough materiality. He associated the haptic qualities of fabrics like heavy leather and denim with both masculinity and with cultural authenticity (James Interview 2: 00:16:52). The touch of familiar dress items on their body also provided a means for participants to assess changes in their body weight and shape.

This accumulated knowledge - working alongside visual and other types of sensory understanding - played a part in framing the participants' dress choices. These preferences sometimes changed as they aged and their bodies, lifestyles, needs and desires changed.

Learning through touch

This section discusses the knowledge that participants gained through everyday, habitual touch interactions with their dress. Haptic engagement with dress can involve the minutest of sensations and sensory adjustments, attending to the changing needs of the body in particular environmental and social situations. These seemingly mundane practices - the micro-details of everyday dress activity - may seem insignificant in themselves, but together they make up the larger experience of daily dressed life.

Following Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk's (2014) notion of 'sensory work' as outlined in chapter one, and Dant's (1999, 2005) research into interaction with the material world, the sense of touch is viewed as a tool for making sense of the world. The participants sometimes actively engaged in this learning process, at other times they were less aware of it taking place.

Dress knowledge

The material(s) that dress items are constructed from and how the material is shaped and structured into a garment, the way it is knitted, woven or cut, the type and placement of seams, darts and openings, plus any additional treatments such as dyes, finishes or embellishments, all combine to determine how an item of clothing feels and how it responds to the body and to the environment. Additionally how a dress item 'encloses' the body, whether wrapped, suspended, pre-shaped or a combination of these aspects (Eicher and Evenson 2015:14) affects how it feels to wear. These dimensions give dress items particular sensory qualities, both visual, as discussed in the previous chapter, and haptic, as will be discussed shortly, as well as auditory and olfactory qualities, which are discussed in chapters six and seven. Haptic qualities might include: how hard or soft, rough or smooth the item is to the touch, warmth and coolness, weight and thickness on the body, and degrees of stiffness and malleability.

Tactile qualities of clothing also change through wear and tear and through laundering - participants discussed how the texture and structure of their clothes had changed over time. Furthermore, as items of dress are worn together as an outfit, often layered on top of each other, different materials can affect each other -

for example creating static when rubbing together, or sticking to each other – something that the slippery linings of outerwear is designed to prevent.

This discussion of 'Dress knowledge' is split into four further sub-headings: 'Dress materials', Manipulating dress', 'Tactile and haptic pleasure and displeasure' and 'Wearing in, worn out'.

Dress materials

The participants described preferences for particular fabrics, but these were quite specific and nuanced. Four of the participants stated that they liked wearing cotton, however the type of cotton each described could be quite specific. Robert for example, talks at length about the weight and weave of a favourite cotton shirt, showing me how it felt just right (Robert Interview 1: 00:28:15).

Some of the participants also had particular expertise in assessing fabrics and garments. As previously mentioned, Pamela had worked in fashion and Simon was a shirt-maker. Some of the other participants had also built up specific knowledge relating to dress as a result of their interests or hobbies. For example, Aaron had learned about the quality of T- shirt printing techniques when he ordered T-shirt designs for his record label. He shows me examples and explains that he is now able to tell how good the print is just by looking at it, but that, 'It's to do with the weight of the print' (Aaron Interview 1: 00:06:32).

Ryan explains that he likes to touch 'shiny' fabrics, but not to wear them and that he doesn't really like the look of them. However it is not in essence their appearance that he dislikes, but the fact that the shininess suggests to him that they might cling if worn next to his skin (Ryan Interview 1: 00:55:57). So Ryan's visual preference is based on his haptic knowledge of how shiny fabrics feel to wear on his body, knowledge that he has gained over the years. Aaron and Ryan have, in this way built up haptic and tactile skills that enabled them to assess sensory aspects of dress items. Moreover these examples demonstrate how haptic skills often work alongside visual skills.

The participants' specific types of haptic knowledge and expertise around dress had developed as a result of their particular biographies. Robert, Paul, Pamela, and Paula all explicitly remembered textures or haptic qualities of clothing and how these had shaped their on-going preferences or dislikes. Pamela explains

how she was influenced by her childhood growing up near an estate in the Borders of Scotland, where the estate workers wore locally woven wool tweeds:

> So growing up in the Borders, it was, it was always like that and I was aware that other people, when you brushed against them, it felt good. (Pamela Interview 1: 00:10:16).

While early experiences shaped some of their responses to fabrics and materials, this continued to change and develop throughout the participants' lives in relation to their changing experiences and needs, in addition to the development of new fabrics, changing fashions and cultural taste. Elsa discussed at some length how she thought the advent of knitted Lycra and jersey transformed the way she dressed and how it felt to be dressed. She describes how, when she wears jersey, she feels 'positively cradled', how we have all become used to this (Elsa Interview 1: 00:12:16). Aaron normally wears casual hoodies (hooded, knitted cotton jersey sweatshirts) and jeans, but recently bought a smarter wool pea coat when he went shopping with his mum. He describes enjoying the 'weight' and 'smartness' of it - which is a contrast to the clothes he wore when he was younger (Aaron Interview 1: 00:14:39, Interview 2: 00:31:39).

Manipulating dress

At the level of daily activity, dress items can be manually manipulated in order to transform their tactile properties and change the way they touch the body. As a result this transforms how they feel on the body. John explains why his shirt is a favourite. He shows me how it can be worn casually, the fabric scrunched and creased, sleeves rolled up, or be made to look and feel smarter – through buttoning it up, or ironing it so that the shirt texture is smooth (John Interview 2: 00:03:38) (see Fig. 5.01 on page 204). John has learned to manipulate tactile and haptic aspects of his shirt in order to both change his look, but also to create particular atmospheres and modes of being, to make him feel relaxed or formal. This is discussed in more depth in the section on dress as second skin at the end of this chapter.

In his writing on dress and materiality, Dant has emphasized the malleability of clothing (1999:86). It was this fluidity and flexibility that allowed the participants to make micro adjustments to their outfits to fit their needs as they moved through the world, managing their relationship to the changing physical and social environments around them. Those items that could be easily and successfully manipulated in useful ways were often highly valued by the participants, and this active haptic engagement with dress items could be a pleasurable activity in itself. For example, Paula described how she manipulated 'bits of fabric' in multiple ways:

> I like fabric. I see something like this and I think it can be a sarong. I can wrap it round my head. I can use it as a shawl. I can take this and take it to the park and sit on it. You know, I like fabric…I mean if you have three bits of fabric, you'd be fine. Off you go. (Laughter) You know. Fine.
> (Paula Interview 2: 00:37:46)

Paula's statement is reminiscent of Mukulika Banerjee and Miller's (2003) study of the Indian sari. They document how the 'pallu' or 'free end of the sari' which normally 'falls over the left shoulder down to the waist' is used for many jobs beyond those normally associated with clothing, such as 'wiping a table', 'lifting hot vessels' so as to protect the hands when cooking, or cradling a baby when breastfeeding (Banerjee and Miller 2003: 29-41). As a form of material culture, dress is particularly malleable, and as a result there are multiple ways in which it touches the body - following its form or even extending its reach. For Paula, successful haptic engagement with dress can be seen to reward '…the worker with the pleasure and satisfaction of having achieved mastery over the tools and objects' – in this case, dress (Dant 2010:np).

Tactile and haptic pleasure and displeasure

Participants expressed haptic knowledge about how particular materials acted and felt against their bodies – if they caressed, itched, kept them warm or cool, constricted or allowed freedom of movement, and this was contextualised by the weather and the environment in which they were worn.

The touch of dress was closely associated with pleasure within the data. Sensory scholars such as Yi-Fu Tuan have argued that modern society devalues touch and the pleasures of touch, which are an essential part of learning about the world (2005:75, see also Classen 2005, Howes 2005). Within this study, the touch of dress items gave all the participants pleasure in different and nuanced ways. Paul, Andrea, James, Paula and Pamela expressed particularly intense pleasure from the feel, texture and structure of clothes and how they felt either to the touch or on their bodies. Throughout the second interview, Paula stroked and rubbed her clothes fondly, telling me why she liked the texture. She often stood up and put items on to show me how they hung or made her move, or how she put her hands in the pockets. For her touch was essential to the enjoyment she took from her clothes and this was both a tactile and haptic pleasure. When she is trying on her favourite coat she says: '...it's like when I walk in this, I walk around and go like 'that' (laughter) - I don't know why' (Paula Interview 2 :00:37:41). For Paula the touching between her and her coat encourages her freedom to move or to perform and 'dance' in her clothes as she described it (Paula Interview 2: 01:05:50).

In another instance, Andrea showed me a 'very light', silk scarf that she takes on every holiday (see Fig. 5.02 on page 204). She remembers the feeling of it draped on her shoulders on a summer evening at the beach.

> You know the feeling of the sand and the sea and the sun on your skin, and the very sort of slightly sensitized...because your skin was slightly burned after the day, or slightly hot after the day. And this gorgeous, cool silkiness, draped on your shoulders. You've just had a shower and you're going out for the evening, and you're feeling quite sort of sensual I think, really sensual. (Andrea Interview 2: 01:55:09)

When discussing clothes that gave them pleasure, participants described the look, the fit and the haptic feeling of wearing items, and in some instances, also the sound and smell, which is discussed in the following chapters on these senses. Additionally, they described the pleasurable ways that dress transformed their movement and their emotional mood. Two of the male participants, Simon and John described the profound pleasure that socks – a fairly mundane item of dress -

could invoke. As previously mentioned in chapter two, John favours wearing 'good thermal socks' in the winter (see Fig. 2.01 on page 85). He is happy to pay for better quality ones and the feeling of wearing them attends to his desire to be comfortable. He says:

> ....when I wear these and I'm wearing these shoes, I feel like I'm bouncing, which is really nice, it's a nice feeling, there's nothing nicer than to feel comfortable in your shoes and socks, if I felt uncomfortable in my shoes and socks I would – it would be awful really, because that's kind of – comfort is a really main priority in the way I dress.
> (John Interview 2: 01:19:18)

The touch of the socks on his foot, and then combined with his comfortable 'skateboard' trainers (see Fig. 5.03 on page 205), make John move with a bounce. Furthermore the tactile and haptic sensation of wearing his socks and shoes then effects an emotional change in him.

> ...it makes you feel as it says - you know, with the spring in your step, you're looking forward to things. (John Interview 2: 01:21:00)

John's testimony is reminiscent of Ryan's discussion of his bright 'lairy' trainers in the previous chapter on sight. While the tactile and haptic sensations and John's change of mood are privately experienced, these may also have a public dimension. John's appearance may appear more relaxed and happy as he moves with a 'spring' in his step. In this way, and as will be argued in more depth in the discussion of 'Social and cultural knowledge' in this chapter, the sensory pleasures and pains of dress affect and work alongside the social presentation of the dressed self (Rocamora 2002:353).

The way that participants described tactile irritations from dress items were individual and nuanced, specific to their bodies and to the particular dress item. Robert showed me a shirt that he does not like, and says that in principle it is a lovely, blue, printed summer shirt, but there is something about the material that annoys his skin. He tried to pin it down, saying: 'It must be a very, very subtle

thing…it could be, at a guess, it might be the chemicals in the print' (Robert Interview 2: 01:11:30). The size, shape and construction of dress items also affected how they felt touching against the body. For example, Dylan explained how an extremely cheap t-shirt of his was particularly baggy and shapeless.

> I could feel like the extra material flapping around behind me… It was really annoying. And then the wind kept going up it as well (laughter). Yeah, very silly. (Dylan Interview 2: 00:19:27)

This example brings to attention the void between the body and dress, created through the structure of the t-shirt, the body, movement and the atmospheric conditions in the environment. This void is the point of sensory connection between body and dress and here the position of dress as interface between body and environment is apparent. When there was less void and movement, that is when clothing was tight or stiff, participants were made acutely, sometimes painfully, aware of their bodies. When the void between body and dress felt right for that particular moment, then a balance and a sense of 'oneness' was achieved.

The tactile and haptic sensation of wearing stiff or tight jeans was discussed by three of the participants. Elsa remembered wearing stiff, uncomfortable jeans in the 1980s, saying that she prefers the stretch denim that is available now (Elsa Interview 1: 00:12:16). Corin too, noted how new Levi 501 jeans start out stiff and slightly uncomfortable but become softer and shaped to the body through a cycle of 'breaking them in' (Corin Interview 1: 00:06:57). In considering the sensory dimensions of everyday dress items, as stated, this thesis pays attention to how these dimensions change through wear, which can itself be understood as a series of touch interactions between body and dress.

Wearing in, worn out

Dant has argued that the relationship between people and objects is a process of 'mutual shaping' (1999:84) and this can be applied to the wearing in clothes. Tuan suggests that, 'Touch, unlike the other senses, modifies its object' (2005:78). While I would agree that touch affects the materiality of dress in a very

tangible way, as will be argued in the analysis of smell, bodily and other aromas also impregnated and therefore modified participants' dress items.

The 'breaking in' process that Corin described is a type of haptic work that tangibly and materially changed the denim jeans, controlling them, softening them and shaping them to Corin's body. They come to feel pleasurable and personal, and look personal due to the paint that has splattered onto them. In this way he takes possession of them (see Fig. 5.04 on page 205). Andrea also showed me her many pairs of jeans, saying: '... my basic wardrobe is black jeans in various stages of disintegration' (Andrea Interview 1:00:50:52) (see Fig. 5.05 on page 206). Sam too, has an 'ancient' favourite hooded sweatshirt - bought when he was fifteen years old - that bears the marks of his biography and years of wear (Sam interview 2: 00:02:57) (see Fig. 5.06 on page 206). As Smith points out, using the example of museum exhibits, '...ownership still confers – and prohibits – the right to touch' (2007:115), and so the ...'notion that touching equals possession is... deeply embedded in Western culture' (Smith 2007:114). This was also apparent in the way that participants who bought second-hand clothing would wash items thoroughly to remove - along with dirt - any perceived residues that the touch of previous owners might have left, signifying a change in ownership. The practice of personalization through laundering is discussed further in chapter seven in relation to dirt and smell.

Through wearing in, a close tactile relationship sometimes formed between the participants and their dress, where they merged to become a, 'sensually meaningful whole' (Rocamora 2002:355). Ryan described this perfect point of connection as a:

> ...twilight period where they're truly yours but they are just about to be so buggered that you can't wear them. And that's when they are at their best. (Ryan Interview 1: 00:58:48)

Too much touching however - as Ryan points out - results in worn out clothes. All of the participants described, in one way or another, how they disliked when dress items changed shape or texture *too* much, through wear or laundering, moving beyond this twilight period and becoming problematic. Garments can

become 'limp' and 'lifeless', and as a result, they feel wrong on the body. For this reason some of the participants carefully stored, cleaned and maintained favourite dress items, or avoided touching or wearing them too much in order to preserve them. Paula has a pair of shoes, bought at a car boot for £8, which she literally 'loves', demonstrated in the way that she gently touched, talked to, and then kissed them during the second interview.

> Where are you? Don't say I didn't bring them. I love these (kissing) (laughter)…Love them. (Paula Interview 2: 00:46:53)

She cares for the leather of the shoes, regularly polishing them - as she does all her shoes - and her attachment is expressed through her gentle and familial touch.

> So it's like, to me, your shoes – like we like to moisturise the skin. It's the same for shoes. (Paula Interview 1: 00:35:30)

Paula's statement and her action of kissing – touching with her lips - expresses the empathetic nature of touch, where 'feelings get communicated in the act of touching' and where touch has a therapeutic quality (Paterson 2007:152). This demonstrates the way that touch can contribute to the close emotional entanglements that developed between the participants and some of their favourite dress items. Paula comes to know her shoes more intimately through her repeated wearing of them and to love them more as a result of the tactile, haptic and emotional pleasure she gets each time she wears them, when the shoes touch her feet, making them feel good. In turn she cares for them back, expressing her appreciation bodily and sensorily through the action of touching when cleaning and polishing them. This adds further layers of touch to her relationship with them.

Merleau-Ponty has articulated the closeness of touching between people and things as 'the intertwining' in which there is a 'kinship' that guides the hand towards feeling 'the textures of the sleek and the rough' (1968:133). Through the first sensory contact, involving vision and touch – and also pleasure - he argues that a relationship is 'opened' up.

With the first vision, the first contact, the first pleasure, there is an initiation, that is, not the positioning of a content, but the opening of a dimension that can never again be closed, the establishment of a level in terms of which every other experience will henceforth be situated. (Merleau-Ponty 1968:151)

Paula told me the story of when she found the shoes at the car boot sale. This was the beginning of their relationship, or as Merleau-Ponty terms it above, '...the opening of a dimension'. Arguably, with dress, it is both the hand, but also the body that is guided towards touching the item and feels that first pleasure when touched back by dress. For Paula, the pleasure of touch began with her hands when buying the shoes (having been drawn to them visually), was then extended to her feet when wearing them, but then further to her whole body as the shoes made her move in a particular way, and again back to her hands when she cares for her shoes. Accumulatively this touch engagement creates an additional emotional dimension to Paula's relationship to her shoes.

For Merleau-Ponty, the duality of touching and being touched back means that the person, in 'passing over to the rank of the touched, descends into the things' (1968:134). For him, it is this 'crisscrossing' of the touching and the tangible that is the root of the intertwining. In this way, through sensory exchange, people understand themselves to be a thing among things - each and all entangled within the same universe or environment, where one does not exist without the other (Merleau-Ponty 1968:133). An example that demonstrated, quite literally, an entanglement between a participant and their dress was Robert's apron that he uses in his art studio - which he has had for twenty years and as he stated, he will keep on repairing and never replace. It has layers of paint and clay impregnated into the fabric and he describes getting 'locked into' it as the apron strings get tangled, so he has to 'climb out of it'. However, like his paint-splattered shoes, the apron lives only within the environment of his art studio (Robert Interview 2: 01:26:00). Dress can also be seen to mediate the connections between the participants and the environment, and through touch a relationship between the two is opened up. This is considered in the following section.

Environmental knowledge

Information about the physical environment and changing seasons was gained through the haptic experience of dress, with the feel of dress items providing a sensory interface, or opening and closing, between the participant's body and the touch of the physical environment. As will be demonstrated in the following example, the touch of dress could in this way, connect to a sense of place and time.

Karen described a particular type of favourite cotton plimsoll shoe of which she owns many pairs (see Fig. 5.07 on page 207). She buys them in Poland (her home country), they are cheap and so she stocks up on them whenever she goes home to visit. Although they are not really suitable for wearing outside because of their flimsy nature, Karen told me that she wears them in the UK in almost all weathers. Because of this, she always senses when the cold weather is coming through the increasing chill on her feet as she walks on the pavement. This happens even before she senses a chill on her face (Karen Interview 1: notes). While her shoes provide *some* protection from the full impact of the cold, somewhat paradoxically, in not doing this job well, they put her feet in touch with the ground. Protection normally implies a positive effect, and shoes are designed to provide some protection for the feet from the cold, or from damage from the hard floor (although in the case of women's dressy sandals it is often only the sole that provides protection, the upper is there to reveal the foot). However, in Karen's case, there was a benefit from being open to the elements, as this could, in its own way, be sensually pleasurable, provide knowledge about the environment and - as will be discussed shortly - evoke memories of 'home'.

When discussing walking in relation to the sensory experience of time and place, Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk refer to Ingold's (2000) phrasing of boots and shoes as 'blunting' the foot's sense of touch (Ingold quoted in Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk 2014:119). They discuss the Israeli practice of walking in bare feet in order to allow 'unmediated contact with the land'. This is both a physical and a spiritual contact, where bare feet are '...absorbing the spirit of the Land of Israel through the soles of the feet' (Oz quoted in Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk 2014:120). The sensory barrier that shoes put up between the body and the ground could be considered a negative restriction or mediation of sensation - a

barrier to embodied or spiritual knowledge, rather than a positive form of bodily protection. In this way, Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk (2014) consider how attitudes towards touch can reveal a culture's attitude towards the environment. Howes has also discussed the relationship between the skin and the environment, how the 'skinscape and the landscape are linked in multiple ways' (2005b:33) and how the ways in which they are linked can reveal cultural values and attitudes.

As Karen feels and 'absorbs' the changing seasons, which are particular to the UK through her feet, the shoes help to emplace her in this particular place and time and orient her body to the changing seasons. Additionally, the familiar feel on her foot and the associations of home that the shoes have, evoke memories of Poland and her cultural identity, and this emotional connection is part of their appeal. Karen's feet are simultaneously sensing the inside of the shoes, reminding her of Poland, and sensing the ground beneath them, reminding her that she is in the UK. In this way Karen's shoes emplace her in the here and now but also in the there and then of her past. The sensation of wearing the shoes constructs a new corporeal embodied experience that helps Karen to negotiate her sense of place within the world, both past and present.

Body knowledge

Dress touched and pressed against the participants' bodies and in so doing, could facilitate them with knowledge about their changing bodies over time. Ten of the participants explicitly discussed how the feel of dress on their bodies – particularly items they had owned for a long time - made them aware that they might have put on weight or that their body shape had changed. This was a form of self-conscious, haptic body knowledge. It was often combined with looking at their image in the mirror to see if the clothes looked as if they fitted or not.

Related to this body consciousness, dress was, at times used by the participants to pull in the body, to re-shape it in an attempt to make their body both look and feel good. Managing these haptic sensations of dress was - like managing appearance - a means of negotiating the pressures from wider social structuring forces and discourses, which included normative and ideal notions around body shape. For example, Andrea showed me a handkerchief style skirt that she always feels good in. She described how it drapes and has some stretch,

which for her was important, '…because I can wear it when I'm quite fat and I can wear it when I'm very slim and it always fits me' (Andrea Interview 1: 00:26:36). She went on to explain that it is not body hugging, it 'flows' and has 'movement' which is, again, an important quality for Andrea, yet it *does* hold her 'tum' in:

> And it holds my tum in as well, which is really nice. It's a nice feeling. You
> sort of feel contained (Laughter). In a good way.
> (Andrea Interview 1: 00:29:29)

Andrea takes pleasure from these different types of touch, one, the movement of the lower part of the skirt brushing her legs, but also - and in contrast - the feeling of skin and fabric pressed together around her waist and stomach. Her skirt is successful in touching her body in the right ways, in the right places. The effect is to make her feel good - to feel and look 'contained', but also to allow movement. It has disciplined that part of her body that threatens to breach the boundaries of the social ideal, a notion that will be discussed in more depth in the following section on social and cultural knowledge. Dress historian, Rebecca Arnold has considered the conflict between the pleasurable, sensual delights of fashion and the need to create a modern, slim physique (Arnold 2001:65). Yet, as Andrea's example demonstrates, these two aspects can co-exist when the right item of dress is worn.

In another example, Sam described a suit he had bought in the January sales. He had not tried it on, assuming that he was the same 'off the peg' size as always. However, when he did put it on he could feel by the tightness against his body that he had jumped up a size (Sam Interview 1: 00:10:48). In relation to standard 'sizing' of clothing, size categories are constructed by the industry, and these have implied value judgments. Some sizes are considered normal or 'medium', others are defined as 'small' or 'large', terms that begin with a normative ideal and then present abnormal transgressions from these ideals. Sizing also glosses over the nuanced ways in which body shapes are individual and particular. In this way, culture played a role in constructing the body knowledge that participants understood through touch engagement with their dress.

Dress when pushing against the skin can leave corporeal traces, such as the imprint of sock elastic or a tight waistband. As Howes states:

The same environmental conditions that shape the land also leave their mark on the skin. This is a distinctive feature of the skin for, while we perceive aspects of the environment with all our sensory organs, only the skin can manifest the marks of what it has perceived. (Howes 2005b:33)

But even when marks are not left, the haptic memory of how dress feels to the touch or against the body is retained to a degree by the body. Out of the twenty participants, thirteen described haptic memories of clothing relating to previous stages in their lives - when they dressed differently - or to particular items. For example, James remembered the comfortable looseness of dancing at raves in baggy clothes as a young man (James Interview 2: 00:33:28). Anne vividly recalled stroking a teacher's velvet boots during reading time as a child at school (Anne Interview 1: 01:05:10). As a result of this embodied somatic memory, if new clothes were worn that had an unfamiliar haptic sensation they took some getting used to. This was apparent in the example of Karen's necklaces discussed in chapter one (Karen Interview 1: 00:07:45), and in the following example.

Elsa preferred the feel of stretchy, knitted jersey fabrics on her body, so having bought a more structured coat she initially thought that it felt too tight. She was quite anxious that it was too small and had therefore been a bad purchase. However, as she got used to the feel of wearing it and to the tightness, she began to reassess her attitude, to feel that it was 'fitted' rather than tight and that it felt ok, like 'her' (see Fig. 2.02 on page 86) (Elsa Interview 1: 00:11:32). As Dant states - and although he is discussing windsurfing, this could apply to Elsa and her coat:

It is through experiencing the inside of a thing, through sensing and responding to its 'pushiness', that we are able to collaborate with material objects, recognizing from their inside something about the rest of the world, including ourselves as physical objects' (Dant 1999:123).

In the earlier section, touch was shown to shape and modify the materiality of dress. From the examples discussed in this section, the touch of dress was also shown to shape a sense of the physical body. As will be discussed in the following

section, this mutual shaping (Dant 1999:84) works not only at a corporeal level but also at the level of social and cultural signification and meaning.

Social and cultural knowledge

Through touch engagement with dress, participants gained knowledge about the social and cultural world around them and the rules and structures guiding their bodies and behaviour within various social situations.

Some yarns, weave and knit textures have implied associations with gender categories. The haptic qualities of silk, for example, were discussed by some of the female participants but not the male. Others have implied associations with luxury, such as velvet weaves, silk and fur, and in this way culture constructs hierarchies of value around dress materials. The status of materials can relate to their texture and the sensations these provoke in the wearer, but physical experience is also entangled with symbolic associations. Arnold, in her account of twentieth century fashion as 'desire and anxiety' highlights how: 'Luxury is a recurring motif of fashionable dress, offering sensual delight to the wearer and frequently a visual feast for the onlooker' (2001:17). She points out that status can be implied through both 'obvious indulgence in fine fabrics and decoration' but also in a 'restrained simplicity' (Arnold 2001:17).

When participants articulated fabrics they liked these tended to be 'simple' and 'natural', for example cotton, linen, wool, silk, and leather came up. Four of the participants explicitly expressed a preference for 'natural' fabrics. In these cases, there was an implied sense that 'natural' was better than 'man-made', somehow more straightforward, simple and 'authentic'. This disposition towards natural fabrics could be considered, following Bourdieu's (1994) notion of the habitus, as 'acquired through education, both formal and informal (through family, schooling and the like)' (Entwistle 2000:36). In contemporary UK culture, 'natural' and 'authentic' materials are highly valued within aspirational discourses around 'good taste', 'healthy living' and sustainability. Fashion, home furnishing and food brands often play on this within their branding and marketing campaigns. Within the data, the haptic and tactile pleasures of these materials worked alongside their implied symbolic value.

Roland Barthes (2000 [1957]) observed the significant symbolic value that touch contains in his essay on the Citroen car, where he describes how the driver inhabits the car and is enveloped by the Citroen's sensory environment. A comparison can be made here with the touch of dress as enveloping the body. Barthes proposed that through touching the car, its symbolic message is received, that of comfort, which for Barthes denotes petit-bourgeois advancement (Barthes 2000 [1957]:103). In Barthes's semiotic analysis, the symbolic meaning overtakes both the object of the car and the perceptual body – the meaning is imposed unchallenged upon the senses and upon materiality. Within the analysis of touch in this study, however, the meanings of dress were made and re-made through the 'dynamic relationship between people and things' (Attfield 2000:16), in which sensory engagement such as touch played an important role in upholding but also resisting cultural and symbolic associations.

