

**ARTS-INFORMED INTERPRETATIVE
PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS:**

**Understanding older men's experiences of ageing through the lens of
fashion and clothing**

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SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN

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¹ All pseudonyms; the process of anonymising the participants' names is described in Chapter 4.

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to investigate the possibility of adopting the lens of fashion and clothing in order to explore the older men's experience of ageing. In this vein, as a creative practitioner, I sought to explore the vantage point and the relationship between fashion and clothing, embodiment and the physical and social processes of growing older in relation to individuals' experiences.

A multi-disciplinary literature review revealed that fashion and clothing is a significant, yet often overlooked, element of individuals' experiences of ageing. Furthermore, this contextual review exposed an array of various influential stereotypes especially in regards to gender and ageing. Notably, the topic of older men and fashion seems to intersect two stereotypical assumptions; firstly, that fashion is a sphere exclusively reserved for women; and, secondly, that individuals' interest and engagement with fashion ceases significantly as they grow older. As a consequence, the majority of the existing studies investigating this phenomenon tend to focus on older women, their experiences and expectations towards clothing. While there is no doubt that such scholarship is valuable, such an imbalance needs to be addressed. Via this thesis I aim to contribute to the fulfillment of this identified gap in knowledge.

In this research, I have developed a novel hybrid methodology, Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Rooted in phenomenology and arts, this methodology put to the test the concept of 'making' as a valid way of data analysis, equal to writing. My research process built on the concept of the hermeneutic circle; the subsequent activities of writing and making allowed me to constantly move between different elements of the participants' experiences, which in turn facilitated the conditions for more in-depth and holistic understanding and enhanced interpretations. In addition, such an approach gave me the opportunity to utilise my skills and sensibilities as an artist and designer and to blur the boundaries between the artificially disconnected domains of fashion research and practice.

This research found that ageing, fashion, clothing, men and masculinities are not disjointed. Fashion and clothing was not only revealed as a valid and useful lens through

which individuals' experiences of ageing can be analysed and interpreted but also the experiences of men in this study proved to be rich and meaningful.

This research culminated in a unified body of work that has relevance to the fields of psychology, sociology, as well as art and design. A composition of the research outcomes consisted of a series of suit jackets, short films and written accounts offering novel insights into a particular sample of men's individual and shared experiences of ageing. In addition, such a multi-layered composition of research outcomes has the potential to reach audiences beyond academia.

Contributions to knowledge are claimed in the three following areas:

- The novelty of the topic of investigation into mature men's experiences of ageing through the lens of fashion and clothing;
- The uniqueness of the developed hybrid methodology, Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis;
- The originality of the outcomes arising from this investigation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

I took the one less travelled by,

And that has made all the difference.

(The Road Not Taken, Robert Frost, 1916)

1.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In this PhD thesis, I explain, document and reflect on the research journey during which I put into test the possibility of adopting fashion and clothing as a valid lens through which individuals' experiences of ageing could be approached and analysed. The nature of this investigation was multi-disciplinary and involved exploring various sub-themes, such as ageing and embodiment, fashion and clothing, gender and identity, and responding to the discovered gap in existing knowledge, namely on older heterosexual men's experiences of and relationships with fashion. Furthermore, this investigation was approached and conducted from the perspective of a creative fashion practitioner.

The backbone of this research was its methodology. The methodological mechanism applied in this research exercise was designed to accommodate two components: the topic of the investigation and the theoretical perspectives that the researcher brought into it (Crotty, 1998). Consequently, the methodological framework of this work is based on the merging of qualitative and practice-based research approaches. The process of exploring how these approaches worked together ultimately led to a fit-for-purpose hybrid research methodology, Arts-Informed Research Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which also accommodated my sensitivities, skills and experiences as a fashion practitioner and artist². In this vein, developing and applying this particular research methodology was the key aspect of my project allowing me to demonstrate how, as a creative practitioner, I can understand a selected group of people through a methodological framework to arrive at a variety of metaphorical readings of the sample.

The aim of this introductory chapter is to frame the research herein. I begin by presenting a short explanation of my background as a researcher, artist and fashion designer, followed by the description of the format of this thesis. I then list the aims and objectives of this PhD project and outline the global structure of the thesis. In the two final sections I list the various presentations, publications and exhibitions through which parts of this research have been disseminated and offer a brief summary of the chapter.

² In doing this I responded to what the Director of Studies, Professor Tom Fisher, advised me when I began this journey; this was "to do a PhD that only I could do".

Before I do that, however, it is equally important to clearly articulate what this thesis is not about; this thesis does not contain a description of a practice-based study where the aim was to design fashionable clothing for mature men. While this thesis contains a description of a research process that allowed me to produce a composition of textual and visual outcomes corresponding to my in-depth understandings of a small sample of mature men's experiences of ageing, developed through metaphorical and interpretative data analysis enhanced via engaging with various artful creative practices, the findings presented in it are relevant only to this particular sample of study participants. All the participants in this study were British, white, heterosexual, middle class, professionally active, appearance-conscious men located in, or strongly connected to Nottingham, UK. Consequently, my findings cannot be extended to any other groups of mature men or to the generation of mature men more generally; I return to this in Chapter 7 where I discuss study limitations and delineate my recommendations and directions for future studies.

1.2 MY BACKGROUND

In this section, I briefly explain my background as a creative fashion practitioner and researcher. This allows me to concisely introduce some of the qualities, skills and expertise that I brought into this research process and highlight their impact on it; my focus here is on my research background as it was at the moment of embarking on this PhD research. I expand upon this in Chapter 4, where I supplement it by presenting my personal reflexivity, and in Chapter 7, where I reflect on the impact of this research on my professional development. This is designed to allow the reader to more fully appreciate my research journey.

My interest in the topic of fashion and ageing first started on the MA course at De Montfort University, Leicester, during which I explored the mature females' relationship with fashion and clothing. All of the produced pieces were inspired by the images of female bones affected by postmenopausal osteoporosis and accounts collected through semi-structured interviews, given by the women about their experience of fashion and ageing. Beside developing certain craft skills, "The Dys-Appearing Body" project (fig1.1 a-b) allowed me also

to explore the possibility of using fashion as a communication tool, which “*has the potential to bring about (...) change*” (Corner, 2011, p.11). Each of the produced garments functioned as a material statement to provoke dialogue and discussion in order to re-address the area of social acceptance of the ageing female body (Sadkowska, 2012).



Figure. 1.1 a-b *The Dys-Appearing Body* project, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2012 (Photo: Fraser West)

It was “The Dys-Appearing Body” project that allowed me to discover and experience the possibility of embracing the roles of fashion designer, researcher and artist at the same time, which was critical for establishing my own position as a fashion practitioner. This was a direct prelude to my doctoral study, which gave me a chance to ask the persistent and intriguing questions of the relationship between fashion, clothing and ageing. Moreover, it gave me an opportunity to methodologically merge the artificially disconnected fields of fashion theory and fashion practice. In doing this, as a creative practitioner, I designed and adopted a particular route forward into the Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis for knowledge advancement, as well as towards its greater dissemination. I expand upon these ideas in subsequent chapters.

By combining knowledge drawn from the disciplines of phenomenological psychology, sociology and fashion studies, my aim was to broaden practical, theoretical and reflective approaches in the field of fashion and ageing studies. Furthermore, in this thesis, I demonstrate that it is crucial for contemporary fashion practitioners and researchers to

attempt to stretch the possibilities of both written and visual expression, and argue that methodological openness is the way to do it.

1.3 FORMAT OF THE THESIS

In this section, I explain how this thesis is organised in terms of its format. Firstly, it is important that I explain that throughout this thesis I document a non-linear, mostly cyclical research process. Moreover, the various research cycles that occurred during this process were never fragmented or isolated from each other; instead, more often than not, they overlapped and doubled backed significantly on each other. However, the nature of any PhD thesis is that of having a set of chapters that follow one after another. This indeed creates a certain level of discrepancy between the linearity of this thesis and non-linearity of the process described herein; in the attempt to represent the complexity of the process accurately, although for simplicity I present the various research stages chronologically, I use signposting to indicate to the reader any relevant information that comes later on in the text, or that was mentioned in it previously.

Secondly, since the point of my approach to this research was to accommodate fashion research with fashion practice, in both writing and making, it generated outputs in various formats: textual and visual. The latter are in the forms of short fashion films and men's jackets, which as part of this project were presented to the public in the form of a fashion research exhibition. Consequently, this PhD thesis is a combination of elements such as text, photographs and films (on the attached at the back of this thesis memory card). While all elements are equally important in this body of work, the majority of this thesis is indeed based on text. This allows me to offer my commentary and reflection on the non-textual elements, such as the exhibition³. I will elaborate on this later in this chapter when I describe the global structure of the thesis.

Throughout this thesis, I use footnotes in order to provide further explanation of terms used within the main text and/or elaborate on my ideas and provide additional

³ Consequently, the subject of this PhD submission is the thesis containing the documentation of the artefacts and corresponding exhibition rather than these artefacts and exhibition per se.

commentary/reflections on the research process. The main body of text is supplemented by a series of appendices where, in chronological order, I present elements such as the project advertising, the letter to the study participants, examples of raw research material (interview transcripts and photos), and examples of stages of analysis (coding).

Finally, throughout this thesis, I consistently adopt the first-person narrative when explaining my work. This, as suggested by Chávez Muñoz (2013, p.49), allows me to highlight my authorial presence as “the Interpreter” in the study. Moreover, this also allows me to fully indicate to the reader the key moments in this research process where my subjective stance influenced the course of this study (Hyland, 2002).

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

After briefly outlining the topic of this investigation and the methodological framework that this study is located within, I now present the aims and objectives of this research:

Aim 1: To investigate the relationships between fashion, clothing and ageing, with special reference to older men.

Objective 1a: To identify relevant theoretical approaches.

Objective 1b: To critically review how researchers explore the topic in the context of contemporary culture.

Aim 2: To adopt an Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in order to discover how fashion and clothing have been experienced by older men drawn from the UK baby boomer population, born between 1946 and 1964⁴, who during their lives have actively engaged with fashion and clothing.

Objective 2a: To conduct in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with a small sample of older men about their experience of fashion and clothing.

Objective 2b: To collect a series of images of fashion artefacts (garments, textiles, accessories, photographs) that carries significance for the participants.

⁴ According to the UK Office for National Statistics the demographic post-World War II term ‘baby boomer’ applies to the peaked live births between the years 1946 and 1964 in UK. UK Office for National Statistics (2011) *Statistical bulletin: Births and Deaths in England and Wales* [WWW]. Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/vsob1/birth-summary-tables-england-and-wales/2011-final/sb-births-and-deaths-in-england-and-wales--2011-final.html#tab-Key-trends-in-births-and-deaths--numbers-and-rates-> [Accessed 7/12/2012].

Aim 3: To apply an Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in order to develop an in-depth understanding of how this sample negotiate their ageing identities through the mediums of fashion and clothing.

Objective 3a: To analyse the gathered information, and produce an interpretative written account of it.

Objective 3b: To extend these interpretations through practical artful explorations and physical engagement with objects, materials and techniques.

Objective 3c: To employ reflexivity as the key element for unfolding interpretation and to capture this process in the form of sketchbooks/research diaries/films.

Aim 4: To explore and expose new, alternative strategies for knowledge production and dissemination within the field of fashion and ageing research.

Objective 4a: To produce a series of artefacts, garments and films, in addition to a written thesis, which will translate developed interpretations into visual forms of communication.

Objective 4b: To organise a fashion research exhibition where the produced artefacts can be presented and disseminated.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The chapters of this thesis are designed to directly contribute to the research aims of this study (fig. 1.2). But in this thesis I offer more than just a description of the research process and how it fulfilled the research aims; I offer my reflections on the sequence of the research choices that determined the ultimate path of this research. In this vein, the subsequent chapters document the uneven and complex research journey I undertook as the researcher, artist and designer in order to gain, develop, and disseminate my knowledge of the male ageing phenomenon through the lens of fashion and clothing. Following the words of the poet, Robert Frost (1916), this journey can best be characterised as the persistent selection of the research paths that were “*less travelled by*”.

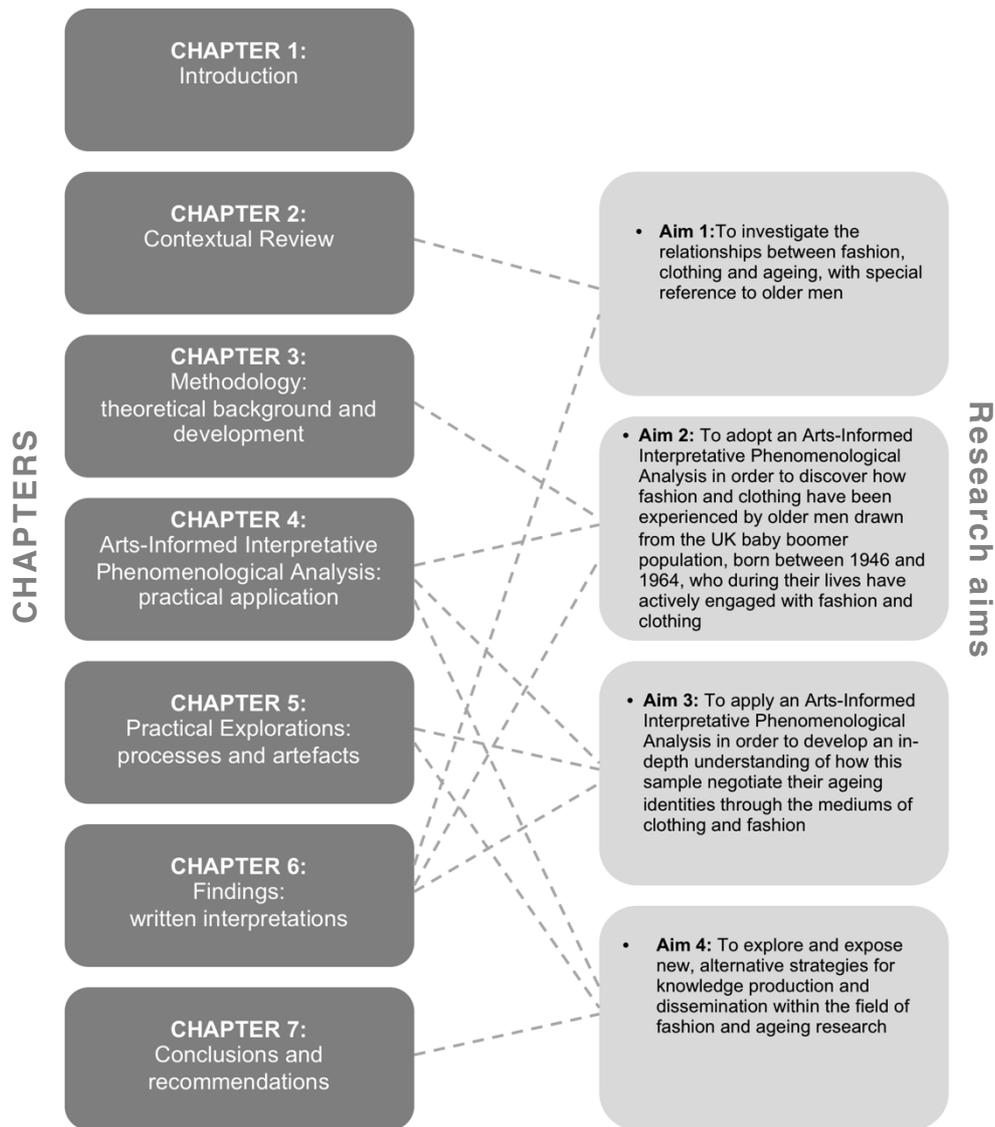


Figure 1.2 Structure of the thesis: the chapters and the contribution of each chapter to the research aims (Sadkowska, 2016)

Following the Introduction, in Chapter 2, I delineate the scope of this research by defining its key terms: fashion, clothing and ageing, as well as explaining other relevant concepts, such as identity and masculinity, and exploring the relationships between them. This chapter reveals the first research decision I had to undertake during this study: whether to focus my interest in the topic of fashion and ageing on older women or men. The literature review undertaken clearly identifies the neglect and exclusion of the topic of ageing men in the existing literature on fashion and ageing that this research endeavours to address. By focusing on the areas such as phenomenology and ageing, fashion and clothing and older men and masculinity, Chapter 2 provides a context, position and grounding for this research.

In Chapter 3, I present the theoretical backgrounds of the developed methodology. I start the chapter by explaining my understanding of what constitutes knowledge and its impact on the development of the hybrid research methodology, Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Furthermore, in this chapter, I present the theoretical underpinnings of the two methodological components, namely Arts-Informed Research and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. I supplement this by presenting relevant examples of different researchers and practitioners who utilised these methodologies; this in turn allows relevant concepts to surface, such as tacit knowledge or the relationship between fashion and art. Furthermore, this allows me to rationalise the second important research decision I had to make in the course of this study concerning the general research approach I adopted; this study is firmly located within qualitative, as well as practice-based, approaches to research.

Building on Chapter 3, in Chapter 4, I outline the practical application of the research methodology. I begin this chapter by describing the practical relevance of the key concepts involved, namely the role of interpretation and the hermeneutic circle, and present a corresponding research model. Secondly, in Chapter 4, I describe the application of the methodology in regards to a fairly standard research process and its stages including: recruitment of the participants, data collection and analysis, and knowledge dissemination. Consequently, this chapter reveals another important research decision regarding the selection and employment of the most suitable research methods, practices, tools and techniques, discussed in the corresponding sections. The main focus of Chapter 4, therefore, is on explaining the complexities and stages of the analysis process, and identifying this as a stage where the hybridity of the methodology came to the fore. This highlights yet another important choice of the research path, that of actively merging fashion theory and practice, writing and making, into one coherent research instrument facilitating and enhancing my creative interpretations. Chapter 4 also contains an important note on reflexivity, including a statement of my personal reflexivity in regards to this study. This part of the chapter documents perhaps the most crucial decision made throughout this project: the extent to which I allowed myself, as a fashion researcher and creative practitioner, and my experiences and pre-understandings, to be imprinted on this research, its processes and outcomes.

Continuing from Chapters 3 and 4, in Chapter 5, I present the produced artefacts:

nine jackets and nine films, corresponding to the subordinate nine themes which emerged in the process of data analysis; in this sense, this chapter is a transitional one, between the project's methodology and the outcomes generated by it. The produced artefacts are discussed as being a peculiar type of 'side-product', developed in the process of meticulous and multi-layered data analysis, yet fully integrated within the composition of the research outcomes. In this vein, in this chapter, I present each of the nine jackets (photographs) and films (videos on the attached memory card) separately by discussing the process of their production in relation to the concept of the hermeneutic circle, introduced in Chapter 4, and their role in stimulating and enhancing my interpretations of the phenomenon under study. This chapter concludes by presenting the photo and video documentation (on the memory card) of the organised fashion research exhibition and my reflection on its role in regards to the adopted research methodology.