An example that demonstrates this well is Robert's 'Belstaff style' jacket (see Fig. 5.08 on page 208). Robert brings his jacket to the second interview and talks about it immediately, and at length, precisely because he is so confused and conflicted about it (Robert Interview 2: 00:01:20). It is a biker 'style' jacket from a designer brand. However it is not made from leather or wax cotton as might be expected, but a cotton velvet, and this becomes problematic for Robert. He explains:

> I like the look of it but, actually, I rarely wear it, which is interesting but there's something about it that maybe I'm not comfortable with. It's strange because it's a copy of a Belstaff - what are they called, Belstaff jackets? Basically in the wrong material…and it actually doesn't function very well… (Robert Interview 2: 00:01:20)

For Robert, the jacket is complex because as a fashion statement it disrupts the conventional material order of a classic biker jacket, being made from a luxurious, soft fabric, velvet, rather than leather. It is therefore simultaneously familiar in shape and structure but unfamiliar in texture and weight. While this novelty and the way it resists convention is part of its fashionable appeal for Robert, this also makes it unnerving. Although Robert does not explicitly describe the jacket as

feminine, he does use terminology that alludes to broader cultural – and negative - stereotypes around 'femininity' or 'effeminate' dress, such as 'limp' and 'fussy'. While Robert does not have a problem with these aspects per se, it is the symbolic, cultural *contradiction* that underlies Robert's frustration, as notions of masculinity, toughness and practicality associated with biker culture, are at odds with the feminine, domestic and luxury associations around velvet.

Additionally, in subverting the normal order of a biker jacket, it veers away from being a classic, work wear item, and becomes more akin to a luxury 'fashion item', suggesting how status, in addition to gender is manifest through sensory aspects of materiality. A 'classic' garment is required to look but also to *feel* a certain way, to the tactile touch and when touching the body. It is this consistency that makes it classic, and the cut and the fabric must be in a proven and familiar combination. Paula explained this well, when she described how the shape, texture and weight of an item of dress can give its look 'longevity', something she appreciates in vintage clothing (Paula Interview 2: 00:41:52).

Robert's example demonstrates how haptic and tactile aspects of a garment's materiality help to frame the meaning it has for the wearer. They affect how it looks and can challenge the cultural values that are attached to it, revealing them as constructed. They may also affect whether the garment is worn or not.

As discussed in chapter one, while semiotic approaches to understanding dress as practice, bring to the fore the culturally ascribed meanings of dress, which are integral to the role of dress as social communication, they fail to acknowledge the role of materiality, the senses, embodied action, and other more personal, subjective and intangible aspects of dress experience. These might involve emotion, memory, sensuality, pleasure, pain or creativity, which also shape the meanings of dress for the wearer and the observer.

This was apparent within the following examples from the data that demonstrate how cultural and social structures and etiquette disciplined the body through haptic dimensions of dress, but also how this understanding and control was mediated by other sensory and emotional aspects of touch experience, notably that of pleasure. Foucault's (1977) articulation of institutional control as exerted upon the body is useful here in understanding the way that the touch of dress may shape the participants' bodies in socially and culturally prescribed ways.

The participants discussed social rules of dressing within more formal, everyday situations - such as weddings or business meetings. As Entwistle notes, these situations have more 'elaborate rules of dress than informal situations' (2000:15). For the male participants in this study, formal dressing translated into structured or tailored clothing - often suits. For the women this could also mean more structured clothing, as well as other forms of body transformation such as wearing shoes with heels. For example, John, who normally favoured comfortable, casual clothing, was aware of the need to wear a suit to weddings, even though he felt awkward in one (John Interview 2: 00:26:15). His statement highlights how dress not only shapes the appearance of the body but also how it feels and moves. One of the examples Foucault (1977) used to outline his theory is the soldier. He describes how, by the late eighteenth century, ordinary men were being shaped into soldiers through training - taught to stand upright, chest out, heads high, to acquire the 'air of the soldier' (1977:135). Indeed, numerous scholars of fashion and dress have drawn on Foucault's notion of the docile body to suggest the ways that fashion and dress can work on the boundaries of the body as a form of social control (see Tynan 2016 for an overview). Bordo (2003 [1993]), who points out that it was feminists who first introduced a 'politics of the body', has also accentuated the material control of the body in everyday life.

In formal situations the body was controlled or in Foucauldian terms 'disciplined' in order to adhere to social requirements. Conversely, participants discussed changing into more comfortable, leisure clothes when they were in the more private, informal space of the home, where they were not subject to the social gaze of others and therefore the body did not need to be controlled or contained. The touch of dress could also affect the participants' emotional mood and how they moved and behaved. In this way, the touch of dress at times played a significant role in aiding the transition between modes of feeling and acting, from for example, a 'work' mode into a 'relaxed' mode. In making clothing choices, participants could demonstrate their own control over their bodies, shaping them how they wanted to, choosing how they wanted their dressed body to feel, and of course look, or indeed sound or smell.

An example that demonstrated well how haptic dimensions of dress could discipline the body is James's leather 'pea coat', a traditional style of jacket

originally worn by sailors and fishermen (see Fig. 5.09 on page 209). James collects and loves to wear American workwear. He talked in detail about the fabrics and how they felt to the touch, the structure of the garments and how they felt on. In this way touch was central to how these items denoted, for James, a rather nostalgic sense of 'authenticity', 'toughness' and 'masculinity'. He told me that he often wore this peacoat for smarter, social occasions, saying:

> When I put it on, it's got shape. It's almost like *you* have to fit the coat. The coat is not particularly forgiving to you. 'No. This is the shape I'm gonna be' (Laughter). And you kind of sort of have to deal with that.
> (James Interview 2: 00:05:40)

> It's almost like it's made out of cast iron. I love the rigidity of it...
> (James Interview 2: 00:05:07)

Here, James's body is affected. He changes to 'fit' the coat, not the other way round. The coat transforms the way he moves about the world, his deportment and attitude, making him feel, act and possibly appear more contained and formal – and more 'masculine'.

Also of note in James's statement is the pleasure that he gets from the haptic experience of his body being controlled. This aspect of pleasure was similarly apparent when I asked Pamela to expand on a passing comment she had made earlier in the interview about her skirt 'swishing':

> You get a skirt that has movement...it really should be fitted on the hips. Of course, it doesn't need to be but I mean if it can be hung...If it can start from somewhere and then have some movement so that you are walking, but when you stop the thing comes back and settles with you. Oh, I mean, there's not a feeling like it in the world. (Pamela Interview 1: 01:07:07)

Pamela had previously described clothes that have a distinct movement as being wonderfully 'alive' (Pamela Interview 1: 01:11:28). In the above statement she articulated the connection that she felt between her body and the skirt working

together, and the pleasure she got from feeling the fabric fleetingly touch, move away, then settle against her legs. At one level this pleasure is just that, corporeal and sensory pleasure - with obvious value to Pamela as she goes about her daily life. When she moves, the skirt, which has a movement of its own – a result of its particular material and structural properties – provides her with a haptic sense of the external surface of her body, and this increases her sense of being alive.

Pamela then explained how this feeling also had cultural connotations. She linked it to a sense of 'being a woman and having grace and the ability to do things that men can't do' (Pamela Interview 1: 01:07:07). Here a level of social and cultural awareness is added to Pamela's haptic experience, as she knows that her experience is gendered. Young (2005 [1980]) has argued that women learn to act and to move in gendered ways, although within the data in this study, as James's earlier example suggests, this could equally be applied to men. Feminine and masculine tropes of dressing not only make the wearer look 'feminine' or 'masculine' but *feel* and *act* 'feminine' or 'masculine'. Following Butler's (1990) notion of gender performance and Goffman's (1990 [1959]) articulation of the 'presentation of self', dressing can be understood as part of the performance of gender, not only because it provides visual guidance for the audience (and wearer), but also because, like an actor's costume, through its touch upon the body and the way this makes them move, it helps the wearer to inhabit the character they are playing.

Notably Pamela does not feel controlled by the touch of her skirt, or controlled by the feeling of 'femininity' it affords her. Quite the opposite, the gendered haptic qualities of her skirt do not 'control' her, they free her. She, like James and his coat, enjoyed the haptic qualities of her skirt.

As these examples demonstrate, the way that dress touches and shapes the body is not merely expressive of cultural ideas or social structures, nor is it purely a pursuit for sensory and aesthetic pleasure. It is, as fashion theorists such as Wilson (2003 [1985]),Young (2005 [1988]) and Rocamora (2002), among others have argued, a complex mix of the two. As Wilson points out, the control of women's bodies through fashion and dress and their resulting subordination has been a 'source of concern to feminists, both today and in an earlier period', but as she also acknowledges, this concern needs to be balanced with fashion's role as an

active and liberating form of creative, self expression, albeit an ambiguous one (Wilson 2003 [1985]:13).

Pamela describes in another instance, how the touch of dress can indeed be a liberating force. She has a vivid, sensual memory of the first, flimsy silk bra she wore as a young woman in the 1950s. This signalled a profound change from the girdle style 'roll-on' rubber underwear that she had previously worn (and her mother's generation still wore). She says:

> This feeling of just two thin bits of fabric over your boobies, you know, which was caressing you actually. I mean, it was really lovely. It was sumptuous. Once you put those on you couldn't go back to the others, so that also had something to do with the clothes, the freedom…
> (Pamela Interview 1: 01:04:50)

Having described to me the initial tactile pleasure of wearing the bra, Pamela then reflected on its loose, free structure and as a result, the more intangible and emotional sense of 'freedom' she experienced when wearing it. Pamela suggested that this might link to a social and moral sense of moving away from what she describes as the 'chastity' and 'control mechanism' of the girdle (Pamela Interview 1: 01:04:17). As Paterson points out in his historical work on touch, tactile knowledge relates to objects but also the space around the body:

> The feeling of cutaneous touch when an object brushes our skin is simultaneously an awareness of the materiality of the object and an awareness of the spatial limits and sensations of our lived body.
> (Paterson 2007:2)

Pamela's sensation of breaking free from the boundaries restricting her body alludes to wider socio-cultural changes that were taking place at the time in the 1950s as social rules relaxed and some of the younger generation began to reject previous social conventions and styles of dressing. It further demonstrates the importance of haptic aspects of clothing in both restricting and liberating the social

body and enabling the wearer to know, and then potentially to transform the way in which they position themselves in society.

Social relations

The way people touch or do not touch each other is an important aspect within social relations. Tactile aspects of dress can invite others to touch us, or conversely provide a barrier to touch. Central to this study is a consideration of the space on the edge of the body that dress inhabits, which informs its role as interface, mediating the boundaries of the body and demarking the private space of the body. To brush someone mistakenly in passing is generally not an issue, although in UK culture an apology might be offered. To actively touch another person's clothes when on the body suggests a degree of familiarity, and the appropriateness of so doing will depend on the particular context and relationship in which it occurs. To touch inside a person's clothing would normally require a specific invitation, even within an intimate or familial relationship, as this space is clearly demarcated by clothing as intimate. As Attfield (2000) observed:

> ...dress constitutes the layer of material that lies between the body and the outside world. As such fabric mediates the relationship between the individual being and the act of being in the world at the most intimate level of social relations. (Attfield 2000:27)

As Paterson has argued, touch 'can bring distant objects and people into proximity' (2007:1) and this was apparent within the data. As previously outlined in the section on dress knowledge, touch could cement bonds between the participant and their dress. The touch of dress could also, at times, play a role in social bonding. For example, Elsa told me that when she wore her silk nightie and cashmere cardigan, her nieces came up and stroked and cuddled her. When I ask if it is the tactile aspects that attract them, she says 'absolutely', noting how the girls also sometimes rubbed their faces on her velveteen leggings.

> I have always got someone tangled up in my cardigan somewhere. It is really cuddly. (Elsa Interview 1: 00:16:27)

The comforting nature of haptic and tactile qualities of dress was an important aspect within the data. Elsa was particularly aware of this and articulated it well.

Under this heading of 'Social and cultural knowledge', I have explored the types of social and cultural learning that came through the participants' touch engagement with dress, arguing that the material and the symbolic are entangled within the meaning of dress items and within tactile and haptic experience of dress. Furthermore within social life, the way that dress shaped the body through touch and the importance of tactile and haptic pleasure for the participants was outlined.

In the following section, the notion of comfort and discomfort is discussed drawing on examples from Elsa and a number of the other participants.

Comfort and discomfort

Comfortable. Cocooned. Like it became a bit of a kind of comfort blanket really - to wear it in that cold flat in those few winter months.
(Anne Interview 2: 00:10:32)

The notion of 'comfort' was a recurring theme throughout the interviews and an important consideration for all of the participants. Smith has outlined a historical shift in the definitions of comfort, arguing that within modernity comfort became principally associated with physical touch and the skin, where protecting and caressing the skin – something clothing was able to do - had political value (2007:104). In the eighteenth century, prior to the 'trans-Atlantic consumer revolution of the 1700s, rather than denoting physical sensation, comfort was related to a metaphorical sense of 'emotional, spiritual well-being under trying circumstances' (2007:103). Additionally Smith suggests that comfort as an aspect of increasing consumer consumption in modernity - in attending to both luxury and necessity - 'eased the tension between the two' (2007:104). As previously mentioned, Elsa explicitly referred to the move towards dressing for comfort, when discussing the current popularity of Lycra and stretch jeans.

Then in the nineties all this Lycra came in and I think that was it, there'll be no turning back, like I will never wear a pair of those really uncomfortable jeans again because everything stretches. You know, our bodies have just got, I mean my body in particular, have got really used to being positively cradled. (Elsa Interview 1:00:12:16)

Participants talked about the sense of feeling both physically and metaphorically comfortable in their dress, often the two aspects were entangled. This could refer to putting on 'comfy' clothes that felt nice and soft against the body, in the privacy and 'comfort of the home' in order to relax. But it could also refer to feeling comfortable in what they were wearing because it was appropriate for the social situation. Alternately, participants also discussed feeling uncomfortable as a result of both physical and social aspects. Restrictive or ill-fitting clothes, fabrics that irritated the skin, or just types of clothes that they were not used to wearing, that felt 'odd', were described as physically uncomfortable. A sense of discomfort also came about if they felt inappropriately dressed or out of place in a given social situation.

In this way, and as discussed in the previous chapter on sight, appearance and how things felt on the body affected whether participants felt good and 'right'. As Woodward concludes in her analysis of 'looking in the mirror', 'comfort emerges as a dialectic between how clothing looks and how it feels' (2007:99). Relaxed, soft clothing did not necessarily create a parallel emotional or social sense of ease, as the haptic experience was always contextualised by the environment and situation, and how participants wanted to appear but also somatically 'feel' in that situation. At times these aspects contradicted each other. For example, worn in, comfortable leisure clothes were appropriate and desirable at home, but made participants uncomfortable if seen in public. And restrictive clothing, normally considered uncomfortable could, paradoxically, feel comfortable in more formal situations, because it was appropriate, it held in their bodies and created a more upright and contained posture and movement. Similarly when dancing participants wanted dress to encourage a sense of freedom on movement. Dancing at a wedding required a mix of both.

Elsa explained that fitted clothing could be comfortable in its own way, describing a sense of being tightly wrapped in winter with lots of layers and a coat.

> You know for me, the fitted coat thing is just a way of, I suppose kind of like closing myself in – locking myself – into it and being quite contained.
> (Elsa Interview 1: 00:13:04)

Here the environmental context affected whether different materials and dress items were 'comfortable' or not. Elsa's coat and layers are perfect for going outside in winter. They would no doubt make her uncomfortable in the height of summer. Feelings of comfort were also dependent on the social situation. Elsa also tells me about an old dress she had worn to a wedding that was quite tight, and she was surprised she still fitted it. I assumed that this would have made her feel uncomfortable, as she had previously said how much she liked to wear stretch clothes, and ask her how she felt in the dress. She says:

> It felt comfortable actually, but it felt comfortable because I was held in. I felt contained and supported. Because you do not want to dance and feel your boobs flying around. (Elsa Interview 1: 00:10:53)

Elsa's haptic experience of the dress is specific to the particular needs of the situation and her action. In a less formal situation, she may have felt too constricted.

In addition to feeling comfortably dressed, participants also described instances where they were physically and emotionally 'comfort*ed*' by their clothing, and touch played an important role in evoking this feeling. As Robert stated when discussing his cashmere jumper (see Fig. 5.10 on page 210):

> Yes, I think what I enjoy about it is its warmth and its tightness. Its closeness - but it isn't a loose garment. I'm aware that I'm being comforted…Like wrapping a blanket around you.
> (Robert Interview 2: 01:17:45)

Wearing certain familiar garments or accessories actively gave the participants a sympathetic sense of security, providing both a haptic and metaphorical 'hug'. Here, dress exerted a type of agency that instigated an emotional transformation for the wearer and signified a move into a more private space, with a different atmosphere and a different emotional mood. The notion of dress as haptic atmosphere is discussed in the final section in this chapter. These dress items could be relied upon, rather like family or friends, to provide physical and emotional support during everyday life.

Comfortable clothes were those that became almost like a 'second skin' for the participants – to the point that they would forget they were wearing them. Through repeated use, and habitual touch, and as discussed in the earlier section on 'dress knowledge' in this chapter, the dress items wore in and felt at one with the body. This could create a sense of familiarity, as well as being 'protected' and 'comforted' by them. In Miller's (2008) ethnography of one London street he highlights the relationship the inhabitants have with the material things that populate the private spaces of their homes, and the way that personal possessions can become, for some people, like companions (2008:264).

Miller asserts that rather than increased materialism resulting in 'our relationships to things coming at the expense of our relationships to people' (2008:1):

> ...in many ways, the opposite it true; that possessions often remain profound and usually the closer our relationships are with objects, the closer our relationships are with people. (Miller 2008:1)

In the more private spaces of home, clothing items can serve as a surrogate person, the other within the social and emotional life of the home. This relationship is enacted through touching. They provide an escape from the more demanding aspects of social interaction but still provide some of the positive benefits that a mutually supportive relationship can bring. In these instances, dress items acted as '...an extension of the body, yet not quite part of it' (Wilson 2003 [1985]:3). Close enough to be emotionally entwined, yet as something 'other' to the body, perceived as acting upon, that is *touching* the participant, both physically and metaphorically.

This relates back to Merleau-Ponty's duality of touching and being touched (1968:134), as discussed in the earlier section on learning through touch.

In many instances within the data clothing acted as a type of comfort blanket for the participant, a transitional object, following the definition developed by psychoanalyst, Winnicott (1989 [1971]). Transitional objects are a 'bridge' between inner and outer worlds (Philips quoted in Attfield 2000:128). Through Tilley's notion of 'textility' and the notion of the transitional object, Attfield has proposed that the 'comfort blanket' is the 'paradigmatic cultural object' (2000:130). As both 'not-me and part of me' it therefore exemplifies the dual link and separation between the person and the outside world - '...it both unites and separates the self from others, so that individuality can only be experienced in its relation to others' (Attfield 2000:133).

The wish to be comfortable could also relate to the needs of practical activities and work. When I ask Andrea how her boiler suit (see Fig. 1.01 on page 61) that she sculpts in felt to wear, she said:

> Very little aware of it, and that's how I want to be. It doesn't fit closely anywhere, but it sort of fits enough, around the waist; it's got nice big pockets that you can stick things in. (Andrea Interview 2: 00:47:21)

Umberto Eco (1987) has discussed that way that being aware of the touch of clothing can be distracting. He described his new jeans which don't 'pinch, but they made their presence felt' and as a result distracted him from his interior and intellectual thoughts when writing, through making him 'self-aware' – of his body being in touch with a material item, part of the social world around him (Merleau-Ponty 1968:134).

Eco's musing reflects an historical Western cultural emphasis on 'the brute physicality of touch', which 'like the body in general, has been positioned in opposition to the intellect and assumed to be the subject of mindless pleasures and pains' (Classen 2005:5, see also Smith 2007:93). According to Eco, unable to forget about his body, because of the persistent touch of his jeans, he could not focus his thoughts inwards. As he humorously puts it, 'a garment that squeezes the testicles makes a man think differently' (Eco 1987:193), expanding that:

> Not only did the garment impose a demeanour on me; by focusing my attention on demeanour, it obliged me to live towards the exterior world. (Eco 1987:193)

And:
> Well, with my new jeans my life was entirely exterior; I thought about the relationship between me and my pants, and the relationship between my pants and me and the society we lived in. I had achieved hetero-consciousness, that is to say, an epidermic self-awareness. (Eco 1987:194)

To return to the previous discussion in this chapter on 'Social and cultural knowledge', when haptic aspects of dress structured and pushed against participants' bodies, they became aware of the social world and the requirements of social relations. Eco goes on to suggest, in an unashamedly sexist tone, that in this way, fashion has enslaved women 'forcing them to neglect the exercise of thought' (Eco 1987:194). This implies a fearful attitude towards fashion and perhaps betrays Eco's own inexperience of, and therefore misunderstanding of the ambiguities of fashionable behaviour, which, as has been demonstrated, can be both enslaving and freeing. However, he makes the salient point that, just as with language:

> The syntactic structures of fashion also influence our view of the world, and in a far more physical way than the *consecution temporum* or the existence of the subjunctive. (Eco 1987:195)

This asserts the importance of haptic experience of dress in constructing meaning, as has been argued throughout this chapter.

This section has highlighted the link between comfort and the home, as haptic aspects of dress enable a transition into a comfort mode when at home in private, familiar space. The following section considers the way that dress when

worn can become like a second skin, providing a familiar home for the body when out in public.

Second skin: Dress as haptic space for the body

This section considers the haptic space of dress and the ways that touch contributed to the sensory atmosphere of the participants' dressed bodies. Additionally, dress is considered as type of home for the body, where the body inhabits dress and its tangible material surround creates a feeling of familiarity and refuge, connecting the participants back to familiar memories and feelings. Within the context of everyday life dress is similarly a portable space that is taken with the wearer, effectively a home from home.

Many of the participants mentioned items of dress that were so comfortable, they felt 'part of them' or like a 'second skin'. When the fit and feel was just right or very familiar (as a result of habitual use or moulding to the shape of the body) they ceased to notice the tactile sensation of wearing them. As Dant points out, '…the engagement of the wearer with the garment such that they become part of each other, also gives clothes meaning' (Dant 1999:107). Woodward has pointed to similar examples from her ethnographic study of women's clothing choices, articulating this as a process of 'naturalisation' - drawing on Bourdieu's (1977:78) notion of the habitus - to argue how the sensual dimensions of clothing, how they feel on the body and work with the body, are crucial in the development of personal 'taste' and clothing preferences (Woodward 2007:33). In addition, through affecting the wearer emotionally, the touch of dress contributes to the more intangible aspects of atmosphere. Movement is also important in underlying the atmosphere of the dressed body, as it is through movement that atmosphere is expressed. All these aspects are demonstrated in the following example of Jill's favourite dress.

Jill is aware of how clothes can help her to manage her moods. She sometimes feels emotionally low, and uses dress to enhance her confidence and 'get up and go'. In Fig 5.11 on page 210, she is shown wearing the dress she bought for her fortieth birthday, which is able to lift her mood through a combination of the tangible, floaty, freedom of the silk fabric and how it moves against and touches her skin, and the fond memories that the dress holds for her.

This is all about the cut and how it feels on you. I love the texture. You put it on and it just does make you feel kind of, you know, different. It's light, it floats and it's just so…it's kind of that whole – it just changes your mood. (Jill Interview 2: 00: 00:00)

The dress is made from a light silk weave and putting on the dress can make Jill want to go out even when she is tired. She wore the dress for her fortieth birthday, and also remembers wearing it on a holiday to Greece that year. She had previously gone through some difficult emotional times and associated the dress with her coming out of that and feeling better. As a result the dress itself has a positive atmosphere for Jill and it comforts her. She says:

…clothes when I've been feeling happy and good and life's been great, there is something quite, you know, comforting about having those sort of – those clothes around you. (Jill Interview 1: 00:48:57)

In this example, the tangible touch of the dress is entangled with the intangible emotional resonances of the dress. It is these aspects working together with Jill's body and biographical experience that create a particular atmosphere and way of being for her when she wears the dress. Dant (2005) has emphasized that objects are more than signs - they are also part of emotional life and provide ways of externalizing emotions. Arguably, it is through the senses, and in Jill's case her touch engagement with the dress that enables Jill to reconnect with a happy time, to bodily and emotionally emplace herself there. It is the fluid structure of the dress, the way it floats and touches her body that enables Jill to remember, re-perform and express these feelings.

The material relations between the human being and the objects around him or her enables feelings and emotions to be pushed from inside to out, from the psyche to the surface of the body and then beyond through things. (Dant 2005:65)

All the participants had dress items that they habitually wore and which provided familiar feelings that were then re-sensed and lived. They tended to form personal bonds with these items and would not throw them away, even when they stopped wearing them. Andrea also has a special dress that a boyfriend had bought for her in the late seventies (see Fig 5.12 on page 211). For Andrea the dress has layers of memory and atmosphere, some tangible and many others intangible. She says it is a great shape, fits nicely on the bosom with little button details - an original 'tie-dyed seventies frock' (Andrea Interview 2: 01:11:26). It is made from thick woven cotton. She wore it 'a lot' in the late seventies and remembers breast-feeding in it, how it showed off her cleavage well.

> I've always felt kind of sexy and glamorous without looking outrageous or provocative, you know? And it just feels okay.
> (Andrea Interview 2: 01:12:24)

Adding to these memories, she tells me how, as a high school teacher, she used to make the costumes for the school play and used the dress in a production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', which she remembers fondly. She showed me some damage that happened to the dress at that time. She then wore it more recently to her graduation as a mature student when she finished her sculpture degree. This was an important time in her life as she had divorced and re-trained as a sculptor. Andrea says that all the younger students were wearing cocktail style dresses, but this felt more real for her. The dress has a tactile roughness and a haptic weight and structure that differs to that of a modern cocktail dress, and in this way it accentuated Andrea's sense of individuality, of her past - when clothes felt very different on the body. Like her sculptural work, wearing the dress felt like a 'sense of continuity' with the past but also 'regeneration', and it was on the spur of the moment that she chose to wear it.

> The reason why I'm worried about the hole is because I think of this as being an heirloom now. I don't think of it as being something that I wear, I think of it as being something that I keep, because it encapsulates an era, and I suppose a sort of lost self, in a sense. And I suppose that was quite

important for me at my graduation show, to kind of reclaim that person in a way. And the rites of passage. It was a rites of passage thing. To get a degree in my early sixties was a big thing for me – something I should have done years ago and never did. (Andrea Interview 2: 01:13:02)

Andrea tells me that the dress felt comfortable, 'so that felt right to me' (Andrea Interview 2: 01:14:15). Through habitual haptic engagement with her dress, bonds with past times and selves were strengthened and new ones made, and through memory and the ability to wear the dress or just to touch and hold it, indeed to show me the dress, Andrea gains a sense of self within changing times and places.

As Jill and Andrea's examples demonstrate, identity connections can be made through memories and atmospheres stimulated by the touch of dress. In these instances dress could feel like a home for the body, a place of sensory and emotional familiarity. Some of the participants described how items of dress, like rings, watches and indeed applied scents (see chapter seven on smell) that they wore everyday, came to feel like part of them. As James says, he feels 'slightly naked' if he goes out without his favourite bag (James Interview 2: 00:49:40).

As outlined in chapter one, anthropological approaches to material culture (see Miller 2001) and to the senses (Pink 2004), demonstrate how people shape and re-shape their home into 'homely spaces' - particular sensory and material environments that attend to their changing moods, needs and desires. Architectural atmospheres are created through numerous intersecting sensory elements, the size, space and shape of the room, its openings, but also the light, the look and texture of the décor, the smells and the sounds. Added to this are the sensory dimensions and mood of any person who moves around or indeed speaks when in the space. The phrase 'to cut the atmosphere with a knife' articulates the emotional tension that can be created in a space by peoples' emotions, moods, attitudes and relations. In a similar way dress atmospheres are also constructed through the material, sensorial and emotional elements as well as through movement.

Gaston Bachelard's (1994 [1958]) philosophical exploration of the intimate space of the home highlights its sheltering nature and the role of dreaming and imagination in shaping a notion of 'inhabiting'. Home is, for

Bachelard, the on-going creation of intimate spaces of refuge and well being (1994 [1958]: 104), not only a place to 'come back' to but a place to 'dream of coming back to' (1994 [1958]:99). For both Jill and Andrea, their dresses in different ways provided a space of refuge, imagination and memory.

Bachelard considers the circular form of a bird's nest and here he draws a comparison with clothing, describing the turning movement of the body of the bird, as it builds a 'felt-like padding' around itself (1994 [1958]:101). This highlights the texture and structure of the nest and the way it follows the form of the bird's body. He explicitly connects this to dress, saying:

> Dreams of a garment-house are not unfamiliar to those who indulge in the imaginary exercise of the function of inhabiting. And if we were to work at our dwelling-places the way Michelet dreams of his nest, we should not be wearing the ready-made clothes, so often viewed with disfavour by Bergson. On the contrary, each one of us would have a... personal house of his own, a nest for his body, padded to his measure. (Bachelard 1994 [1958]:101)

Bachelard's reference to bespoke clothing as providing a 'nest for the body' suggests the aforementioned mutuality that, through touch, can occur between the individual wearer's body and their dress, and how achieving the right 'fit' creates a sense of well-being and balance within the world. That is not to forget, however that just as dress can emplace it can also displace, exposing and making vulnerable the wearer. As the wearer moves through different physical, cultural and social spaces what is appropriate to wear or feels right in one situation may not in another, and haptic as well as other sensory aspects of dress may interact with the body to make the wearer feel awkward or out of place.

The sensory form of the dress in which we inhabit is like the homes and buildings in which we 'dwell'. Dant has similarly compared dress to '...rooms and houses - containers in which we are able to live out our lives' but highlights the nature of this surround as an interface, one which can close or open the body out to the world (Dant 1999:85). In the previous chapter on sight, the way in which dress acted as a screen, both revealing and concealing the participants' bodies was

outlined. While Bourdieu (1970), in his writing on 'The Berber House', has argued that dwellings structure behaviour and reflect social structures, as Dant points out, these behaviours are not strictly adhered to by people, who may negotiate, resist or respond in their own ways to these structuring spaces (Dant 1999:66). In relation to inhabiting dress, as Attfield (2000) has also asserted - and as the participants demonstrated - the wearer also shapes the roles and meaning of dress to their own needs through wear, a process that involves sensory engagement.

One of the differences between the space of the home and that of dress is that whereas the home is often defined as a static place to return to, dress on the other hand, shell-like, travels with the wearer. Its homely atmosphere is taken with the wearer - it can be constantly touched and tangibly and intangibly experienced during everyday life. In this way the imaginary notion of home is understood through the senses. As previously discussed in Law's (2005) consideration of 'Little Manila' as a temporary community home for Filipino women in the authoritative and dislocating space of Hong Kong, the space is both sensory and moveable. Elia Petridou, like Law, reflects upon 'The Taste of Home' (Petridou 2001:87) and suggests the notion of 'home' is less useful as an analytical tool when it is understood as an immobile space. Rather, and as is appropriate in times of exile, emigration or other forms of mobility, she suggests that:

> ...the concept of home can be realized in sets of practices, styles of dress and address, in memories and myths, in words and jokes.
> (Petridou 2001:87)

For the participants, when in unfamiliar spaces the sensory atmosphere of dress and all that it evoked could indeed provide a source of comfort. Moreover, Petridou (2001) suggests that because food is perceived through the combination of senses, it can evoke home in its sensory totality. I would argue that the same can be said of the sensory totality of dress, and this will be further evidenced in the following chapters on sound and smell.

Conclusion

In this chapter, through analysis of examples from the data, touch was shown to be an especially important element within the participants' everyday engagement with dress.

Through touch interactions with their dress, participants gained knowledge about - and connected to - the material properties of dress, their bodies, the physical environment and the social world. Haptic and tactile preferences around dress were built up from childhood and changed in relation to age, body changes and life situations, and as such related to specific participant biographies.

It was demonstrated how haptic engagement with dress could engender intense feelings of pleasure, comfort and discomfort, and how these developed through the entanglement of physical, emotional and social aspects. Indeed the haptic and tactile pleasures of dress were shown to be an important part of the participants' everyday sensory engagement with dress.

Tactile aspects of materiality, such as texture, structure, lightness and movement could have symbolic connotations for the participants around social and cultural categories such as gender and social status. The touch of dress upon the body could feel restricting or liberating and this reflected the social situation in which the participants were dressed. Haptic qualities of clothes made participants aware of the social situation and through managing different haptic aspects of dress, it was demonstrated how social rules were negotiated, contributing to the participants' sense of their place in the world. Examples from the data illustrated how haptic aspects of dress could transform the emotional mood of participants and helped to enable transitions between public and private life.

Through the wearing of dress, a form of habitual touch between the body and dress, a process of wearing in or 'mutual shaping' took place. When dress items began to follow the form of the participant's body or became a familiar haptic memory, they could feel like a home or a second skin. Additionally the familiar feel of dress items on the body could at times emplace the participants through haptic memory and associations to past times and places and to past selves, contributing to the emotional transitions between life stages. As such, it was argued that touch was closely linked to the emotions in the experience of dress. Moreover, it was demonstrated how through these interlinked aspects of

haptic experience, at times close emotional bonds between the participants and particular items of dress were formed and participants felt physically and emotionally comforted by them. Within social relations, tactile aspects of dress could connect participants to other people, by encouraging close interaction within familial relationships. In this way, touch engagement with dress was shown to be complex and multidimensional with communicative and empathetic aspects.

Through touch the connections between dress, the body, the mind, the emotions and socio-cultural structures were played out and negotiated.

Chapter 5. Images

Fig. 5.01
John's shirt (2012)
Pale blue shirt. 100% woven cotton. Made by H&M. Bought in Brighton in 2011. £30.

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 170)

Fig. 5.02
Andrea's scarf (2012)
Multi-coloured tie-dye scarf with fringing. 100% woven silk. Maker not known. Bought around 1995. £25.

'You know the feeling of the sand and the sea and the sun on your skin, and the very sort of slightly sensitized, because your skin was slightly burned after the day, or slightly hot after the day. And this gorgeous, cool silkiness, draped on your shoulders, you've just had a shower and you're going out for the evening, and your feeling quite sort of sensual I think, really sensual.'

(Andrea Interview 2: 01:55:09)

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 172)
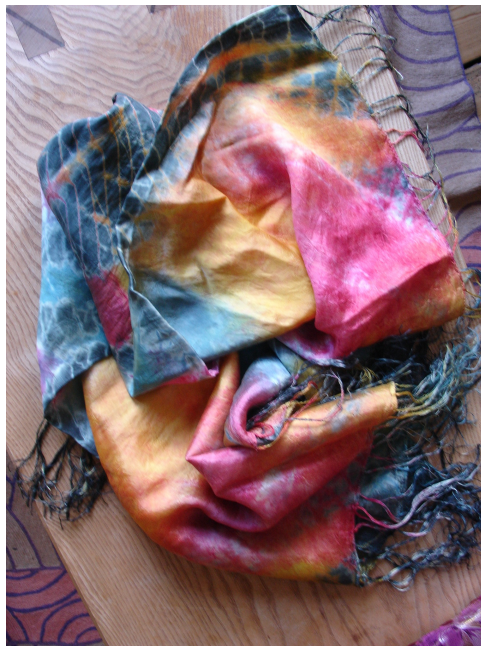
Fig. 5.03
John's trainers (2012)
Grey, white and blue trainers. Suede upper and rubber sole. Made by DC Shoes. Bought in Brighton in 2011. £45 in the sale.

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 173)

Fig. 5.04
Corin's jeans (2013)
Blue denim jeans. 100% woven cotton. Made by George at Asda. Bought in Brighton in 2011. £6.

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 175)

Fig. 5.05
A selection of Andrea's jeans (2012)
Selection of blue and black denim jeans. 99% woven cotton and 1% elastane. Made by Marks & Spencer. Bought in Brighton between 2009-2012. Around £20 each.

'… my basic wardrobe is black jeans in various stages of disintegration.'

(Andrea Interview 1:00:50:52)

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 175)

Fig. 5.06
Sam's sweatshirt (2015)
Grey sweatshirt with hood. 100% knitted cotton jersey. Made by Everlast. Bought in a 'sports shop' in Brighton in 1983. Around £5.

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 175)

Fig. 5.07
Karen's plimsoll shoes (2012)
Black plimsoll shoe. 100% woven cotton upper with elastic strap and rubber sole.
Maker unknown. Bought in Poland in 2011. £3.

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 178)

Fig. 5.08
Robert's jacket (2012)
Grey jacket. Made by Nicole Farhi. 100% woven cotton velvet with 100% cotton lining. Bought in TK Maxx in London in 2010. Around £40.

'I like the look of it but, actually, I rarely wear it, which is interesting but there's something about it that maybe I'm not comfortable with it. It's strange because it's a copy of a Belfast - what are they called, Belfast jackets? Basically in the wrong material…and it actually doesn't function very well…'

(Robert Interview 2: 00:01:20)

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 183)
Chapter 6 (page 228)

Fig. 5.09
James's pea coat (2015)
Black pea coat. 100% leather outer and 100% woven polyester lining. Made by Schott. Bought second hand in San Francisco in 1994. $300

'It's very - it is - when I put it on, it kind of - it's got shape. It's almost like you have to fit the coat. The coat's not particularly forgiving to you. "No. This is the shape I'm gonna be." (Laughter) And you kind of have to sort of deal with that…And, I don't know, if I'm going somewhere where I'd like to look a little bit smarter, I might wear this sometimes.'
(James Interview 2: 00:05:40)

'It's almost like it's made out of cast iron. I love the rigidity of it…'
(James Interview 2: 00: 00:00)

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 186)

Fig. 5.10
Robert's jumper (2012)
Grey, black and cream check tank top.
100% knitted cashmere wool. Made by
Polo Ralph Lauren. Bought in London in
2011. £150.

*'Yes, I think what I enjoy about it is its
warmth and its tightness. It's closeness -
but it isn't a loose garment. I'm aware that
I'm being comforted...Like wrapping a
blanket around you.'*

(Robert Interview 2: 01:17:45)

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 192)

Fig. 5.11
Jill wearing her dress (2015)
Pink Floral print dress. 100% woven silk.
Made by Whistles. Bought in 2005. £150.

*'This is all about the cut and how it feels on
you. I love the texture. You put it on and it
just does make you feel kind of, you know,
different. It's light, it floats and it's just so...
it's kind of that whole – it just changes your
mood.'*

(Jill Interview 2: 00: 00:00)

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 196)

Fig. 5.12
Andrea at her graduation (2011)
Multi-coloured tie-dye dress. 100% woven cotton. Maker not known. Bought in the 1970s. Price not known.

'I've always felt kind of sexy and glamorous without looking outrageous or provocative, you know? And it just feels okay.'
(Andrea Interview 2: 01:12:24)

'The reason why I'm worried about the hole is because I think of this as being an heirloom now. I don't think of it as being something that I wear, I think of it as being something that I keep, because it encapsulates an era, and I suppose a sort of lost self, in a sense. And I suppose that was quite important for me at my graduation show, to kind of reclaim that person in a way. And the rites of passage. It was a rites of passage thing. To get a degree in my early sixties was a big thing for me – something I should have done years ago and never did.'
(Andrea Interview 2: 01:13:02)

Text references:
Chapter 5 (page 198)

CHAPTER 6. SOUND

Introduction

Sound did play a part in the participants' everyday clothing experience, but it was not central to it in the way that sight and touch were. There was less data on sound, although some participants discussed it in depth. The sound of dress was normally perceived in the background, although when it was noticed, this could engender quite strong reactions.

During the interviews only five of the twenty participants brought up sound in relation to dress unprompted. In the cases where it had not arisen towards the end of the first interview, I asked them specifically to consider it.

The notion that sound can create impact and 'make an impression' in social settings, was a prominent aspect within the data. The first section of this chapter therefore contains a discussion of clothing sound and its relationship to socialization. As outlined in chapter four on sight, some participants used strategies of inviting and deflecting the gaze of others when dressing. Similarly the sound of clothing (and shoes in particular) was, at times used by the participants to create impact or blend in within a social situation. Ryan illustrates this, when he discusses his brogues (see Fig. 6.01 on page 240) saying:

> Yeah. I've got a pair of brogues that I sometimes wear for work.
> Sometimes I love the noise that they make. And sometimes I hate it.

He says he likes it when:

> ...I've got a spring in my step and I'm feeling bold and I'm in a look-at-me
> mode. (Ryan Interview 1: 00:57:21)

This is reminiscent of Ryan's choice to wear his 'bright, lairy' trainers, as discussed in the chapter on sight, when he is feeling confident and happy to draw attention to himself through the visual impact of his shoes (see Fig. 4.01 page 156). In this way, aural dimensions of clothing, like visual dimensions, can be seen to contribute to an individual's 'presentation of self' (Goffman 1990 [1959]), providing a means to

manage feelings of self confidence and self consciousness. As previously argued, the various senses worked together in framing experience and mediating the participants' movement through social spaces.

The second aspect to emerge concerns the way in which the sound of dress surrounds the individual wearer's body, contributing to the sensory atmosphere of the body. It will be demonstrated in this second section, using examples from the data, that through memory and imagination, dress sounds, and the intertwining of music and dress, connected the participant to other times and places, creating a sense of familiarity and belonging. This further develops the notion of emplacement in relation to sensory experience of dress.

However, before moving on to the aforementioned sections, I will provide a summary of the main types of sound engagement that were discussed, along with an outline of the range of differing attitudes and dispositions towards sound and dress as expressed by the participants.

Summary of participant auditory attitudes and engagement

The participants expressed different levels of awareness around the sound of dress and different attitudes towards it. As stated above, many were not consciously aware of dress making any noise. Often when they did become aware of their own dress making an unwanted noise they became self-conscious. In this way the strength of the sound - how loud or quiet it was – affected how it was perceived and understood, in addition to the situation in which it was heard.

Particular types of dress and materials were associated with making a noticeable noise. Shoes were by far the most common item to be associated with sound, and the complex meanings related to this are unpicked in detail in this chapter. Other items mentioned were coats, jewellery, shirts, skirts, formal dresses and trousers along with some articular fabrics such as leather, sports fabric and silk. In the case of shoes, the sound was made by the action of walking on the pavement. In this way, the sound of dress was produced through the movement of the body and the contact between the dress material and other materials, the body or the external environment.

While most of the participants did not want their dress to make a noise, in some situations - such as when they wanted to make an impression - this was

acceptable or even desirable. Out of the twenty participants, five expressed both negative and positive attitudes to dress making sound. Six expressed only negative feelings and some were strongly felt. Five expressed only positive feelings, all in varying degrees of intensity. Karen states simply: 'I basically don't like clothes that make any sound' (Karen Interview 1: 00:26:30). However, in many cases, where the initial reaction was negative, this was followed by an acknowledgement that there were some situations or garments where noise could be a more positive sensory aspect. For example, I ask Paula about the sound of clothing.

> *Sara: Are you ever aware of how things sound when you are wearing them or moving? You know, how clothes sound sometimes. They have…*
>
> Yes. Oh yes. I'm not good with that. I'm not good with things making sounds. I mean, when I wear them. (Paula Interview 1: 00:38:55)

Paula goes on to reflect that sound might be useful when she wants to create impact, saying:

> Make an impression? Maybe. (Paula Interview 1: 00:38:55)

Participants expressed different sensitivities to sound, in particular Karen and Paul were aware of sound, for Paula it could be intrusive, whereas for Paul he found pleasure in sounds associated with dress items and with the practice of cleaning his shoes.

Dress, sound and socialization

> But for me, my clothes are important. Yeah, they make me feel good. And also you can dress for all sorts of things. You know, you can dress differently for school, for a job interview, going out dancing, going to the beach, going out to dinner. You know, it's a bit of theatre.
> (Paula Interview 1: 00:38:26)

Paula's metaphor of social dressing as 'theatre' moves beyond a focus on the visual aspects of dress towards an embodied and multisensory description of dressing for social occasions. This brings to mind Goffman's dramaturgical articulation of social life as a form of conscious self-presentation, where the social world is 'frontstage' and more private spaces provide a 'backstage', the dressing room where the actor prepares for the social performance (1990 [1959]). Theatre is spectacle, and the performance is visible but also audible. There is the sound of dialogue and also the noise created by actors moving around the stage. In real life, like theatre, social interaction may include the sound of talk in addition to environmental noise. The action of bodies interacting with material objects, such as dress also creates sound (Eicher and Evenson 2015:12). In all its manifestations sound punctuates and permeates social interaction, impacting upon it.

The way that Paula chooses to dress for each particular situation will make her look but also sound different. Dress however, tends to make subtle noises due to the properties of cloth and other dress materials such as animal skins. The rustling may be just about perceptible to the wearer but these mundane, everyday sounds that form the background soundtrack to life are often taken for granted. Eight of the participants observed that sound was not something they normally thought about or were generally aware of in relation to clothes. However during the interviews, given the time to stop and consider this, they were able to reflect upon it. When sight is removed the importance of these everyday soundscapes in orienting the self in relation to time, place and action, is apparent. An example that illustrates this is radio drama. The studio manager of 'The Archers', a long-running BBC Radio 4 drama series, set around the daily life of a farming community, describes how the addition of background sound effects:

> ...transform the clean audio of voices reading script into a world that is believable for the listener. (Partington 2015)

He explains that these, '...ordinary noises that happen in the background of real life' (Partington 2015), noises such as clothing moving and cutlery clanking, give the scene authenticity. It is possible and necessary to exaggerate these background sounds in a radio drama. In real life, however, the more subtle ordinary noises,

such as those that clothing make are often lost within the din of the noisy social world. They are rarely heard or listened to as individual sounds. As Bull and Back (2003) point out:

> …the experience of everyday life is increasingly mediated by a multitude of mechanically reproduced sounds…In parallel to this, cities are noisier than they ever were in the past and more people complain about levels of noise than ever before. (Bull and Back 2003:1)

As a result, participants were not usually aware of the sound of their dress. The interview situation was unusual in that it facilitated listening carefully to these sounds and some participants did this eagerly, whereas others showed less interest. Throughout the interviews there was an awareness of the impact, both negative and positive, that the sound of clothing *could* have in particular social instances. Here, I will draw upon examples from my data around the sound of shoes clicking along the pavement. This was the most common noise discussed by the participants and it illustrates how sounds of the dressed body can attract attention, both wanted and unwanted.

As previously mentioned in chapter two, Karen has negative associations with the sound of men's formal shoes clicking on the pavement. She articulates the nature of sound as being particularly intrusive, immersive and resonant. Here she is discussing the difference she perceives between looking at and hearing someone else's clothing.

> …I can just look and analyse it and then it's over, with a sound I can't escape it. It's so around me I just can't turn my ears off. With my eyes I can just turn around and it's ok. See you later. I've got my opinion and that's it. But with sound it kind of follows me, hounds me.
> (Karen Interview 1: 00:31:00)

She goes on to compare the sound of shoes clicking to a catchy tune that she cannot get out of her head. It both fills and resounds in her mind. This intrusive aspect of sound has been linked to techniques of power and forms of individual

control (see Bull and Back 2003:4, Bull 2006, Shafer 2003). Although as Murray Shafer acknowledges in his historical account of the political and cultural effects of listening and not listening:

> We have no ear lids. We are condemned to listen. But this does not mean our ears are always open. (Shafer 2003:25)

Shafer implies that while sound can be intrusive, people choose to listen (or not) in particular ways, framed by particular cultural and social viewpoints. There is both passive hearing and active listening and, at times, a combination of both. Although Karen feels as if she is being made to 'hear' the shoes, she hears them so loudly partly because she is 'listening', because the meaning of the sound has strong associations for her. Another person may not notice the sound so intently. *How* people choose to listen impacts upon the world.

> Listening, for Shafer, is not merely descriptive, but cognitive, value laden and hierarchical. (Bull and Back 2003:21)

This is apparent in the difference between Karen's embodied experience and interpretation of the sound of formal men's shoes and Paul's, as previously touched upon in chapter two. Paul's ears are also open to the sound, but for different reasons. He loves the sound of his own shoes clicking on his wooden floor. For him it is a positive reminder of his past time in the Army. Karen, on the other hand, is disturbed by the sound. She is involved with radical left-leaning politics and associates this clicking with capitalism and patriarchy – with bankers and people concerned with status and imposing themselves upon others. The imposition of the sound, the way that it forces her into action, to 'follow, look and think' about the person embodies her sense of being imposed upon politically and socially by the type of people that she thinks would wear formal, noisy shoes (Karen Interview 1 1:31:10). Ryan also associates the sound of shoes with 'authority' (Ryan Interview 1: 00:58:00).

Sound can signify social class and status, as pointed out by the sensory historian, Mark, M. Smith who agrees with McLuhan and Ong's suggestion that in the pre-Enlightenment West and other societies without the printed word:

> ...sound and the heard world (was) extremely important not only for communication but also for arranging, affirming, and mediating various forms of social organization and hierarchy. (Smith 2007:42)

He goes on to argue that in the modern era, sounds were also linked to class and identity in addition to providing a means for locating and identifying place. Smith links the distinction between loudness and quietness to morality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, using the example of London's increasing economic development and simultaneous growing urban 'cacophony'. He describes the noisy, everyday streets of London that contrasted with the quiet spaces in which the monarchy and nobility resided, a contrast that articulates class and power hierarchies through sensory differentiation within particular places.

> The Crown, nobles generally, counterpoised themselves against the masses by embracing quietude, not loudness. The interior furnishings of court - carpets, curtains, and the like - muted noised, the Monarch's voice was the supreme sound, and everyone modulated their own sounds accordingly. In this way, the ability to afford and insist on quietude became increasingly associated with class and notions of refinement and 'taste'. (Smith 2007:45)

In the above quote, the sensory materiality of the court furnishings act to muffle loudness, and this muted sound is associated with status. To compare this with Karen's testimony around the sound of men's formal shoes, for her it is the loudness and particular sound of formal shoes that signifies someone who is concerned with imposing their status upon others. How clothing sound was understood by the participants, that is the associated meanings that were heard, were in part shaped by the participants' cultural assumptions and understandings around social categories such as class, status and gender.

Sound can reveal implicit power relations perceived to exist within social life. A significant difference between Karen and Paul's experience of the sound of formal men's shoes is that Paul is making the noise himself, so he has control over it, whereas Karen is not. Her frustration at not being able to control the sound, or even simply to turn away is apparent in her earlier quote. Karen also talks about not wanting to wear high heels herself as she feels that this sound makes a gendered statement - it draws attention to the sexualized meanings associated with high heels, associations that Karen does not want to embody. But this is not only about her individual identity. Her attitude to the sound encapsulates her wider feelings around female empowerment in general.

> And again there is this thing about high heeled shoes and
> femininity…that's why when I hear high heeled shoes I don't feel
> comfortable because I'm thinking someone tried to impress a guy.
> (Karen Interview 1: 00:29:15)

The sound of both types of shoe is perceived by Karen as a powerful signifier of particular gender categories and relations that she associates with the style of shoe. For Karen, sound, in this context, appears to emphasize the cultural meanings in a particularly uncomfortable way, whilst for others, like Paul it may give them confidence. Karen says the sound shouts, 'look at me' and forces her to pay attention. Robert also interpreted leather soled formal shoes as sounding 'male', while high heels sounded 'female'. Pat Kirkham and Attfield have explored the 'myriad ways', that the 'dynamics of gender relations operate through material goods (just as do the dynamics of class, 'race', nation, age and other types of social relations' (1996:1). Some of these ways are sensory. Objects, like shoes are visually symbolic of gender, but are also part of the performance of gender (a notion that will be discussed further shortly). The shoe's gender associations are brought to our attention through a sensory route - sound - that involves the wearer and the item of dress enacting the performance together. Robert recalls listening everyday to someone walking by his flat in stilettos and how he would enjoy listening to it (Robert Interview 2: 00:57:00). Without visual clues, the sound appeared to

Robert to indicate a women walking by (although he never knew if this was the case).

　　To return to the notion of dressing as theatre, Judith Butler (1990) has positioned dress as providing a means with which to perform and de-construct gender identity. As stated earlier, Pamela was conscious of the performance aspect of dressing and sound had the potential to accentuate the sense of drama and to highlight the construction of gender identity. Like Karen, Anne had a highly problematic relationship with high heels, again relating to gender. While Karen confidently rejects particular types of gender categorization, Anne is more conflicted. Anne works in an office for a young and dynamic digital media company in a client-facing role. Whilst wanting to wear high heels, which she thinks can look cool and sexy in fashion spreads, in reality, when worn, they never feel right *on her*. She puts it down to her body shape. She is petite with relatively large feet and thinks that heels make her look unbalanced. She has seen girls 'clomping' around awkwardly in heels and thinks that this is how she looks, remarking that she has not 'learned' how to walk in them (Anne Interview 1: 00:36:01).

　　As Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk (2014) suggest, culture trains its members into sensory habits, ways of walking, moving, and in Anne's case also sounding. Therefore, 'To move appropriately is to display not only motor skills but social skills' (Vannini, Waskul and Gottschalk's 2014:28). Anne's performance of femininity in heels is unconvincing and fails in her opinion. It is turned on its head, making her feel like 'a man in drag' (Anne Interview 1: 00:36:01). The performance is revealed as just that. Anne recognises that despite often thinking girls look more elegant in a pair of flip flops, and against her better judgement, she finds it hard to ignore the fashionable allure of heels and still 'really wants' to wear them (Anne Interview 1: 00:36:01). The sound of the heels is part of the problem. It accentuates her feeling of 'clompiness' and makes her even more self-conscious. The last time she tried wearing a pair to work, people commented that she looked 'different', not herself and this mirrored her own sense of 'strangeness'.

　　I felt really loud on the floor like this (stomps). I felt like everyone could see me, everyone could feel how much taller I was...
　　(Anne Interview 1: 00:36:01)

As I have previously discussed in the analysis of sight, Merleau-Ponty articulates the strangeness of being a sensory body, simultaneously and paradoxically able to see itself seeing and touch itself while touching (1993 [1964]:124). The same could be applied to hearing. The sound of herself in heels makes Anne aware that dressing is a self-conscious, social practice. She is, as Goffman would argue, partaking in an everyday social performance, which in his definition requires an audience (Goffman 1971:26). Anne is made acutely aware of her audience as a result of the sound of her shoes although - as Helen Thomas points out in her overview of theoretical approaches to performing the body - '...in a Goffmanesque performance, the individual may be performing without being aware of it' (2013:43). In relation to Anne's performance of gender, Butler's (1990) notion of 'performativity', that is, simply put, making a statement through an action, articulates the conscious acting that frames Anne's example. Butler draws on Foucault's 'notion of power', which as Entwistle has argued:

> '...can be applied to the study of dress in order to consider the ways in which the body acquires meaning and is acted upon by social and discursive forces' (Entwistle 2000:21).