In Chapter 6, I offer the written interpretative accounts of the nine subordinate themes which emerged from the analysis grouped into three superordinate themes. I describe each theme separately, using as evidence various quotes from the interviews with the participants. Throughout the presented analysis, I describe how some of these themes are connected and influence each other, especially in relation to the participants' past and present experiences and potential future expectations towards clothing and fashion. The final element of this thesis is a discussion of these findings in regards to the concepts introduced in Chapter 2, such as fashion, identity and masculinity.

In Chapter 7, I offer the conclusions and recommendations arising from this project. Firstly, in this chapter, I offer a brief thesis summary. Secondly, I present my final reflections on the research process, focusing on two significant aspects: the research mechanism based on the intertwined activities of writing and making, and the role of the artefacts; this section allows me to reflect on the sequence of the various research choices I have made throughout this study and "*all the difference*" (Frost, 1916) they have made to the outcomes of this project. In the further sections of Chapter 7, I revisit the aims and objectives of this project and outline the contribution to knowledge this research claims to make. Additionally, I discuss the limitations of this study and the quality and validity of this research. An important element of this chapter is my reflection on the way in which my understanding of being a fashion

researcher and practitioner has changed during the project. In closing Chapter 7, I offer my recommendations for potential future directions, both in regards to my professional development and to the wider contemporary fashion and ageing research communities.

1.6 PRESENTATIONS, PUBLICATIONS AND EXHIBITIONS RELATED TO THIS THESIS

Elements of this research have been presented at various academic conferences, workshops, published in books and journals:

- SADKOWSKA, A. (2015). Psychology of Design - 500 word encyclopaedia entry. In: EDWARDS, C., ATKINSON, H., KETTLEY, S., O'BRIEN, S., RAIZMAN, D. and WILLIS, A.M., (eds.) *The Bloomsbury Encyclopaedia of Design*, London: Bloomsbury.
- SADKOWSKA, A. (2015). Interpreting Male Ageing and Fashion. In: *Designing for Mature People*. Shanghai: Shanghai Institute of Visual Art, pp.79-91.
- SADKOWSKA, A., WILDE, D., and FISHER, T. (2016). Third Age Men's Experience of Fashion and Clothing: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *Age, Culture, Humanities: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 2(1), pp.33-68.
- SADKOWSKA, A., TOWNSEND, K., and SISSONS, J. (2015). Emotional Fit Project: Mapping the Ageing Female Form - paper presented at the 2nd Designing for Mature People Symposium (invited speaker), 19 October 2015, Shanghai Institute of Visual Art, Shanghai, China.
- SADKOWSKA, A., FISHER, T., WILDE, D. and TOWNSEND, K. (2015). (Dis-)Engaged Older Men? Phenomenological exploration of fashion, aging and mature masculinities – paper presented at the Fashion, Sex, & Power Joanne B. Eicher Symposium II, September 11-12 2015, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, US.
- SADKOWSKA, A., FISHER, T., and WILDE, D. (2015). (Re-)Constructing Masculinities: Fashion, Clothing and Ageing paper presented at the College of Art, Design and Built Environment Research Conference, 13-15 June 2015, Nottingham Trent University,

Nottingham, UK.

- SADKOWSKA, A., and WILDE, D. (2015). Taking the Interpretative Phenomenological Approach: new possibilities of creative collaboration between fields of fashion design and phenomenological psychology (Phenomenological Methods in Design) – workshop delivered at the Arcintex'15 symposium, 24 February 2015, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK.
- SADKOWSKA, A. (2015). Fashioning Age(ing) – paper resented at the Crafting Anatomies Symposium (invited speaker), 30 January 2015, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK.
- SADKOWSKA, A. (2014). 'I will breathe in, and fasten anything, and live with it for the day, if I have to': older men's experience of body dis-comforting in the context of fashion and clothing - paper presented at the British Sociological Association (BSA) Ageing, Body and Society Study Group Conference 2014: Researching Bodies, 28 November 2014, British Library Conference Centre, London, UK.
- SADKOWSKA, A., WILDE, D., and FISHER, T. (2014). Fashioning Age: New Strategies of Knowledge Production and Dissemination within the Field of Cultural Gerontology - paper presented at the Aging and Society: 4th Interdisciplinary Conference, 7-8 November 214, Manchester Conference Centre, Manchester, UK.
- SADKOWSKA, A., FISHER, T., WILDE, D., and TOWNSEND, K. (2014). Interpreting Fashion and Age: Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as a fashion research methodology - paper presented at The Fashion Thinking, History, Theory, Practice, 30 October 2014 - 1 November 2014, University of Southern Denmark, Kolding, Denmark.
- SADKOWSKA, A., and WILDE, D. (2014). Bringing experience together: methodological collaboration between fashion design and phenomenological psychology - paper presented at the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment (CADBE) Annual Conference, 10 June 2014, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK.
- WILDE, D., and SADKOWSKA, A., Taking the Interpretative Phenomenological Approach:

IPA for Postgraduates - workshop delivered at the Postgraduate Research Festival.

21 May 2014, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK.

- SADKOWSKA, A. (2014). Fashioning Age: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a Fashion Design Methodology – paper presented at the First Annual Professional Research Practice (PRP) Conference 2014: Breaking Boundaries, 15 May 2014, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK.
- SADKOWSKA, A. (2014) 'Fashion Equilibriums': Older men and their perception of fashion and clothing - paper presented at the 8th International Symposium on Cultural Gerontology (Meaning and Culture(s): Exploring the Life Course) 2nd Conference of the European Network in Aging Studies (ENAS), 10 - 12 April 2014, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland.

In the form of a research poster, elements of this research were presented at:

- The 16th International Foundation of Fashion Technology Institutes (IFFTI) Annual Conference, Bunka Gakuen University, Japan (January 2014).
- Ageing Research Across the Disciplines Postgraduate Research Event, Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK (September 2013).
- The British Society for Population Studies Conference, The London School of Economics and Political Science, Swansea, UK (September 2013).
- Well-Being 2013 Conference, Birmingham City University, Birmingham, UK (July 2013).

The practical element of this work, jackets and films, were presented at the following events:

- Fashioning Age(ing): Mature men's experiences of fashion and clothing – fashion research exhibition, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK (16-18 December 2015).
- The "Dis-Comforting", "Distancing" and "Presenting" jackets were presented at the Crafting Anatomies Exhibition, Bonington Gallery, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham,

UK (7 January – 4 February 2015).

- The “Dis-Comforting” film was presented at the 17th Annual International Foundation of Fashion Technology Institutes (IFFTI), Polimoda, Florence, Italy (12-16 May 2015) - award for best fashion film.
- The “Dis-Comforting” film was presented at A Shaded View of Fashion Film 8 (ASVOFF 8), Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2-6 December 2015).

Additionally, some elements of the work presented in this thesis were featured in: The Times, *The Nottingham Post*, BBC Radio5Live, Notts TV (May 2015).

1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, my aim was to provide the reader with an overall introduction to this PhD thesis. To do so, I briefly explained the focus of this PhD investigation by clarifying what this research and corresponding thesis are, and are not, about. In this chapter, I described the overall methodological framework and I supplemented this by presenting my background as a researcher, designer and artist. Furthermore, I outlined the aims and objectives of this project and explained also the structure and the format of this thesis; I build upon all these aspects in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. The final element of this chapter was the list of the presentations, publications and exhibitions relevant to this thesis. In the next chapter, I am going to review the selected literature relevant to my work.

2. CONTEXTUAL REVIEW

2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter has two main goals. Firstly, the underlying aim of this research was to develop an in-depth understanding of the male ageing phenomenon from the perspective of mature individuals and through the lens of their everyday embodied experiences of fashion and clothing. Such a study is interdisciplinary in its nature and involves reviewing literature from various different disciplines such as sociology, psychology or anthropology. Additionally, such an interdisciplinary review will, thus, cut across the different, and often superficially disjointed, fields of ageing, fashion and clothing, and studies of men and masculinity. Furthermore, such a review will include phenomenology as its philosophical background, strongly influencing the adopted methodological solutions. Accordingly, to focus on these fields individually would be an over-simplistic approach that would only accentuate their disconnection. Thus, in this chapter, I present an interdisciplinary review of the literature surrounding the topic of fashion and male ageing in order to investigate the ways in which they intersect and how this interplay is explored and interpreted by researchers in the context of contemporary culture.

Secondly, it is worth highlighting that the relationship between fashion and ageing has recently become topical, especially within the context of the current western socio-demographic changes, such as the development of ageing populations and maturing of the so called “baby boomer” generation. The melding of these social phenomena has resulted in a stronger link between fashion and ageing than ever before. This is reflected in the copious and diverse literature available on the topic but which is, however, often limited to older women (Twigg, 2013; Sadkowska et al., 2016). In this chapter, I do not intend to examine this literature in its entirety but to provide the reader with a context for my thesis, by discussing strands of literature within the various disciplines of social science. In this capacity, my aim is to engage with a number of studies through which the topic of older men’s experiences of fashion and clothing can resonate. Consequently, the objectives of the present chapter are to explain the various contexts surrounding this research and to define the key terms used within the thesis, which in turn will allow me to clearly articulate the gap in knowledge that this research aims to fill.

Furthermore, throughout this chapter, I adopt two complementary approaches. Henceforth, following Barnard (2002), I subscribe to the idea that in order to fully explore the potential meaning of complex concepts, such as fashion, masculinity or ageing, first the context in which they are used needs to be explained. Following from that, as discussed by Kaiser (2012), I recognise the importance of two interconnected contexts, those of time and space, actively influencing all potential meanings. Somewhat inevitably, concepts such as fashion, ageing or even clothing are historically and socially mediated and the meanings behind them are different in different historical times, geographical locations and, furthermore, these meanings might differ from one individual to another. Ultimately, it is through these different contexts that I determine the meanings of the key terms used within this thesis. Moreover, acknowledging these two large, yet sometimes abstract, concepts provides me with an opportunity to discuss various other contexts surrounding this research. This does not mean that for each concept I provide a complex geographical and historical analysis of how and where it has evolved; instead, the deliberations I present in this chapter are always in relation to contemporary western culture, especially the United Kingdom (UK).

In this vein, I begin this chapter by exploring the various interconnections between the themes of fashion, ageing and phenomenology. The last of these is especially important because it is precisely through the phenomenological focus of this study that I subscribe to the theory that it is the narratives provided by ordinary people, in this case mature individuals, about their idiosyncratic experiences that allows me to gain the knowledge necessary to develop an in-depth understanding of human phenomena (Kolb, 2014). Consequently, it is through the exploration of themes such as fashion, clothing and ageing but in relation to the phenomenological focus on lived experiences that other relevant sub-themes resonate, such as embodiment and identity. I build on this in the second part of this review, where I continue to explicate the intersections between fashion and ageing but I shift my focus towards older men explicitly. This allows me to extract sub-themes, such as men's fashion, menswear, and ageing masculinities.

2.2 PHENOMENOLOGY, FASHION AND CLOTHING

The sociologist Julia Twigg (2013, p.1) reflects on the relationship between fashion and ageing as “*sift[ing] uncomfortably together*”. Yet in recent years this relationship has been studied from various perspectives, including sociology (e.g. Twigg, 2007, 2009a, 2013; Hurd Clarke et al., 2009), psychology (e.g. Paulson and Willig, 2008; Tiggemann and Lacey, 2009), marketing (e.g. Peters et al., 2011; Holmund et al., 2010), and design studies (e.g. Iltanen and Topo, 2007; McCann, 2008; McCann and Bryson, 2014). However, no matter what discipline we operate within, this relationship seems to be analysed mainly from the angle of bodily deterioration; for example Howarth (2014, p.233), who explains “*the [bodily] exclusion of ageing people within contemporary society*” in regards to negative concepts such as “*fear, vulnerability and ‘contamination’*”. And although Howarth (ibid) does attempt to formulate some more positive remarks in regards the discrimination against older people he concludes that there is a small chance for real change in the adverse social perception of ageing bodies. Such body-centred perceptions are indeed distorting and dim the complexity of the embodied lived experience (Biggs, 2002).

The contemporary approaches to ageing, especially those that are underpinned phenomenologically, redefine the constrained perceptions of growing old by placing the emphasis on individuality and encouraging alternative ways of exploring what it is to age (Powell and Gilbert, 2009). This includes exploring different contexts, sensitive to the complexity of the ageing phenomenon, through which such alternative understandings can emerge; through this thesis I argue that fashion and clothing provides such a context. In the following section, I focus on defining various contextually relevant concepts in relation to this study and the adopted phenomenological approach.

2.2.1 ADDRESSING CLOTHING AND FASHION

To define “fashion” and “clothing” is not an easy task. Both terms, especially “fashion”, represent complex and elusive concepts of many often interconnected and overlapping meanings. Furthermore, while it is clear that these terms are not synonymous,

the delineation between them is often blurred and obscure. In this vein, Bernard (2002) building on Wittgenstein's (1958) concept of "family resemblance", argues that the problem in defining these terms, as well as other related terms such as "dress" or "style", lies in the fact that these words are mutually dependent in the sense that they are often used to define each other. He also points out that this is further complicated by the fact these terms function in the English language as both verbs and nouns. While in this chapter I relate to "clothing" as both a noun and a verb, on "fashion" I focus explicitly on its use as a noun. "Fashion(ing)" as a verb, however, comes to the surface in Chapters 5 and 6 where I present my practical explorations and written interpretations.

To add to this, in this thesis, I do not exclusively focus on "fashion" or "clothing"; instead I consistently use the joint term of "fashion and clothing". This is precisely because the terms do not have the same meaning and cannot be used as a replacement for each other. At the same time, however, I argue that, within the context of this thesis, both terms are intrinsically linked. In the following section, I present the appropriate definitions of both terms and explain why this "inclusive" approach is the most suitable for this thesis.

CLOTHING

Joanne B. Eicher (2010, p.151) in the encyclopaedia-type publication entitled *The Berg Companion to Fashion*, edited by Valerie Steele, defines "clothing" as follows: "[c]lothing' as a noun refers generally to articles of dress that cover the body. 'Clothing' as a verb refers to the act of putting on garments." She also provides examples of clothing from around the world, such as kaftans, shirts, trousers and skirts, as well as turbans, hats, gloves and shoes, showing an inherent diversity in what is meant by clothing, but also once again highlighting its implicit connection to the human body. The definition offered by Eicher is indeed a rather uncomplicated and straightforward definition that can easily be accepted at face value. However, in the "Preface" to the same publication, Steele notices that there are many reasons for clothing to be worn, including practical ones such as protection or staying warm. Moreover, wearing clothing is always located within fixed social expectations, implying a certain look in order to conform to any given society's rules of what is perceived as modest

and appropriate. At the same time, Steele further complicates this seemingly simple definition by pointing out that all “*functional considerations fall short of being able to explain what clothing means to the people who wear it and to others who see it*” (ibid, xvii). In this, she implies that there is more involved in the wearing of clothing than simply protection and modesty, and that in modern settings clothing is in fact inevitably always worn within the broader context of fashion (Wilson, 1985). In the following paragraphs, I will explore further the relationship between fashion and clothing and explain how it operates in the context of this thesis.

Bovone (2012, p.79) proposes that we should consider clothing as a part of the material culture. In this, she argues that clothing functions as a part of the “*numerous artefacts we use in our everyday life, which mostly have a function connected to our needs – namely subsistence, home, work – but are specifically chosen and appreciated by us because they enrich our lives by giving them meaning*”. There are two important points in this definition. Firstly, Bovone correctly notes that clothing is an inherent element of our mundane everyday lives. We all engage with clothing and we all wear it on a daily basis. This is important because, in this thesis, my focus lies primarily in developing an in-depth understanding of the embodied experience of ageing through the lens of the everyday experience of fashion and clothing.

Secondly, similarly to Steele (2010), Bovone explains clothing in connection to its function in fulfilling human needs; “*they enrich our lives by giving them meaning*” (2012, p.79). Accordingly, our use of clothing can be explained in relation to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, a model showing the motivations that drive human actions. Maslow (1970) argued that human drives can be classified into two categories: those of deficiency needs, stimulated by primary physiological needs such as hunger, thirst, warmth or safety; and those of being needs, stimulated by secondary social needs of satisfaction, self-esteem and self-actualisation. According to Maslow, once the deficiency needs are fulfilled, human beings always strive to achieve those higher in the hierarchy. In this thesis, I focus upon the latter; I explore how for the participants of this study clothing functions as a source of pleasure, confidence and self-assurance and I analyse it in regard to their biological, cultural and social ageing.

It is also worth noting that, somewhat contrastingly to Maslow's model, for these individuals, it is clothing that primarily fulfils their being needs. For them, the primary function of the carefully selected items of clothing is to create, share and mediate various socially situated meanings of who they have been, and who they are becoming; arguably, clothing "enriches" their lives. I will now turn to explaining how clothing relates to the concept(s) of fashion.

FASHION

In his "Introduction" to the *Fashion Theory: A Reader* (2007), Barnard refers to the *Oxford English Dictionary* noting that the single word "fashion" has as many as nine different explanations. Indeed, despite the large number of classical and contemporary fashion theories, such as Veblen (1899), Simmel (1904), Blumer (1969), Lipovetsky (1994) or Baudrillard (1998), and building on these modern and postmodern studies, such as Craik (1993), Crane (2000) Entwistle (2000a, 2015), Barnard (2002) or González (2012), the concept still retains a certain level of ambiguity both for academics and the general public. This includes the lack of a clear delineation between fashion as a social process, an industrial system or indeed a form of material product. Crane (2012) implies that juxtaposing various different perspectives from several disciplines can augment our understanding of what really constitutes fashion. Likewise, Kaiser (2012) asserts that studying fashion requires integrative as much as imaginative ways of thinking and Elizabeth Wilson (1985, p.11) reflects:

The attempt to view fashion through several different pairs of spectacles simultaneously – of aesthetics, of social theory, of politics – may result in an obliquity of view, or even of astigmatism or blurred view, but it seems we must attempt it.

Consequently, in order to appreciate the multi-dimensional character and complexity of fashion, in the following sections, I attempt to view it, as well as other relevant concepts in further sections, simultaneously through various different prisms.

It is within this multi-perspectival approach that sociologist Diana Crane (2012) argues that there are four different "types" of definitions of fashion based upon four aspects of how it is "manifested". In order to fully understand her proposed typology, we first need to appreciate the terms involved. Here, the key word is that of "manifestation", which can be

understood as the practice of showing or embodying something abstract or theoretical, synonymous to “demonstration” or “exposition”. This is of great importance to this thesis because it highlights the connection between fashion “manifestation” and “appearance”, in the sense of making concepts that are hard to apprehend, like “fashion”, easier to grasp through making them visible. As I argue in the following sections, clothing functions as a primary form of fashion’s manifestation.