As Thomas notes, Butler's work also 'resonates strongly with aspects of Goffman's ideas', although Butler did not explicitly draw on his approach in her two major books (Thomas 2013:44-45), the focus within 'performativity' is on how successful the performance is – in Anne's case, not very. As Thomas puts it, when 'performativity is revealed through a performance' or as Butler argued in relation to drag culture, is revealed through exaggeration to be an illusion or act, then gender identity itself is revealed as a fiction (Thomas 2013:45). Here, 'Gender is the product of styles and techniques such as dress rather than any essential qualities of the body' (Entwistle 2000:21). It is, as Anne's example demonstrates also powerfully reproduced through sensory aspects of dress, in this instance, the sound of the materiality of the shoes working with or against Anne's movement and gesture. Bordo (2003 [1993]:38) has critiqued Butler's lack of attention to the body's materiality, and this example suggests that performativity when applied to dress is always constituted through a combination of bodily and material elements

which create a sensory performance, and when the bodily and material elements do not work as one, it is perceived, through the senses as failing or as fiction.

In this way the sound of clothing can have an important effect on how a person inhabits a social space, whether making them stand out or blend in, garner negative, positive or a confused response from others. Corin states that he does not want to draw attention to himself, so he is happy that his shoes are quiet. He says:

> I like to creep around unnoticed so I kind of - they (the soles) are quite soft. (Corin Interview 1: 00:48:13)

Karen echoes a similar sentiment when she states:

> ...not in England, but when I was in Poland, I already attracted loads of attention from people because I wear colourful stuff, and I was bullied and making sound would make it even worse so yeah I never really wear stuff like dresses that make sound. (Karen Interview 1: 26:30)

The ability of sound to draw attention to the wearer is perhaps partly why most of the participants in general did not want their clothes to make a noise. Another reason may be because clothes are not expected to make loud noises. As previously stated, the sound of dress material is often barely discernible when worn. Amusingly, James stated that he could only hear his jeans rubbing when he had just cleaned his ears out, at which point he would suddenly notice the noise and feel self-conscious about wearing them (James Interview 1: 00:06:58). To consciously hear clothing is quite unusual and it can disrupt the wearer's sense of equilibrium, the feeling of being at one with their clothing. Most participants stated that on a daily basis they did not think about their clothes, dressing and being dressed felt like second nature. As Paul put it:

> It's not something I think about every day, I get dressed and then suddenly I'm dressed. (Paul Interview 1:01:04:00)

And as Corin observes, when his shoes mould to his feet they get like slippers and 'you don't even actually know they're on' (Corin Interview 1: 00:12:41). Corin, who has quite small feet has found that the 'Dr Marten' brand of shoes and boots are the only mens' shoes consistently available in his size that are comfortable. He therefore owns many pairs in different states of wear and comfort, the most worn out of which he uses in his painting studio, and which have moulded to the shape of his feet (see Fig. 6.02 on page 241). Neruda (1975 [1954]) in his aforementioned poem, *Ode to Clothes*, (see appendix six) echoes Corin's sentiment, suggesting that we become one with our clothes precisely because we feel an affinity with clothing's' fragility, because, we know that it will wear out with us, and, like us, eventually die.

> At the thought of this
> every day
> I greet you
> with reverence, and then
> you embrace me and I forget you
> because we are one

Once dressed, the body and its clothing could be considered to act together. Fashion and dress are an embodied practice (Wilson 1992, Entwistle 2000, Entwistle and Wilson 2001), so the sound of worn clothing is tied to the body. Indeed clothing does not make a sound when still, only when it is animated and moving. The movement of the body is also normally only 'evident through sound when body supplements that make sound are worn' (Eicher and Evanson 2015:12). The sound of a dressed body is therefore made through the combination of both body and clothing working together, and clothing items interacting with each other. When the sounds that a dressed body emits are predictable, the ordinary background soundscape of the individual is maintained. But when clothing makes an unexpected or unruly noise, the spell is broken, a shift occurs from the sub-conscious to the conscious. The symbiotic performance is perceived to have failed by wearer or audience, or both. A rift between body and clothing opens or is revealed. This can threaten or confuse the wearer's sense of self, as was

the case with Anne's clompy heels. Don Idhe argues that sound, particularly that which is out of place, can be 'disruptive' particularly effective at interrupting thoughts (2003 [1976]:62). The notion of sound 'out of place' resonates with Douglas's (1966) concept of dirt as 'matter out of place', disruptive of social notions of 'purity' and therefore threatening to the body, which is discussed in detail in the following chapter on smell.

While the sound of clothing can be a warning or threat to the wearer, in some social situations the ability of clothing sound to disrupt thought, can be used in a positive sense to signal arrival, create a self-conscious confidence and make an impression on others. Sound pushes out into the world and fills space, so sound can be used to assert a person's presence, to inhabit, perhaps even dominate the space - creating impact in a social situation. Bull and Back use the example of the church bell ringing in a French village as a way of *punctuating* and *regulating* space as well as time (Bull and Back 2003:5). The Islamic 'call to prayer' is another example, a familiar sound all round the world. Regular sounds can mark time and Robert describes how the sound of the person walking past his house was enjoyable, partly because 'it was so regular and early in the morning' (Robert Interview 1: 00:59:00). Punctuating sounds can also signal an event or arrival, notifying that something is about to happen, as a siren would. Pamela remembers how the sound of her clothing helped to signal her 'arrival' and domination at an important awards event in Milan when she was head of a high profile fashion college. In order to make an impression, she had purchased for the occasion an unusual raffia jacket. She describes it as 'perfect' and 'magical', standing out against the classic, conservative style favoured by many Milanese. Pamela describes the jacket in all its sensory dimensions, how the shiny black raffia 'sparkled', and was 'crunchy' yet 'malleable'. She expands on the sound, saying:

> It rustled, It rustled. So particularly if you were doing the arm business, it rustled.

> *Sara: And how did you feel about that?*

I loved that. You know. Again, it's like, we used to wear large, clanking
bracelets and they'd drive you mad...
(Pamela Interview 1: 00:49:52)

Pamela is aware that within fashion circles great emphasis is placed on
dressing well and in an interesting way, wanting others to notice their clothes, and
through this, establish their status. Therefore to make an impact within a fashion
circle requires something more or special, and sound can provide that. She
remembers:

The noise, you know. But that was a terribly fashiony thing because,
eventually, when I got to know fashion editors, they liked making noise.
You know it's like, they liked showing people they were in the room and
clank, clank on the table or the desk is just part of it, you know? It's like,
"I've arrived. You can hear me coming down the corridor". It's the shoes.
And it's the bracelet. You know. Of course, it's on the phone as well but,
you know...but that's the...all those things.
(Pamela Interview 1: 00:51:12)

Here, the sense of the sound filling the room is palpable, the nervous anticipation
as the noise of the editor's footsteps becomes louder as they draw nearer, their
growing sensory presence. In this instance, the sound of dress plays an important
role in extending the presence of the wearer, beyond visual presence, to make a
deeper impression on that particular social, public space and the people within it.

This section has considered how the sound of clothing can create impact or
be managed in order to blend in when participants are in social situations.
Additionally, it has demonstrated the role of sound in constructing cultural
understanding around aspects such as gender and status through clothing. I would
argue therefore that sound, like sight and other sensory modalities mediates the
way in which bodies move and are perceived to move through social spaces.
Having illustrated how sound can be used to disrupt and punctuate space and time,
in the following section it will be demonstrated how the sound of dress can also
contribute to the creation of more intimate, auditory spaces for the wearer, spaces

of comfort and familiarity. This builds on the analysis in the previous chapter on touch that considered the notion comfort and discomfort in relation to understanding dress as a tactile space for the body.

Surround Sound: Dress as an auditory space for the body

> Sound thus has both utopian and dystopian associations; it enables individuals to create intimate, manageable and aestheticized spaces to inhabit, but it can also become an unwanted and deafening roar threatening the body politic of the subject. (Bull and Back 2003:1)

Bull's research on iPod usage (2006) brings into focus how individuals can create, through sound, their own sensory spaces that they carry with them. Drawing also on Barthes' analysis of the Citroen car that described the car's 'enveloping nature and tactile sense', like an extension to the body, Bull argues that the iPod is a continuation of, 'A Western narrative of increasing mobility and privatization' (2006:105). Playing their choice of music through iPod headphones overrides external noise and distractions, enveloping the user in a familiar private bubble, or in Bull's terms an 'acoustic envelope'. The volume and on/off button, as well as simply removing one or two earphones, allows them to manage the extent to which they tune into and out of this private space. Bull's data is from a study he undertook in 2004, in which urban iPod users describe gaining a sense of escape from externally imposed noise by immersing themselves in their own musical soundtracks. Bull has argued that it is through:

> ...the tripartite concepts of control, seamlessness and fine tuning whereby users constructed a unified set of experiences as they move from home, to the street, to the automobile and to work, thereby stabilizing their soundscape within the heterogeneity of the urban landscape passed through. (Bull 2013:30)

As a result, 'iPod users had the expectation that their use of the iPod would give them the ability to control whatever space they happened to inhabit' (Bull 2013:

31). However Bull suggests that this sense of control is to an extent an, 'illusion of a fully private sonic envelope', an imaginary individual 'reality'. In fact their experience is not so private, nor individual. It is framed through the hegemonic control of iPod technology, and the 'jukebox' from which they are selecting their own playlist choices is structured by the commercial music industry (Bull 2006:108).

Like the iPod, dress can give the user a *sense* of control and agency over their surroundings, although as discussed, it can also do the opposite. This section considers parallels that can be made between the iPod and dress, drawing on Bull's work in particular, and examples from my data to illustrate how dress can create intimate auditory spaces for the wearer, spaces that feel comforting and familiar.

The first parallels to be drawn between the iPod and auditory aspects of dress relate to the aforementioned movement between private and public spaces and the notion of dress as a private, intimate space that can be taken into the public world. Clothing is in intimate sensory contact with the body. Bull (2006) has described a similarly close sensory relationship between the user and their iPod. Constantly in touch with the hand, with the music streamed directly into the user's ears, the iPod creates a sense of closeness, of privacy, of individualization. The sense of closeness is amplified precisely because, as Bull points out, the miniaturization of iPod technology makes it mobile and therefore easy to be carried about by the user. Dant has further considered the embodied nature of the iPod, how, 'The personal stereo system brought the musical performance not only under the control of the listener but also within their body space' (2006:5). Clothing is designed to adorn the body. Unlike many other material things, the wearer takes clothing and the iPod with them on their daily journey, through time, place and space. The iPod (and other mobile communication devices) can in this way be theorized not only as a technology but as a type of 'body supplement', a term coined by Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1995) in relation to clothing. And although 'technology' is a term more commonly associated with electronic devices, dress practices have also been theorized as a 'technology of the self' (Entwistle 1997, 2000).

As 'things', dress and mobile devices often interact with each other closely. When not held in the hand, the iPod sits inside an item of clothing, normally in a pocket or bag. As one of Bull's interviewees puts it, the 'soundtrack to their life is in their pocket and at their fingertips' (Bull 2006:107). Three of the male participants specifically discussed the importance of having the right pocket on a coat, one that would enable ease of access to their phone as well as other essential items. When discussing his problematic 'Belstaff' style jacket that was discussed in the previous chapter (see Fig. 5.08 on page 208), Robert explains that it has too many pockets, so 'If the phone rings it takes you half an hour to find it' (Robert interview 1: 00:19:00). In this instance dress can be seen to enable, (or indeed impede) the ability of other technologies to do their job properly, by providing useful pockets for carrying necessary items. This is one of the ways in which clothing helps the wearer to move around the world successfully. Another way is through its provision of physical protection for the body from the elements. In addition to this dress also attends to social needs, providing a socially appropriate and adaptable form of body covering that allows the wearer to negotiate changing social spaces. In this way, clothing, like the iPod or mobile phone, is an enabling mobile technology that attends to the complex daily needs of the individual within society.

In order to work successfully, using an iPod requires training or practice by the user. As discussed in the previous chapter on touch, dressing also requires practice. As Goffman pointed out, clothing, or rather learning the 'necessary competency' in how to clothe oneself appropriately (1971:295) - how to 'wear long pants, to tie one's own shoes' - is one of the routines that 'allow the individual unthinking, competent performance' in everyday social interactions (1971:293). Once dressed, as previously stated, participants were not particularly aware of their clothing, perhaps because they had learned how to 'seamlessly' integrate it with their bodies and activities. It is often only when the performance or purpose fails, and this is brought to the attention of the wearer's senses, for example through sound, as with Anne's clomping heels, as previously mentioned or Robert's frantic search for his phone in his pocket, that they become aware of it.

The sound of clothing interacting with the moving body and the external environment or indeed other items of clothing follows the wearer wherever they go. The sound will change according to the changing environment and how the

wearer moves within it. Clothes will make the body move in certain ways, and the body animates the clothing in particular ways. For example the sound of shoes walking on the pavement or in an underpass is different to that of shoes on a carpet. A skirt may swish when walking, and swish differently when dancing. If Anne's heels 'clomp' she may try to change the way she walks to prevent this. Bull (2006) describes how the music from the iPod also moves the user's body.

> In tune with their body, their world becomes one with their
> "soundtracked" movements; they move to the rhythm of their music, not
> the rhythm of the street. (Bull 2006:107)

While Bull is describing an 'immersive' musical rhythm, one that excludes the sounds of the street through headphones, with clothing the environment is at play in the sensory experiences of dress, it is heard simultaneously. The sound of the wearer's clothing is constant to a degree, but it changes through interaction with the body and the material environment. This is particularly apparent in relation to the sound of shoes as the act of walking creates a noise, a noise structured by the combination of body, movement, materiality of the shoe's sole, the ground, and the architectural or street space in which the wearer is walking. For example one of the participants in my study, Sam, remembers little metal things called 'blakies' that, as a kid, he hammered onto the soles of his shoes so that they would spark and clack as he walked down the street. He talks about feeling as if he was 'James Bond or something' (Sam Interview 1: 0:37:03).

In another instance, Dylan shows me his 'Beatle Boots', black winkle pickers with a Cuban heel that he wears for dancing and which make a loud, sometimes 'invasive' noise on the pavement but which also make him feel 'cool' and 'swinging', not to mention giving him sore feet (see Fig. 6.03 on page 242). The sensations felt when wearing the boots creates a mood for Dylan. They are 'fun', for dancing and socializing, and they remind him of the 1950s and 1960s, a time he loves musically and cinematically. He says:

> I remember when I first got the Beatle boots, I made a special playlist.
> (Laughter) Because I was like, "This is what I should be listening to".

Sara: To go with the boots?

My fancy-boots playlist. (Laughter) I was dancing round the kitchen.
(Dylan Interview 2: 00:17:25)

Dylan's boots create a particular atmosphere for him, an emotional mood
and a sensory space where sounds, touch, rhythm and movement act together.
From dancing round his kitchen to dancing in a club, the boots allow him to take
this atmosphere with him. In a similar process as described in relation to touch,
the sound of Dylan's boots – in combination with the feel of them, the way they
change Dylan's posture and movements – help to anchor the particular character
and mood that he is performing within different spaces. It will also affect his
perception of space and place, and will act sensorily upon those spaces, creating
new atmospheres, of which he is a part. In this way, Dylan's boots help to 'emplace'
him, or connect him to this particular sense of self (at that time) as he moves
through the world. They also connect him back to an imagined time and culture in
the past - in the fifties and sixties - with its particular mood, rhythm and musical
soundtrack. Bull describes a similar experience for the iPod users in his study,

In tune with their thoughts their chosen music enables them to focus on
their feelings and desires; in tune with their memories - they create an
auditory mnemonic of their day via the playlists on their iPod.
(Bull 2006:107)

Sound, materiality and memory are closely linked. Nadia Seremetakis in her
writing on sensory perception, memory and material culture in modernity, has
argued that 'The senses are implicated in historical interpretation as witnesses or
record-keepers of material experience' (1994:6). Memory may be viewed as a re-
collection but also a re-imagination of the past. Re-imagination relating to the past,
present or future can be sparked through sensory stimulation such as sound. In my
study Robert remembered listening every morning to a woman walking in high
heels (or so he imagined) - clicking along the pavement outside his window. He

enjoyed imagining her through the sound, but did not want to look out and see her with his eyes, the fun and pleasure was in the distance, the sensory gaps that he could fill with his imagination (Robert Interview 1: 00:57:00).

Music and rhythm, whether listening, making or performing has been theorised as a means of individual and collective identity work. Paul Gilroy in his on-going work on the African diaspora has highlighted the relationship between 'music, time and place' (Bull and Back 2003:12). Culture and fashion theorist, Janice Miller suggests that Gilroy shows how the combination of body and music enables a rhythmic expression of autonomous identity (Gilroy referenced in Miller 2011:116).

> Listening to music offers new opportunities to address issues of globalization, place, identity, belonging, history and memory. Think about the way in which hearing a particular piece of music can evoke a vivid memory, or how a record collection can act as a kind of juke box of remembrance, each piece of music associated with a particular time and place. (Bull and Back 2003:14)

Material items such as clothing can also act as a 'kind of jukebox of remembrance', illustrated by Dylan's Beatle boots and their 'party boots playlist' (see Svetlana Boym 2001 for a discussion of the different contexts of nostalgia within everyday life). Musical identity work can involve imagination and desire. Indeed Dylan is re-imagining himself into a previous time and trying out aspects of these identity ideas in his boots, through performance. He moves in his boots to the rhythm of the music, hearing and feeling how they interact with his body as he dances round his kitchen. Dylan was not born half a century ago, and as such, although he may feel a tinge of nostalgia, he is not remembering his own experience but rather he is imagining a version of past eras through a collective nostalgia, one that has been formed, for him by the films and music of that era. His imagination is sparked by desire, the desire to connect to a different time and place, one with romantic connotations of 'coolness' for him, even just for a moment (Dylan Interview 2: 00:16:43). As Bull suggests in his study of the iPod, when listening to their personal soundtrack, users retreat into their own desires and feelings (2006: 107).

In relation to dress, Miller has argued that despite the increased attention being paid to understanding the meanings of the fashioned body from within fashion studies, sociology and cultural studies, researchers have 'failed to reflect the significant role of music to fashioned identity' (Miller 2011:7). The connection between music, materiality and dress is discussed shortly.

Sensory aspects of dress, like sound, whether made by the item of dress interacting with the body, clothing and environment or as music identified with the item, can provide an experiential link with a time, place, event, individual, group of people or culture, present, past or imagined. These identity links are experienced and performed, sometimes with ritualistic, rhythmic repetitiveness, and as a result the links are both strengthened and transformed. A number of the cross-cultural essays in the aforementioned collection of work on dress and the senses (Johnson and Foster 2007) discuss identity creation through dress practices, demonstrating how this is achieved through the mechanics of sensory memory and imagination. In Linda Welters' (2007) essay on Greek village dress she explains that when women wear ceremonial folk dress, it is the specific style, but also the textures and sounds created through movement – such as the jangling of coin embellishments and jewellery - that create a multisensory expression of community sentiment, not just for those wearing it, but also for those observing. This process of sensory 'empathy' or imagining oneself wearing another's clothes and feeling the same sensations can provide a sense of community and connection (Welters 2007:13-14).

Dylan's boots, in all their sensory materiality and associated music 'playlists', provide a point of connection through the process of 'emplacement', a notion which will be developed below in relation to a particular example from the data involving the sound of shoes.

Emplacement

Through emplacement, auditory aspects of dress could make connections for the wearer across time and place, through imagination and associated memory and emotion. I draw here in detail on the particular example of Paul. The sound of his shoes when walking, alongside other sensory aspects around his shows, such as cleaning and polishing, comforted Paul and reminded him of his past in the Army.

Unlike many of the other participants, Paul positively revels in the sound of his clothes, talking in depth about the pleasure he derives from audible aspects of his shoes, coats and shirts. He states:

> The sound of shoes on a wooden floor, I love. So they then either need to be leather soled shoes or soles like these with the sort of commando soles on like that with the rubber bits. I think it's one of the most amazing sounds in the world. Our flat is all wooden floors and in the lounge and the kitchen areas I just love walking around. It's a very comforting feeling, that sound. (Paul, Interview 1: 00:47:30)

When Paul gets out his shoe polishing kit, I ask him to show me how he cleans his clothes, a skill he learned and perfected in the Army. No longer in the Army, the ritualistic act of zipping open his bag, the tin clanking on the table, wiping the shoes down with scrunched up newspaper and brushing the polish to a shine is comforting and satisfying. In this extract from the interview, Paul's sensory pleasure is palpable when talking about cleaning his shoes.

> *Sara: So it's not just that you think it says something about you (clean shoes). In essence you think that people won't notice anyway…It's just always about your own standards I suppose…*

> Totally. Yep. [Brushing sound] Actually this is quite good we'll have a before and after. [Brushing sound] Now that's a lovely sound. Sounds like a train. [Brushing sound] It's funny on different bits of leather…I wonder if it's because…it sounds different …[Brushing sound]. You most probably can't see any difference to this and the other one.

> *Sara: Well I think they look very well polished anyway but that's…*

> We used to spend in the Army…on our army boots the toecap you used to have to polish for hours and hours. A little bit of water, a little bit of polish…it would be like patent leather, you know it was incredible…[pause]

> And the other thing I never do is wash this cloth because I think it's part of
> what gives it good character [cloth polishing sound].
> (Paul Interview 2: 01:12:30)

The full background soundscape that frames this activity can be heard in the audio clip from the interview, along with the click-clack of Paul walking around his flat (Paul Interview 2: 01:05:00). This sound emplaces Paul back to his army days, providing a nostalgic, comforting feeling. More than just a stimulation for memory, Paul's conscious movement – the walking and polishing activities - have moved beyond elicitation to become a habitual, ritual act, a counterpoint in time, a new aspect of his civilian life and identity, bringing past and present selves together. He recalls bumping into an old friend he had not seen in fifteen years and the first thing he said to Paul was, 'Have you still got the cleanest shoes in the music business?' (Paul Interview 1: 00:36:00) (see Figs. 6.04 and 6.05 on pages 243 - 244).

For Paul the sound of shoes clicking on the floor contains all the sounds of shoes he has heard and for him this knowledge is dominated by the sound of shoes from his 'army days' (Paul Interview 2: 01:04:00). In Merleau-Ponty's (1968) defining of the 'the intertwining - the chiasm' in relation to vision, he describes the seer as bringing to their gaze upon colour, all the colours that they have previously experienced, and all the associations and perceptions with that colour that exists inside them, binding them to that colour (Merleau-Ponty 1968:132). Although now a civilian, the sound of marching still resonates for Paul. The interactive and familial bond that he displays with his shoes suggests that this relationship could be seen to take the place of his previous relationship with his marching colleagues. The shoes play a role in keeping these memories alive - certainly they provide one of his only remaining connections with that time (I ask if he has any photographs of his time in the army and he cannot locate any). [1]

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[1] Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) (1991) could also be applied to an alternative analysis of Paul's shoes as 'actants', in which dress practice is considered as a technology and people and things as entangled – although this will not be pursued here. See Gomart and Hennion (1999), who have developed a theory of attachment using ANT. As Entwistle has suggested, ANT is an approach that has not yet been fully explored in relation to fashion and dress (2016:282).

The sound of Paul's shoes accompany him for most of the time, as he only very occasionally wears soft-soled trainers. This sound has become an integral part of his personal soundtrack and atmosphere, emplacing him back in time but also enveloping him in an auditory space that is familiar - that feels like 'home'. Paul's various homes feature often in his conversation. He has a busy life, he works in London where he shares a flat and has a home in the country where he goes at the weekend. He also tells me about moving home as a child when his dad was in the army. His wardrobe, iron and shoe polishing boxes take a central place in his homes. For example, he has two pairs of shoes, exactly the same, one in London one in the country and refers to them as 'brothers'. Indeed home has connotations of family and belonging. As previously discussed, Law's (2005) study of displaced Filipino women in Hong Kong and their sensory creation of a 'Little Manila', demonstrates the importance for people of feeling that there is a space in which to belong, a space in which to connect, through interaction and embodied, sensory memory, with familiar people and familiar things.

Music, sound and the materiality of dress

The connections between music and the material culture of dress will now be considered, and how this intermingling could also emplace the wearer, returning to the notion of clothing as a kind of musical 'jukebox of remembrance' (Bull and Back 2003:14), which was previously discussed in relation to Dylan's beatle boots. Through drawing upon another example from my data, John's favourite 'Fat City Records' t-shirt, the way in which both tangible and intangible sensory aspects can invest clothing with meaning is demonstrated. As a part-time DJ, and having previously worked in record distribution, John likes going record shopping and owns a vast number of records and quite a few record label t-shirts collected as memento-mori of labels and clubs he has been to.

> That's my favourite t-shirt, which is an old... - as you can tell. I like it old as well, I like the way it looks faded and worn and - it's Fat City Records which is like a Manchester record shop, which is no longer - and I used to go there every Saturday morning and that's why I like it, it's got that sort of sentimental value behind it. I can actually look at it and I can see the shop, I

can see the records I bought and the people who used to work there and everything. So that's kind of like, if I go to a festival, I'd probably take that and wear it quite often, because I think it would probably bring out that - people - I have had people come up to me and be like oh Fat City Records they were a great shop, because they died off about five years ago. (John Interview 2: 00:01:48)

As with Paul's example, the t-shirt provides a sensory, aesthetic memory, in this case of a shop and time now gone. To look at it re-ignites a fondness and re-emplaces John in the shop. He later recollects the 'wooden' interior of the shop and the 'great music in there which was across the board from hip-hop to jazz funk to soul, reggae, house techno whatever…- those like-minded people, congregating in that shop is what I see in that t-shirt' (John Interview 2: 00:48:10).

The t-shirt, (see Figs. 6.06 and 6.07 on pages 245 - 246) for John, encapsulates a feeling of common interest, the sounds of shared music and memories of record shops, clubbing and festivals. Showing its age and wear, once quite a bright blue (vestiges of this are just visible on the inside of the collar) the t-shirt is now a sun bleached mauve, testament to the many outdoor festivals John has worn it to. He likes the broken up crackle of the logo print although he says this happened almost immediately after he got the t-shirt, but is glad it has not gone so far as to make the logo illegible. John associates the graphic logo with the record label, shop and its music. For John, his attachment to the t-shirt comes through wearing it but also through sensory association and imagining, made stronger because it provides a 'sentimental' connection to an era now gone. The memory of buying, hearing and dancing to the music are part of John's somatic history and embedded knowledge, re-experienced through the t-shirt, which is a material jukebox of remembrance, but also a jukebox of future possibilities. The act of wearing the t-shirt to festivals re-makes new experiences, re-ignites the music and engages others in memory sharing and social interactions. When talking about another of his music label t-shirts from a club in the US called 'Body and Soul', he remembers wearing it in a 'mad bar in Mexico' when the guitarist on stage starts playing an acoustic version of one of the club's anthems and then comes over, telling John that he used to be the main guitar player from the Body and Soul club.