Accordingly, Crane’s (2012) classification lists four different definitions of fashion corresponding to the four different ways it becomes visible. Firstly, fashion as a part of material culture is manifested through body adornment. This, as many scholars discuss, is strongly linked to the consumption of various goods, including clothing, and the consumer culture to which we all contribute. As explained by Wilson (1985) in her seminal text of fashion and modernity, “*it was easy to believe that the function of fashion stemmed from capitalism’s need for perpetual expansion*” (p.49). Furthermore, in this, fashion is often presented in resonance to discourses on human identity. For example, Colin Campbell (2012, p.15) argues that “*there is nothing at all new about the idea that an individual’s mode of consumption, and especially his manner of dress, is an indication of his social identity; for this has been there for most of human history*”. However, at the same time, he notices that it is a somewhat “*suspect logic*” to claim that individuals have the possibility to influence their identities simply by changing their clothing. Rather than ascribing such “power” to fashion, he concludes that clothing, as with any other consumer goods, is just one of the forms of material culture through which its consumers can develop an understanding of what their likes and dislikes are. Similarly, Bovone (2012) also links fashion to the use of consumer goods, especially clothing. Her argument is that, in our fragmented and unstable postmodern society, consumers, just as tourists, arrive at different meanings but none of them are definitive. Instead, she argues that “*we can experiment even with good deeds, but we are not in a position to definitively decide their hierarchy*” (ibid, p.89). Such considerations are relevant to this thesis because the study participants were selected precisely because of their active engagement with fashion as manifested via the materiality of clothing. Furthermore, these participants were selected from the current ageing generation; one that created and contributed to a consumer culture built on youth and sexuality, as we know it today.

Secondly, fashion can be defined within the frames of semiology. Here, as Crane (2012) argues, the emphasis is on fashion being a form of a language or a code. In this vein, she identifies clothing styles as the signifiers of various meanings. Furthermore, she points out that, although usually in quite minor ways, fashion as a language has been subject to constant changes and modifications, which further influences the often-ambiguous meanings of most of its elements (i.e. different items of clothing); such semiological considerations are of course closely tied to Barthes' (1967/1990) seminal text *The Fashion System* where he argues that when we look at any piece of clothing (image of), we in fact are exposed to a complex system of signs.

Barnard (2002), by examining various semiological accounts of meaning connected with fashion, arrives at the interesting conclusion that fashion in fact is not an innocent form of communication but an ideological phenomenon imbued with the issues of power. In this, he argues that clothing, as an element of the fashion code, does in fact contribute to the creation and reproduction of various power relations and positions. Such a position has been critiqued, for example, by Campbell (1996), who rightly argues that instead of searching for the meaning of an object such as a piece of clothing, we should attempt a more complex and difficult process of determining the meaning of an associated action. Indeed, in Chapter 6, where I present my analysis of the empirical data gathered from the participants, I do not evade commenting on the connected actions such as selecting, purchasing or storing clothing. However, Barnard's (2002) position is equally relevant and important within the context of this thesis due to questions of how male heterosexual ageing can be signified via fashion and manifested through clothing. Parallel considerations, but in relation to women, are presented by Twigg (2013), who argues that clothing for older individuals often comprises dull colours and shapeless silhouettes, which is telling in relation to their adverse socio-cultural position.

Thirdly, in her classification, Crane (2012) points to fashion being a system of business organisations. In this sense, she argues, fashion can be visible through, for example, clothing's production, communication and distribution to consumers; with public and various "role models" performing a key role in its dissemination. Indirectly referring to the trickle-down theory of fashion as explained by Veblen (1899), Simmel (1904) or Laver (1969),

she recognises that this dissemination formerly happened largely on the level of non-elite members of society imitating the appearance of the elites in society. However, she also argues that nowadays such dissemination lies on the shoulders of celebrities from popular culture as well as members of minority subcultures. Once again, such forms of fashion manifestation are relevant to this thesis. Somewhat inadvertently, but equally relevantly, all participants in this study (I discuss this further in the “Sampling” section in Chapter 4) were in the past members of various different subcultures and referred widely not only to being influenced by the appearance of other subculture members, as well as their music idols, but admitted to often directly “copying” their styles of clothing.

Additionally, in the context of this thesis, I would stress the importance of fashion dissemination as a part of the pre-production stage; the stage when this manifestation is not yet a clothing item, but a mere idea or concept, further developed through the creative processes or ‘design’, yet, ultimately shaped by an author herself. This understanding of fashion being manifested through the practitioner’s creative thinking and making is crucial due to the practice-based element of this project, and I discuss this in more depth in Chapter 5, where I describe the processes of creation of the artefacts as part of this research.

The fourth type of definitions, Crane (2012) argues, is based on “*the hypothetical effects of fashion, such as the reinforcement of social differentiation, the expression of aspirations for social mobility and the resolution of anxieties regarding social identity*” (p.2). For once, it could be argued that this might be the most problematic “type” of definitions due to its “hypothetical effects”; if something is “hypothetical”, it can be assumed that it is yet to become visible. This could falsely suggest that this set of definitions might lack its relevant form of manifestation, which in turn could undermine its credibility. However, in the second part her description, Crane (ibid) explains that fashion should not be presented as a trivial nor ephemeral phenomenon, but indeed, that “fashionable clothing” carries a certain resonance as to how individuals express and shape their personal and social identities. It can be argued, therefore, that this set of definitions, to put it simply, focuses on clothing being a meaningful medium of identity communication and mediation between individuals and society. Furthermore, it can also be argued that this type of definitions encompasses the previous

three sets of definitions in one multi-dimensional definition of fashion, with clothing being the most obvious and common form of its manifestation.

Indeed, in the context of this thesis, fashion is captured and revealed as a complex concept that cannot be explained by a single definition, or even by one set of definitions. Instead, it is precisely through the various interconnections between different concepts and actors present (me) and presented (my participants) in this thesis that the relevant definition of fashion unfolds. In this, I must take into account the interconnections between creative thoughts (designer and researcher), disseminated objects of material culture (clothing artefacts) and associated meanings (interpretations, often in relation to past experiences, behaviours and practices), as well as their potential to influence individuals on personal and collective identity levels (study participants and their experiences, as well as the potential audience(s) of this project's outcomes). This is perhaps best explained by Sandy Black (2010: online), who comments: “[f]ashion is both an internal and external experience of the body, a three-way communication between designer, wearer and those who observe, each adding their own patina of taste.”

Finally, as a part of my attempt to see fashion from different perspectives simultaneously, it is essential that I acknowledge that many scholars often discuss fashion within the frames of having a negative or positive impact on individuals and society. For example, Barnard (2007) distinctly states that “[f]ashion is either one of the crowning achievements of western civilisation or it is incontrovertible evidence of consumer culture’s witless obsession with the trivial and unreal” (p.2). In this thesis, I distance myself from such a binary view of fashion, or clothing for that matter; I do acknowledge the existence of the positive and negative functions that fashion and clothing might play in our everyday lives and the implications they might have for individuals as well as societies. However, the aim of this thesis is not to “judge” these mediums but to understand how older male individuals have experienced them as an integral part of their life courses. While Barnard’s (ibid) rather dichotomous distinction adds to the understanding of fashion as a social phenomenon, this study indicates that fashion can have a much broader, and to certain degree, finely-grained impact on individuals and their daily, individual and collective experiences.

THE BODY

It is important to note that the forms of fashion manifestations that Crane (2012) proposes can only emerge in and through the relationship between clothing and the body; *“clothing (...) is the empirical reality of dressed bodies”* (Twigg, 2009a, p.93). It is precisely the body that is the vanishing point between fashion and clothing. And it is precisely in the embodied experience of the clothed body that the private and public spheres of our identities meet, or as Entwistle (2000a, p.7) puts it, *“[t]he individual and very personal act of getting dressed is an act of preparing the body for the social world, making it appropriate, acceptable, indeed respectable and possibly even desirable also”*. This once again highlights that when we clothe our bodies, inevitably we do so within the social context of fashion. Similarly, Craik (1993, p.9) comments that *“fashion is conceived as a ‘body technique’ which displays markers of social conduct expressed and displayed through clothes”*. Interestingly, Joanne Entwistle (2000b, p.337) comments upon the unique relationship between human body and fashion and its critical role in our everyday individual and social performances of identity:

Not only does dress form the key link between individual identity and the body, providing the means, or ‘raw material’, for performing identity; dress is fundamentally an inter-subjective and social phenomenon, it is an important link between individual identity and social belonging.

Consequently, within this research, I acknowledge the intrinsic relationship between ageing bodies, in this case the ageing male body, and fashion as manifested through clothing. Accordingly, I utilise the lens of “fashion and clothing” in order to understand my participants’ embodied experiences of ageing; I discuss this further in the second part of this chapter where I deal with the theme of the older male body.

FASHION AND CLOTHING

As I stated at the beginning of this section, “fashion” and “clothing” are not synonymous. However, my aim within this section is to argue that they are intrinsically linked by the means of clothing being a valid form of fashion manifestation and that, within the context of this thesis, they should not be explored in separation.

Firstly, I shall now return to Eicher's (2010) definition of "clothing" as representing various "*articles of dress that cover the body*" (p.151) and add to it Barnard's (2002) similarly simplistic explanation of clothing being "*what people wear*" (p.192). I accept these definitions at face value. However, at the same time, I find intriguing a somewhat overlapping description of fashion as presented by Hollander (1994): "[w]hat everybody wears (...) has taken different forms in the West for about seven hundred years and that is what fashion is" (p.11). This once again highlights a certain degree of ambiguity when it comes to a clear delineation between these terms, to which Barnard (2007, p.4) offers an explanation:

clothing sounds like, or has connotations of, the sort of thing one wears every day and is mundane, fashion connotes glamour and sounds somehow special and different from clothing. However, if fashion is what people wear to go about their everyday lives (...) than fashion has to include what we would usually want to call clothing or 'what people wear'.

This indeed offers some useful explanation in the sense that while both terms are so inextricably linked, there is a significant difference between them; as Loschek (2009) comments "*any garment other than what has been agreed upon [by a community] as fashion is simply clothing*" (p.136). This, as Loschek argues, has important implications for the idea that certain clothes can be socially defined as fashion for given (shorter or longer) periods of time. This is an interesting idea, because it highlights the transitory nature of clothing, which sometimes can become fashion (given the community's agreement).

In this thesis, I subscribe to Loschek's ideas, especially that at certain points in time and within certain communities, a fine line exists between what constitutes fashion and what constitutes clothing; yet throughout this thesis, I acknowledge the differences between both terms. I also subscribe to the proposed different types of fashion definitions by Crane (2012), and, furthermore, I accept that fashion is a complex concept that within the context of this thesis cannot be unequivocally defined. Instead, within this study, different types of fashion definitions overlap and affect each other significantly. Yet, I also acknowledge that the common denominator in all these definitions is clothing.

Moreover, despite the somewhat common sense distinction between fashion and clothing, I also recognise, following Kawamura (2011, p.9), the existence of a commonly accepted simplification in which "fashion" often functions as "*clothing fashion, that is, the most*

trendy, up-to-date clothing that the majority of the people in society adopts and follows". This is an especially important consideration when I present my interpretations of the respondents' accounts later in this thesis, in which, for example, they reflected on themselves as members of various youth subcultures.

Finally, similarly to Twigger-Holroyd (2013), I also find the "inclusive"⁵ approaches to "fashion and clothing" more suitable for the purposes of my thesis. While I separate myself from equating both terms, I agree that through a series of the everyday embodied experiences they are so intimately linked that it is nearly impossible to dissociate them completely. I am especially intrigued by Hollander's (1993, p.350) description of fashion as "*the whole spectrum of desirable ways of looking at any given time*" and its relation to "*our body – and, unavoidably, our dressed body – as a basic element of our identity*" (Bovone, 2012, p.67). This applies particularly strongly to my participants' past and present experiences and my own interpretations of these presented in this thesis, and the corresponding exhibition. Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen to adopt the integrative definition of "fashion and clothing" as presented in Brach (2012, p.63):

[f]ashion can be seen as one of a variety of means through which identity can be disclosed, including both material objects [clothing artefacts] and chosen behaviours [clothing practices and experiences]. These aspects of the subjects are not actually the person's identity, but identity is manifested and known through them.

This definition links extremely well with Crane's (2012) typology discussed above in using the same concept of manifestation, as well as providing the common ground for both Campbell's (2012) critique of semiological understanding of clothing as elements of fashion language, and Entwistle's (2002b) argument that clothing can become a vehicle for individuals to perform their individual and social identities. In this sense, through selecting and wearing certain clothes, people can potentially manifest who they are, or as whom they wish to be identified, including their preferred social and cultural affiliations. In Chapter 6, I discuss these ideas in regards to the research material.

⁵ By "inclusive" I mean approaches that do not primarily distinguish between fashion and clothing but instead acknowledge how closely linked these terms are.

NOTE ON FASHION AND CLOTHING STUDIES

My intention for the previous sections was to show how fashion and clothing are inextricably linked and highlight their relationship with the body and identity. As most of the above definitions show, fashion and clothing are integral elements of individuals' everyday lives. People's fashion preferences, manifested through their clothing choices, might play an important part in the visualisation of their personal and social identities. This creates immense possibilities for various fashion and clothing scholarship, upon which I will turn my focus now, and provides a further academic context for this study.

Firstly, following from Entwistle (2015), it is worth noting that fashion and clothing are no longer subjects of academic neglect. Indeed, many scholars, from fields such as sociology, psychology and design studies, have explored these once neglected areas. However, it can be argued that many of these studies have often been overtly focused on perception, which tends to explore how others see clothing and overlooks the context of specific everyday and mundane practices of clothing and fashioning one's body (Tseëlon, 2001; cited in Frith and Gleeson, 2004). As Frith and Gleeson (2004, p.40) note, such a narrow focus contributes also to reproducing "*pre-existing essentialised identities*". Similarly Entwistle (2000a) argues for the need for understanding fashion and clothing as "*situated practice[s] [and] to investigate dress in everyday life empirically*" (p.75). To adopt such a position was an important methodological element of this study because my aim was to investigate the individuals' everyday experiences of fashion and clothing as a lens towards an understanding of how these individuals experience growing older.

Secondly, while we witness more and more studies exploring women's everyday lived experiences of clothing (e.g. Tseëlon, 1995; Woodward, 2007; Twigg, 2013, 2009b), only a handful of studies have investigated this in relation to men and masculinities. This is mirrored in the contemporary research on fashion and ageing which concentrates mainly on older women (Twigg, 2013). Whilst this research has told us much about how ageing women experience fashion, it excludes the parallel considerations of ageing men. Therefore, in this thesis, I focus on older men's everyday experiences and routine practices of fashion and clothing because this area is currently under-represented in empirical research on ageing.

Furthermore, building on Twigg (2013), who argues that “[a]s we reflect on our lives, our lives’ meaning emerges” (p.75), I focus on how older men interpret their past and present experiences of fashion and clothing.

Finally, Twigg (2009a) argues that, while older people, who I concentrate on in this research, are often excluded from consideration in fashion studies, they remain active clothing wearers and consumers, so she proposes focusing on clothing, rather than fashion, in ageing studies. In the previous sections of this chapter, I have argued that fashion and clothing are inextricably linked concepts, with clothing being the most obvious and common form of fashion manifestation, and that, in the context of this study, it is impossible to focus on either of them exclusively. Furthermore, such an exclusive approach would not be a good fit in the case of this study, which takes samples from the generation of older men who, in general, extensively contributed to the ‘development’ of contemporary menswear and men’s fashion.

2.2.2 PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

Undoubtedly, Western cultures conflate beauty with youth and sexuality. In contrast, ageing is tacitly equated with bodily deterioration and loss of strength and beauty. As a result, Western societies, somewhat as a rule, devalue older age. Ageism, a persistent discrimination against individuals on the basis of their age (Bytheway, 1995), is often based upon the visible signs of ageing. In this, the bodily manifestations of growing older, such as greying hair, deepening wrinkles or changing physique, arguably, can be reflected in one’s clothing choices. These visual manifestations may become what visibly differentiate older individuals from societal standards of beauty, and, in addition, can function as negatively distinguishing, if not stigmatising those older individuals (Chrisler and Ghiz, 1993; Fairhurst, 1998). Moreover, the ubiquitous ageist stereotypes of decline and body deterioration provide a negative cultural frame to an individual’s embodied experiences of ageing. It is in this vein that Featherstone and Hepworth (1990) note the existence of “*the perpetual tension between social categories based on generalization about ageing and the actual personal experience of ageing in its diversity*” (p.254). Understanding of what it means to age in new, subtle and

individually-oriented ways has the potential to weaken ageism and improve the social “position” of ageing individuals, thus making a difference to the lived world around us.

The aim of this research has been developing an in-depth understanding of what it means to age, to focus on certain individuals’ experiences of ageing in their own right. In doing so I exploit the intimate relationship between body and clothing and argue that fashion, as it is manifested through clothing, can become a valid lens to this understanding; that the meaning(s) of ageing for these individuals can arise from how they experience their everyday encounters with fashion and clothing. Furthermore, I am not indifferent to my own co-constructive role as the researcher, designer and artist in this study; from the selection of the topic under investigation, through gathering the data, data analysis using various artful practices, and finally to the interpretative writing up of my findings.

I am also more than aware that this knowledge co-construction happens in a given historical, cultural and professional, as well as personal context. For all of these reasons, phenomenology, with its emphasis on human experience, seems to be the obvious philosophical underpinning for such a research endeavour. In the following sections of this chapter, I will explore this further. In turn, phenomenology as a philosophy has also serious implications for the methodological solutions adapted throughout this study, which I explain further in Chapter 3.

PHENOMENOLOGY AND THE (AGEING) BODY

Langdrige (2007) points out that, while all phenomenological approaches have in common their explicit focus on lived experience, they also vary significantly when it comes how they suggest exploring this experience. In this vein, my aim in this section is not to introduce the phenomenological tradition of philosophy in its entirety and complexity but to establish the phenomenological strands relevant to my work. Therefore, this section seeks to outline the elements of existential and interpretative phenomenology that are most relevant to my work. Furthermore, what is important for this review is that most phenomenological perspectives explore the relationship between the human experience and the lived body, advocating “*the idea that human beings and their consciousness is invariably embedded*

within the body" (Nettleton and Watson, 1998, p.9). Given that my aim within this thesis is to explore the lived experience of ageing, the ageing body is a predictable entry point into this discussion.

Especially relevant is the work of Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1962/2002), in which he pursued the idea that human perception is possible only through and in relation to our bodies; all human senses are invariably connected to our bodies and cannot function in separation from them. This has a certain epistemological implication regarding the limits of the knowledge that can be gained about any phenomenon. As a result, the experience of the body and the way that the body influences our lived experiences are inseparable and must not be explored singly but in conjunction (Fraser and Greco, 2005). This is precisely the approach that I pursue in this thesis. My participants' bodies are the focal point to their life-long experiences of growing old that I attempt to explore, analyse, understand and represent in this thesis via the mediums of fashion and clothing. These mediums, as I explained previously in this chapter, are inextricably linked to the body, providing an alternative context for research on ageing.

Moreover, central to Merleau-Ponty's argument is also the notion that the body, rather than being an object and being explored like one, represents a matter of condition through which we interact with other objects, such as clothing, which constitute the world around us:

The body therefore is not one more among external objects, with the peculiarity of always being there. If it is permanent, the permanence is absolute and is the ground for the relative permanence of disappearing objects, real objects. The presence and absence of external objects are only variations within a field of primordial presence, a perceptual domain over which my body exercises power. Not only is the permanence of my body not a particular case of the permanence of external objects in the world, but the second cannot be understood except through the first: not only is the perspective of my body not a particular case of that of objects, but furthermore, the presentation of objects in perspective cannot be understood except through the resistance of my body to all variation of perspective.