John's music label t-shirts are complex things, multisensory in their tangible materiality and multisensory in their intangible associated meanings. As Edwards, Gosden and Phillips propose, following Paul Stoller (1989), understanding and engaging with objects through the senses involves an appreciation of both 'imagination and experience' and '…suggest a fullness, encompassing reality, imagination and multiple experiences of perception and evocation' (2006). For John, and at times other people he comes into contact with, the t-shirts' visual and textural aspects are also rich with musical patina and meaning, they have a sensory and evocative 'fullness'. Idhe proposes a 'phenomenology of sound' (2003 [1976]) in which:

> In the realm of the imaginative, auditory imagination may accompany other dimensional presentifications. I recall looking at a *National Geographic* map of the Middle East, and it presents itself irreally in the imaginative mode. But to it, I 'add', while recalling the myriad faces of the peoples, the strains of a Near-Eastern wailing melody I once heard. (Idhe 2003 [1976]:61)

As in John's example, Idhe's recollection demonstrates the entanglement of various senses with the imaginary in the perception of material things. Idhe suggests that there is an ever-present 'dual polyphony of perceived and imagined sound' (2003 [1976]:62), that external noise can affect and 'disturb' the internal 'train of thought' as it penetrates into the self. Arguably then and as was discussed in the previous chapter four on sight, this points towards a notion of a 'sensory imagination' that draws upon all the senses along with embodied and somatic memory to re-create in the mind past experience in relation to dress. [2]

When the motion of the body or environment animates clothing it is not just one sensory mode that is at play. As evidenced in the previous chapters on sight and touch, the senses and sensory properties of materials and dress items affect each other in relation to experience and perception. Paul gives an example of this in relation to sound when he tells me about maintaining his clothes. He does not use conditioner when washing them as this makes the fabric soft. In relation to

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[2] See Oliver Sacks (2005) for a discussion of imagination and the senses in relation to the experience of the blind.

shirts he describes how this removes the 'crispness', for Paul a vital aspect of shirting. He says he feels 'excited' when he pulls out a folded crisp white shirt, scented with ironing water, from his wardrobe. Handling his shirt, he demonstrates the quality of the cotton to me by making it rustle (see Fig. 6.08 on page 246).

> There's just something...I mean...[rustling] the sound of that [rustling] there is just something [rustling] you know. I mean that's great quality cotton. [Pause and rustling]... I don't know, these were made in Italy...these ones. (Paul Interview 2: 00:19:30)

Here texture, sound, smell and colour are required to work together to create the right 'rustling' nature of his shirt. Also apparent is the complex interweaving of cultural knowledge and visceral sensory perception in Paul's experience of his shirt. The cultural framing of Paul's perception of crispness is apparent in the association he makes with 'Italian quality' cotton shirting. Here Paul's sensory perception is framed by knowledge around changing modes of garment production (a diminishing Italian clothing industry) and cultural ideas regarding authenticity and value that he perceived in the sensory dimensions of the shirt. On the other hand, and part of the same experience, Paul's 'excitement' comes through the sensory 'encounter' - the ritual act of taking the crisp, white, ironed shirt from one particular environment, the wardrobe, unfolding it and putting it onto his body (and all the sensory stimulation and transformation of both body and shirt that this entails). Here the cultural framing and the sensory encounter work together.

Conclusion

In this chapter it was demonstrated that the sound of dress did have significance for some participants within particular situations and the sound of shoes had particular resonance. Many of the participants did not particularly associate sound with dress, nor were they always aware of it. Sound was often a background aspect, not central to their everyday engagement with dress, in the same way that sight and touch were, so loud or unwanted sounds relating to dress could be quite disruptive.

Sound was positioned as entangled with the other senses within the perception of dress. Dress sounds were animated through the body's movement and in this way, the sound of dress worked with the participants' bodies, as an intermingling of materiality, body and environment.

Drawing on Goffman's dramaturgical notion, the sound of the dressed body was shown to play a role in social life as part of the presentation of self. Sounds of dress had cultural associations with gender and social status, and participants applied different meanings to these associations, depending upon their particular backgrounds, situations and beliefs.

As with sight, audible aspects of dress in social situations could create impact, extending the presence of the participant or helping them to blend in. Here the nature of sound as being potentially intrusive was discussed, where unwanted sound could disrupt the participants' performance and sense of self. It was demonstrated how the sound of the dressed body impacted upon how the participants inhabited social spaces. Sound was theorised as one element in the dressed body's sensory atmosphere, one that the participant took with them out into the public world. The sound of dress made participants aware that dressing oneself is a self-conscious social practice and was at times used to manage feelings of self-confidence and self-consciousness.

It was also argued that in addition to social dimensions, the sound of dress also had personal resonance for some of the participants. Through a notion of emplacement, it was demonstrated how in relation to dress, sound, materiality, imagination and memory were closely entwined, creating an experiential link to previous times and places and to past and imagined selves. Ritual and habitual sounds of dress were shown for some participants to be familiar and comforting, creating for them a particular emotional mood.

In this way, the sound of dress and the dressed body could have layers of private and public, social and individual meaning and significance.

Chapter 6. Images

Fig. 6.01
Ryan's shoes (2014)
Brown brogue shoes. Leather upper and leather sole. Made by Churches.
Bought in London in 2012. Around £300.

*'Yeah. I've got a pair of brogues that I sometimes wear for work. Sometimes I love
the noise that they make. And sometimes I hate it.'*
(Ryan Interview 1: 00:57:21)

Text References:
Chapter 6 (page 212)

Fig. 6.02
A selection of Corin's shoes (2013)
Brown and black shoes and boots. Leather upper and rubber sole. Made by Dr
Marten. Bought in Brighton between 2009 – 2013. Around £100 each.

'I like to creep around unnoticed so I kind of - they (the soles) are quite soft.'

(Corin Interview1: 00:48:13)

Text references:
Chapter 6 (page 223)

Fig. 6.03
Dylan's boots (2012)
Black 'Beatle' boots. Leather upper and leather sole. Make unknown. Bought from E-bay in 2012. £60.

'I remember when I first got the Beatle boots, I made a special playlist.   (Laughter) Because I was like, "This is what I should be listening to".'

'My fancy-boots playlist. (Laughter) I was dancing round the kitchen.'

(Dylan Interview 2: 00:17:25)

Text References:
Chapter 6 (page 229)

Fig. 6.04
A selection of Paul's shoes (2015)
Tan, brown and black shoes and boots. Leather or suede upper and leather or rubber sole. Made by Crockett & Jones. Bought in London between 1995-2011. £300-450.

Image on right: Black 'Tetbury' boots. Leather upper and rubber sole. Made by Crockett & Jones. Bought in London in 2007. £300.

'The sound of shoes on a wooden floor, I love. So they then either need to be leather soled shoes or soles like these with the sort of commando soles on like that with the rubber bits. I think it's one of the most amazing sounds in the world. Our flat is all wooden floors and in the lounge and the kitchen areas I just love walking around. It's a very comforting feeling, that sound.'

(Paul Interview 1: 00:47:30)

Text references: Chapter 6 (page 234)

Fig. 6.05
Paul's shoe polishing kit (2015)
Black 'Tetbury' boots. Leather upper and rubber sole. Made by Crockett & Jones.
Bought in London in 2007. £300. Black wax polish. Made by Crockett & Jones.

'We used to spend in the Army…on our army boots the toecap you used to have to
polish for hours and hours. A little bit of water, a little bit of polish…it would be like
patent leather, you know it was   incredible…[pause] And the other thing I never do
is wash this cloth because I think it's part of what gives it good character [cloth
polishing sound].'

(Paul Interview 2: 01:12:30)

Text references:
Chapter 6 (page 234)

Fig. 6.06
John's t-shirt (2012)
Blue t-shirt. 100% woven cotton. Made by Fat City Records. Bought in Manchester in 1992. Price not known.

'That's my favourite T-shirt, which is an old... - as you can tell. I like it old as well, I like the way it looks faded and worn and - it's Fat City Records which is like a Manchester record shop, which is no longer - and I used to go there every Saturday morning and that's why I like it, it's got that sort of sentimental value behind it. I can actually look at it and I can see the shop, I can see the records I bought and the people who used to work there and everything.'

(John Interview 2: 00:01:48)

Text references: Chapter 6 (page 236)

Fig. 6.07
Logo detail of John's t-shirt (2012)

Text references: Chapter 6 (page 236)

Fig. 6.08
Paul's shirt (2015)
White shirt. 100% woven cotton. Made by a tailor in Hong Kong (a copy of Paul's Mulberry shirt) in 2010. £30.

'There's just something…I mean…[rustling] the sound of that [rustling] there is just something [rustling] you know. I mean that's great quality cotton'.
(Paul Interview 2: 00:19:30)

Text references:
Chapter 6 (page 238)

CHAPTER 7. SMELL (AND TASTE)

Introduction

This chapter analyses the data relating to smell and also includes the few instances where the sense of taste was discussed. The senses of smell and taste are at times closely entangled, due to the proximity of the nose and mouth. The sense of smell played a part in the participants' everyday clothing experience but as with sound, the participants discussed it significantly less than they did the senses of sight and touch. Like sound, smell, in relation to daily engagement with dress was normally perceived in the background and only mentioned in quite specific contexts, with stronger aromas coming in and out of attention at particular times.

Most of the participants did not associate taste with dress, but four participants, once prompted by me, did have something to say about it, and all four of them discussed it in relation to the sucking of fabric comforters either by themselves or others, as a child or into adulthood. As Elsa pointed out, for her the comfort was as much about the smell as it was the act of sucking the cloth. One participant, Karen remembered the taste of her grandmother's lipstick and Robert had a memory of the taste of leather, which he thinks had come from using his teeth to help untie his leather shoelaces. These were the only other aspects relating to taste that the participants discussed.

During the interviews, almost all of the participants had to be prompted by me before they mentioned smell. The exceptions were April who brought it up unprompted when she was showing me a jumpsuit that she described as 'crumpled and smelly' (April Interview 2: 00:05:00). Dylan also brought up smell unprompted in relation to dirty jeans (Dylan Interview 1: 00:27:19). Laura, Andrea and James were half prompted – when I asked them which senses they associated with dress other than sight and touch, their first response was smell. Once prompted, however, all the participants had something to say about smell in relation to their dress and that of others – both loved ones and strangers - and at times expressed both strong negative and positive reactions to it, involving degrees of pleasure and conversely disgust.

This chapter is organised under three thematic headings. The first concerns dress, smell and social relations, that is how aromas and olfactory practices

relating to dress and the body are culturally and morally constructed, contributing to structures of social interaction, but additionally how they are experienced and given meaning at an individual level. This section is separated into three sub-headings: 'The smell of new clothes', 'Dirty and smelly: Odours of the dressed body' and 'Managing odour: Cleaning and laundering practices'. The second thematic heading concerns the creation of personal atmospheres through the use of applied scent and the third considers the role of olfactory aspects of dress within intimate bonding.

During the interviews the majority of discussions around smell were closely linked to bodily aromas resulting from perspiration, and the way in which clothing choices and laundering practices as well as bodily cleansing or scenting mediated these aromas. Threading throughout the analysis in this chapter is a sense of the close, intimate and micro nature of smell, the way in which the smell of dress is entangled with the smell of the body and activated through movement. Before beginning these sections the differing attitudes and dispositions towards smell in relation to dress that were expressed by the participants is outlined and a summary of the main types of olfactory engagement is provided.

Summary of participant olfactory attitudes and engagement

As with the other senses, participants expressed different attitudes and dispositions or affinities towards smell. Some also expressed different levels of olfactory sensitivity, and these could be complex and at times contradictory. For example, Simon said that while leather shoes have a distinct smell of leather and polish; '...you're not really conscious of it until you stop and do something like this and talk about it...' (Simon Interview 2: 00:21:13). He later states however that he is *very sensitive* to the smell of other people and their clothing (Simon Interview 2: 00:26:50). Paul, Karen, and Andrea explicitly stated that they had a strong sense of smell, Andrea says - 'I'm quite responsive to smells' (Andrea Interview 1: 00:32:39). The significance of smell in relation to everyday dress differed depending on the type, strength and context of the aroma. Some participants were more aware of material items of dress smelling, for others it was their own smell or other people's that they were particularly attuned to. The strength or weakness, and the perceived 'quality' of the aroma defined the degree of attention it received,

so Robert states that he is aware of other people's smell if it is 'bad', but only notices perfume or aftershave on others if it is very strong (Robert Interview 1: 1:02:00).

Like the sound of the dressed body, which was discussed in the previous chapter, many dress and bodily smells are subtle and only perceptible when the nose is close to them. As a result, olfactory experience of dress often involved a level of intimacy. For example, Pamela explicitly connects up perfume to closeness and sensuousness (Pamela Interview 1: 00:18:05), and many of the participants discussed actively bringing items of dress in close to sniff them for pleasure or to gauge their cleanliness.

Particular materials and fabrics were associated with smells, which could give pleasure and/or displeasure, depending on the particular participant's viewpoint. Leather was mentioned by six of the participants and engendered strong emotional responses. Four of them loved the smell, while two hated it. For one, leather had connotations of luxury, for another it signified animal cruelty. Two participants discussed the smell of silk as nice, and the smell of cotton and fur were both mentioned once as pleasurable. On the other hand wet wool and rubber were described as having an unpleasant smell. Three of the participants discussed synthetic fabrics, specifically mentioning nylon and polyester as causing them to sweat, creating unpleasant body odour. But they qualified this by acknowledging that this effect also depended upon the external temperature, seasons and the level and type of activity being undertaken.

The material fabric of clothing was described as becoming impregnated with smells emanating from the body, from the movement of the body in the environment, from the external environment itself or from added scents. For example, cigarette smoke, fresh air from drying washing on the line as well as a 'shop smell' were mentioned by participants as affecting the aroma of the dress item. The origin of dress smells can be complicated to unpick. Elsa tells me that her nieces always say '"she smells of London"' when they see her, but she thinks this may be the particular washing powder and her house that pervades the clothes which her nieces then associate with London (Elsa Interview 1:00:16:16). All these factors contribute to the way that dress items and the dressed body smells, which, when noticed, could engender quite intense reactions from the participants. As will

be illustrated in the analysis, these visceral and emotional responses to smell were specific to individuals and experienced as personal reactions but were also culturally attuned, shaped by both the individual's specific life experience and by wider cultural and social rules, values and practices. I discussed perfume and aftershave with all of the participants and they had differing attitudes to its use and the type of scents they preferred. In some instances these preferences were a result of cultural background, or to do with cultural values for example gender. Others related to the situation or space in which the scent was to be worn.

For the participants, olfactory dress experience had both private and social aspects, shaping social and familial relations, but also private moments of personal experience and meaning.

Dress, smell and social relations

According to Roach-Higgins and Eicher's (1992) definition of dress as 'body modification' and 'body supplements', dress modifies the perceptual properties of the wearer, one of which is odour, and this affects how they perceive themselves and how others perceive them (Eicher and Evenson 2015:6).

> Body smell relates to the study of dress, because we both add and subtract various odours or scents to our bodies. Each process usually involves grooming practices. (Eicher and Evenson 2015:10)

Similarly Jennifer Craik (1993), who positions everyday fashion as cultural identity played out on the body, includes scent as part of 'body decoration', one of the 'techniques of composing the social body within different conducts of life' (1993:153) and in so doing brings the non-visual to bear on appearance. Within this study, Goffman's (1971, 1990 [1959]) work on social interaction and encounters, foregrounds an understanding of olfactory dress preferences and practices as contributing to the participants' performance or 'presentation of the self' (Goffman 1990 [1959]) within social life. As has been previously argued, following Entwistle (2000), the relationship between the body and dress, and the embodied *practice* of dressing, is central to the meaning of dress. In relation to smell, the connection between body and dress is particularly intimate. Aromas,

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through their ability to impregnate both body (coming into the body through the act of smelling) and material fibre, result in a close entanglement and olfactory mixing between the wearer and their dress items.

As Simmel (1997 [1907]) suggests in his early sociological work on the senses, the body is arguably more intimately related to smell than to any other sensory modality, and as a result smell affects social interaction.

> Smelling a person's body odour is the most intimate perception of them; they penetrate, so to speak, in a gaseous form into our most sensory inner being...this must lead to a selection and distancing that to some extent creates one of the sensory foundations for the sociological reserve of the modern individual. (Simmel 1997 [1907]:119)

As Simmel points out, smells penetrate into the body of the perceiver through the nasal passage, but additionally and as previously stated, body odour, as well as environmental odour, also penetrates cloth, so lingering smells resulting from wear were an important part of the participants' olfactory experience of dress. Within the data, the discussion of smell was often linked to notions of cleanliness and dirt and to managing body odour through laundering (which removed or replaced the smell of wear) or through scenting the body and dress items with perfume or aftershave. The smell of particular fabrics was only briefly touched on by the participants, although four participants discussed in some detail the smell of new clothes - which will be outlined shortly - as this was the first olfactory contact participants made with their personal items of dress, and it foregrounds the notion of unwanted dress and bodily aromas that subsequently came through wear.

The smell of new clothes

The complex smell of 'new' clothes was described as highly pleasurable by four of the participants, with another also mentioning that his new shoes still smelt of 'shop' because he had hardly worn them. The smell of 'newness' was very specific and described in a similar way by all these participants. Three of the participants did not attempt to describe the smell other than to say it was the smell of 'newness', which perhaps points, as previously mentioned, to a lack of

appropriate sensory vocabulary. The particular smell of new clothes and accessories partly related to the aroma of the shop environment from which it came and to the experience of shopping and consumption itself as pleasurable. While the smell of new items of clothing and dress has an element of 'freshness' to it, this was very different to the smell of freshness that comes from newly laundered or cleaned items. As Robert says:

> There's a newness of new… and a newness of something washed, they are very different….But you can never retain that. Now if somebody could package that it would be… (laughter). (Robert Interview 1: 01:04:30)

Ryan agrees with Robert in that it is a very different smell to laundered clothes, but does try to explain this 'shop smell' in more detail, linking it to other sensations such as touch when he says new clothes 'feel amazing'.

> Quite a kind of neutral but really clean smell, but not one that you'd ever recreate by washing it. It's not at all floral or fruity like fabric conditioners are. It just kind of smells like a factory, but in the best way possible. (Ryan interview 2: 00:31:15)

For Ryan this particular smell of newness is pleasurable and has to have a 'neutrality', which relates to a lack of sensory engagement, to material as 'untouched' and unworn, what would be termed 'box fresh' in contemporary speak. In this way smell in relation to dress is often linked to touch, as smells impregnate and affect its material qualities through touching the body, environment and other things. Keeping shoes in their box is one way to prevent atmospheric and other contamination. For example, and as previously mentioned in chapter five on touch, Sam has a favourite pair of suede moccasins that he keeps for nice weather. He brings them to the interview carefully boxed up which is how he stores them at home – protected from the environment and sensory contamination, from light and potential damage (see Fig. 7.01 on page 277).

I wrap them. I put the stuff in them. They go in the box and they come out
once in a blue – when its nice…They are smart. They are lovely.
(Sam Interview 1: 00:32:42)

In this way, Sam can be seen to practice techniques of preservation in order to
retain their 'smartness' and 'newness'.

To return to Ryan's statement above, he senses in the smell of newness the
factory and production process. Factory smell was something that Elsa also
mentioned, but in a negative way. Elsa points out that too much factory smell is
unpleasant, as the overpowering scent is anything but neutral. Elsa explains how
she ordered some clothes from a catalogue and when they arrived they had a 'vile'
chemical smell, which she associated with production possibly in China, and this
reminded her of unsustainable and unethical production practices (Elsa Interview
1: 00:14:31). Physical retail stores - the interface between production and
consumption - could be seen to play a role in neutralizing or masking olfactory
residue from factory production, through steaming and de-creasing processes
before hanging the clothes and through the layering of new consumption smells
from the store, making the items ready for purchase. The cultural valuing of the
new within fashion consumption is played out through sensory dimensions of
dress, in which smell is an important element. This helps to uphold a Western
fashion system based on continuous cycles of consumption, and a Western cultural
preoccupation on neutralizing odour more generally. This, in turn, foregrounds the
de-valuing of worn clothes that have permanently taken on bodily smells, which is
discussed below.

These examples demonstrate how from the beginning of the production
process through to consumption, dress items may already have a complex
overlaying of scents, which reflect the production, distribution and consumption
journey they have been on, the various environments they have passed through
and processes they have undergone.

Dirty and smelly: Odours of the dressed body

Dress can act as a barrier, preventing bodily smells from extending further.
However, as previously mentioned contact between particular materials and the

body can encourage perspiration, which smells. Habitually worn dress gets dirty and dirty clothes can begin to smell in particular ways as a result of interactions with the body and with the environment. Bodily odour that has impregnated the material of dress can linger long after the dress item has been taken off and, for the most part within Western culture, this odour is understood negatively as 'dirty' and polluting. As Prown (2001 [1982]) has observed, and as previously mentioned in chapter three, in Western discourse, material things have been de-valued as base, whereas abstract and intellectual ideas are seen as 'lofty' and superior. Part of this de-valuing process involves lifting the mind to a place above the body and world, whereas material remains below, very much entangled in and affected by bodily and worldly 'ills' such as dirt or damage: 'Material things are heir to all sorts of ills – they break, get dirty, smell, wear out…' (2001 [1982]:70).

Unpicking this Western cultural notion of 'dirt' enables an understanding of this central aspect of the participants' olfactory experience of dress. In Douglas's (1966) anthropological study of dirt and pollution, which is discussed in more detail shortly, she argues that Western ideas of dirt as unhygienic have little or no basis in medical fact, but rather are a significant expression of symbolic systems - cultural constructions and practices that regulate and structure social behaviour. This is apparent in the data, as the management of dress odour provided a means for the participants to try and create pleasant, socially acceptable or attractive body odour.

Cross-cultural anthropological studies have demonstrated how the values associated with smell are culturally attuned (Howes 1991 and Classen 1993, Classen). Jim Drobnick's (2006) edited collection of essays on smell attests to the existence of different smell cultures, as do a number of the cross-cultural essays on dress and the senses (Johnson and Foster 2007). One of these, Marlene R. Breu's article on scent and the body in Turkey, specifically illustrates 'cross-cultural differences in the way natural and applied body scents mediate social behaviours' (2007:61). From her observations, she suggests that:

> …in Turkey, and elsewhere, natural body scent may be an acceptable
> personal identifier whereas, in the United States, only scents added to the
> body in the form of fragrances may be acknowledged as acceptable for this

purpose. While it is not generally encouraged in Turkey that an individual smell unpleasant as a result of body odours, natural body scents from excretions through the skin are not as negatively perceived as they are in the United States and a greater variation of what is considered unpleasant or unacceptable exists. (Breu 2007:63)

This study took place within a Western context and participants' olfactory attitudes and practices were broadly in accordance with Western cultural thought and convention - most of the participants defined and experienced aromas of dress associated with dirt in a negative light as unclean and unwanted - although their level of conformity differed according to each participant's attitude towards those cultural norms and to specific social situations.

Non-compliance with cultural notions and practices around cleanliness can have social implications for the wearer. As Simmel's earlier quote suggests, the valuing of these bodily odours on a negative and positive scale can lead to 'selection and distancing' within social life (1997 [1907]:119). This was apparent within this study as the participants described other people's odour as most noticeable when it was either appealing or repellent. In this way the scent of the dressed body could act as both a means of attracting another person - which might result in 'selecting' them for closer social interaction - or as a warning - that might result in a 'distancing' of social relations. For example, Elsa describes how she once made the mistake of commenting to a partner that she liked the smell of his aftershave, and as a result he then wore so much that it suffocated her (Elsa Interview 1: 00:19:04). Smells can attract and repel, but as smell is such a matter of complex individual and culturally learned tastes, successfully managing one's smell to achieve the desired effect on another person is, as Elsa's example demonstrates, tricky and complex.

As discussed in chapter four on sight, the appearance of the dressed body can invite or deflect the attention of others, and so too can the smell of the dressed body. One of the participants, Jill, in particular said that for her 'smelling ok' was as important as 'looking ok', that perfume was 'a huge thing' for her and that if other people had a nice smell it made 'a huge difference' and was almost as important as what they wore (Jill Interview 1: 00:47:26). Participants perceived their own

odour and that of their dress, and through being aware of and making judgements about how other people smelled, had a self-conscious understanding that others would be doing the same to them. As Ryan says of his aftershave, highlighting its social role:

> So, yeah, there is this one particular aftershave that I really like. And a few people that I've been with have kind of noticed it. It's kind of got social approval now that I want to keep wearing it. (Ryan Interview 1: 00:49:09)

If, following Goffman's approach, social activity is theorized as staged and performed scenes, these practices to maintain particular bodily scents can be seen as part of an individual's social performance, an attempt to give the impression and 'convince' others that they are successfully realizing the social standards by which they will be judged (1990 [1959]:243).

Ryan's quote also suggests how managing smell is a self-conscious and 'reflective practice' (Waskul and Vannini 2008:53), one that connects to Merleau-Ponty's (1993 [1964]) articulation of the strange duality of vision and touch, as previously discussed in chapters four and five, in which the body is simultaneously and paradoxically able to see itself seeing and touch itself while touching, can be extended to include not only sound, as argued in chapter six, but also smell, as the body can also smell itself while smelling other things. In this way dressing as a self-conscious social practice involves all the senses of smell, sound, touch and sight. Dressing was for many of the participants much more than keeping up appearances, rather it was a multisensory projection or enactment of self within social life, a 'situated' and 'embodied practice' (Entwistle 2000), but also a sensory one. This practice relates to a sense of self, but implicated within this is a sense of otherness, which will be discussed shortly.

While, as stated, most of the participants, were aware of and in the main conformed to olfactory notions and practices of cleanliness, there were individual differences in the extent to which, and the ways in which, they conformed, or were concerned with conforming to social convention. Dylan explicitly stated that he was not too bothered what other people thought about his clothes smelling, that for him often 'the look' was more important (Dylan Interview 1: 00:35:20). That

said, there was for most of the participants, a sense of the need to smell if not good, then, at the very least as Jill puts it, 'ok' - or in other words, socially acceptable. Ryan says he feels 'safe' wearing natural fibres such as cotton and wool, implying that they do not make him sweat (Ryan Interview 1:00:20:32). One of the reasons why Karen loves her new angora wool jumper so much (see Fig. 7.02 on page 277) is that it is loose and therefore does not make her smell bad.

> So I kind of know that there's a jumper I can always put on and, you know, I can trust and rely on it to always keep me warm, but won't make me smell bad and stuff. (Karen Interview 2: 00:35:08)

Smelling 'bad' or 'out of place' has distinct moral connotations, as pointed out by Douglas (1966) that are just as, if not more powerful than, those associated with looking 'out of place'. It is the strong moral associations with smell that make it so effective in upholding social rules of engagement. Building on Simmel's (1997 [1907]) approach, the significance of, and relationship between the moral and social dimensions of smell were outlined by sociologists Gale Largey and Rod Watson.

> In short, odours, whether real or alleged, are often used as a basis for conferring a moral identity upon an individual or a group. And certainly such moral imputations bear upon the processes of human interaction. (2006 [1972]:30).

More recently, Alan Hyde has outlined how, historically in the United States, individuals and groups have been hierarchically arranged, accepted and rejected according to the moral identities conferred upon them, through association with bad smells relating to social concern with hygiene (2006:53). In Law's study, she points out how the smell of Indonesian Clove cigarettes was described in a letter to a Hong Kong newspaper as a ''filthy stench', with its implications of refuse and contamination' (2005:232). As Smith points out in his chapter on the history of smelling, olfactory categorization is implicated in power relations. 'Class distinctions – subjective and objective – so very constitutive of modernity, were

also indebted to olfaction' (2007:66). At a macro level of social structure, class formation involved the definition of odour values by the Western elites and emerging middle classes in the nineteenth century, so the 'labouring classes' were labelled as 'reeking' while the bourgeoisie presented themselves as 'largely inodourate' (Smith 2007:65-67).

In unpicking further the relationship between dirt, hygiene, smell, dress and the body within the data in this study, of particular relevance is Douglas's (1966) theoretical approach. She explains the moral dimensions of dirt by positioning dirt as 'matter out of place', which:

> ...implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt then is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is a system. (Douglas 1966:44)

If 'dirt' is considered 'pollution', this implies impurity and a contravention of boundaries - an immoral act - resulting in ritual practices around cleanliness that enable dirt to be contained, re-ordered and re-defined as clean and therefore morally acceptable. According to Douglas, these 'symbolic systems of purity' are a means to maintain order within disorder, and so the elimination of dirt is a creative, 'positive effort to organise the environment' (1966:2), to conform to an idea and therefore 'make unity of experience' (1966:3). In relation to dress and smell, the creation of 'unity of experience' can be seen to frame the participant's activities on a public and, as will be demonstrated in the following section on scent as personal atmosphere, on a personal level.

Also of relevance here is Douglas' notion of 'boundaries', in which the boundaries of the body reflect social boundaries and management of these boundaries are integral to social order (1966:142). Through rituals that demarcate boundaries, 'beliefs in the danger of crossing forbidden boundaries' and punishments for doing so, order is imposed (Douglas 1966:5). Things in the world, such as bodies, material items and environmental matter are separated, ordered and kept in place. So 'food splattered on clothing' (Douglas 1966:45) or sweat impregnated in clothing is an example of matter out of place and boundaries transgressed. All participants laundered their clothes and some took extra care

over this. While as Douglas attests, this activity undoubtedly attends to re-imposing social order upon the material items of dress and the body, as will be argued in the following section, for the participants it also served to manage an individual sense of self.

Managing odour: Cleaning and laundering practices

Laundering provided a means for participants to attempt to remove unwanted smells of wear, both bodily odour and environmental smells from their items of dress, replacing them with more pleasant ones. The use of washing powders and conditioners, ironing water or shoe polish were described as providing a nice scent and part of the pleasure was in their familiarity. As discussed in the previous chapter on sound, this is reminiscent of Paul's shoe polishing, where both the activity of polishing but also the familiar smell of the polish emplaced him back to his time in the army. Polishing, like ironing (which he was also taught to do in the army) had olfactory dimensions, which through their habitual and ritualistic nature, played a therapeutic role in Paul's everyday life (Paul Interview 1: 00:36:30). For Paul ironing transformed his clothes and afforded him an emotional transition to a different atmospheric space, providing a sensory, ritualistic, personal, and often private moment of time that was just about him, an escape from the stresses, structures and social life of work. Having had a busy week he recalls cancelling a dinner arrangement as all he wanted to do was get home and spend some time ironing, after which he felt 'great' (Paul Interview 2: 01:23:00). Paul's ironing board, his meticulously ironed clothes and sheets laid out, and his bottle of scented ironing water, which was an important aspect of this practice can be seen in Fig. 7.03 on page 278. The sense of satisfaction and the calm atmosphere around this captured moment is almost palpable in the image. Ryan also described enjoying laundering and sorting his clothes as a private activity at home on a Sunday that gave him a sense of order (Ryan Interview 1: 00:52:53).

Another participant, Laura, stated that, for her, smell can be 'powerful' and calming, because of its link to memory, and that this can create a pleasurable, if intangible feeling of oneness, reminiscent of Paul's ironing. When I ask Laura about other people's perfume, she says she is aware of her mum's, her dad's aftershave

and her boyfriend's, as well as her grandmother's. This caused her to reflect on the ambiguous but powerful effect smell can have:

> Smell has a strong – strong links to your, well, memory, as in it's very powerful. Yeah, I love that feeling when you smell something and you're not quite sure what it reminds you of but you just have this sense of complete calm and happiness and it's quite – yeah. Smells are good.
> (Laura Interview 1: 01:03:16)

The smells are 'good' for Laura because they are familiar and remind her of close family members – they have a personal resonance for her. For Paul, while the smell of ironing water is not related to a close family member, it too is valued partly for its qualities of familiarity and its personal resonance. For Paul the use of scented ironing water is an essential part of his ironing ritual. He says:

> I use the ironing water, yes. I got very distressed the other day because I'd run out and I had to resort to using water - which wasn't quite the same.
> (Paul Interview 2: 00:19:15).

There were a number of other instances in the data where participants discussed using particular laundering products, to make dress items smell familiar. Here smell is used to impose a sense of ownership and personal identity upon the items. For example, Karen always uses the same fabric conditioner as this is familiar to her, and says she 'feels like a different person' if she wears something washed in a different conditioner (Karen Interview 1: 00:39:45). As both Karen and also Paula stated, this personalizing aspect of laundering was very important for second hand clothing purchases, as it made them their own and erased any potential sensory memory of previous wearers - which might make the new wearer feel uneasy - as well as dirty or musty odours.

However, to what degree aromas were considered as dirty, unwanted or 'out of place' and how it was subsequently dealt with was not always clear-cut for the participants, suggesting that the boundaries and tensions are under negotiation. As with new clothes, old clothes and in particular second-hand clothes

were associated with strong smells by the participant. The smell of second hand clothing was discussed by five of the participants, but not all viewed it negatively. Two participants thought its smell unpleasant while another stated that they liked the smell and yet another said that it was sometimes bad, sometimes good – although they could not say what the subtle difference was or why. The fifth participant pointed out that charity shops smelled much better than they used to.

Douglas's model tends to overlook the individual differences in attitudes towards dirt, bad aromas and cleanliness. In relation to dirt and dress, it does not account for the positive contexts of dirt in relation to dress, when it is considered to add value to a garment rather than pollute it, such as when a garment is 'worn in' or has a 'patina' of age which is viewed as 'authentic', as discussed in chapter five on touch, or when the dirt or the smell is the tangible evidence and connection to sensory memories, which will be discussed shortly. That said, developing on the logic of Douglas's notion of 'matter out of place', the way that clothes wear out and accumulate dirt could be positioned as materiality pushing back upon social structures. The re-categorization and re-valuing of second hand clothing as 'vintage', could be seen as another way of 'managing' this threat to social structure. When washing is no longer effective, dirt may be re-defined as not dirt, but something else, so that the potentially offensive item can be contained and controlled within a new category. This, however, does not fully account for the pleasure that worn clothing can engender and the complex ambiguities around smell.

Social rules can work alongside sensory pleasure. The more intangible aspects of everyday experience such as emotional or sensual pleasures and pains also structured the participants' social lives. This demonstrates how social structure can be challenged and re-negotiated in order to accommodate for individual needs and to allow for pleasure and creativity.

Additionally, sometimes what are normally viewed as 'bad' aromas come to be re-assessed as having a pleasant, personal significance and this depended on the context and if they enabled a re-connection with a memory of a place or person.

Ryan tells me that his jacket still smells from a recent trip to Paris where he and his girlfriend sat in cafes drinking wine and smoking cigarettes.

Like that jacket now smells of Paris. Because we did nothing for four days apart from sit outside cafes drinking wine and smoking French cigarettes. It wasn't until I got back and I put it in my room and I smelled it and it smelled a bit smoky and at first I was like, "Oh, that's bad." But then I thought, "Actually that's nice. It kind of smells of the weekend that we had." My girlfriend wears a particular perfume and if we've spent a weekend or if we're been watching a movie and she's had her head on my shoulder and I smell that, I really like that...that kind of association.

(Ryan Interview 1: 00: 45:28)

Applying Douglas's notion of 'dirt' as pollution to Ryan's statement above is problematic. While initially he thinks the lingering smell of smoke on his jacket is bad, he quickly decides that it is actually 'nice'. His negative associations are overridden by positive memories of the time he had, of Paris and of being with his girlfriend. The ways in which bodily smell and applied scents connected participants to close family and friends are discussed in the following section titled 'Intimate bonding through smell'.

In Ryan's example, the positive nature of intimate social interaction and personal memories contained in the aroma is more powerful than the more general social stigma of dirt. Ryan's perception of the aroma can only be understood within the context of his lived experience - in which social structures are negotiated through his particular embodied activities and acquired knowledge.

A number of scholars have critiqued what they see as Douglas's overly structuralist approach, where the body is a representation of social structure, a text upon which social discourse is written. Howes, following Jackson, argues that for Douglas the body is treated as an 'unknowing inert object', merely a sign or metaphor of the social, and as such denies the action and knowledge of the lived body (its 'habitus', as Bourdieu (1994) terms it), and how somatic experience shapes, rather than merely reflects social and cultural life and structures (Howes 2003:30). Entwistle also argues that the structural approach to the body taken by Douglas and others, attends to the body as symbolic but does not fully account for the active body, for 'embodiment' as the bringing together of 'bodily experience

and social practice' (2000:29). She suggests that the phenomenological approach of Merleau-Ponty:

> ...demonstrates how the body is not merely a textual entity produced by discursive practices but is the active and perceptive vehicle of being. (Entwistle 2000:29)

Entwistle combines a structuralist with a phenomenological approach.

> ...an account of dress as situated practice requires drawing on the insights of these two different traditions, structuralism and phenomenology. Structuralism offers the potential to understand the body as a socially constituted and situated object, while phenomenology offers the potential to understand dress as an embodied experience. (Entwistle 2000:12)

Dress is not merely social structures acting on the body, dress is a practice, where social relations are played out, negotiated, and made within different spaces and situations. To return to Ryan's statement, the way he perceives the smell is contextualised by a number of spaces and situations. He may not have noticed the smell while in Paris, and it only comes to his attention back home in the privacy of his room. He is aware that he would normally perceive the smell as unwanted – most people would not want to go out smelling of cigarette smoke - but the space and situation in which the smell impregnated his jacket changes his view to a positive one with personal resonance. It is unlikely that this would have been the case if the smoke had impregnated his jacket during a less pleasant or personally significant situation than a romantic trip to Paris, because it would not have contained the meaning and memories for Ryan.

As Entwistle notes, Goffman's articulation of space is useful for understanding dress as attending to space and situation (Entwistle 2000:34). Different spaces have different rules, and 'dress forms part of the micro-social order of most social spaces', additionally, 'action transforms space', so how dress is practiced can transform how the space is experienced, and negotiates or transform the rules of the space (Entwistle 2000:34). I would add to Entwistle's argument

that sensory dimensions of dress and sensory practices around dress are integral to the way in which actions involving dress 'transform space' and negotiate social structures and rules.

In this section, the ways in which participants managed body odour that had permeated dress has been theorized as a means of maintaining social order and conforming to wider social and cultural rules, although these rules could also be challenged, ignored or re-defined to accommodate for their individual needs or preferences. Additionally, the removal of body odour smells and the application of fresher, clean or perfumed scents was also a means to personalize dress items. This dual removal and re-application of scent articulates the tensions between the need to conform to social standards and normative collective modes of sensory behaviour and a wish for individuality. Olfactory residues are removed to create a more neutral smell, however, as a result the dress item no longer feels personal. Body odour would, of course, make it smell personal to the wearer, and this was acceptable to a degree in the privacy of the home in relation to leisure clothes. For example, Anne does not bother to wash her cosy onesie (Anne Interview 1: 00:40:08) (see Fig. 1.02 on page 61), however when out and about, body odour is generally not socially acceptable, so familiar perfumes take its place, applied through laundering using scented products, to create a sense of individuality and re-possession. In addition, perfume and aftershave applied to the body and onto dress items were described by a number of participants as creating a sense of self, and this is considered in the following section of this chapter.

Personal scents: Dress and bodily preparations as atmosphere

The use of perfume and aftershave was discussed by thirteen of the participants who expressed a variety of attitudes towards its use. Not everyone applied scent, some wore it sporadically, some always wore the same scent and others chopped and changed between scents. Five of the participants, Paul, Karen, Paula, Jill and Pamela loved wearing scent and discussed it at some length.

Participants were aware of having a distinct 'smell' of their own and, as previously stated, they were in varying degrees aware of other people's smell, particularly when either 'bad' or 'good'. Karen is known for wearing strong perfumes and her friends have told her that her clothes smell strongly of her. She

says that it's the intensity of scent that they associate with her rather than the scent itself, as she wears many different types. She is also aware that if she lends clothes to other people, they come back smelling of them, not her, and this she finds 'disturbing' (Karen Interview 1:00:35:30). Ryan also discusses his own smell in relation to his cycling gloves (see Fig. 7.04 on page 279).

> Yeah. I think like borrowing kind of cycling stuff from friends. Like particularly gloves. They have that horrible smell. I remember at school, like the sports equipment. That kind of festering, like fetid smell. And like my cycling gloves have that smell. But it's mine and I like it. But if it's someone else's, it's stomach churning. So that's always kind of really, really kind of pungent. (Ryan interview 1: 00:46:49)

As discussed in the previous section, categories of olfaction have been used historically and culturally to define differences between groups of people, and this process involves a self-consciousness of 'how one smelled as an individual', as linked to 'ideas about selfhood' which, in turn, enables 'the construction of olfactory others' (Howes quoted in Smith 2007:67). As Karen's and Ryan's statements illustrate, understanding their own scent as familiar, involves understanding the scent of others as different, and sensing another person on a personal possession - such as an item of dress - is therefore disconcerting, as it signifies 'otherness' and 'strangeness'. As previously stated, this points to the need to possess personal dress items through removing unwanted odours and replacing them with familiar ones.

Taking a phenomenological understanding of selfhood as 'located in the body, which is in turn located in time and space' (Entwistle 2000:29), then paying attention to *how* the body perceives both this sense of self and time and space through the senses, highlights the importance of the sensory and sensing body in framing knowledge of, and interactions between people and the world around them. If the self is in the body and this body is dressed, it is the dressed body that is located in time and space. Furthermore, if people come to know each other through their senses, then the way that dress and other bodily preparations transform bodies sensorily is of significance.

Simmel, in his writing on the senses, outlines how a 'person's atmosphere' which makes a 'sensory impression' on others is integral to social interaction, that atmospheres pull people towards others, through instigating an 'instinct' or 'desire' to get to know them better through talking and interacting with them, and that this combination of sensory impression and knowledge '...become cooperatively, and in practical terms inseparably, the foundation of our relationship to that person' (Simmel 1997 [1907]:111).

The way that scents prescribed a sense of self and a sense of 'others' within the data in this study, demonstrates how they are an important aspect in framing social relations. This can be seen in the way that scents are gendered. Indeed, Robert remembers how, during his upbringing in the north of England, the very act of applying scent was viewed as feminine, and as a result he still does not wear scent (Robert Interview 1: 01:08:00).

Scents are culturally attuned and socially understood, but as Simmel points out in relation to space, smell in human relations is nuanced and sometimes difficult to pin down. It connects or disconnects people in quite intangible but intense ways, it brings into close proximity, the 'most inarticulate, instinctive and exclusively emotional condition of these relationships...' (Simmel 1997 [1908b]:155). It feels like, following Mason and Davies (2009), an essence or a likeness, or alternatively, a repulsion that is sensed instinctively, but cannot be easily articulated. In this way, the notion of dress as providing a sensory atmosphere for the wearer seems particularly appropriate in relation to smell, as scent particles emanate into the air around the wearer, present but unseen, tangible and intangible.

Scenting as a technique of dressing

Getting dressed in the morning involves choosing what clothes and accessories to wear and might also involve choosing to wear a particular scent or to apply creams or cosmetics. All these items bring to the body layers of aroma, and so part of dressing is to create, sometimes consciously, sometimes sub-consciously an olfactory atmosphere around the body. These applied scents can have both cultural and individual associations and meanings for the wearer.

A similar process takes place in the creation of domestic spaces. As previously outlined, insightful comparisons can be made between the space of home and the space of dress, both of which, bodies inhabit. Pink (2004) in her research on gender and domestic life demonstrated how people 'created specific olfactory environments in their homes which are attached to identities, moralities and more' (Pink referenced in Pink 2009:145), and are important to a 'constitution of place' (Pink 2009:145). In the notion of dress as sensory atmosphere, the olfactory element is important to a 'constitution of self'. By including scent as an aspect of dress (Craik 1993:173), it is one of the sensory techniques the wearer uses when dressing. As Craik puts it, 'While make-up is based on visual techniques, perfume is a technique of smell' (Craik 1993:164).

Within this study, Jill was explicit about the importance of managing her smell as part of making herself feel good and 'right', suggesting also how scent transforms her mood. For Jill smell was as important as look and feel, which was previously discussed in the chapters on sight and touch, in achieving a holistic sense of self and to feeling 'right' when dressed. Jill tells me that she is very attached to her current favourite perfume, Euphoria by Calvin Klein, although she used to wear a Chanel scent (in Fig. 7.05 on page 280 both bottles are pictured on her bathroom shelf).

> I just have one that I really like and I've worn that for – you know, and it's expensive. Usually it's expensive. Can't - smell is hugely – a huge thing for me. And so I sort of – I'd rather wear nothing at all than...
> (Jill Interview 1: 00:47:26)

While Jill experiences her perfume as personal to her, Euphoria is a popular, although not cheap, scent, available on the high street, and therefore by no means unique to Jill. There is both a collective, cultural, economic and fashionable value to the scent, but this does not prevent it from also having a personal and individual resonance for Jill. It still feels uniquely 'her' when she wears it.

Craik points out how perfume advertisements emphasise 'the relationship between the scent, human senses (alluding to the role of smell in sensuality and sexuality), and the wearing of identity (social body)' (1993:164). Like other items

of fashionable dress, personal perfume or aftershave styles and products are chosen from those on offer in the shops, however, once applied scent reacts in a unique way with the wearer's body – just as an item of clothing will look different on different people - so arguably Jill's particular experience of smelling Euphoria on herself *is* unique, even if this is in a nuanced way. For Elsa, it is both her rings and her perfume which are the key items of her everyday dress, and that afford her an immediate sense of self.

> …mmm it feels like part of my identity *(rings).* It's like that. I put on my rings, and I spray my perfume. (Elsa Interview 1: 00:12:53)

Paula, who says that perfumes are important to her, again illustrates the duality of scent as social and individual, private and public, but accentuates the intimacy and sensual aspects of scent, apparent in the way that she whispers when she tells me the name of the perfume she currently wears, and adores (Paula, Interview 2: 00:50:25). Her perfume gives her intense personal pleasure but it is also social - she says she loves it, and 'boys love it too' (Paula Interview 1: 00:40:51). She first noticed it on a customer who came into the shop where she works, and describes having to persuade the woman to reveal the perfume's name. Paula understands that as perfume reacts with different bodies in different ways, it feels personal to the wearer once applied. As a result, it can feel like giving something away to reveal it, which may diminish its uniqueness, and the fashionable value in having something no one else knows about - the sense of being 'in the know'.

Paula does link perfume to desire and sexual relations, when she says that 'boys like it too', and Elsa also mentioned scent in this way. As previously pointed out, perfume and aftershave advertising has relied heavily on constructing associations with sexual desire to sell: 'As a practical technique, perfumes are constructed as the site of sexual desire in the trained body, as a means to produce and intensify desire' (Craik 1993:171). However, this aspect of perfume or aftershave was not the main focus of the participants' discussions around scent. Scent was discussed as giving personal and private pleasure. As Susan says:

Sometimes I just spray perfume on my scarf, because it's nice to have that smell for yourself. (Susan Interview 1: 00:57:45)

Pamela remembered a camel coloured cashmere coat she owned that was incredibly soft, impregnated with the scent of the Shalimar by Guerlain perfume that she wore at the time. She tells me how a young woman in the cloakroom of a restaurant she frequented would swoon whenever she handed the coat in, and how Pamela implies that she 'knew' that the woman always tried her coat on. Here both the soft feel of the cashmere, the large shape of the coat and the pervading scent work together in creating an enveloping atmosphere or cocoon for the body. The coat is a mini sensuous world, one which Pamela has created for herself, but which also comes to have resonance for the young woman, through her initial transformation and the repeated ritual of engaging with the coat and its sensory dimensions. Pamela enjoyed that her coat was appreciated. It gave her a sense of social approval, creating a new social connection and enjoyable, habitual ritual.

But it wasn't just the coat. It was the fact that as soon as she got it on, she was enveloped in that smell. (Pamela Interview 1: 01:17:35)

In both Susan and Pamela's examples, the scent is sprayed on or lingers on their dress items and the haptic and tactile dimensions of the clothing work with the scent to create a particular pleasure. In spraying the scent on an item that can be actively smelled, wrapped around the body or taken off, rather than it being sprayed directly on the body, how and when the scent can be sniffed or not, is brought more under the control of the wearer. This points to the particular malleable nature of dress as tools and technique, as previously mentioned in chapter five on touch.

In this section, personal scent has been outlined as a technique of dressing that, working together with other sensory aspects of dress, created an olfactory atmosphere that for some of the participants attended to a sense of self.
In the following and final section of this chapter the additional role that personal scent plays in establishing bonds within close relationships through enabling connections to other people, times and places is discussed.

Intimate bonding through smell

Within close, familial relationships with friends and family, the scent of the body and dress could strengthen bonds. This was enabled through the strong association of particular scents with particular people, as discussed in the previous section. Within more intimate relationships, the boundaries of the body were actively crossed in varying degrees. The atmospheric scent of a person is one form of demarcation of the boundary of the self and of the other but, in order to smell another person's scent, a level of intimacy is required. And conversely, one way to achieve intimacy is to smell another person, or as was the case in a number of the examples to be discussed, to smell their dress items on which their scent lingered, as this provided a pleasurable reminder of the person. It was this mingling of self and other through olfactory perception that created the connections and bonds in the examples to be discussed. In the examples, the sensing and sharing of bodily scent was a positive aspect of social relations. In all the cases to be discussed, it was applied scents, rather than bodily odour resulting from sweat or other body emissions that were associated with a person. That said, and as previously stated, the scent of a person is often a combination of aromas. When worn, perfume or aftershave, is entangled with layers of other body, material and environmental aromas.

Within close relationships, just as in wider social activity, boundaries still have to be negotiated. Simmel suggests that close relationships require careful management because the physical proximity between people needs to match the psychological closeness between them, saying, 'One may involuntarily conclude that the warmth and inwardness of a relationship must increase in proportion to degree of personal closeness' (Simmel (1997 [1908b]:157). Arguably, then:

> Among the most subtle sociological tasks of the art of living is that of
> preserving the values and affections that develop between people at a
> certain distance for a close relationship. (Simmel (1997 [1908b]:157)

This suggests that paying attention to space is required when considering olfactory dimensions of dress within intimate relations. Goffman outlined a notion of 'The Territories of the Self', spatial and non-spatial territories over which

individuals and groups of individuals make claims upon and maintain boundaries around to prevent violation (1971:52-52). This concept of claims is for Goffman, 'at the centre of social organisation' (1971:51) and this resonates with Douglas's concept of boundaries as outlined in the previous section. Goffman does make passing reference to Douglas's work in a footnote, when discussing the different sensory and bodily modalities through which 'humans' can enact violations of boundaries (1971:71), although he does not expand further on this, nor reference in detail Douglas's notion. In thinking through the examples of smell relating to intimate relations within the data, Goffman's notion of the 'territory of the self' is useful in adding a layer of complexity and nuance to the broader social boundaries that Douglas outlines, as Goffman pays attention to micro practices, and the different types of spaces that define different social relations.

Here a notion of personal space is useful, what Simmel termed the, 'delimitation of personal spheres' (Simmel 1997 [1908b]:156). Part of the unease that Karen described when her clothing smelled of another person, as previously mentioned, is perhaps because it warns of improper intimacy or, as Simmel suggests, a perceived lack of fit between the physical and psychological closeness of their relationship.

Just as when a stranger gets too physically near and invades personal space, on the opposite spectrum, when a close family member is far away, there is also a misfit between psychological and physical intimacy. In this situation olfactory aspects of dress can help to bring them closer, to close the space between. Because scents can be associated intimately with people, they can be a means to connect with those at a distance. As with the notion of 'emplacement', as previously discussed in chapters five and six, through memory, association and ritual relating to dress and personal scent, bonding across distances is enabled.

This was illustrated in a sensory shrine that Laura made to evoke her mother. As Laura is living away from the family home now, she misses her mum and tells me that she sometimes goes into Boots to spray her mum's perfume on herself. When she told her mum this, her mum sent her the handkerchief from her wedding day, sprayed with her perfume. Laura has put this in a little Laura Ashley jug her mum had previously given her, and wrapped the jug in cling film to preserve the scent, keeping it on a desk at home and occasionally sniffing it when

she passes. This ritual action enables her to feel reconnected with her mum and home (Laura Interview 1: 01:03:16).

In another example, one of the few instances where participants discussed taste in relation to clothing was when Robert tells me about his silk scarf (see Fig. 4.02 on page 157). His baby grandson used to suck it when he was being carried on Robert's shoulder. As a result the scarf came to hold memories of that time with his grandson, and as Robert stated, it '…acquired a kind of provenance' (Robert Interview 2: 00:42:30).

> It's got sentimental meaning now, because when my daughter had her first baby and I went to see my grandson and he was then, oh, about four or five months old…It's that kind of thing when babies are exploring everything with their mouths and this would be ringing wet because he was so fascinated with it. He really liked the taste or the texture of it… There was something about it. (Robert Interview 2: 00:42:30)

In Robert's statement, smell contributed to the close sentimental bond that he has developed with his scarf, suggesting that the notion of social relations can be extended to include not just human-to-human relations but human-object relations (Miller 1987, Attfield 2000, Edwards, Gosden and Phillips 2006) and this is something that could be explored further in future research around dress and the senses, which is discussed in the conclusion to this thesis.

The smell of clothes can be a reminder of, or provide a connection between family members or close friends. Paula, says:

> This particular perfume, I quite like it on my clothes. I went to see – my dad's not really well. I went to see him. It was on the scarf. I left the scarf there and he hasn't stopped sniffing it. (Paula Interview 2: 00:41:00)

Four of the participants also discussed how they liked the scent left when loved ones or good friends had borrowed their clothing, contrasting with Karen's statement about the smell of strangers, and the need to remove lingering scents from second hand clothes.

Within close relationships, the sharing and mutual recognition of personal scents can be an active and pleasurable aspect of bonding. Woodward (2007) has explored the sharing of dress as part of women's close relationships with each other and also in relation to the practice of wearing boyfriend's jeans as a means to manage difficult emotional relationships (Woodward 2011). James remembers his granddad's aftershave, Eau Sauvage by Christian Dior, the specific smell of this mixed with tobacco smoke, saying that it makes him think of the smell of his granddad's wardrobe, and James now occasionally wears that same aftershave (James Interview 1: 00:37:27).

As these examples from this study demonstrate, the senses and memory are closely intertwined (see also Seremetnoakis 1994). Additionally there is a body of academic work that attests to the links between clothing and memory (see Chong Kwan, Laing and Roman 2014), so it is perhaps unsurprising that memories of people can be evoked through the olfactory dimensions of dress. Juliet Ash has written about clothing and the double sense of 'presence' and 'absence' which is both 'reassuring' and 'disquieting' when a 'garment becomes imbued with the essence' of a person (1996:219), but a particularly evocative example of this can be found in Stallybrass's (2012 [1993]) reflection on clothes and mourning. Stallybrass describes how, when wearing the jacket of his recently deceased friend, Allon, he felt the sensory memory of Allon contained within the very textile of the jacket, and he notes how it was the smell that was particularly evocative.

> I was inhabited by his presence, taken over. If I wore the jacket, Allon wore me. He was there in the wrinkles of the elbows, wrinkles that in the technical jargon of sewing are called 'memory'; he was there in the stains at the very bottom of the jacket; he was there in the smell of the armpits. Above all, he was there in the smell. (Stallybrass 2012 [1993]:68)

In this context, for Stallybrass the way that the material of the jacket was entangled with bodily odour, which, as discussed earlier in this chapter, in another context could be defined as polluting and unwanted, is a positive and 'magical' experience. He says, 'The magic of cloth, I came to believe, is that it receives us; receives our smells, our sweat, our shape even' (Stallybrass 2012 [1993]:69). Stallybrass's

feeling resonates with Merleau-Ponty's articulation of the way that things haunt us and we haunt things (1993 [1964]:122), as discussed in chapter four in relation to sight. In this instance, the materiality of cloth catches the smell and makes the olfactory essence of Allon tangible through its entanglement with dress.