Merleau-Ponty (1962/2002), pp.105-106

Fraser and Greco (2005) note that this has also a fundamental impact on the meaning of the world itself, which can no longer be defined as a compilation of determinants but instead, for Merleau-Ponty, the world becomes a horizon that is "*latent in all our experience*" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2002; cited in Fraser and Greco, 2005, p.44). In this, it is the meanings that occur between the world and the body embedded within it that need to be explored and analysed

over the simplistic relations of cause and effect as argued by positivists. Thus, the body provides us with the one and only perspective through which we experience the world, yet, causing an inevitable partiality, subjectivity and perhaps even biases in all our knowledge(s). I return to this idea in Chapter 3 where I explain my own epistemological position in this research.

While the relationship between the conscious body and the world of objects is central to Merleau-Ponty's concept of phenomenology, Nettleton and Watson (1998) comment that we cannot always be conscious and fully aware of our often-mundane everyday actions. They use as the example the activity of walking or smelling a rose to which we might somewhat semi-consciously command our bodies to do. Furthermore, they argue that these examples prove that, in fact, the body is being often "*taken-for-granted*" (ibid, p.10). Similarly, Leder (1990, p.1) observes that the body often disappears from our consciousness:

[the] bodily presence is of highly paradoxical nature. While in one sense the body is the most abiding and inescapable presence in our lives, it is also essentially characterized by absence, That is, one's own body is rarely the thematic object of experience, when reading a book or lost in thought, my own bodily state may be the farthest thing from my awareness (...) the body, as a ground of experience, (...) tends to recede from direct experience.

Leder, 1990, p.1

Much in the same vein, Cruikshank (2003; cited in Slevin, 2010) argues that, regardless of the body's pivotal role as a marker of ageing, even social gerontologists have given very little attention to it, except in cases of disease or illness. Likewise, Leder (1990) proposed the concept of the "dys-appearing" body in which he argues that some of the rare occasions in which we become fully aware of our bodies are during the states such as pain, disease or death; our body "dys-appears" as it becomes dysfunctional and its normal and routine capacity ceases. Such a concept, as Nettleton and Watson (1998) rightly argue, carries important implications for how we can develop our knowledge about the lived experience in relation to the fully functioning body. For example, the authors question the ways in which we can ask people about their routine bodily experiences, such as ageing, if they are simply not fully aware of these experiences, and, furthermore, if the produced answers inevitably need to be artificial. In contrast, I would argue that it is precisely in the context of mundane everyday practices that the phenomenological understanding of the lived

body can emerge. However, the selection of a suitable lens through which this experience can be entered is critical; this research adopts the context-sensitive lens of fashion and clothing.

Additionally, Coupland and Gwyn (2003, p.8) observe that “*the body is itself not a stable phenomenon*”. Indeed, if we turn to the concept proposed by Shilling of the “body project” (1993, p.4), we learn that the body is always “*an unfinished biological and sociological phenomenon*” and “*an entity which is in the process of becoming; a project which should be worked at and accomplished as part of an individual’s self-identity*” (ibid). This process of constant change has an especially strong resonance to the topic of the ageing body. In this vein, Bytheway and Johnson (1998) notice that looking in the mirror for an individual can in fact have two faces; one in which the viewer does not encounter his bodily changes caused by ageing and reflects on himself as “*still the same person*” (ibid, p.245); and, second, in which he defines himself directly within the frames of these bodily changes such as greying hair or wrinkles. Nevertheless, bodily ageing, even if periodically acknowledged by the sudden realisation of visible physical changes, is a process that is difficult, if not impossible, to grasp entirely. This once again highlights the need to look for alternative prisms, perspectives and contexts, as well as research methodologies and methods, through which the embodied experience of ageing can be encountered; this study is an example of such a scholarship.

This thesis is situated precisely in the context of searching for the suitable lens through which the common elements of individuals’ experiences of growing older can be viewed, yet through which individual differences for every single person could be explored, interpreted, understood and, finally, which could be utilised in the process of this knowledge dissemination. In previous sections of this chapter, I explained how fashion, manifested through clothing, is an invariable element of our everyday practices and behaviours and also explained its often very intimate relation to the human body. Furthermore, so far in this section, my aim has been to outline the phenomenological approach as the most suitable for this study of the embodied experience of ageing. In the following section, I will focus on explaining that fashion and clothing provide a rich, yet unexplored terrain of possibilities for a deeper understanding of how ageing is embodied in the ageing individuals’ identity and subjectivity.

PHENOMENOLOGY AND CLOTHING

In the previous sections of this chapter, I explained the role of fashion and clothes as the communicators and mediators between self and society, which has been recognised by many scholars (Craik, 1993; Entwistle, 2002; Entwistle and Wilson, 2001; Crane, 2000; Kaiser, 2012). Furthermore, Weber and Mitchell (2004, pp.4-5) describe the women's dress stories collected by them as "*a research method*" and "*a method of inquiry into identity process and embodiment*", while Twigg (2009a, p.93) argues that "[clothes] *offer a useful lens through which to explore the possibly changing ways in which older identities are constituted in modern culture*". Thus, from a sociological point of view, clothes can become the key to analysing and understanding a whole array of tensions between the personal and social factors of which ageing self-identity is composed, which I exploit in this study. Moreover, as I explain further in Chapters 4 and 5, fashion and clothing can also become an equally productive medium of interpretation for the researcher, designer and artist.

As explained in the previous section, a phenomenological approach, with its emphasis on practice and experience, enables "*un-locking an understanding of what it means to be a human person situated within and across the life course*" (Powell and Gilbert, 2009, p.5). In contrast to perhaps more "automatic" and "taken-for-granted" actions, such as walking or driving a car, discussed by Nettleton and Watson (1998), engaging with fashion and clothing can be experienced by (at least some) people as having some kind of meaning. Schneider (2006, p.205) explains this as follows, "*[b]ecause we always exist on the edge of existential chaos, they [cloth and clothing] fix certain meanings for us, constituting a tangible sense of social reality*". Following the adopted phenomenological approach, I argue that these meanings need to be understood from an insider's point of view, and with an emphasis on how the lived body influences these meanings. Furthermore, I need to also acknowledge how these meanings impact on how the body is constructed in individuals' lifeworlds⁶.

On the other hand, some scholars argue that the dressed body, just like the ageing

⁶ Here I use the term "lifeworld" understood as "*the taken-for-granted 'common-sense reality' of the social world as it is lived by ordinary individuals. In the daily course of their lives individuals produce typifying constructs of their fellows' actions which, though frequently faulty or short-sighted, are the only legitimate basis on which social scientists can advance*" (Schütz, 1932; cited in Harrington, 2006, p.341).

body, is in fact “taken-for-granted” by individuals, and imply that, as it is deeply embedded in our everyday routines, it might be absent from our consciousness. For example, Entwistle (2002, p.133) comments upon the clothed body as follows:

Dress, then, forms a part of our epidermis – it lies on the boundary between self and other. The fact that we do not normally develop epidermal awareness tells us a lot about our routine relationship to dress, that is, that it forms a second skin which is not usually an object of consciousness. Our consciousness of dress is heightened when something is out of place – when either our clothes do not fit us, (...) or they do not fit the situation.

This is especially important for my argument that fashion and clothing can become a valid lens to analyse older individuals’ lived experiences. Even though the sometimes subtle and often invisible biological effects of cells ageing are invisible to us most of the time, they are inevitably exteriorised through the material form of clothing. The mature body, with some, more or less, visible signs of biological ageing, can simply affect how clothing fits it; or can even pose as a whole new “situation” to the individual who operates within certain socio-cultural expectations regarding their appearance. This embodied self-perception might arise from how individuals feel in their own aged bodies, as their muscles are weaker and saggier than what they once were, their backs might curve or they might gain some weight. Furthermore, this is also relational to how this body looks. For this, I once again argue that fashion and clothing through its intimate, yet seemingly ordinary, relationship to the body provides a valid context in which the lived experience of ageing can be investigated.

Indeed, when it comes to fashion, and clothing particularly, phenomenology provides the possibility to uncover the lived experience of ageing through the lens of, and to establish the interrelation between, the stories of individuals, the objects and the times they inhabit. As Arxer et al. (2009) note, “[p]ersons remake themselves over time, and thus their identities change” (p.46) and so human biographies have the potential to be translated as the relationships between personal and structural factors, and individual and collective experiences. What is important for the argument herein is that fashion and clothing are an integral part of our everyday being, and that fashionable clothes are objects that inevitably must respond to the changing physicality of an ageing individual. For these reasons, the study where the everyday and very personal experiences of fashion and clothing are explored can in fact deliver a vast amount of information about these individuals’ experiences of ageing.

Moreover, the issues discussed in this thesis relate strongly to the postmodern social and cultural identity discourses and the way in which fashion and clothes can visibly differentiate individuals within society (Breward, 1998). Current social narratives seem to undermine the existence of age ordering through clothing; however, as Julia Twigg (2009a) notices, it is still present. Building on the words of Lurie (1992), Twigg describes a twofold way in which clothes can still differentiate, and potentially stigmatise, older individuals. On the one hand, it can force them, especially women, to consider excessive coverage of their bodies and into choosing un-revealing, misshapen and often dark coloured clothes; on the other hand, it can also be associated with wearing bright colours and infantile garments. These produce significant implications for our culturally mediated constructions and representations of ageing and identity, especially in relation to gender, which I discuss in the subsequent sections of this chapter. Moreover, these are also central to how those ageing individuals negotiate themselves in relation to others.

CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

At the beginning of this section, it is worth noting that within the expanded field of fashion and ageing studies, more and more studies tend to focus upon exploring everyday and very personal experiences of clothing (e.g. Tseëlon, 1995; Banim and Guy, 2001; Clarke and Miller, 2002; Woodward, 2007; Twigg, 2013). However, it also needs to be pointed out that their focus lies primarily on women's experiences of these mediums; only a handful of studies have investigated this in relation to men and masculinities. On the other hand, while phenomenological explorations of the lived ageing body in relation to fashion and clothing are rare in contemporary research, they are not entirely absent. In this section, I will focus on three of the few existing studies relevant to my study that focus on gathering and reflecting the wearers' accounts of their individual experiences. This is important not only in order to explain the existing gap in knowledge that this thesis aims to fill but also it has an impact on my methodology, which I discuss further in Chapter 3.

Firstly, Woodward's (2007) ethnographic study into why women wear what they wear is a prime example of a study where the focus lies on individuals' lived experiences of fashion

and clothing. Even though her approach is not explicitly phenomenological, she comments that it is precisely by analysing a series of routine embodied processes that “*it is possible to offer novel insights through looking not only at the level of representations nor at the level of abstract system of fashion, but at the actual level of practice*” (ibid, p.29). Her study offers implicit insights into the complexity of these embodied practices during which women select their attires with a sensitive appreciation of the detail and depth of the data gathered from individuals, rather than the pursuit of artificial generalisations of the findings. This allows her to conclude that, for the women in her study, their personal and social identities are enacted through their everyday acts of getting dressed. Furthermore, Woodward cogently recognises also the importance of her informants’ different social positions, including their ethnicities or disposable incomes, in shaping their experiences. Similarly to Woodward, in this study, my interest lies in the participants’ personal understandings of their embodied experiences arising in regard to their engagement with the mediums of fashion and clothing. Building on this, I seek to fuse together phenomenological concerns about the dressed body in order to foster a deeper understanding of embodied ageing identities.

Secondly, Fairhurst (1998) investigates how mature men and women experience the physical aspects of ageing and, furthermore, how these changes are socially constructed. Similarly to Woodward (2007), Fairhurst’s approach in her study is not explicitly “phenomenological”. However, by placing her interest in the individuals’ personal experiences of their changing physicality, inevitably she touches upon their embodied realities. What is important for my argument here is that through her investigation into the bodily experiences of ageing, Fairhurst arrives at a whole array of findings regarding various appearance-related practices, both regarding men and women. This has a twofold importance for my work. Firstly, Fairhurst’s findings are in opposition to the stereotypical belief that men are not interested in fashion and clothing, which I discuss further in the subsequent sections of this review; secondly, it once again highlights the connection between the dressed and the ageing body. In my work, I want to build upon Fairhurst’s study in the sense of reversing its focus; it is through the explicit focus on fashion and clothing that I want to arrive at an understanding of the informants’ experiences of ageing.

Finally, Twigg's (2013) study is one of the rare examples where the focus lies primarily in the bodily changes that occur in relation to age and their impact of women's choices of clothing. In this, she successfully links the meaning and (corpo-)reality of the ageing body with the meaning and (corpo-)reality of the dressed body. Interestingly, Twigg constructs three intersecting trajectories of time and change relevant to these meanings: the trajectory of ageing, the trajectory of historical time, and the trajectory of individuals' life courses. This has a tremendous importance for my study, in which, with a phenomenological emphasis, I focus on the dressed body as the centre of the whole array of subjective experiences and a key to understanding what it means to grow older. I argue that the acknowledgment of these trajectories, as well as others emerging throughout my data analysis, has the potential not only to enhance our understanding of ageing but also to tell us something about the cultural meanings affixed to this process.

NOTE ON CRITICAL AND CULTURAL GERONTOLOGY

While the emerging fields of critical and cultural gerontology, by questioning their own practices, actively address the construction of various meanings of age and ageing, including issues of power (Biggs, 2001, Biggs, 2004), we are currently witnessing their turn to the humanities; encouraging the grounding of the empirical investigations in the life course perspective and embodied experience, and acknowledging its qualitative value (Leontowitsch, 2012a). These perspectives, including phenomenology, and especially their rejection of natural science as the only suitable way of acquiring knowledge on ageing (Baars, 1991), provide the solid theoretical foundations for this study.

2.2.3 SUMMARY

Ageing is a topic that is difficult to explore. This thesis is set within the context of the current shift in focus around ageing from an objective to a subjective stance, placing the emphasis on individuality and personal experience (Bennett and Hodkinson, 2012; Powell and Gilbert, 2009) and resulting in the emergence and development of cultural gerontology. Human biographies have the potential to be interpreted through the relationships between personal and structural factors, and individual and collective experiences. Fashion and clothing, as communicators and mediators between self and society (Entwistle, 2002; Entwistle and Wilson, 2001, Craik 1993), and as part of humans' "*universal experience*" (Black, 2007, p.299), can be adopted as key factors in understanding ageing identities. It is in this way, that the phenomenological approach, with its emphasis on embodied practices and experiences, enables me to "[unlock] *an understanding of what it means to be a human person situated within and across the life course*" (Powell and Gilbert, 2009, p.5), which ties in closely with the aspirations of critical and cultural gerontology. Moreover, when it comes to fashion and clothing, and its conjunction with the body, phenomenology especially provides the possibility to "*uncover the multiple and culturally constructed meanings that a whole range of events and experiences can have for us*" (Weber and Mitchell, 2004, p.4), and to establish the interrelation between the stories of individuals, the cultural and temporal life worlds they inhabit, and the subjects and objects that fill those worlds. Furthermore, this thesis is designed to stand against the "*profound cultural silence*" (Twigg, 2000, p.115) accompanying older individuals' embodied experiences of ageing, by creating conditions of knowledge dissemination that have the potential to transcend generational divisions, as well as to go beyond the merely academic audience.

Arguably, viewing ageing through the lens of (fashionable) clothing has now become a well-established approach within an on-going academic debate and changing social discourse on ageing. While this statement is supported by the vast literature available, especially from the sociologist Julia Twigg, similar transitions are also visible within contemporary media including TV, radio and popular Internet weblogs, and the trendy approach of exploring 'the beauty' hidden within old age. The fact that they are echoed by

academic events such as the “Mirror, Mirror: Representations and Reflections on Age and Ageing” Conference held at the London College of Fashion (29-30/10/2013) suggests that fashion and ageing is no longer a taboo subject. However, what is common in most of these initiatives, as well as most of the fashion and clothing studies more generally, is that the main focus is on women. What this also means is that there is a concurrent neglect of the topic of older men, their experience of growing old and how this is reflected in their engagement (or otherwise) with fashion, which this thesis aims to address, and which I continue to explore in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

2.3 OLDER MEN, FASHION AND CLOTHING

In the previous part of this chapter I reviewed the literature relevant to my study on fashion, clothing and phenomenology in relation to ageing. This allowed me to define, at least to some extent, the key terms in this thesis, such as fashion and clothing, as well as to extract other relevant sub-themes such as that of the body and identity. In the following sections, I focus on terms such as “men”, “masculinities” and “men’s fashion”, in order to explain their meanings in the context of my work. I depend upon all these definitions and meanings in the final section of this chapter, where I once again re-articulate the gap in knowledge that through this thesis I aim to fill. Furthermore, in the following chapters of this thesis, I seek to build on these definitions, and where possible, extend them by exploring the various interconnections with other relevant concepts.

2.3.1 EXPLORING MEN AND MASCULINITIES

Similarly to the previous sections of this chapter on “fashion” and “clothing”, my first step in this part is to define “men” and “masculinities”. However, just as in the case of the previous terms, the present ones are only purportedly simple and straightforward. For example, Stimpson (1987) reports that *The Penguin Dictionary of Quotations* has over 175 entries for the term “men” and nearly 200 for “man” and Reeser (2010, p.2) describes seeing the concept of masculinity as natural as being “greatly complicated” and “problematized”.

Such complexity and ambiguity, as Reeser argues, is caused by a wide cultural variation in what constitutes masculinity and that even considering various cases across different cultures and historic periods, instead of offering any clarification in this matter, leads to only one conclusion: that it is impossible to unequivocally determine what masculinity is or what it means.

As is the case with “fashion” and “clothing”, the difficulty seems to lie precisely in the mutual dependence of the terms in the sense that they have often been used to define each other. Much in this vein, Connell (2005) identifies four different strategies that have been employed in order to define these terms. Firstly, in essentialist approaches, “masculinity” is defined by one core feature of men’s lives, such as activity or sexual potency. Secondly, positivistic approaches tend to simplify “masculinity” to “*what men actually are*” (ibid, p.69); here the focus is on empirical investigations and a search for the patterns in the lives of men such as to beget an offspring or to build a house. Thirdly, normative definitions by recognising the differences amongst men themselves extend positivist definitions to “*masculinity is what men ought to be*”(ibid, p.70); although this set of definitions, more than the previous two recognises the differences amongst men, these definitions still try to establish a set of social norms of how men should behave. This, as Connell argues is best seen through the popular culture where actors such as John Wayne, Humphrey Bogart or Clint Eastwood, through a multitude of similar roles have provided a form of a blueprint for such norms. Finally, semiotic definitions reject the importance of personality and explain “masculinity” at large by symbolically contrasting it to “femininity”; “masculinity” effectively becomes “non-femininity”. In this set of definitions, this division between men and women is often reduced to the phallus being a signifier for men, and the lack of it signifying women.

Indeed, what seems to link most of these attempts to define “men” and “masculinity” is the inextricable linkage of both terms, creating an impression that they might be somewhat difficult to disassociate. Admittedly, this conceptual context of “men and masculinities” is extremely relevant to this thesis. At the same time, however, as a researcher, designer and artist, I subscribe to the idea that, within the contemporary social reality, it is not the only possible complex of connections; there are various ways and possibilities in which women

can be linked to different forms of masculinities, as well as men to various forms of femininities, which indeed comes to the fore in Chapter 6, where I present my findings.

Furthermore, the parallel between the “fashion and clothing” complex and “men and masculinities” can be stretched further in the sense that “masculinity” just as “fashion” is a concept that is somewhat invisible and difficult to grasp. Likewise, Edwards (2006) comments that “[m]asculinity is at once everywhere and yet nowhere, known and yet unknowable, had and yet un-**have-able**” (emphasis in original, p.1). In this sense, metaphorically, the relation between “men” and “masculinities” could be aligned to that of “clothing” and “fashion”; men, arguably as much as women nowadays, through their “*body-reflexive practices*” (Connell, 2005, p.64) might visibly express their masculinity, just as clothing is one of the forms through which fashion is manifested. Consequently, in the following sections, I investigate these two connected notions of “men” and “masculinities” in relation to fashion, clothing and ageing, firstly by providing a relevant historical background.

MASCULINITY: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although I am not aiming at providing a comprehensive account for the historical emergence of men and masculinities as a field of study, it is still important to remain aware of the social processes which can be seen to have played an important role in contemporary understandings of the terms and their construction. The consideration, albeit briefly, of historical perspectives provides support for my further considerations regarding ageing masculinities and men’s fashion.

Edwards (2006) discusses the emergence and development of critical studies of men and masculinities in terms of a three-phase model, and explains it in parallel to the three waves of feminist movements. In this spirit, historically prior to the first wave of feminist movements, definitions of masculinity have been associated with two recurring sets of traits: man as a “puritan”, celebrating his ability to perform hard laborious tasks; and, man as a “playboy”, emphasising him enjoying life, leisure and pleasure (Hoch, 1979; cited in Beynon, 2002). Since the feminist influence on cultural studies in the 1970s, however, men and masculinities have been seen as ambiguous socio-cultural constructions that require careful

exploration and analysis, beyond Hoch's rather simple categories. Furthermore, as argued by Goldberg (1976; cited in Edwards, 2006), the studies from this period attempted to record how various social processes were limiting, or even detrimental to, men with regard to their mental as well as physical health. Edwards (2006, p.2) comments that in this period of time "*the pressures of performance, whether in the bedroom or the boardroom, and an emphasis on emotional repression – or the commonly quoted syndrome of 'big boys don't cry' – were particularly common targets*". This points to the influence of feminist movements on academic scholarship's attempts not only to analyse and reflect on, but also to impact and enhance different individuals' lived realities.

According to Edwards (2006), the second wave of critical studies of men and masculinities arose in the 1980s and was a direct critical response to the first wave. In its fundamentals lay the rejection of the sex role paradigm as ambiguous and limiting. At the same time, influenced by the social and cultural changes such as the advancement of the consumer society and the rise of the gay movements, the out-dated term of natural and fixed "masculinity" has slowly been replaced by more accurate multiple and fluid "masculinities" (Beynon, 2002; Buchbinder, 1994; Buchbinder, 2012). This has moved thinking about masculinity beyond narrow stereotypes, based on biological differences between men and women, to the acknowledgment of multiple different ways of being a man, depending on the various intersections of gender, ethnicity, age (generation), class and sexuality. Furthermore, this encouraged the recognition of socio-historical and geographical contexts as crucial to understanding how different masculinities are enacted and experienced.

The third wave of critical studies of masculinity, as identified by Edwards (2006), has emerged under the strong influence of the post-structural theory, and it specifically has analysed issues of gender in relation to theories of normativity, performativity and sexuality. Furthermore, such scholarship often embraces an interdisciplinary approach, however, with a common thread of the significance of representation, and often in relation to the wider picture of change and continuity in relation to masculinities and identities. Additionally, Edwards (ibid) argues that such studies, more often than not, attempt to have a relatively positive undertone, "*whether more overt or covert, on the sense of artifice, flux and contingency concerning masculinities*" (p.3). Consequently, it is now clear that many men might enact "hybridized" or

even “bricolage” masculinities that not only are experienced differently depending on various times and situations but conglomerate different versions of “the masculine” (Beynon, 2002). As Hennen (2005) notes, in a derivative from a semiotic approach, even these various masculinities are defined in relation to each other, and often in opposition to femininity.

This historical background is important for the analysis presented in Chapter 6 of this thesis for three reasons. Firstly, the men whose experiences are at heart of this thesis lived in the UK throughout those periods of changes when the second and third waves of feminist movements influenced fresh understandings of what it means to be a man, including men’s interest in and engagement with fashion and clothing. While there may not be an exact “fit” between academic thinking and the lived experiences of being a man (and it could be argued that those purely academic developments are detached from the real lives of individuals), nonetheless, the feminist movements to which such studies responded provided material for gauging assumptions about men and masculinities, and alternative ways of exploring them. Thus, arguably, the academic developments within the field of critical studies in men and masculinities reflect, at least to some extent, men’s lived realities.

Secondly, as it will be discussed in the further sections of this review, fashion (yet not clothing), which I adopt as an interpretative lens and entrance point to my participants’ experiences of ageing, has been perceived as a stereotypically feminine domain (Kaiser, 2012). In this vein, Wilson (1985) comments that “*fashion is obsessed with gender*” but at the same time it “*defines and redefines the gender boundary*” (p.117). This thesis is strongly influenced by the idea of redefining and blurring these once rigid boundaries of femininity and masculinity, in regards to fashion and clothing. Importantly, much in this spirit and negotiating what it means to be a contemporary man with a strong interest in and active pursuit of fashion and clothing, some individuals in this study have exhibited certain tensions when discussing fashion and clothing. Thirdly, the men participating in this study have often emphasised the gender boundaries in order to construct their own sense of masculinity, further problematised by their ageing processes. I explain this further in the section on “Ageing Masculinities”.

NOTE ON HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

Somewhat inevitably, among the multiple forms of masculinity, some are more respected than others as determined by their context. “Hegemonic masculinity” can, therefore, be defined as the most successful way of being a man in a given time and place (Kimmel; 1994, Connell, 2005). As a consequence, hegemonic masculinity signifies exalted, yet culturally normative, ideals of masculinity that impact on norms of social acceptance (Davis, 2002; Pringle, 2005). Ricciardelli et al. (2010) point out that hegemonic masculinity is (re-)produced via various discourses including appearance, sexuality, behaviours and occupations. Accordingly, contemporary hegemonic masculinity can often be equated with white, muscular, straight, young/middle-aged and professionally successful men.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is, therefore, important to this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, even if the participants of this study, due to their employment of various body management practices such as exercising and dieting (I discuss this further in the “Participant’ Profiles” section in Chapter 4), are embracing the rather paradoxical concept of “successful ageing”, yet *“inevitably there will come a time when such practices will consume more and more of their time and energy and they will find themselves further and further removed from hegemonic standards of what is acceptable”* (Slevin, 2010, p.1008). Consequently, while it could be argued that the participants in this study, due to their age, are somewhat outside the rigid norms of hegemonic masculinity, undoubtedly, they did enact it when they were younger. It is much in this vein of change and progress, inherently built into individuals’ life courses, that in this thesis I focus upon the experience of “ageing” rather than “being old”.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p.838) argue that *“[i]t is desirable to eliminate any usage of hegemonic masculinity as a fixed, transhistorical model”*. As much as, in this thesis, I do not intend to reproduce this model in any form, I cannot escape acknowledging its presence and function in my participants’ accounts, in which they often oriented their own male identities in relation to what they perceived to be the applying norms of masculinity. As Morgan (1992) comments, the culturally idealised forms of masculinity rarely correspond to the lived ways of it; however, they prevail as an effective script by which men are evaluated

by throughout their life courses. Furthermore, acknowledging the presence and function of this dominant form of masculinity allows me to more fully exploit the interpretative potential of some of the narratives, as well as contextualise some of the co-created interpretations, which is further complicated because of the inevitably retrospective character of some of the narratives presented in this thesis. It can, indeed, be argued that different norms of hegemonic masculinity functioned at different historical moments in my participants' life courses, which they might have experienced differently due their past subject positions. I expand upon this in Chapter 6, where I discuss the findings of this study.

DEFINING MEN AND MASCULINITIES

In the previous sections, I outlined a short historical background of critical studies on men and masculinities and I introduced the concept of the hegemonic masculinity. I shall now return to the task of defining the terms of “men” and “masculinities”. Importantly, any potential meanings of these terms depend upon various historical and socio-cultural configurations. Moreover, just like “fashion” and “clothing”, the present terms are somewhat woven together, and in the Wittgensteinian spirit embedded within one family resemblance (Wittgenstein, 1958).

As the previous sections show, these terms are strongly linked to, yet not limited by, the gender concept, as Connell, et al. (2004, p.3) comment:

Although men and masculinities are (...) understood as explicitly gendered, men and masculinities are not formed by gender alone. Men are not simply men or simply about gender, and the same applies to masculinities. Men and masculinities are shaped by differences of age, by class situation, by ethnicity and racialization, and so on.

Likewise, Beynon (2002) rightly argues that men are not simply born with masculinity, but are instead acculturated into this gender classification and corresponding social conventions. Building on this, Connell (2005) critiques any attempts to define masculinity as a character type, behavioural average or indeed a gender norm. Henceforth, Connell proposes focusing on exploring masculinities through the various processes and relationships through which men conduct their gendered lives. At the same time, however, and importantly for this thesis, the traces of such socio-cultural norms, expected behaviours and characteristics are present

in the accounts of my participants on multiple occasions and levels, for example, with regards to heterosexual men and women, as well as homosexual men, which I present and discuss in Chapter 6. Hence, while in this thesis I subscribe to the empirical approach proposed by Connell (ibid) in the exploration of older men and ageing masculinities, by focusing on the various fashion and clothing practices and behaviours present throughout my informants' life courses, and as experienced by their ageing bodies, I also recognise a series of common social expectations as to what constitutes men and masculinity.

Consequently, as discussed by Connell (2005), researchers must break beyond the rigid norms of exploring "men" and "masculinities" as the only possible internally coherent structure of gender and instead empirically explore various masculinities in relation to their different internal logics and formulas. Following on from various feminist writings, Morgan (1992) argues that, in order to truly explore different notions of "men" and "masculinities", and modes of their articulation beyond their contemporary manifestation, scholars need to focus on everyday routine areas of life, such as fashion and clothing. Kaiser (2012), drawing on the work of the feminist scientist Fausto-Sterling (2003), critiques understanding gender as simply "*hard wired*" in favour of viewing it as a "*soft assemblage*" (Kaiser, 2012, p.124). She concludes that it is "*the material and symbolic interplay between the body and style-fashion-dress [that] opens up all kinds of possibilities*" (ibid, p.125) to investigate various masculinities in regards to the interplay between various subject positions, including those relevant to this study: sexuality, race, ethnicity, national identity, social position, and the most important one, age/generation. To add to this, Hearn and Collinson (1994) argue that, in the quest to define "men" and "masculinities", we cannot escape analysing various power relations, which I discuss further in the section on "Ageing Masculinities".

Taking the above points into consideration, for the purposes of this thesis, in which I describe and interpret how the various notions of masculinity were internalised, as well as externalised by a small sample of British men, the holistic empirical approach is more useful than approaches seeking to unequivocally define "masculinity" explicitly in relation to "men" and their biological determinants. Although it is tempting to oversimplify the definition of "men" and equate it to "males", and although some men certainly do exist in such a categorical relation, I have chosen to adopt Hearn and Collinson's (1994, p.104) definition of men as

individuals who are “*existing and persisting in the material bases of society, in relation to particular social relations of production and reproduction*”; and, furthermore, Connell’s (2005, p.71) definition of “masculinity” as follows:

‘Masculinity’, to the extent the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture.

As a result, in Chapter 6, I discuss some older men’s (my participants’) role as active agents, reflexively constructing their ageing masculine identities through everyday engagement with the practices of fashion and clothing and their embodied experiences of these. In doing so, I extend the previously presented definitions of fashion and clothing by subscribing to Edwards’ (1997, p.4) understanding of them as “*a significant link in the connections of masculinity and society, past and present*”. In the following section, I will extend the presented definitions further in regards to older men and ageing masculinities.

AGEING MASCULINITIES

As was noted above, historically, masculinity was often associated with production and related to domains such as labour or sexuality. Various socio-cultural changes meant these spheres expanded to include men’s economic and professional status, and, indeed, their appearance, which I discuss further in the following section. However, the traits of economic and professional status can be related back to production, for example, in the sense that a man is producing his own appearance through engagement with sports, cosmetics or fashion and clothing and, in this sense, is invested in the production of his own image as fashionably virile.

Both these traditional social markers of masculinity, and their more recent cultural inflections, change with age. Men’s “productivity” changes, and their physical resilience may decrease, accompanied by changes in appearance, in parallel to changing roles, retirement or redundancy. As Hearn (1995) states, among the consequences of these changes, men’s experience of ageing is dominated by various forms of disengagement. Similarly, Meadows and Davidson (2006) argue that the transition from workplace to home space, and from

production to consumption, can place men closer to notions typically perceived as feminine. Furthermore, referring to older men's somewhat "*contradictory social power*", Hearn argues that the ageing process "*may subvert dominant constructions of men and masculinities*" (1995, p.113), and Thompson implies that "*the social construction maintains that 'old men' are not men at all*" (1994; cited in Whitehead, 2002, p.2000). Considerations as to whether or not ageing masculinities might be somewhat weakened masculinities, as compared to hegemonic masculinity, are important to this thesis and trigger an interesting question about the strategies that older men might implement in order to preserve their masculinities, especially in relation to their appearance. This is also strongly connected to the mostly negative representations of ageing within the Western culture, which I explore in the following section.

However, this links also to the mostly lay bio-medical accounts, and discourse on male menopause, initiated in the mid-1950s and re-enlivened in the mid-1990s (Hepworth and Featherstone, 1998; Watkins, 2008). While there is a considerable ambivalence about the existence and impact of such a condition as andropause⁷, Hepworth and Featherstone (1998) note that for men the years 45-60 can indeed pose a real sense of vulnerability and awareness of health and other problems. Furthermore, these authors argue that this element of psycho-biological ageing is inevitably linked to various social categorisations and has important implications for older men's experience of self, for example, a certain sense of unease or displacement towards their ageing bodies that some men might feel in midlife.

Likewise, Marshall (2007) points out that biological male ageing is often perceived as a kind of de-masculinisation. Such a cultural narrative, she argues, has resulted in its medicalisation in an attempt to somewhat preserve the masculinity of older men, such as the introduction of Viagra. Comparatively, Thompson (2006, p.647) argues that even though the "[s]tandards of masculinity may not remain stable across the life span, but neither do they disappear. Old men are still men after all, and 'being a man' is an expectation that extends into old age". This pronouncement is in line with the present argument that older men's experience of ageing is complex and inextricably linked to their individual sense of being a man and changing sense of masculinity. Arguably, it has also implications for the way in

⁷ Medical term colloquially known as 'male menopause', describing a condition of deficiency in a male sex hormone androgen, which can be ageing-related (Segal and Mastroianni, 2003).

which explorations of ageing men and their masculinities should be conducted; namely, carefully considering individual variations of the life course, but always within the context of broader socio-cultural conditions. In the following section, I will look at some of these conditions in regards to the socio-cultural representations of ageing.

REPRESENTATIONS OF AGEING

Although this thesis does not primarily focus on the socio-cultural representations of older men and ageing masculinities, it does consider older men's experiences of ageing as seen through the lens of fashion and clothing. As Blaikie and Hepworth (1997; cited in Howson, 2013) comment, representations, and particularly visual representations such as images or photographs, create a form of "cultural iconography" of ageing; and in turn actively influence individuals' experiences of it and, for that reason, are relevant to this research.

Likewise, Hearn (1995) argues that any such image does not represent only the particular individual, event or phenomenon presented in it, but instead, imposes certain, often stereotypical, social categories through processes such as producing, presenting and, indeed, looking at images. Furthermore, Hepworth (1995) argues that visual representations of ageing can often be characterised by one of two approaches; either reproducing narrow stereotypical assumptions about bodily degeneration, or counterbalancing it with bodily idealisation to which individuals ought to aspire. More recently, Thompson (2006) in his study of images of old men's masculinity, found that the analysed images often comprised positive and negative depictions of ageing as well as older masculinities. Ylänne (2012) rightly points out that various representations of ageing need to be considered not only within stereotypical classification but within the expanded frame of often interrelated contexts, such as the media, how ageing individuals draw on and relate to the representations on offer, and the process of how marketers and journalists formulate and articulate such representations.

Therefore, a brief consideration of how older individuals are represented within the context of fashion and clothing is significant here, due to its possible implications for individuals' experiences of these mediums. For example, Twigg (2010) analysed how the British fashion magazine *Vogue* negotiates the age of the female models presented in its

publications and concluded that, “*older women in Vogue only feature sporadically, and predominantly in ways that dilute or efface their age*” (p.471). Moreover, she equates the images of visibly aged women as a “disruption” to Vogue’s cultural profile of youth and beauty. What is important here is that, while a vast amount of other studies exist which investigate such representations, and their impact on individual women’s lives (e.g. Hurd Clarke and Korotchenko, 2012; Twigg, 2012; Warren and Richards, 2012), yet once again, the parallel research in regards to older men is scarce. Reasons for this might be found in Blaikie’s (1999) argument that it is older women that are subject to more negative representations in regards to their ageing physicality and progressive de-sexualisation, compared with parallel representations of older men which seem to have milder, if not more positive, undertones. In this way, Slevin (2010) rightly points out that “*gender plays a critical role in ageing experiences; both men and women face ageist pressures to maintain youthful bodies but they experience this cultural weight in different degrees and forms*” (p.1006). This argument can clearly be related back to Sontag’s (1972) influential concept of the “double standard of ageing” in which older men are much more privileged when it comes to their social position, as compared to older women, who are denounced and stigmatised.

On the other hand, Holland and Ward (2012, p.120) in their study on the experience and representations of ageing as marked by greying hair, report that the anti-ageing doctrine has been newly extended to men, for whom “[t]he appearance of ageing is presented as problematic to hegemonic masculinity. Albeit in a manner intended to avoid any charge of narcissism, [and] with solutions presented in the language of discretion, privacy and ‘undercover’ action”. Furthermore, they rightly argue that “*the heterogeneous nature of later life means that older women and men receive such images and messages about the acceptability of different types of images in different ways*” (ibid, p.119). Indeed, the experience of ageing is heterogeneous, not only between men and women but amongst men as individuals. For these reasons, to assume that the impact of such representations on all older individuals might be the same, or even similar would be a mistake. To say that, as I stated before, my aim within this thesis is not to investigate the socio-cultural representations of older men but their lived experiences of ageing. At the same time, however, I cannot omit completely how the various representations of ageing, especially the negative ones,

contributed to my participants' subjective experiences of their ageing body. This is an especially potent theme in regard to male fashion and clothing, which I explore further in the following section. Moreover, throughout Chapters 5 and 6, I acknowledge different moments where such representations come to the fore.