Within this study, an example that illustrates well how scent can be a powerful link to departed loved ones came from Andrea, who has kept the handbag of her mum who passed away ten years earlier. Handbags normally contain very personal items and her mum's bag still contains her perfume spray and other items such as throat lozenges and a powder compact (see Fig. 7.06 on page 281), which means that the bag and its contents have retained traces of her mum's scent. This item of her mum's dress provides an important connection between Andrea and her mum, one that helps Andrea to deal with her loss. In the absence of her mother, the bag serves as a surrogate.

> I kept her handbag, and I actually did a project on it, my first project when I went to college, because they said to take an object that means a lot to you, and just do lots of work on it. And it was her handbag, and all the things that she had in her handbag, her powder compact and everything else. And that definitely smelt of her, it had a perfume bottle in it, it had a powder compact. And she smelt of that mixture of her perfume and her makeup and all of those things. That was quite important, actually. I've still got the bag, but I did in the end – I think I may have some of the contents, but quite a lot of them – I felt like I sort of worked it through. I actually made a collage based on the contents of her handbag, and that helped me to work it through. So yeah, that definitely encapsulated a lot of things. And her smell was very her. I suppose I felt the same about a lot of people.
> (Andrea Interview 1: 00:34:15)

Private spaces or containers, such as handbags are important in that they attend to the individual self and to personal needs. In Goffman's (1991 [1961]) study of asylums, the inmates' pockets provide a personal place of refuge. It is the private nature of Andrea's mum's handbag and its contents that makes it so

powerfully evocative. In these examples objects take the place of the departed person, and in so doing they can help during transitional times.

Conclusion

In this chapter, smell was outlined as playing a significant role in the participants' everyday experience of dress within specific contexts. The smell of dress and the dressed body engendered strong reactions of pleasure and disgust, however, like sound it was normally perceived in the background, with stronger aromas coming to the participants' attention. Taste was shown to play a minor role in the participants' sensory engagement with dress.

The smell of particular dress material was valued in different ways and had a range of cultural meanings ascribed to them by the participants. Smells from the external environment and bodies also impregnated the materiality of dress, creating complex olfactory dimensions and meanings. In this way, the smell of dress was linked to touch, as aromas intermingled through touch interaction.

Drawing on Goffman, olfactory dress practices were outlined as contributing to the presentation of self in everyday life. Smell was understood by most of the participants in relation to the socio-cultural valuing and maintenance of, acceptable or desirable bodily aromas - although they conformed to this in varying degrees. In this way smell in relation to dress was social but also intimate in nature, closely related to the body. Drawing on Douglas, the participants' understanding of body odour that resulted from perspiration was linked to cultural discourse and social structure. For most of the participants, body odour of this nature was associated with moral notions of uncleanliness and therefore required managing in order to maintain social order. It was shown, with reference to Simmel, how aromas of the dressed body affected the way participants perceived both themselves and others and as such, smell had a self-conscious aspect and, as with sight and sound, could make an impact within social relations. However there were ambiguities around the categorization of odour as negative or positive, and this could change depending on the context and when the odour had personal resonance for the participant.

Personal applied scents were considered as part of everyday dressing and were also shown to play a role in social relations. Participants took personal

pleasure from applied scents and related specific scents with particular individuals, either themselves or close friends or family. The application of scent was linked to the constitution of the self in creating a sense of individuality. It was shown to make a significant contribution to the sensory atmosphere of the dressed body. Smell was also closely linked to memory and could connect participants with, or trigger a memory of, absent loved ones. Furthermore using a notion of boundaries and personal space, the sharing of body aromas were shown to strengthen bonds within intimate relationships. It was therefore argued that smell in relation to dress had public and private, social and individual resonance.

Chapter 7. Images

Fig. 7.01
Sam's shoes in and out their box (2015)
Brown shoes. Suede upper and robber sole. Made by Lacoste. Bought in London in 2012. £100.

'I wrap them. I put the stuff in them. They go in the box and they come out once in a blue – when its nice…They are smart. They are lovely.'
(Sam Interview 1: 00:32:42)

Text references:
Chapter 7 (page 252)

Fig. 7.02
Karen's jumper (2012)
Purple, royal blue and black jumper. 100% angora knitted wool. Maker unknown as label removed. Bought in a charity shop in Brighton in 2012. £10.

'So I kind of know that there's a jumper I can always put on and, you know, I can trust and rely on to always keep me warm, but won't make me smell bad and stuff.'

(Karen Interview 2: 00:35:08)

Text references:
Chapter 7 (page 257)

Fig. 7.03
Paul's ironing (2015)
Ironing board, iron, bottle of ironing water and a selection of neatly pressed clothes and laundry.

'I use the ironing water, yes. I got very distressed the other day because I'd run out and I had to resort to using water which wasn't quite the same.'

(Paul Interview 2: 00:19:15)

Text references: Chapter 7 (page 259)

Fig. 7.04
Ryan's cycling gloves (2014)
Grey and black mountain bike gloves. Suede and woven stretch fabric. Made by Endura. Bought in Brighton in 2011. £15.

'Yeah. I think like borrowing kind of cycling stuff from friends. Like particularly gloves. They have that horrible smell. I remember at school, like the sports equipment. That kind of festering, like fetid smell. And like my cycling gloves have that smell. But it's mine and I like it. But if it's someone else's, it's stomach churning. So that's always kind of really, really kind of pungent'.

(Ryan Interview 1: 00:46:49)

Text references:
Chapter 7 (page 265)

Fig. 7.05
Jill's perfume (2015)
100ml bottle of 'Euphoria' perfume (centre). Metal and glass bottle. Made by
Calvin Klein. Bought in 2012. Around £40.

'I just have one that I really like and I've worn that for – you know, and its
expensive. Usually it's expensive. Can't - smell is hugely – a huge thing for me. And
so I sort of – I'd rather wear nothing at all than..'

(Jill Interview 1: 00:47:26)

Text references: Chapter 7 (page 267)

Fig. 7.06
Andrea's family (1958)
From left to right: Andrea's mother, Andrea, her sister, her father. The family are on their way to a wedding in East Grinstead.

Andrea's mum's handbag and contents (2012)
Black handbag. Leather. Make unknown. Date bought and price unknown. Contents: Chanel No 5 perfume spray, throat lozenges, powder compact, mints, letter, wallet, notepad and diary.

'I kept her handbag…And it was her handbag, and all the things that she had in her handbag, her powder compact and everything else. And that definitely smelt of her, it had a perfume bottle in it, it had a powder compact. And she smelt of that mixture of her perfume and her makeup and all of those things. That was quite important, actually. I've still got the bag,…And her smell was very her. I suppose I felt the same about a lot of people.'

(Andrea Interview 1: 00:34:15)

Text references: Chapter 7 (page 274)

CHAPTER 8. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Introduction

Academic research into everyday dress in a UK context has touched upon the multisensory experience of dress from the perspective of the wearer, although this has not been fully explored (see chapter one). This study has brought together existing research that considers dress as an embodied practice, with sensory studies, material culture and a specific phenomenological approach, to consider how the senses were integral to the participants' individual experience and understanding of dress.

This chapter summarizes the findings from the data analysis. These relate to the particular group of 20 people who participated in this study. As noted, women have largely been the main focus of research into fashion and dress, predicated on the basis that the experience of men and women may be quite different. However, in this study, the findings have proved to be equally applicable to both men and women. The analysis of the data showed that all of the participants had a sensory relationship with their items of dress. This suggests that there may be more commonalities than differences between contemporary male and female sensory engagement with, and understandings of dress within a UK context.

A core aim of this research was to map out the different ways that the senses were involved in everyday dress experience, and this was done through the data analysis. These included:

- Sensory interactions when shopping, selecting clothes to wear, laundering and maintaining items of dress.
- The different sensory dimensions of particular dress items and how these changed through wear and tear.
- How dress was perceived through all the senses (individually and combined) - as the wearer moved through different environments.
- Sensory engagement with other people's dress.
- Sensory memories and imagining relating to dress.

In this chapter the findings are organised under four theoretical sections. The first is 'Sensory entanglements', which is split into two headings, 'Entangled data' and 'Vision, the other senses and materiality'. The second section is 'Sensory effects' and the third is 'Mediating boundaries: private and public, individual and social experience'. The final section outlines a notion of 'Dress as sensory atmosphere for the body'.

Sensory Entanglements

This section draws a comparison between the entangled nature of the data in this study - which builds on previous discussion in the methodology chapters - with the entangled nature of sensory perception. I would argue that, following Law (2004) in order to more fully understand everyday dress experience in all its sensory dimensions, new methods and approaches are required that attend to these entanglements.

Entangled data

As a result of taking a sensory approach I was faced with an intricate web of entangled and at times intangible experience within the data. My urge was to try to unravel some clear or definite meanings, to untie the knots.

As demonstrated through the data analysis, the interviews were connected to each other. Most participants undertook two interviews and so these were naturally linked, intersecting along thematic threads. The second interview built layers of meaning and reflection upon the first. As the first interviews covered similar themes, they each connected with the other to some degree across lines of purpose and theme. The participants used stories and aspects of their life history to describe their sensory experience of clothes. In this way, narratives also connected the interviews. Similarly, as the second interviews were based on a discussion of particular items of dress, these interviews connected to each other across modes of description and across particular types of clothing - for example, shoes were discussed in depth relating to sound in a number of the interviews. These various connections enabled specific comparisons to be made and asserted certain themes over and above others but, as highlighted throughout the data

analysis chapters, they also threw up contradictions and disconnections, ambiguities and confusions.

As I began to pull out themes through close examination of the interview testimony (see chapter three), the knots appeared to untie whilst simultaneously the multiple and fluid connections tying them together also increased. Themes and connections pulled participants and elements together at various points, while differences punctuated these connections and stretched or pushed apart emerging generalisations and theoretical ideas. This process continued as the data amassed and the project evolved. From the very first research encounter in this study, both embodied sensory knowledge and private, emotional feelings were evident. These, along with the more ephemeral sensory experience and the multiple connections and entanglements that made up the 'messy' nature of the data, were central to the research encounters and went on to shape the analysis (Law 2004:2).

A similar notion frames the nature of sensory experience itself - as entangled and intangible – leading to the question of how we might then define and 'know' the senses. As evidenced throughout the data analysis the senses are entangled not just with each other but also with cultural variables and with other more 'intangible' sensory aspects. In this way it was necessary to attend to both the senses and to 'essences' and 'atmospheres' when analysing the participants' sensory dress experience. Following this a notion of dress as a sensory atmosphere for the body was proposed and this is outlined in the final section of this chapter.

Moreover, the entangled data highlighted some of the issues encountered when using traditional material culture methods, such as Prown's (2001 [1982]) to investigate dress items in use or as worn. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, and as will be summarized in the section to follow, in everyday life the sensorial materiality of dress changes and the wearer is affected not only physically, but also emotionally through their sensory engagement with dress. In this way the relationship between the participants and their dress was shown to be a complex and affective one.

It is argued therefore, that new methodologies that embrace different types of experience and understanding - such as the sensory approach taken within this study - are needed in order to more fully understand the relationship between the wearer and their dress within everyday life.

Vision, the other senses and materiality

The different senses of sight, touch, sound and smell were shown to play particular roles in relation to everyday dress, some of which were applicable to the experience of many of the participants, others were more particular to individuals. For most of the participants, taste was not involved in their daily experience of dress. Each sense could have particular resonance at different times and within different contexts, and participants had complex sensory preferences and sensitivities. It was argued that sight and touch were both central to the participants' everyday engagement with dress, often working in conjunction or conflict with each other. Smell and sound were very significant to some participants, less so to others, and these senses tended to act in the background, coming to the fore at particular times, and mainly in relation to specific type of dress or engagement with dress. Furthermore, the data analysis suggested ways that the senses were entangled together (and could affect each other) and the ways in which the senses were entangled with materiality.

I argue therefore, that in this thesis, a consideration of how visual understanding was contextualised by other sensory aspects and materiality enabled an in-depth exploration of the many layers of experience and meaning that everyday dress had for the participants. Movement also proved to be central to the sensory perception of dress. The way in which the participants sensed and made meaning from sensory engagement with their dress was framed by their cultural biographies, but was also contextual and could change as participants aged and moved through the world. In summary, these affective factors were:

- Other sensory aspects
- The materiality of dress
- Movement
- Learned social and cultural knowledge and attitudes
- Memories
- Transition through life stages
- The body
- Emotions
- The physical environment

- The particular private and public spaces and situations in which the participant was dressed

The more intangible aspects of the participants' dress experience - aspects such as memory and emotion - were brought to the fore during the interviews. This suggests that the senses can provide a means to get closer to the more nuanced and intangible aspects of everyday experience. In addition, by treating *all* the senses as entangled, the often ambiguous or contradictory nature of the participants' dress experience was explored, which in turn suggests how the meanings that might be inferred from the participants' appearance could at times be quite different to how they themselves felt. This challenges the 'assumption that the meaning of clothes can be more or less confidently read off the garment itself' (Tseëlon 2001b:253).

For the participants in this study, the visual dimensions of dress and their appearance was just one, albeit important, component in the practice and meaning of dress. They described many other sensory aspects, demonstrating how being dressed was, for them, a complex, nuanced and changing multisensory exchange with the material items of dress they wore. Throughout the data analysis, it was shown that through the senses and through sensory imagination, participants and their material items of dress were closely entangled, that a mutuality and recognition existed between them. Arguably then, in order to understand the material culture of dress from the wearer's perspective, the ways that the senses connect the wearer to the item should be considered. This would uphold Edwards, Gosden and Philips (2006) suggestion that:

> ...a deep mutuality exists between our sensory apparatus and material things - that the sensory and the material call each other into existence... (Edwards, Gosden and Philips 2006:5)

As Stewart has similarly noted, it is sensory stimuli and the possibility for sensory pleasure that guides the infant towards objects - that opens out the world for them (2002:19). The data analysis in this study demonstrated how sensory aspects of dress called out to the participants, and through the sensory pleasures and

irritations that came from being dressed, suggested new ways of being in the world. This fed into the participants' wider sense of being both individual and social beings, able to move out into and engage with the world.

As outlined above, the nature of the research topic had introduced two parallel issues - the entanglement of the data and the entanglement of the senses. During the analysis stage, it became apparent that rather than trying to disentangle the data and indeed the senses within the data, it was more sensitive to acknowledge them, be reflexive and to loosen the interwoven threads just enough to allow analysis of the individual connections - to see if differences and commonalities between the senses emerged, whilst still attending to the messy whole. The data chapters sought to reflect this process; as the data was loosened, and sensory categories considered in turn, themes and aspects were teased out, before returning to the sensory connections through which they were entangled.

Sensory effects

One aim of this research was to explore how sensory engagement with dress affected the participants' bodies, emotions and thoughts and how these aspects were entangled. As demonstrated in the data analysis, the participants were made to look, feel, smell and sound in particular ways when dressed. Participants learned knowledge about their changing bodies from the feel of dress and the body was shaped, structured and encouraged to move differently. Moreover, through wear - an accumulation of sensory interactions – the sensorial materiality of the dress items was affected by: the participants' bodies, the environment and laundering practices. In turn this change affected how the participants understood and valued the dress items.

Sensory engagement with dress could make the participants feel in particular ways, and could affect their mood, both short and long term. In this way, sensory dimensions of dress could both disturb, but also help to maintain their sense of wellbeing. It was also shown that through memory work, sensory dimensions of dress could have intense personal resonances for some of the participants and using a notion of emplacement, these were positioned as connecting participants with past times, places and people, in addition to past,

present and imagined selves. This process in turn linked to the participants' sense of home and belonging, and helped them to negotiate their sense of place within the world in their everyday life. During life transitions, sensations from clothing could make participants feel as if they had grown up or moved into a different stage in their life.

The cultural background and particular biographies of the participants framed their sensory learning around dress, which, in turn, shaped the specific meanings they attached to dress, and the different roles that dress items played. This process of meaning making was continually changing throughout their lives, in response to their different bodily, emotional and situational needs.

Mediating boundaries: Private and public, individual and social experience

Throughout the data analysis, attention was paid to the position of dress on the boundaries of the body. A comparison was made with the way that the senses work on the margins of the body, moving inside and outside. The senses connected participants' bodies to their items of dress and beyond this, to the outside world and to other people. The inside of dress items and how this was sensed on the body was shown to be of importance in addition to how dress was sensed from the outside. Taking a sensory approach highlighted how the private pleasures, pains, emotional and mindful aspects of dress that were personal to individuals were entangled with their social and cultural understandings of dress. It was suggested that the senses are the connectors that bring together these aspects of experience, mediating between body and mind, feeling and knowing.

Furthermore, considering dress as operating at the interface between the wearer and the world, it was argued that sensory engagement with dress enabled participants to negotiate the porous boundaries between themselves and others within social life, and between themselves and the world around them. The data analysis demonstrated how participants presented themselves and acted within and upon the world through all the sensory dimensions of dress. Visual aspects of appearance were an important element of this, but tactile and haptic aspects of dress were also shown to make the body appear, feel and move differently. Additionally, smell and sound played a role in how some of the participants pushed out into or pulled back from the world and to how the participant was perceived

by others. Sensory aspects could also provide warning signals to the participants, revealing when their dressed performance was unsuccessful and creating a feeling of displacement, of being socially 'out of place'. In this way sensory engagement with dress was a significant aspect framing how participants inhabited space and made an impact within social life.

When dressing was a self-conscious practice for the participants, it was shown to also be a sensorily aware practice. I have argued, following Merleau-Ponty (1993 [1964]) that this was framed by the duality of simultaneously sensing other people and things, while also sensing the self. Through managing sensory aspects of their dress, participants could attend to the complex needs of particular social situations in which they found themselves. Additionally, sensory aspects and practices around dress were used by the participants to help them transition between formal and informal contexts, private or public spaces, which required different ways of being and feeling. As was argued throughout the analysis, all sensory aspects of dress, that is sight, touch, sound and smell, even taste albeit in a minor degree, played a role in social relations. Appearance was of particular importance in broader social life, while it was demonstrated that the other sensory dimensions of dress played various roles within more intimate and familial relationships. For the participants, sensory aspects of dressing could create a sense of belonging but also of difference, and managing sensory aspects of dress helped them gain a sense of their own individuality.

It was argued then, that for the participants, sensory engagement with dress was part of the construction of the social self, but also of the individual self. It enabled a negotiation between the two, and helped to mediate the tensions between social and individual needs and desires.

Dress as sensory atmosphere for the body

In the data analysis a definition of dress as a sensory atmosphere for the body was proposed, drawing on an understanding of atmosphere, the notion of 'personal space' and the concept of 'home'.

I have suggested that paying attention to the atmosphere of the dressed body enabled an exploration of both the tangible sensations as well as the more intangible - but nonetheless significant – essences that contributed to the

participants' experience. The atmosphere of the participants' dressed bodies was constituted through appearance, movement, texture and touch, aromas and sounds, deportment, gestures and more intangible aspects such as the their attitude, emotional mood, memories and imagination. This notion therefore, takes account of all sensory dimensions and moves away from the focus on appearance. When participants made successful dress choices, ones that attended to their individual and social needs and desires at that moment, dress and the body worked successfully as one, creating a feeling of balance and oneness – they felt 'right'.

Added to this, a notion of atmosphere articulates the malleable and portable nature of dress as worn. A type of home for the body, participants carried their dressed atmospheres with them during their daily life, inhabited them and animated their sensory dimensions. It was furthermore suggested how, for some of the participants, individual dress items could develop their own atmospheres, taking on sensory and emotional resonances from other people, places and events. In agreeing with Mason that atmosphere is 'part of the 'social'' (2015:np), I have also suggested that the atmosphere of the participants' dressed bodies were affected by, and in turn could influence the wider environmental and social atmospheres through which they moved.

Conclusion

The above findings drawn from the data analysis facilitated a reflection upon the original aims of the research, as outlined in the main introduction to this thesis (see page 13). The analysis has attended to those aims in the following ways:

- The different types of sensory interaction that made up the participants' everyday engagement with dress were articulated and analysed in depth.
- The ways that the different senses worked both distinctly and together in relation to dress were outlined.
- Sensory engagement with dress was shown to affect the participants in multiple ways and inform their sense of self within the world.

- Cultural and social background and on-going life-experience was positioned as continually shaping the participants' sensory engagement with dress and thus the particular and changing meanings of dress.
- It was shown that through sensory engagement with dress, bonds could form between participants and their dress items.

This research has demonstrated how sensory engagement was central to the participants' experience of dress and played a significant role in shaping their meanings of dress and dress practices. Therefore, I would argue that adopting a sensory approach to understanding dress within other contexts, or incorporating the senses into other theoretical and methodological approaches, helps to move beyond the focus on appearance and visual aspects of dress and contributes to current understandings of the role of dress within everyday life.

CONCLUSION

Through undertaking a new multi-sensory, empirical study of everyday dress from both male and female participants' perspectives this thesis has made an original contribution to knowledge through its approach and its findings. In doing so, this thesis begins to close the sensory gap in existing knowledge on everyday dress within a contemporary Western context. This thesis therefore makes an original contribution to the field of fashion and dress studies that has tended to neglect some of the senses, namely sound and smell, and additionally to the field of sensory studies, which has tended to neglect dress as a subject matter for research.

An interdisciplinary theoretical approach was taken that combined social, material, phenomenological and sensory studies theory – a combination that had not previously been applied to the study of everyday dress in this context. The resulting findings provided new knowledge around the wearers' multisensory perceptions of dress. It was demonstrated that sensory interaction involving numerous senses; sight, touch, but also sound and smell provided the building blocks of everyday embodied dress experiences for the participants. In taking a multisensory approach to researching and understanding everyday dress from the wearer's perspective more intimate and private practices and meanings around dress were revealed, aspects that are not easily observable. This demonstrated the complex interplay between private and public understandings of dress and how the senses were shown to work together and in particular ways to frame these complex meanings. As a result, the significance of multi-sensory engagement within everyday dress experience was demonstrated, which furthermore contributes to the subject debate by building on existing critiques of visual readings of dress that do not account for the wearer's experience.

Based on detailed analysis of empirical data gathered through interviews, this thesis mapped out the range of different types of sensory interactions that made up the participants' everyday engagement with their personal dress. The senses of sight, touch, sound, smell and taste were attended to separately – although, as stated, there was little data on taste - and were shown to be entangled. Other more intangible aspects of sensory experience were also specified.

By including both men and women in the participant group, I have begun to challenge some of the perceived differences regarding gendered dress experiences. Traditionally viewed as 'feminine' experience, within this research project, both men and women engaged with their everyday dress on a sensual and emotional level. Furthermore, this study provided an opportunity for men (until very recently, a marginalized, often largely overlooked group within fashion and dress studies) to discuss their dress experience and express their feelings about dress. It is hoped that this approach will encourage more research into fashion and dress that considers male and female and other non-binary gendered experience together.

The methodological approach focused in detail on the sensory, emotional and meaningful relationship between the wearer and their material items of dress, situating this within their particular biographies and life situations. Sensory engagement with dress was analysed through a notion of 'emplacement', connecting participants through memory and emotion to past times, other places and people. In this way, sensory engagement with dress was positioned as potentially bridging past, present and future selves. This linked to a sense of belonging and place in the world. It was argued that a micro-sensory material approach brings to the fore non-visual aspects of dress experience. Furthermore, that this enables a more comprehensive and nuanced exploration of dress as both social and individual practice - one that attends to the intimate, sensuous body and private, emotional self, in addition to broader social and cultural structures and relations.

Through paying attention to all types of sensory perception and experience within the data analysis - involving the individual senses as combined with movement and emotion - appearance was contextualised within other sensory engagement and understood as entangled with materiality. I have asserted the need to consider how everyday dress is more than appearance, and more still than the haptic. The participants' dress as object and practice was seen, but also felt, grasped, touched, smelled, heard and tasted. Finally, a notion of dress as a moveable, sensory atmosphere was proposed, in which layers of sensation and multiple, complex meanings were understood to frame the participants' everyday dressed experience.

Further research

As this study progressed, the data suggested pathways and themes for future analysis, and further research questions emerged that were beyond the scope of this thesis. In terms of my own research, I would like to consider in more detail different types of connections across the data. For example, one theme that emerged was the changing nature of sensory engagement with dress throughout an individual participant's life, so comparing the data according to age, and taking an explicitly biographical approach to analysing the data could provide insight into the role of dress through life stages. Another underlying theme concerned the anthropomorphic nature of some of the participants' relationships with particular dress items. A deeper theoretical analysis of this could be used to consider how and why, through sensory engagement, people and the things that they wear become emotionally connected in profound ways.

I have argued that new methodological approaches are required to get close to the sensory experience of being dressed, methods that can capture the moving, messy, intimate and at times intangible nature of dressed experience and the minute sensory adjustments that occur during everyday activity. The use of video, photography, and also creative writing or autobiography as methodological tools, could therefore be explored further in order to triangulate and develop the findings of this thesis. As the number of participants was limited, it would also be interesting to consider the experience of other groups of people, who were not included in this study, to see if this produces different findings. Cultural groups based for example, on age, ethnicity, sexuality, class or sub-culture could provide specific case studies for research of this nature. This would facilitate further understanding around the cultural construction of sensory engagement with dress and the relationship between collective and individual experience.

Potential applications for this research

There are a number of areas both within fashion and dress contexts and within broader fields of research and practice that this thesis could inform. It may be useful to fashion designers and makers when thinking about how wearers engage sensorily with their dress items. Additionally, it could feed into existing and future research into a more sustainable, inclusive and ethical fashion industry.

Clark has looked to a 'new sensory fashion culture' (2008:443), suggesting that beauty could be re-defined based on all the senses not just appearance (2008:441). Furthermore the 'slow fashion movement' that 'facilitates sensory investment in our clothing', where time is taken to savour dress, could provide more sustainable pathways for fashion producers and consumers' (Clark 2008:443, see also Fletcher 2014).

Attfield has argued that '...only dealing with the visual features of artefacts obscures the work of designers, makers and users as all involved in the making of meaning through things' (2000:43). Indeed, this research has begun to foster a more interdisciplinary approach within the area of fashion, dress and the senses, through the international 'Fashion and The Senses' symposium (2015), which I co-organised with Bethan Alexander at LCF. This brought together cultural, design and retail perspectives and pointed to a need for more critical debate and cross-fertilisation of ideas and research, in addition to the potential for future collaboration within this emerging field. [3]

Moving beyond a fashion context, this thesis suggested ways in which the participants - and their dress items - were affected both physically and emotionally through sensory engagement, highlighting feelings of comfort and discomfort linked to a sense of self and place. There could therefore be potential therapeutic applications for this research within healthcare and well-being contexts, that harness these transformational effects, broadening out from existing work that has considered dress in a dementia setting (Twigg and Buse 2013) to other contexts such as counselling or recuperation from illness. Moreover, the way in which sensory aspects of dress 'emplaced' some of the participants within everyday life, points to the importance of sensory dimensions of personal dress when people feel 'displaced'. This approach could be applied in everyday situations of displacement, but there may also be possible applications for marginalised groups such as the homeless or refugees. This research has already begun to make a contribution to a

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[3] There is a body of sensory research within the business disciplines of retail and marketing (see Aradhna Krishna (2013), Martin Lindstrom (2005) and Bethan Alexander (2016), who has applied this in a fashion context). This research, in its focus on consumption is different in approach to that taken within this study, and as such did not inform it. It does, however point to the increasing attention being paid to sensory aspects of fashion and dress and the need for cross-disciplinary debate.

number of social responsibility community outreach projects at LCF (see *Better Lives* 2016).

Approaching dress from a sensory perspective opens up possibilities for new ways of thinking about the complex role of dress within everyday life, and how this might be applied within the contexts of pressing contemporary and future concerns and issues.