2.3.2 OLDER MEN AND FASHION

As I indicated before, existing fashion and clothing, as well as fashion and ageing, studies where the focus is on men and their experiences are scarce and limited. And although some recent studies (e.g. Krekula, 2007; Russel, 2007) have started to explore the relationship between gender, more generally, and ageing, the topic of older men and their relationship with fashion and clothing is still a relatively unexplored field of enquiry. In reviewing this, Twigg observes that, "*older men are largely disengaged from fashion as a cultural field*" (2013, p.19). Through this thesis, my aim is to contribute to this established gap in knowledge by presenting a series of interpretative accounts in which I describe the richness of men's experiences of ageing explored and analysed through, and via, the lens of fashion and clothing, and discuss their clear and active engagement with these mediums.

In order to at least partially fill this established gap in the existing knowledge, I first must understand and articulate the reasons for its existence. One reason for this relative lack of literature on older men and ageing masculinities, in relation to fashion and clothing, might be that this topic seems to intersect two narrow stereotypical assumptions; firstly, that men, with the exception of gay men, are not interested in fashion (Edwards, 1997; Steele, 2000; Arnold 2001); secondly, that fashion is all about youth and beauty (Twigg, 2013). Another factor might be the relative difficulty in recruiting older men as study participants, as compared to older women (Humphries and Gordon, 1996; Lomas, 2000; Sadkowska et al. 2016), which I discuss further in Chapter 4. Finally, as Leontowitsch (2012b) points out, the lack of social research focusing on older heterosexual men can be equated to them not being "*considered 'worthy' of investigation as they have not been seen to be a marginalised group in need of emancipation*" (p.105). Consequently, in addressing this gap, this thesis offers an original contribution to wider debates on ageing, masculinities, and fashion. Likewise, in the

final sections of the contextual review, I turn to the fields of menswear and men's fashion in regards to ageing masculinities and mature men. These fields are not typically addressed together, thus providing new scholarship within the emerging field of cultural gerontology.

MEN'S FASHION

In the season 2009-10, the online fashion film platform the SHOWstudio invited a number of fashion creatives and scholars to contribute to a series of essays and short films entitled "The Fashion Body". It was no surprise that the majority of the presented essays and visuals were dedicated explicitly to the female body and its relationship with fashion and clothing, and the few texts on men tended to focus on gay men. Regarding this, a writer and fashion journalist, Max Berlinger (2010: online), in the text on gay men and their influence of women's fashion, quotes a certain story:

In response to interviewer Charlie Rose's question 'What is fashion?', Editor in Chief of *Elle* Magazine Robbie Meyers eloquently responded, 'Whenever you talk about fashion, you're talking about women. We all want beauty. Men like to look at women and women like to be looked at. Fundamentally fashion is about love, sex and identity.' I'd posit that, as the head of one of the most powerful commercial magazines in the United States, she's probably on to something.

What is compelling in this short extract is how strongly fashion is exposed as a gendered concept and how inextricably it is linked to women and femininity. As the quote implies, it is not only the case that men are somewhat excluded from the active engagement with fashion as a given socio-cultural context, but also that their role within this context is reduced to the passive observers of female (over-)engagement with it. As I have already mentioned in the previous section, it can be argued that such a state is the reflection of a rather complicated social understanding of masculinity and the social stereotype that men, especially mature and older men, do not care about their appearance.

Craik (1993) relates this to the historical equation of masculinity with sober and modest clothing and puritanical appearance, which largely explains the limited academic interest in men's fashion and clothing compared to parallel women-oriented studies. Drawing on this, the sociologist Tim Edwards (2011), discusses the lack of academic studies in men's fashion as a result of three historical factors: the supremacy of studies in haute couture over

street fashion; the development of women's movements which prioritised the role of women's dress; and in what he describes as "*the gendered development of fashion itself*" (p.42), contributing to the trivialisation and marginalisation of men's fashion. Edwards rightly asserts that "*men's fashion is indeed something to take seriously in itself, and as a microcosm of the macrocosm of men, masculinity and society*" (ibid, p.43); a view to which I subscribe in this body of work.

Similarly, Kaiser (2012, p.125) points out the expression "*clothes maketh the man*", which should be analysed as much in terms of what it does not say as in what it says. And it precisely does not say "*fashion maketh the man*". While in western societies men are "allowed" to engage with clothes, which often become the symbol of their masculinity and social power, they are not entitled to do so with fashion, which implies feminine characteristics of frivolity and superficiality (Kaiser, ibid). Respectively, in a rather essentialist manner, Barbara Schreier (1989, p.2) classifies fashion as a highly feminine concept: "[i]n fashion, out of fashion, fashionable, and fashion-conscious are concepts commonly linked to women; men must be content with the description of old-fashioned". From the historical perspective, this is in line with the argument represented by two of the very few early fashion theorists touching on the topic of men, Flügel (1930) and Veblen (1989), who asserted that men's fashion is, and in Flügel's case should be, simply dull and uninteresting. This suggests some kind of ambiguity between men's clothing style and their gender identity, especially in the case of men who might represent an active interest in fashion as manifested through their flamboyant, and often unique way of clothing, as we will see in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

On the other hand, in the recent years we have witnessed an intensified interest from various fashion scholars in the subject of men's fashion. However, it is somewhat despite this recent scholarly interest, demonstrated, for example, by the 2008 and 2009 publications of two independent Men's Fashion Readers (Reilly and Cosbey, 2008; McNeil and Karaminas, 2009), that men's fashion still seems to remain "*a space that is fraught with ambivalence and anxiety*" (Kaiser, 2012, p.136). In contrast to this, the menswear sector seems, at least on the surface, to be presenting a different story. Given this situation, many scholars discuss men's interest in clothing, and tailoring especially, not only as a modern phenomenon but one with a strong historical tradition (e.g. Arnold, 2001; Buchbinder 2012; Breward, 1999).

Similarly, Reilley and Cosbey (2008, p.3) comment that, "[w]hen we consider men's dress in its historic totality, descriptions come to mind that suggest it has more in common with women's dress than we may initially have thought" and add that, in different historical periods, menswear "*has been decorative, impractical, erotic, changeable, revolutionary, idealistic, oppressive and restrictive, subject to strict protocols, and laden with meanings*". Hollander (1994, p.6) goes as far as to argue that it was the "*male dress [that] was always essentially more advanced than female throughout fashion history, and tended to lead the way, to set the standard, to make the aesthetic propositions*". Such views are important for the arguments presented in this thesis for two reasons; firstly, they allow for the observation that men's dress is always linked to its "other", women's dress (McNeil and Karaminas, 2009). Secondly, it gives a clear sense of how rich the phenomenon of men's fashion really is; yet, that the socio-cultural perceptions of the connection between men and their appearance are distorted (Reilly and Cosbey, 2008, p.1), and, consequently, that it remains often overlooked. I continue this investigation in regards to contemporary ageing masculinities and fashion in the following section.

AGEING MASCULINITIES AND FASHION

Undoubtedly, in the last few decades men have certainly become more style and appearance conscious and have entered territory hitherto associated almost exclusively with women and femininity (Edwards, 1997; Nixon, 1996; Spencer, 1992; Mort, 1996). Edwards (1997) describes how the shift in conceptions of masculinity from what one does to how one looks emerged from the narcissistic, often individualistic, aspirationalism characteristic of the 1980s, linking it strongly to the expansion of various men's magazines such as GQ and Arena. Additionally, he points to the increasing acceptance of the advertising-driven consumption of products related to appearance and care of the body, including skin and hair care and fashionable clothing, which were part of new masculine identities in the 1960s and 1970s. In a similar vein, Luciano (2001) ascribes the rise of white, young, middle-class men's interest in their appearance to new capitalist ideas and their striving to become successful professionals.

A striking dimension of these new masculine identities in the period between 1950s and 1980s in Britain was the development of the principally youth-oriented and predominantly male subcultures, such as the Teddy Boys, Mods, Skinheads, Rockers and Punks. These groups often utilised clothing as a form of a direct visual resistance and a refusal of clothing typically associated with older generations, and to express their differentiation from other subcultures in time and space (Hebdidge, 1979; Hall and Jefferson, 1976). As Hebdidge (1979) comments, "*these objects* [such as clothing] *become signs of forbidden identity, sources of value*" (p.3), highlighting the often ambivalent, yet crucial role, of those objects for the subculture members and their socially mediated identifications. Furthermore, Crane (2000; citing Field, 1970) argues that the influence of these various subcultures, amplified by the enormous size of the baby boomer generation, amounted to a new fashion model in which "*age replaces social status as the variable that conveys prestige to fashion innovator*" (ibid, p.14). Interestingly, this once again extends the adapted definition of fashion. In this way, Teunissen (2013, p.201) argues that it is from the 1960s that "*fashion became the product of a design that was 'attached' to the human body but that also sought to research and explore its own relationship with the body, with identity, self-image, and the [social] environment*"; such an argument is relevant in the context of this body of work.

Beynon (2002) also points out that attitudes towards masculinities themselves have changed considerably since the second half of the 20th century, just as masculinities have developed different relations to fashion and clothing. This means the man of the new millennium was somewhat difficult to define and "*the only defining feature we can point to with any degree of certainty is that he is certainly not* [does not look like an] *'old man', his father*" (ibid, p.120). This polarization between "young" and "old" masculinities was also present in the popular discourses at the turn of the 21st century on the "new" (Entwistle, 2000; Edwards, 2011) and "metrosexual" man (Pellegrin, 2009; Buchbinder, 2012); we are currently witnessing a further shift in this discourse to the "vetrosexual"⁸ man (Ajimal and Easters, 2014). As opposed to "new" or "metrosexual", "vetrosexual" men not only appreciate the

⁸ First used by Ajimal and Easters (2014) the term "vetrosexual" comes from combination of two stereotypical descriptors of "metrosexual" this is a man aged 25-34 who excessively cares about his grooming and appearance, and "retrosexual" this is a more 'traditionally' masculine man, who does not display such traits; "vetrosexual" describes a man for whom clothing is important part of his life, especially when it comes to attracting a partner but also who simply enjoys shopping for clothes, with an important trait being that he is more likely to be living at home, presumably with his parents/guardians, and therefore to have more disposable cash.

importance of their appearance, but also represent very different consumer behaviour as compared to previous generations of men, including openly admitting to enjoying shopping for clothing, especially for bargains (ibid).

Twigg and Majima (2014) assert that nowadays even the least fashion conscious men, although sometimes under the influence of women, are engaged in purchasing and being consumers of clothing. This is in line with the findings of the recent Mintel report (Menswear, March 2015a) in which we read that the men's clothing market has grown by 22% in the last five years to reach £13.5 billion and is forecasted to reach £16.5 billion by 2019⁹. Kaiser (2012) notes that such developments are mirrored by a growth in literature on men's fashion, not only in the fashion field, but also in emerging cultural studies of men and masculinities. Yet, Edwards (2006; cited in Kaiser, 2012) argues that "men's fashion" is still a contradictory area that requires further, and in-depth, investigation. In contrast, in the Mintel report cited above (Menswear, March 2015b, p.1), we read that more and more older men represent an increased "*interest in maintaining an attractive appearance and dressing in a more stylish way*". This poses an interesting question about how older men experience fashion and clothing and may negotiate and articulate their ageing masculinities through these mediums, given that they, as with this study's participants, have witnessed and contributed to developments in them throughout their life course.

NOTE ON CONTEMPORARY MENSWEAR

This thesis is not on menswear or men's clothing design. However, as will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, in this body of work, I conceptually utilise a certain element of traditional menswear, this is a men's suit jacket, as a key methodological component enabling me to enhance my creative interpretations of it and arrive at alternative understandings of the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, as will be presented in Chapter 6, the participants of this study often related to the various elements and trends within the contemporary menswear sector; for these reasons it requires a brief commentary.

⁹ This is in comparison to total clothing spending that rose 6% in 2013. Shoppers grew their spending in real terms in 2013 by 4.8% against clothing price inflation of 1.2% (Mintel, 2014).

In the "Introduction" to the book *Basic Fashion Design: Menswear*, John Hopkins (2011) states that, in order to understand the contemporary menswear, first we need to understand its historical and social evolution. For this, he points to the important influence of elements such as court and mercantile dress, uniforms and military dress. Furthermore, he also comments on the influence that menswear has had on womenswear, especially within the modern media-oriented popular culture and mentions the increased influences that music, film and sport have on the menswear design. Further in the book, Hopkins notes that contemporary menswear is inextricably linked to traditional, often bespoke, tailoring such as the famous Savile Row in London. Such a description, clearly targeting undergraduate fashion design students, can give an impression of the field of contemporary menswear design being straightforward and rather unproblematic.

However, for the purposes of this thesis, and in order to provide a complex contextual background to the data interpreted in Chapter 6, I must supplement Hopkins' description with a few observations. Firstly, indeed the connection between traditional tailoring and menswear is unquestionable, but clothing aesthetics, which are the resultant of this link, vary significantly depending on the segments of the menswear market as well as socio-cultural and geographical conditions. Within the UK context, the contemporary menswear designers, such as Raf Simons, Hedi Slimane, Rick Owens, Oliver Spencer or Paul Smith, tend to be creatively inspired rather than restricted in any sense by the traditional tailoring, including innovative garment construction, as well as use of fabrics and techniques.

Secondly, it is important to note that indeed various media-driven platforms play a significant role in disseminating trends and influencing men's tastes and preferences. Nowadays, however, an equally important role is played by various social media, such as Facebook, Tweeter and Pinterest and weblogs, mediums that mature men do not shy away from engaging with. For example, David Evans, describes his blog Grey Fox as "[a] *mature search for style. Fashion and menswear for the older man*" (Evans, 2016: online), and Pinterest has a pinboard entitled "Older Men's Fashion", where images of various styling, as well as actors such as Sean Connery, are used. Such online presence is important because it suggests that there is a group of mature men who actively and openly pursue their interest in clothing, using modern, including online means of communication.

Thirdly, Hopkins rightly points to the influence of various music idols, actors and celebrities. However, it is once again worth noting that these groups of individuals, who potentially can influence menswear, as well as womenswear and any other field of design, include many mature individuals, such as the aforementioned Sean Connery, actors such as George Clooney or Brad Pitt, the comedian Stephen Fry, musicians David Bowie or Mick Jagger, or the ex-footballer David Beckham. Such observations are important because contemporary fashion marketing is often based on using celebrities as a brand face in the advertisements and as models on the catwalks, for example, David Beckham in the H&M 2015 menswear range, adding to the representations of ageing that as a society we are exposed to.

It is important to articulate also that just as Hopkins rightly notices that these influences can easily be transferred to womenswear design, the contemporary menswear is equally strongly influenced by womenswear in various forms such as shape, colour and details; heterosexual men wearing pink or forms of dress/tunic are not common in the UK, but increasingly can be observed. Moreover, we currently witness a tendency, not only towards unisex, but also to some degree gender-neutral clothing, which is important because it adds to what contemporary fashion has on offer for men, including mature men, inevitably influencing their experiences.

Finally, while these observations are perfectly valid in the case of the sample of this study, men who have substantial disposable income that they spend on often expensive clothing, it is also worth pointing out that British menswear is a multifaceted industry that offers clothing also for less affluent customers. The Mintel report (Menswear, 2015b) identifies the most popular menswear brands as Marks & Spencer, Primark, Next, Debenhams and Topman. These brands are important because some of these were present in the narratives of the participants in the study, mostly in a strongly negative sense e.g. because of their youth-oriented profile, bad quality of garments, or certain ethical issues. In this sense, the participants in this study expressed a strong disconnection with the major high street brands, which I discuss further in Chapter 6.

In this section, my aim was not to provide an extensive analysis of the contemporary

British menswear as an industry or segment of the fashion market, instead my aim was to provide a brief set of observations that are relevant to this study, and this sample of participants, in order to provide a comprehensive conceptual review around the topic of the investigation. The points I have made in this short section are especially important to Chapter 6, where I present my interpretations of the participants' narratives co-created not in a vacuum, but in wider socio-cultural conditions with contemporary menswear being an inherent component of this.

2.3.3 SUMMARY

The exploration of contemporary older men's relationship with fashion and clothing is interesting not only from the psychological and sociological perspectives, but also due to its historical context. Men entering mid- and later life in the UK in the early years of the twenty-first century have had very different fashion life courses compared with older or younger generations. The period of the 1950s onwards has been especially exuberant in terms of menswear and men's fashion, including development of a variety of youth subcultures, such as Mods and Rockers, and production of cheaper, mass-available fashion goods. Additionally, modern feminist movements have influenced fresh social perceptions of men and masculinities (Hearn, 1995). Thus, while we are currently witnessing the ever-changing perceptions of masculinity, especially in relation to ageing, fashion and clothing, it is important to capture those transformations through various different research approaches; through this thesis I respond to such a view. In the following section I present the summary of this chapter as a whole and offer my reflections on how it allows me to contextually situate the current thesis.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY: SITUATING THE CURRENT THESIS

In this chapter, my aim was to present the reader with an interdisciplinary review of selected literature surrounding the topic of older men and fashion and clothing. This is a crucial first step, allowing me to rightly address my research aim of developing an in-depth understanding of the male ageing phenomenon from the perspective of older “fashion-conscious” men. Below, I present a brief summary of the key observations stemming from this review in order to situate the current body of work in relation to the gap in knowledge that via this thesis I aim to fill.

Firstly, following Entwistle (2015), it is critical to reflect that fashion and clothing are no longer neglected subjects. Indeed, many scholars, from fields such as sociology, psychology and design studies, have explored this once undervalued area of human experience. However, many contemporary studies have focused on how people other than the wearers see clothing and tend to overlook the context of the specific everyday and mundane practices of clothing and fashioning one’s body (Tseëlon, 2001; cited in Frith and Gleeson, 2004). As Frith and Gleeson (2004, p.40) note, such a narrow focus also contributes to reproducing “*preexisting essentialized identities*”. Similarly, Entwistle (2000) argues for the need to understand fashion and clothing as “*situated practice[s] [and] to investigate dress in everyday life empirically*” (p.75), an approach to which I subscribe in this thesis.

Secondly, while we witness an increasing number of studies exploring women’s everyday experience of clothing (e.g. Tseëlon, 1995; Woodward, 2007; Twigg, 2013), only a handful of studies have investigated this in relation to men and masculinities. Therefore, this body of work focuses on men’s everyday experiences and routine practices of fashion and clothing because this form is currently under-represented in empirical research. Furthermore, building on Twigg’s (2013, p.75) argument that “[a]s we *reflect on our lives, our lives’ meaning emerges*”, I focus on how older men interpret their past and present experiences of fashion and clothing. For this, I adopt a phenomenological approach with its focus on lived experiences.

Thirdly, it is also important to note that the notions that I explore in this study, namely older men and ageing masculinities, resonate strongly with studies of the body and

embodiment. The body plays a central role in how men age and how they enact what it means to be a man. Whitehead (2002, p.200) reflects on the intrinsic relationship between ageing, masculinity and the male body:

Masculinity is not static and unchanging over a male's life; it changes just as the body moves in time and space. The masculinities that become inscribed on the youthful male body become transformed just as the body is transformed through ageing.

In this thesis, I explore the intersection of the embodied experience of male ageing in relation to the intrinsic inter-relationship between the body, fashion and clothing. The body is not only the changing "canvas" on which men's ageing is marked, but also the vehicle for clothing and fashioning their appearances in response to those changes.

Fourthly, many scholars have discussed the recent development of the new definitions of masculinity. For example, in 1988, Frank Mort noted that "*it seems as if young men are now living out quite fractured identities, representing themselves differently, feeling different in different spatial situations*" (p.219). This is echoed by Whitehead (2002, p.200), who notes that the process of ageing "*was perhaps more predictable for past generations of men than for present*". This thesis explores how masculine subjectivities might change as men grow older by analysing menswear and men's fashion development in a sample of older men, taking them as representatives of their generation's past and present experiences of fashion and clothing. Since men's relationship to masculinities, and their relationship with fashion and clothing, have changed markedly in the past few decades, my focus is on generating an in-depth understanding of how these new social conditions have impacted on my participants' lived experiences of ageing. This includes the exploration of how older men might use fashion and clothing to reinforce their sense of being a man.

Taking the above points into consideration, this thesis addresses a gap in the literature by exploring the relationship with, and experience of, fashion and clothing for the fraction of this generation of men who were identified as being "interested in fashion". This is a significant group in terms of their past and current, often pioneering, fashion practices, linking together the economic and social potential required in active fashion and clothing consumption. Moreover, echoing Gilleard and Higgs' (2011) distinction between third- and

fourth-agers¹⁰ and its dialectic in terms of the cultures of ageing, researching this participant group allows me to “*focus on the issue of ageing rather than upon the aged*” (Gilleard and Higgs, 2000, p.199). Consequently, this thesis offers an original contribution to wider debates on ageing, masculinities, and fashion within the emerging field of cultural gerontology.

Finally, from both personal and professional perspectives, I cannot entirely separate myself from considerations on the social inequalities between older men and women. And while this work, due to its focus on male subjects, may be prone to some critique from some feminist scholars, in no way do I intend to contest the distorted and often trivialised social position of older women. Instead, by taking a socio-psychological perspective, the present body of work is designed to respond to the gap in knowledge established through the literature review, namely that of older men’s lived experiences of ageing, analysed and interpreted through their encounters with fashion and clothing.

In this spirit, in this thesis, I provide a description and my interpretations of a living experience of ageing in relation to a small sample of the contemporary older men who exhibit a very distinctive consciousness about, and attitudes to, their appearance, especially fashion and clothing. Furthermore, in doing so, I adopt a novel hybrid methodology, Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, which allows me to utilise various artful practices in regards to fashion and clothing as a valid research method, enhancing findings generated through more traditional research methods, such as interviews and personal inventories. Moreover, such a research methodology allows me to unite and synchronise my practices as a researcher, designer and artist into one sound research instrument to co-create and disseminate knowledge via engagement with various artful practices. I discuss this further in the following chapter.

¹⁰ In this thesis I subscribe to Gilleard and Higgs’ (2011) distinction between third- and fourth-age, and its dialectic in terms of the cultures of ageing. These authors loosely define third agers as those aged 55 to 74 years old, and fourth agers as those 75 years and over. Furthermore Gilleard and Higgs (ibid) argue that the difference between these cohorts is greater than just their biological age, and include the significant generational, socio-cultural and economic differences between these cohorts of individuals. Researching this group allows me “*focus on the issue of ageing rather than upon the aged*” (Gilleard and Higgs, 2000, p.199).

3. METHODOLOGY:

theoretical background and development

3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

The contextual review presented in the previous chapter identified a gap in the current knowledge on older heterosexual men and their experiences of fashion and clothing. The main aim of this PhD research was to respond to this gap by exploring how a sample of older men have experienced fashion and clothing throughout their lives, and how they negotiate their ageing identities through those mediums. Consequently, in this chapter my aim is to explain the theoretical background and development of the research methodology underpinning the outcomes that can potentially fill this gap in the literature. Undoubtedly, there is more than one suitable methodology on offer that could be effectively used for such purposes. However, the research methodology that I was aiming to develop for the purposes of this study was tailored to fit my skills set and qualities as a researcher, designer and artist. Such research parameters required searching across disciplines such as sociology, psychology and indeed (fashion) design in order to establish the most appropriate approaches that could be merged together into one hybrid methodology affording a seamless fit between the topic under study, the research processes, and the researcher herself.

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2008, p.10) argue that there is an “*alarming gap between methods and theory – both within and across the disciplines*” which should be addressed through innovation and an interdisciplinary approach within the social and behavioural sciences. This relates also to fashion studies, wherein examples of empirical research analysis accompanied by the practitioner’s creative response are scarce and limited. Likewise, Kawamura (2011) rightly argues that contemporary fashion studies need to embrace the empirical potential as well as clearly articulate the methodologies and research process employed, and should not be “*distracted by fashion and fashion-related information (...), which lack objectivity, the very essence of social sciences*” (ibid, p.7). Much in the same vein, the designer Jessica Bugg (2009, p.10) asserts that there can be “*alternative fashion strategies for fashion design and communication that are concept and context based, rather than being driven by commerce, the market, and trends*”. Likewise, in this research, I explore the possibility of a novel fashion research and practice methodology based on the intersection of sociology, psychology, fashion and arts research practices. Furthermore, by employing

such an interdisciplinary approach, I test the boundaries and value of objectivity and subjectivity in the research process. I explain this further in the following sections of this chapter and build on this in Chapter 4, where I describe the practical application of the research methodology.

The developed methodology merges two approaches, namely Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), rooted in phenomenological psychology and typically used in healthcare, and Arts-Informed Research, with its roots in humanities and education studies. Integrating this trans-disciplinary approach allows me to redefine forms of process and representation of a fashion inquiry. Furthermore, by developing and adopting a methodology in which interpreting through “making” offers alternative insights into the participants’ lived experiences that can only be achieved through creative artful practices, this body of work pushes the boundaries of fashion research and practice. Moreover, adopting such a methodology requires the acknowledging of the active, not always entirely objective, role of the researcher-practitioner-interpreter throughout the research process. For this purpose, I begin this chapter by re-articulating my research aims and positioning myself in the work. In the further sections of this chapter, I explain both components of the developed hybrid methodology and introduce the selected relevant studies. Additionally, I provide brief notes on the resonant concepts such as tacit knowledge, fashion and art and the role of metaphor in research; thus, provisioning a more comprehensive theoretical background and explaining the development of the Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis methodology, the practical application of which I describe in the following chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH AIMS

Crotty (1998) argues for two key decisive factors in the process of the selection of a suitable methodology: the research question(s) that the inquiry is bound to answer and the theoretical perspectives that the researcher somehow carries into the research. Thus, it is important that, at this stage, I re-state the research aims for this study:

Aim 1: To investigate the relationships between fashion, clothing and ageing, with special reference to older men.

Aim 2: To adopt an Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in order to discover how fashion and clothing have been experienced by older men drawn from the UK baby boomer population, born between 1946 and 1964, who during their lives have actively engaged with fashion and clothing.

Aim 3: To apply an Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in order to develop an in-depth understanding of how this sample negotiate their ageing identities through the mediums of fashion and clothing.

Aim 4: To explore and expose new, alternative strategies for knowledge production and dissemination within the field of fashion and ageing research.

The four aims were designed to be compatible and complementary to each other, and to form one unified study. However, while the first three aims focus completely on the subject of this study, older heterosexual men and their experience of ageing through the lens of fashion and clothing, the fourth aim works somewhat independently. Its focus lies in questioning the existing ways of conducting fashion research and revealing alternative, more holistic and engaging possibilities, where theoretical and practical concepts and techniques are integrated into one coherent research mechanism throughout the different stages of the study. However, before I discuss this in more depth, in the following section, I must first explain the second factor Crotty outlines, which is how I position myself in this research.

3.3 POSITIONING MYSELF IN THE WORK

As mentioned in the previous section, Crotty (1998) identifies two elements influencing the selection of research methodology; the second component, alongside the research aims, is the researcher's theoretical perspective. Therefore, before I introduce the developed methodology, it is important that I explain the epistemological position and the wider approach to research that this study and its processes sit within. My work is influenced by two ontological stances, namely critical realism and conceptual constructivism, and my position can be described as sitting between these two standpoints.

3.3.1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITION

In this section, I focus upon explaining my understanding of what knowledge is and how this impacts the present study. Firstly, I am strongly influenced by the work of critical realists, especially their acceptance of the multiplicity of alternative yet valid accounts of any phenomenon, the inevitable partiality of all knowledge (Maxwell, 2008) and the possibility of discovering the remarkable in the mundane and prosaic (Silverman, 2007; cited in Butler-Kisber, 2010). Secondly, from the contextual constructivists, I take the notions of reality being socially constructed and mediated, and its inextricable attachment to the given context. I do not entirely reject the realists' claim that there is an objective and independent truth but I advocate for the impossibility of getting any closer to it than through the myriad of subjective and often interconnected accounts of it. Furthermore, I am inspired by the opportunity of deriving fresh understandings through alternative tools and languages (Vygotsky, 1978; cited in Butler-Kisber, 2010), especially various *artful* practices (Sullivan, 2010). My aim, as a fashion researcher and practitioner, cannot be, therefore, simplified to new knowledge production, but rather can be described as knowledge co-construction and accumulation.

Those positions are important because I want to get in-depth understandings of the male ageing phenomenon from the perspective of individuals and through the lens of their everyday experiences of fashion and clothing; thus, these positions are influential on how I conduct the research, including the formulation of the claims of contribution to knowledge, which I present in Chapter 7. Moreover, I also recognise a set of certain contexts impacting on these understandings such as time, space and others (Sadkowska et al., 2016); this research is seeking to explore the socially mediated reality of individuals who all have a very distinctive fashion past and are at a very specific moment of their lives when they enter their third age.

The previous chapter explained the various socio-historical contexts surrounding this research. At this stage, however, it is useful to revisit some of them. Firstly, this study is being conducted and presented at the time of important socio-demographic changes which have resulted in a stronger link between fashion and ageing than ever before, such as the growth of British ageing populations and maturing of the so-called baby boomer generation.

Subsequently, this study should also be understood in the academic context where men's fashion is an ever-growing field of study; yet, as Edwards (2011, p.41) comments, it is still a problematic topic that is somewhat "*haunted by the ghost of Flügel [1930] who asserted with some aggression that men had 'renounced' fashion in the early nineteenth century*". Finally, the timing of this study is also coinciding with that of the menswear branch of the fashion industry being the strongest it has ever been (Mintel, March 2014), illustrated not only by the growing sales, but also by its recognition at the various fashion events, such as the London or Paris Fashion Week.

Lastly, I feel that it is crucial to re-articulate the context of the researcher who is undertaking this study and who, as was already indicated, plays an important role in it. Having trained as a textile and fashion designer, it has become apparent to me that my research practices do not fit neatly within this one discipline; instead they display significant overlaps with the disciplines of creative arts, phenomenological psychology and sociology. Thus, this research in part allows me also to question my own practices as a fashion researcher interested in lived experiences; furthermore, as a fashion designer and artist who seeks to investigate alternative ways of exploring these experiences and disseminating her research findings. In the following section, I continue to explain this in regards to the approach to research within which this study is situated; in Chapter 7, I offer my reflection of how this project has influenced my research practices.

3.3.2 APPROACH TO RESEARCH

The best match of my epistemological position and the focus of this research is within the non-positivist qualitative approach to research. This approach, through the focus on the instrumental role of the researcher-interpreter, and her actions, in the process of constructionist and subjectivist uncovering of the possible meanings of the lived experience (Crotty, 1998) can be seen as sympathetic to my understanding of the research process. Moreover, such an approach allows for an analysis of individual lived experience laden as it is with socio-cultural significance; in the case of this study, the qualitative approach acts in support of my interpretative analysis of the emotional and embodied elements of the

participants' experiences of ageing in the context of fashion and clothing. This is clearly supported by Denzin and Lincoln (2013, p.6), who describe qualitative research as "*a situated activity that locates the observer in the world [and] consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible*".

Therefore, the qualitative approach provides the secure scaffolding on which I base this study. Furthermore, it allows me to be present in the research alongside the participants and to emphasise the holistic and integrative research process throughout the stages of data collection, analysis, interpretation and knowledge dissemination. However, inspired by the possibility of pushing the boundaries of this approach towards more "*embodied [practices] capable of evoking intellectual, aesthetic and affective responses and to reach wider audience*" (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p.4), I also turn towards the non-traditional, arts-based means of conducting research. Tesch (1990) makes a valid observation about the close proximity between the practices of qualitative researchers and artists; "*qualitative research is to a large degree an art*" (ibid, p.304). Gray and Malins (2004, p.24) ascribe the unique value of practice-based research for:

asking question of ourselves about the place and value of Art and Design in society and encouraging an intellectual social dialogue; through clear and critical thinking and expression; through the articulation of a paradigm, in order to make 'new culture' and gain the understanding and support of society for this.

It is precisely the possibility of creating a "new culture" of research, where the multiple positions of a researcher, a designer and an artist can be equally accommodated, that I want to build upon. In such a research juncture, critical thinking and creative expression are no longer exclusive, and their fusion has the capacity of triggering "*new cultures*" of understanding and communication based on critical writing about the participants' subjective experiences of ageing and making corresponding (fashion) artefacts. Such research outcomes can potentially reach diverse audiences and, in turn, encourage inter-generational social dialogue on the phenomenon of male ageing and fashion.

Finally, Leavy (2008a) describes the shift from a traditional qualitative to an arts-based approach to research as a process of expansion where, amongst other transitions, an interdisciplinary approach based on interpretative written texts is shifted towards one based on

representational stories, images and sounds. Through this project, I do not only integrate both approaches, but more importantly, explore the vantage point at which they intersect based on a symbiosis between the intellectual activity of writing and creative activity of making. Furthermore, as a result of employing such a hybrid approach, I offer a composition of research outcomes based on an integration of various mediums, such as written text, visuals and sounds.

3.4 BUILDING METHODOLOGY COMPONENTS

Silverman (1993, p.1) describes methodology as “*a general approach to studying research topics*”. Furthermore, Lavery (2003) points out that any successful research methodology must allow the researcher a certain degree of sensitivity and creativity, in relation to both the research context and the research material. In this sense, the methodology developed for this project is directly informed by my epistemological position, as explained previously, and provides me with a way of thinking about and responding to the data, rather than simply a “prescription” of rigid, step-by-step rules for what to do with them.

Given the parameters of my epistemological position, the present research aims, and the two approaches within which this study is located, the developed research mechanism is informed by two emerging methodologies: in developing an in-depth understanding of the small and homogenous sample of older men’s experience of ageing in the context of fashion and clothing, I conducted an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study; by extending the interpretative strategies through various creative practices and producing artefacts as a valid form of knowledge dissemination, I undertook Arts-Informed Research. I will now present these two methodologies and explain their suitability for this project.

3.4.1 INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (IPA)

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a qualitative approach to research concerned with participants’ personal lived experiences. It was developed by Professor Jonathan Smith as an alternative to descriptive psychology and was formally introduced in

1996 in Smith's seminal paper entitled "Beyond the Divide Between Cognition and Discourse: Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in Health Psychology". Finlay (2011, p.140) identifies three "touchstones" of IPA: a reflective focus on subjective accounts of personal experience; an idiographic sensibility; and, the commitment to a hermeneutic approach. In my work, I draw on these concepts and, in the subsequent sections, I shall elucidate how each of these philosophies applies to and informs my research practice.

The philosophical foundations of IPA lie primarily in phenomenology, which is the study of the structures of consciousness and experience, and especially its existential strand as present in Heidegger (1927/1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1962/2002). IPA is phenomenological as its main currency is the first person accounts, perceptions, understandings and experiences of the phenomenon under scrutiny. This is a subjective endeavour and the investigator does not attempt to develop an objective, truthful reality about an experience, rather there is "*an appreciation that experiences are 'meaning-full' for a person*" (Wilde and Murray, 2010, p.59). This is relevant to my work because I am committed to the examination of how the participants in the study make sense of the major life experience of growing older, which is an on-going and transitioning process of continuous physical and social change. Smith et al. (2009, p.163) argues for IPA being especially suitable for studies concerned with "*identity changes associated with major life transitions*". It is precisely in this sense of the "*identity changes*" that I explore the unique relationship between body and clothing and adopt the medium of fashion as my interpretative lens in order to understand the participants' experiences of ageing.

In a bid to reach a more profound understanding of the complex, multi-layered lifeworlds of individuals, IPA also draws upon the theoretical standpoints of the hermeneutic phenomenologists such as Schleiermacher (1998) and Gadamer (1960/1990). In acknowledging these influences, IPA recognises that gaining access to these lifeworlds "*depends on and is complicated by the researcher's own conceptions (...) required in order to make sense of that other personal world through a process of interpretative activity*" (Smith et al., 1999, pp.218-219). The researcher is, thus, positioned as both active and reactive in a cyclical interpretative process that essentially continues until the fruits of the research are finalised. In synthesising these philosophical positions, Smith et al. (2009, p.37) argue that

“without the phenomenology, there would be nothing to interpret; without the hermeneutics, the phenomenology would not be seen”. This is of great importance to my project and the co-constructed knowledge that I seek to represent in this thesis; namely my own multiple interpretations and understandings of my participants’ experiences of fashion and clothing, as they grow older.

Lastly, with its close attention to the lived experiences of individuals, IPA is an idiographic methodology, and is concerned with particular importance paid to the rigorous, careful and thorough analysis of specific cases. This, as Smith et al. (2009) note, can be somewhat problematic, especially when compared to nomothetic approaches that allow the generalising of claims to the group or population. However, Harré (1979, cited in Smith et al., 2009) claims that idiography does not make generalisations impossible, but imposes them differently. This is very well explicated in Smith and Osborn’s (2007) paper on the psychological impact of chronic benign lower back pain, where they comment that *“the fact that all participants spoke similarly and with (...) intensity indicates the strength of the impact on these individuals and is suggestive about wider applicability”* (ibid, p.530). Furthermore, they also notice that that this provides the reader with a possibility of a “theoretical generalizability”; this is, to interpret the results in the context of their own knowledge and understandings when evaluating any potential prevalence of the findings. Similarly, in this project, the idiographic commitment to the particular allows me to identify particular convergences and divergences within the study sample, and draw cautious generalisations of the potential richness of the male ageing phenomenon as experienced through the participants’ embodied experience of fashion and clothing; I return to this in Chapter 7.

HERMENEUTICS AND THE HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE

Having established the importance of the interpretative role of the researcher in IPA in a brief discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of the methodology, in this section, I expand upon this with a further consideration of the hermeneutic aspect of IPA. Hermeneutics is the theory of text interpretation, rooted in the renaissance interpretations of biblical and ancient texts. In IPA, the key tool of analysis is interpretation and the main form of knowledge

dissemination is interpretative written text where the researcher comments upon passages taken from participants' accounts.