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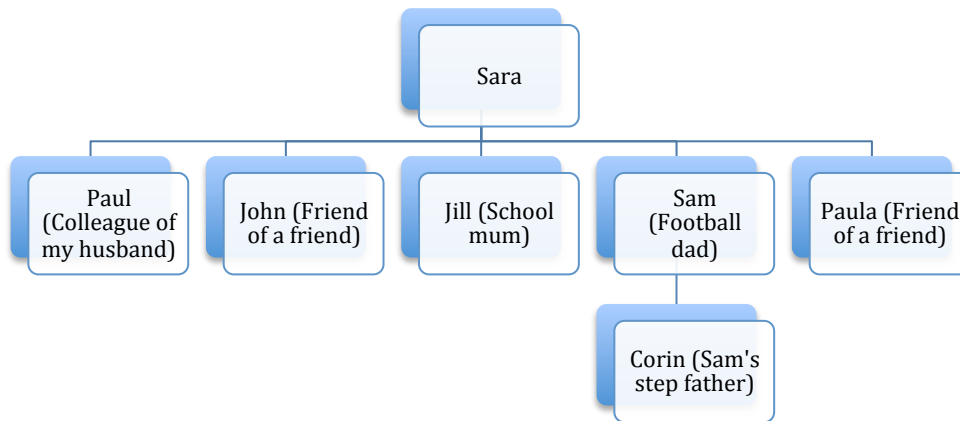
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant recruitment networks

1. Personal network

```
                        Sara
         ┌──────┬───────┼───────┬──────────┐
      Paul      John    Jill     Sam       Paula (Friend
   (Colleague of (Friend (School (Football  of a friend)
   my husband)  of a friend) mum)  dad)
                                    │
                                  Corin (Sam's
                                  step father)
```

2. UAL college network

```
                        Sara
         ┌──────────┬────────┬─────────┐
       April      Robert    Simon      Elsa
   (Colleague's (Colleague's (Colleague's (Colleague)
   daughter)   partner)    husband)
       │
     Dylan
   (April's
   housemate)
```

3. Digital Consultancy in Brighton

```
                    ┌─────────────┐
                    │    Sara     │
                    └──────┬──────┘
              ┌────────────┴────────────┐
    ┌─────────┴─────────┐    ┌──────────┴────────┐
    │ Ryan (worked at   │    │ Anne (worked at   │
    │  the company)     │    │  the company)     │
    └─────────┬─────────┘    └───────────────────┘
    ┌─────────┴─────────┐
    │ James (freelance  │
    │ psychologist at   │
    │  the company)     │
    └───────────────────┘
```
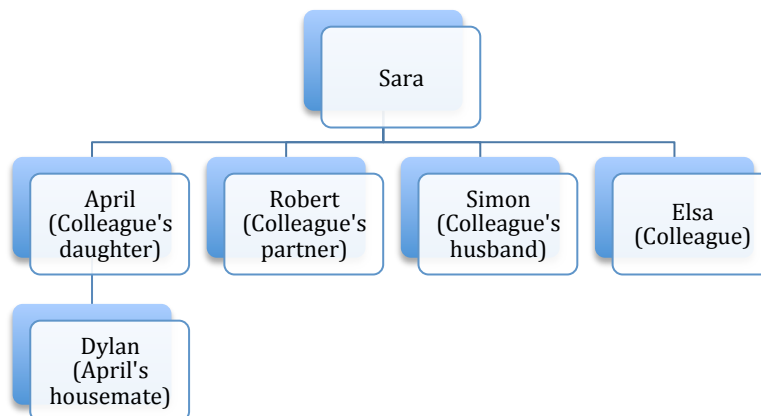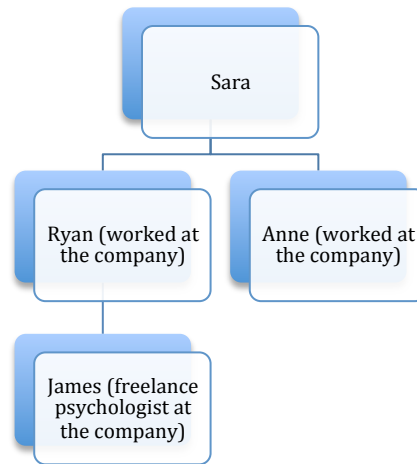
4. The Cowley Club in Brighton (Libertarian social centre) - Clothes Swop

```
                         ┌─────────────┐
                         │    Sara     │
                         └──────┬──────┘
         ┌──────────────────────┼──────────────────────┐
  ┌──────┴───────┐      ┌────────┴───────┐      ┌────────┴───────┐
  │ Karen (worked│      │ Sally (at      │      │ Laura (at      │
  │  at club)    │      │  clothes swop) │      │  clothes swop) │
  └──────────────┘      └────────┬───────┘      └────────┬───────┘
                        ┌────────┴───────┐      ┌────────┴───────┐
                        │ Andrea (Sally's│      │ Aaron (Laura's │
                        │  pottery       │      │  boyfriend)    │
                        │  teacher)      │      └────────────────┘
                        └────────────────┘
```

5. Writing workshop
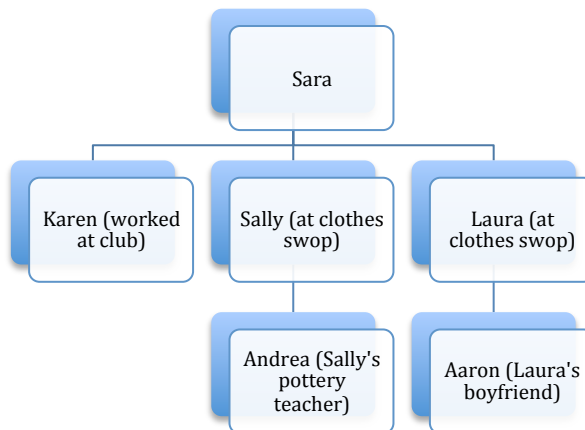
```
              ┌─────────────┐
              │    Sara     │
              └──────┬──────┘
              ┌──────┴──────┐
              │ Pamela (at  │
              │   the       │
              │  workshop)  │
              └─────────────┘
```
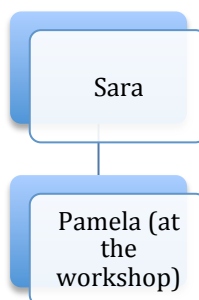
Appendix 2: Participant demographics

(Total of 20 participants)

Gender
- Male (10)
- Female (10)

Occupational status
- Student (2)
- Student & self employed (1)
- Employed (9)
- Self employed (3)
- Retired (2)
- Retired practicing artist (3)

Location

- Brighton (16)
- London (4)

Age

- Age 20-29 (5)
- Age 30-39 (2)
- Age 40-49 (5)
- Age 50-59 (2)
- Age 60-69 (5)
- Age 70-79 (1)
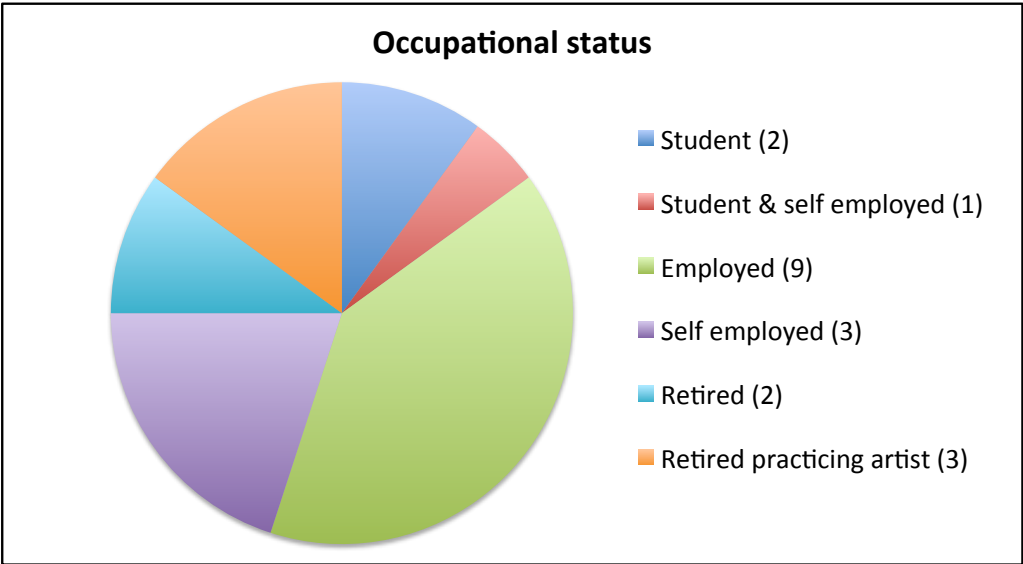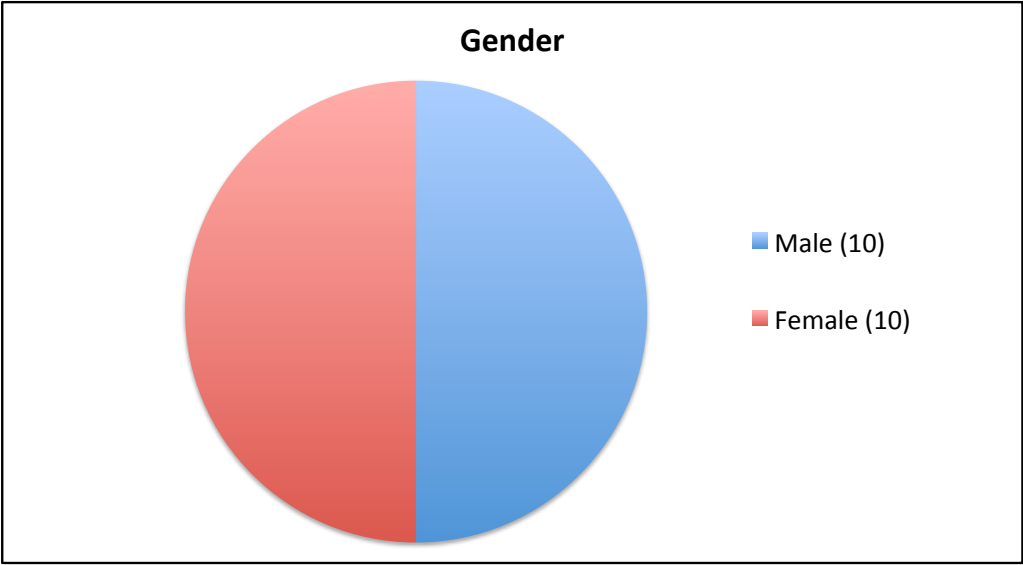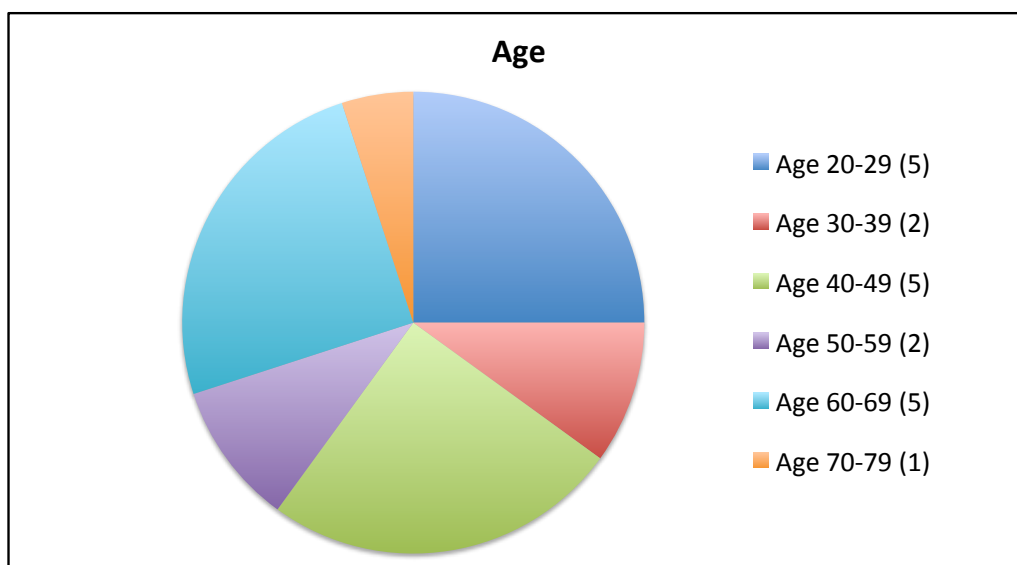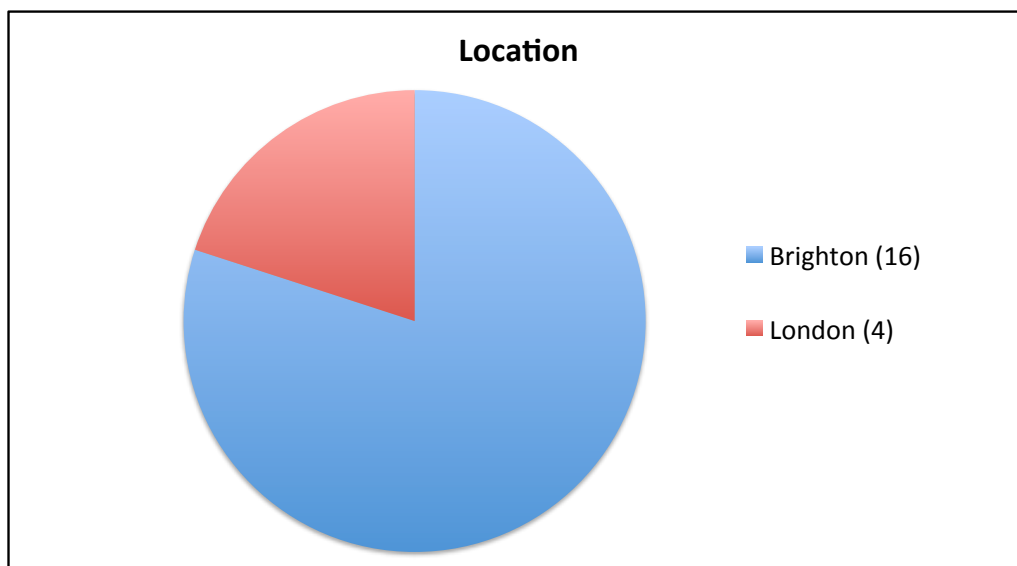
Appendix 3: Concise participant biographies

Aaron

Male (Age 20-29)

Administrative assistant for the local authority.

Lives in Brighton with his girlfriend.

Connection: Boyfriend of Laura, who suggested I interview him.

Two interviews, the first at the office in Brighton, the second at his flat.

Andrea

Female (Age 60-69)

Practicing sculptor and retired teacher.

Lives alone in Brighton.

Connection: Teaches pottery to Susan, who suggested I interview her.

Two interviews, the first at the office in Brighton, the second at her flat.

Anne

Female (Age 30-39)

Works for a digital consultancy.

Lives in Brighton with her boyfriend.

Connection: Recruited through her company where a friend of mine works.

Two interviews, the first at the office in Brighton, the second at her flat.

April

Female (Age 20-29)

Politics student.

Lives in shared flat in Brighton.

Connection: Daughter of a colleague of mine at UAL.

Two interviews, both at her flat.

Corin

Male (Age 60-69)

Practicing artist and retired lecturer.

Lives in Brighton with his wife.

Connection: Stepfather to Sam, who suggested I interview him.

Two interviews, the first at the office in Brighton, the second at Corin's studio.

Dylan

Male (Age 20-29)

Film student.

Lives in shared flat in Brighton.

Connection: Shares a flat with April, who suggested I interview him.

Two interviews, both at his flat.

Elsa (pilot study)

Female (Age 40-49)

PhD student at UAL, artist and art journalist.

Lives in London with her mum.

Connection: She is a fellow PhD student.

One interview undertaken at LCF. No second interview due to her work/study commitments.

James

Male (Age 40-49)

Freelance psychologist.

Lives in Brighton with his partner.

Connection: Works with Ryan, who suggested I interview him.

Two interviews, the first at the office in Brighton, the second at his house.

Jill

Female (Age 40-49)

Works at a hospital and plays cello in a quartet.

Lives in Brighton with her two school age children.

Connection: Mother of one of my son's friends.

Two interviews, the first at the office in Brighton, the second at her house.

John

Male (Age 40-49)

Tree surgeon.

Lives in Brighton with his family.

Connection: A friend of a friend.

Two interviews undertaken, both at the office in Brighton.

Karen (pilot study)

Female (Age 20-29)

Chef and bike mechanic, works at the Cowley Club.

Lives in Brighton in a shared flat, born and brought up in Poland.

Connection: I met her at the Cowley Club.

Two interviews, both at the Cowley Club in Brighton.

Laura

Female (Age 20-29)

Care worker.

Lives in Brighton with her boyfriend.

Connection: I met her at the Cowley Club Clothes Swop.

Two interviews, the first at the office in Brighton, the second at her flat.

Pamela

Female (Age 60-69)

Retired head of a fashion school.

Lives in Lewes (near Brighton) with her husband.

Connection: I met her at a writing workshop.

One interview, at the office in Brighton.

Paul (pilot study)

Male (Age 60-69)

Works as a music agent.

Lives in London (shares a flat with a flatmate) and alone in Somerset (at weekends). He has two grown up children.

Connection: A work colleague of my husband's.

Two interviews, the first at LCF, the second at his flat in London.

Paula

Female (Age 50-59)

Sales assistant in a clothing boutique. Treasurer for a charity.

Lives in Brighton with her teenage son.

Connection: A friend of a friend.

Two interviews, the first at the office in Brighton, the second at my house.

Robert (pilot study)

Male (Age 60-69)

Ceramic artist.

Lives in London with his partner.

Connection: Suggested by his partner, who is a colleague of mine at UAL.

Two interviews, both at LCF.

Ryan

Male (Age 30-39)

Works for a digital consultancy.

Lives in Brighton with his girlfriend.

Connection: Works with Anne, who suggested I interview him.

Two interviews, the first at the office in Brighton, the second at his flat.

Sam

Male (Age 40-49)

Taxi driver.

Lives in Brighton with his son.

Connection: My son's football team.

Two interviews, one at the office in Brighton, the second at my house.

Simon

Male (Age 50-59)

Bespoke shirt maker.

Lives in London with his wife and children.

Connection: Husband of a colleague at UAL.

Two interviews, the first at his workplace, the second at his house.

Susan

Female (Age 70-79)

Retired model and social worker.

Lives in Brighton with her son.

Connection: I met her at the Cowley Club Clothes Swop.

Two interviews, both at the office in Brighton.

Appendix 4: Interview schedules: 1 and 2

Interview schedule 1

The first interview was semi-structured around the subject areas that follow. In each interview the participant was encouraged to talk about what was important to them, so the order in which the subjects came up differed, as did the amount that each participant said on each topic. The questions were used as prompts to facilitate the discussion. Some other areas came up during the interviews that were not on the schedule.

1. Clothes in general / sight

Shopping

- How do you feel about shopping for clothes?
- Where and how often do you shop for clothes?
- Are you particular about what you wear, if so, how?
- When you are shopping do you think about how a garment looks and also how it feels to the touch?
- What about the fabric and how the garment has been made?
- Do you consider 'quality' in terms of the clothes you buy?
- Do you try items on before buying?
- What about how an item fits your body?

Getting dressed at home

- Do you have favourite clothes that make you feel good when you wear them, can you explain why they do?
- Would you relate certain clothes to certain moods (e.g. Does colour affect your mood)?
- How long do you keep your clothes for?
- What are your reasons for either discarding or holding onto items of clothing you no longer wear?

- Can you think of an item where your attitude towards it has changed over time?
- How would you describe your style of dressing now?
- Has your style of dressing and attitude to clothes changed over time?
- Would you associate any particular items with a specific time or period of change in your life?

2. Other senses (prompts if not already discussed)

Sound

- Have you ever thought about the sound clothes make?
- (For example the sound of shoes on the pavement, or perhaps jewellery jangling)
- How does the noise make you feel? Does the noise tell you something?

Smell

- Have you ever noticed that clothes have a particular smell (this could be from the fabric itself or as a result of being worn)?
- Do you wear aftershave, perfume or other scented body products?
- How do you feel about other people wearing scents?
- Are you aware of how other people or their clothes smell? What can smell tell you about them?
- Can you think of any instances when you would smell an item of clothing, either your own or those belonging to someone close to you?

Touch

- Have you any items of clothes or accessories that have a particular texture that you could tell me about?
- Are you aware of how your clothes feel against your skin?
- Do you ever notice how other people's clothes feel to the touch?

Taste

- I've been trying to think of instances where taste is related to clothes...
- Can you think of any instances when you might put clothes in the mouth?
- (One example would be a baby or child sucking a comforter - do you have memories of doing this as a child?)

3. Memory

- Do any of the clothes or items you wear trigger memories for you?
- Can you describe it in detail, and what is the trigger?
- Do you have any strong memories about clothes? (Either clothes you've worn in the past or other people's clothes.)
- What do you remember about them?
- Do you have photographs of these clothes?
- Are there any items of clothes that you remember wearing but which you lost or had to discard for some reason? (Or clothes that someone else used to wear.)
- Do you have in your possession or wear any clothes that belonged to someone else you know, perhaps a friend or family member?
- (For example did you wear hand-me-down clothes when you were a child?)

- Have you ever lent clothes to someone else?
- Do you buy or have you ever worn second hand clothes, how do you feel about wearing clothes that someone else has worn before?

4. Clothing care

- When you launder your clothes do you use a particular washing powder or fabric softener?
- Do you iron your clothes and if so which clothes?
- Are there clothes that you would not want to iron?
- Do you fold, brush or hang your clothes?
- What about cleaning and polishing your shoes?
- Do you repair your clothes?
- How do you feel about looking after your clothes?
- Do you treat some of your clothes differently to others?
- How would you treat a new item in comparison to an older item?
- Have you ever bought or looked after other family members clothes?
- Have you ever made any clothes for yourself or others?

Interview schedule 2

The second interview was based around personal items of clothing that the participant had brought with them. Jules Prown's (2001 [1982]) method of object analysis provided a broad framework for the interview discussions. The number of items each participant wanted to talk about, in what ways and in how much detail varied considerably. The following subject areas and questions were used as prompts rather than a formal schedule during the interview.

Q Which item would you like to talk about first?

1. Description

- Tell me about this item.
- Can you describe it physically?
    Shape & structure
    Weight
    Volume & proportion
    Colour & pattern
    Material
    Construction – inside and outside
    Fastenings
    Decoration / detail
    Texture
    Sound
    Odour
    Taste
- Tell me about the quality.
- Can you describe marks of wear and tear?
- Has its sensory properties changed over time?
- Where do you store it?
- How do you wash and care for it – how often?

2. Deduction

- Can you describe it?
- Can you describe how it feels to wear it?
  - In general - fit
  - On your skin
    - Which part of the body do you wear it on?
    - How do you sense it when you wear it?
    - Are you aware of it when you are wearing it and does this change at different times during the day?
    - How do you change it when you wear it, for example when you fasten or do it up?
    - Tie
    - Wrap
- Do you use it in other ways?
  - As a scarf / pockets?
- How does it change *you* when you wear it?
  - Makes you move in certain ways?
  - Or hold you in?
  - Makes you smell or sound differently?
- What do you wear it with?
- When do you wear it and how often?
- Why do you wear it?
  - What occasions
  - What reasons?
  - How does it make you feel in certain situations?
- What do you think it says about you?
- How do you think it makes you look to other people?
- When did you buy it?
- Why did you buy it – what did it represent to you?
- Tell me a short history of its life.

Emotions

- How does it make you feel when you wear it – mood?
- What does it mean / symbolize to you now?
- Have your feelings about it changed over time?
- Does it trigger any emotions?
- What is it about the item that triggers these emotions?
- What do you value about it?
    - Why is it important to you?
    - What do you like about it?
    - What don't you like about it?
    - Would you say you are attached to this item?
- Does it remind you of anything?
    - A time when you wore it
    - A particular time in your life
    - Someone else
    - Something else
- What is it about it that triggers this memory?

3. Speculation

- Just thinking about everything we've discussed, how would you sum up your relationship with the object?
- Validate any questions / themes that came up or themes from the first interview (make additional notes for each participant here).
- Anything else you want to tell me about it.

Appendix 5: List of interviews

Aaron (2013). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 22 January [62 minutes]
Aaron (2013). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 20 March [38 minutes]

Andrea (2012). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 19 November [55 minutes]
Andrea (2012). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 28 November [118 minutes]

Anne (2012). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 30 November [88 minutes]
Anne (2013). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 1 May [52 minutes]

April (2012). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 24 October [notes only]
April (2012). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 29 November [37 minutes]

Corin (2013). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 13 February [52 minutes]
Corin (2013). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 23 May [60 minutes]

Dylan (2012). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 14 November [73 minutes]
Dylan (2012). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 28 November [23 minutes]

Elsa (2011). Interview 1 with the author. London, 16 November [73 minutes]

James (2012). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 7 December [notes only]
James (2013). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 18 January [53 minutes]

Jill (2013). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 11 February [53 minutes]
Jill (2013). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 5 March [43 minutes]

John (2012). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 25 September [50 minutes]
John (2012). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 24 October [83 minutes]

Karen (2011). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 16 November [50 minutes]
Karen (2012). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 3 February [37 minutes]

Laura (2012). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 30 October [69 minutes]

Laura (2013). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 11 December [35 minutes]

Pamela (2013). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 30 May [110 minutes]

Paul (2011). Interview 1 with the author. London, 16 November [73 minutes]

Paul (2012). Interview 2 with the author. London, 15 March [90 minutes]

Paula (2013). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 13 February [53 minutes]

Paula (2013). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 2 May [78 minutes]

Robert (2012). Interview 1 with the author. London, 7 March [88 minutes]

Robert (2012). Interview 2 with the author. London, 14 March [94 minutes]

Ryan (2012). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 21 November [64 minutes]

Ryan (2013). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 5 February [48 minutes]

Sam (2013). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 12 February [41 minutes]

Sam (2013). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 13 March [35 minutes]

Simon (2013). Interview 1 with the author. London, 6 March [40 minutes]

Simon (2013). Interview 2 with the author. London, 20 July [64 minutes]

Susan (2012). Interview 1 with the author. Brighton, 19 September [77 minutes]

Susan (2012). Interview 2 with the author. Brighton, 27 September [46 minutes]

Ode to the Clothes

Every morning you wait,

clothes, over a chair,

for my vanity,

my love,

my hope, my body

to fill you,

I have scarcely

left sleep,

I say goodbye to the water

and enter your sleeves,

my legs look for

the hollow of your legs,

and thus embraced

by your unwearying fidelity

I go out to tread the fodder,

I move into poetry,

I look through windows,

at things,

men, women,

actions and struggles

go on forming me,

keep making me what I am,

opposing me,

employing my hands,

opening my eyes,

putting taste in my mouth,

and thus,

clothes,

I make you what you are,

Pushing out your elbows,

Bursting the seams,

and so your life swells

the image of my life.

You billow

and resound in the wind

as though you were my soul,

at bad moments

you cling

to my bones

empty, at night

the dark, sleep

people with their phantoms

your wings and mine.

I ask

whether one day

a bullet

from the enemy

will stain you with my blood

and then

you will die with me

or perhaps

it may not be

so dramatic

but simple,

you will sicken gradually,

clothes,

with me, with my body

and together

we will enter

the earth.

At the thought of this

every day

I greet you

with reverence, and then

you embrace me and I forget you

because we are one

and will go on facing

the wind together, at night,

the streets or the struggle,

one body,

maybe, maybe, one day motionless.

Pablo Neruda

Reference:

Neruda, P. (1975 [1954]) *Selected Poems.* Translated by Anthony Kerrigan, W. S. Merwin, Alistair Reid and Nathaniel Tarn. London, New York, Victoria, Ontario, New Delhi, Auckland, Rosebank: Penguin Books.