The central assumption in hermeneutics is that "*the meaning of a part can only be understood if it is related to the whole*" (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009, p.92), illustrated by the idea of the hermeneutic circle (fig. 3.1), which operates on the assumption that in order to understand the whole you need to look to the parts, and in order to understand any given part you look to the whole (Smith et al., 2009). This dynamic relationship between part and whole in IPA is represented by various relations such as: single word – sentence; single extract – complete text; particular text – the complete works; interview – research project or single episode – complete life.

Figure 3.1 The hermeneutic circle: basic version (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009, p.104)

A significant factor in this process is the acknowledgment of, and reflection on, the potential impact of the researcher's pre-conceptions, perceptions and processes on the research being conducted (Smith et al. 2009). In this vein, the hermeneutic circle in IPA can be illustrated as the constant movement between part and whole, interpretation and re-interpretation of gathered information influenced by the unfolding understanding of the

phenomenon under investigation, which allows the researcher to get closer and closer to the participant's personal world (Smith, 1996). Smith (2007) extends this also towards another overlapping 'level' of the hermeneutic circle; this is the dynamic and cyclical process of re-interpretation(s) occurring between researcher and the study participants, the interpreter and that object of her interpretation. He argues that the research skill is, therefore, "*in deciding when to come out of the circle[s] and commit oneself to speaking or writing, to deciding that one has an interpretation that is good enough*" (ibid, p.5). I describe the process of making such decisions in this study in Chapter 5.

In my work, I build on these basic models of the hermeneutic circle. In this, I seek to explore the possibility of what Elizabeth Grosz (1994, p.86), drawing on the work of Merleau-Ponty (1962/2002), describes as the "*necessary interconnectedness*" of the mind and body. As indicated in Chapter 2, Merleau-Ponty asserted that experience occurs between the body and mind. This relates to the participants' embodied experience of ageing that I attempt to understand through the constant movement between the different elements of their interpretation of it; but on a different level, this applies also to the researcher's embodied experience of creating these understandings and interpretations. This project builds upon the hypothesis that practices of engaging with materials and objects can advance my understanding of the human condition started in the process of engaging with text; and, furthermore, that making can be as important a tool of interpretation as writing. I will return to this concept in the following chapter.

THE DOUBLE HERMENEUTIC

The concept of the double hermeneutic is widely used in postmodern social science and can be best described as the researcher interpreting the participant's self-interpretation of the phenomenon under study (Giddens, 1976). Smith et al. (2009, p.35) note that this explains the dual character of the researcher in the research process "*as both like and unlike the participant*". On the one hand, the researcher plays an active role in the unfolding interpretations, becoming a filter and a lens to the produced knowledge. In this study, the researcher brings into the process her subjective consciousness. Nevertheless, the process

of knowledge (co-)construction can only be catalysed by the participant's subjective understanding of the phenomenon that is reported to the researcher in the first place, and to which she must attempt to stay objective. In this sense, IPA also recognises that the researcher is like the participant in that they are both making sense of something, but is unlike the participant because she is doing this in a more formal, rigorous way through sustained, repeated engagement with the text of the transcript, which the participant is unable to do.

In the centre of the developed methodology lies the recognition of the convergences between IPA and my own practice; specifically, the focus on lived experience, the iterative processes of analysis, continuous interpretation leading to the formulation of the researcher's response, and the dissemination of that response. In this sense, IPA offers a much better fit than, for example, Thematic Analysis, which tends to produce more descriptive and less in-depth accounts, employs a larger sample size, is nomothetic in its focus and does not employ the same emphasis on the researcher's reflexivity as IPA. Similarly, the constructivist Grounded Theory, as advocated for example by Charmaz (2006), on the surface shows certain similarities to IPA in its focus on meaning making. However, in contrast to Grounded Theory, which claims the ability to generalise based on theoretical saturation and use of large, heterogeneous samples, IPA allows for more depth of analysis in order to understand how a certain group of people make sense of their experiences. Consequently, IPA is a good fit for this research; however, the developed methodology extends significantly the assumptions underlying IPA by the use of arts both in the research process and in the reporting of findings. For this reason, I turned to the methodology of Arts-Informed Research and merged it with IPA into one synchronised methodology. However, before I proceed to explaining the Arts-Informed methodology in more detail, I will first introduce some selected IPA studies that for different reasons resonate with my study. It is important to do so, not only in terms of what I can learn from other researchers but also to advance the presentation of IPA as an established research methodology suitable for a PhD project.

RELEVANT IPA STUDIES

From the methodological point of view, many IPA studies are relevant to my research in the sense that they offer sound research processes that I can draw on (e.g. Smith and Osborn, 2007; Eatough and Smith, 2006; Dickson et al., 2008; Wilde, 2011). However, it is not within the scope of this thesis to provide an extensive examination of IPA as a research methodology per se, but to explore the ways in which its practices can be enhanced towards the field of art and design. For this reason, in this section, I turn my attention to three different IPA studies, stemming from three different disciplines and conducted in three different research settings, but which share a common thread of pushing their boundaries towards more visual methods and, therefore, bringing new perspectives and sensitivities into IPA methodology, which as Gee (2011) notices, accommodates both a theoretical approach and an imaginative sensibility.

Firstly, of immense importance for this study was the project entitled "*Brick, Ball, Hoax Call*" by a team of researchers from Nottingham Trent University. In this project, the multi-disciplinary team of two psychologists and a sociologist explored the phenomenon of the abusive and violent behaviour towards the workers of the UK Fire and Rescue Service. For this, they conducted a mix of ethnography and semi-structured interviews and analysed the gathered data as suggested by a standard IPA protocol. However, at the same time, they extended significantly the typical IPA research conditions by integrating an artist into the research team and allowing him full access to the raw data and resulting IPA interpretations in order for him to create a variety of artworks (Brunsden et al., 2012). In doing this, these researchers successfully merged the creative processes of art and science and produced the research outcomes which they describe as "*art-science works*" (ibid, p.69). Furthermore, Brunsden et al. (2012) argue that such an alternative way of presenting and disseminating the study findings is attractive and engaging not only to other academics, but also to various lay audiences, as well as UK Fire and Rescue Service professionals.

This project was inspiring to me, not only due to the inclusion of the artist into the research process, but mostly, by the production of visual interpretations equal to the written texts in their status as valid research outcomes. Furthermore, while Brunsden et al. (2012)

report certain tensions and discrepancies between how different members of the team envisaged the research outcomes, further intensified by the lack of common ethical codes and codes of practices, I also feel that in my work I need to acknowledge the existence of a similar tension between myself as a researcher, designer and artist. However, in the case of this study, it is nearly impossible to explicitly segregate those different sets of expertise and skills which equally come to fore in the research process, are mutually enhancing and augmenting each other, but inevitably cause the need for continuous internal negotiation of their role and impact. Much in the same vein, the proposed research process must involve continuous mediation between the subjectivity of the art practices, and objectivity of the science processes.

The second project that I want to connect with here is Ní Chonchúir and McCarthy's (2008) study of the role of enchantment in users' experience of the Internet. In the case of this project, the parallel to my own study lay in the use of IPA as a methodological framework allowing the researchers to get an in-depth understanding of the participant's experiences of using and engaging with material objects, which in turn can be utilised in the process of designing and production of other corresponding objects. While Ní Chonchúir and McCarthy's aim was to understand the individuals' experiences in relation to human-computer interactions and respond to this understanding by developing technology, such as digital jewellery that had the potential to enchant its users, in my project I sought to explore the possibility of understanding my participants' daily encounters with fashionable clothing in order to respond to it via the creation of a series of fashion artefacts. Despite the fact that, arguably, the cited project was much more product design-oriented than mine, it encapsulates the intriguing possibility of shaping the standard IPA's protocol into the creative process of understanding and responding, based on individuals' (i.e. both participants' and researcher's) engagement with material objects, and for this reason it was relevant to my study.

Finally, while it was useful to learn from the above projects when developing the methodological framework for the current study, it was important for me to connect with other PhD projects, for which the expectations towards the processes involved and outcomes produced might be different from those for independent, often group, research projects. For this reason, in this section, I relate to the PhD project which shows some important similarities

to mine, not only from the methodological point of view, by utilising IPA and extending its processes towards more visual practices of art and design, but which is also situated within the area of textiles, which is closely related to fashion discipline. Claire Lerpiniere, from De Montfort University, Leicester, for her PhD project (2015) in which she explored the importance of the “*personal textile archives*” for certain individuals (Lerpiniere, 2013a) has developed an interesting ‘modification’ of the IPA methodology, where she actively utilised her practice of drawing; “*drawing is a way of connecting with (...) textiles, through using its potential to visually interrogate artefacts and its processes of simultaneously focusing and expanding an enquiry*” (Lerpiniere, 2013b, p.101). Importantly for my project, Lerpiniere (ibid) reflects on how the practice of drawing, admittedly instrumental within the textiles design process, allowed her an opportunity to create a visual interpretative response to her object-based investigation, and, additionally, afforded her a space where she could apply her otherwise implicit and difficult to articulate knowledge and expertise of textiles design.

In this manner, all three presented projects bear important resonance to my own ideas of how I can utilise my visual and creative skills in order to augment the research process, as well as to reach alternative academic audiences. Furthermore, some of these projects draw on the concept of ‘tacit knowledge’ that I briefly describe in the following section.

NOTE ON ‘TACIT KNOWLEDGE’

In the previous sections of this chapter, I described my epistemological position as sitting between critical realism and contextual constructivism. Such positioning, as I explained, has important implications for my relationship to the new knowledge offered via this thesis. This position means that, rather than being involved in the process of producing new knowledge in an objectivist and positivist manner, as a fashion researcher, artist and designer, I am engaged in the processes of knowledge co-construction and accumulation. Likewise, such an epistemological position requires me to, at least briefly, link to the implicit elements of my expertise that I bring into this research and its process. These elements are certain emotions, intuitions and values that might be difficult to verbalise but which influence the study and its outcomes. Such intelligence has been described as ‘tacit knowledge’ and is

often linked to Michael Polanyi's (1983, p.4) argument that "*we can know more than we can tell*". Moustakas (1990, p.20) argues that "*such knowledge is possible through a tacit capacity that allows one to sense the unity or wholeness of something from an understanding of the individual qualities or parts*", and Merleau-Ponty (1962/2002, p.144) observed that a certain type of "*knowledge in the hands, (...) is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort*".

This has an especially strong resonance to the aforementioned idea of the hermeneutic circle, and the continuous interplay between implicit and explicit embodied modes of knowing occurring between the study participants and myself. It also links to Schön's (1984) influential concept of "*reflection-in-action*" and Lawson's (2005) idea of the "*endless*" design process, illustrated by a series of overlapping loops repeated within time intervals allowing for analysis and reflection. The developed methodology, as explained in the following chapter, is based heavily on these concepts.

Much in the same vein, Kristina Niedderer (2007, p.6) comments on the significance of the tacit knowledge in the research process, as follows:

[T]acit knowledge plays an important role both in the research process and in evaluating and communicating research outcomes. (...) [T]acit knowledge seems important for the generation and application as well as the experience and judgement of research and its results, and for creating new experiences, abilities, and knowledge.

Furthermore, despite the fact that this project is not solely located within the field of design, but instead spans a variety of disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, arts and fashion design, I do actively incorporate my design expertise throughout its processes. And it is precisely within the contemporary design research that the concept of tacit knowledge has gained the status of a "*prolific guiding principle*" (Mareis, 2012, p.61). Arguably, thus, by engaging with activities such as drawing, stitching, knitting, dyeing, or embellishing, I do tap into the array of my creative tacit knowledge(s). Moreover, when listed like this, these activities can hardly be limited to the processes, but must be attached to the produced objects themselves (Cross, 2006).

This, in turn, links to the idea of “*epistemic objects*”, characterized by the “*‘unfolding ontology’ and [which] are constantly in flux, rather than fully formed*” (Ewenstein and Whyte, 2009, p.7), which can be framed within Frayling’s (1993-94) categorisation of “*research into art and design*”, “*research through art and design*”, and “*research for art and design*”. He assesses that while first two categories are rather straightforward and can be explained as research that informs art and design and research that examines the process, the third one, where the concept of tacit knowledge seems especially relevant, takes place when “*the thinking is, so to speak, embodied in the artefact, where the goal is not primarily communicable knowledge in the sense of verbal communication, but in the sense of visual or iconic or imagistic communication*” (ibid, p.5).

At first glance, this research can be best located within the third category, “*research for art and design*”; however, it also shows some significant overlaps with the category of “*research through art and design*”. Situating my research across these two categories allows me to elucidate the role of my practice both as a research method and a work in its own right. I discuss this further in the following chapter, where I explain the application of the developed methodology and explain the roles of interpretation in this research process. I also return to these concepts in Chapter 7, where I reflect on the role of artefacts. For now, I turn my attention to the second component of the developed methodology, this is, Arts-Informed Research.

3.4.2 ARTS-INFORMED RESEARCH

Arts-informed research is an emerging approach located within the expanded qualitative approach to research. The term was introduced by Gary Knowles and Ardra Cole in 2000, when they established the Centre for Arts-Informed Research at the University of Toronto, Canada. It has well-established roots in education, sociology and humanities.

At the heart of this alternative qualitative approach lies the enhancement of the human condition through creative processes and representational forms of inquiry (Cole and

Knowles, 2008). At the same time, arts-informed researchers aim at reaching beyond academic audiences in order to make scholarship more widely accessible. As Knowles and Luciani (2007, xi) assert:

We cannot stress more the importance of accessibility in research, in communicating complex understandings through multiple or alternative media for purposes far beyond mere artistic fancy and pleasure, and personal gratification.

It is this possibility of utilising art making as a valid research practice in order to enhance the internally consistent research process that I pursue in this project.

In arts-informed research, as opposed to arts-based research (Eisner, 1997), various creative genres, such as literary, visual and performing arts, become “*a key methodological component*” (Cole and Knowles, 2008, p.65) and are used to stimulate the research process yet do not determine it (Butler-Kisber, 2010). Cole (2004, p.16) argues for the need to bring research practices closer to the arts by making them more “*accessible, evocative, embodied, empathetic and provocative*”. In this, arts can be utilised at the various stages of the research process, such as conceptualisation, data collection, analysis, or knowledge dissemination (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Cole and Knowles, 2008; Knowles and Luciani, 2007). As noted by Cole and Knowles (2001), arts-informed research merges the systematic rigour of social science with the creativity and imagination of the arts. In this view, the arts-informed research approach is holistic and responsive and can potentially extend the standard text-based discourse (Knowles and Luciani, 2007).

Likewise, Cutcher (2007, p.84) identifies the specific conditions in which arts-informed research can be effectively employed, as follows: “[when] *the sensibility of the researcher and the requirements of the research demand it*”. For me, as an artist, designer and researcher, who strives to apply her sensitivity, creativity and intuition to the process of understanding the participants’ relationship with fashion and clothing as one of the possibilities of getting closer to their experience of ageing, arts-informed research is a good fit. Furthermore, arts-informed research is a good fit with IPA in a way that it complements its practices. As was shown by the examples of the projects by Brunsden et al. (2012), Ní Chonchúir and McCarthy (2008) and Lerpiniere (2013b, 2015), there is scope for employing IPA and integrating its procedural

protocol with various art and design techniques and practices in order to enhance the researcher's interpretative capacity, as well as to facilitate conditions where these interpretations can take forms that are alternatives to written text.

DEFINING ELEMENTS OF ARTS-INFORMED RESEARCH

Cole and Knowles (2008) identify several elements of arts-informed research. These include: the commitment to a particular art form that shapes a definitional frame of the inquiry process and which can be compared to the "text" in traditional qualitative inquiries; methodological integrity and a creative inquiry process based on openness and only restricted by human imagination; and the centrality of the audience and its engagement "*in an active process of meaning making that is likely to have transformative potential*" (ibid, p.62). These, alongside the concepts of double hermeneutics and the hermeneutic circle, are interlocked in order to give the foundations for the novel methodology employed herein.

Building on the tradition of most qualitative research, Cole and Knowles (2008) also discuss the researcher's commitment to subjective understandings, their reflexive presence in the study and their "signature" on the findings as critical elements of arts-informed research. In this, they build on the qualitative idea of "researcher as instrument" and propose an alternative version where the "researcher-as-artist" becomes the "instrument" of research, which overlaps significantly with the understanding of the role of the researcher in the IPA studies discussed previously. Cole and Knowles (2008) note that, in arts-informed inquiry, the acknowledgement of the researcher's presence is imperative, but they are not necessarily the subjects of the study. This is an idea that is especially relevant to my study, because while throughout the processes of this research I am actively applying and drawing on my subjective sensitivities, skills, and qualities, and tacit knowledge, which become integral elements of this exploration, they are not under scrutiny in the research investigation¹¹. This, once again, validates the good fit of arts-informed research and its role in addressing the aims of this study. On the one hand, I acknowledge my role as one of the cogs without which this

¹¹ It is also worth pointing that, although showing some relevance, this is not an autoethnographic study. This study is not autoethnographic because I do not attempt to analyse my own experiences of ageing as a method towards better understanding of cultural experiences of it (Adams et al., 2014).

exact research mechanism would not be possible. On the other hand, the aims of this study include shedding light on the often ignored phenomenon of older men's experience of fashion and clothing, as much as on the research mechanism per se.

FORM

Cole and Knowles (2008) argue that the key defining element of arts-informed research is the chosen art form. They rightly claim that this choice should involve “a *consideration of form in its many manifestations*” (ibid, p.62) and, furthermore, imply several aspects in which the interplay between art form and research content comes to the fore. I will now refer to some of these aspects in the context of my research. This will allow me to explain the process of selecting clothing (fashion) artefacts and films as the most suitable art form for this study.

The first of the potential manifestations of the art form identified by Cole and Knowles (2008, p.62) is its role as a “*genre and/or medium*” of the inquiry process. In this, they argue for the importance of the researcher's prior experience and familiarity with the chosen art form, allowing for the unification between research process, potential knowledge advancement and research communication. In the context of this research, my previous training as a textile and fashion designer, as explained in Chapter 1, was crucial. However, this can be limiting to some degree and requires me to step out of the often-rigid boundaries of commercial fashion design; instead, I approach clothing from the perspective of an artist who draws on the operational and physical elements of fashion design. I expand on this in Chapters 4 and 7 of this thesis.

Another aspect of art form manifestation discussed by Cole and Knowles (2008) is its utilisation as a research method. A similar approach can be found in the catalogue of the 2010-11 *Aware: Art Fashion Identity* exhibition, where Gabi Scardi (2010, p.13) reflects on the role of a fashion artist in this way:

In his quest for self-knowledge, and knowledge of his environments, the artist approaches clothing as a prism through which to take a fresh look at the world, to distil its particular character and to convey its main tendencies and needs.

Indeed, in this research process, fashion and clothing functions as a method of analysis; and indeed it became a pertinent prism through which I can interpret, understand and creatively respond to the gathered empirical data. Echoing my way of being in the world as an artist, designer and researcher, I employ the process of re-designing and re-creating second-hand men's jackets, identified in the analysis process as a key element of men's attire, as a research technique of practical explorations allowing me to process and interpret participants' accounts of their experiences of fashion and clothing. Consequently, I utilise the (re-)produced artefacts and corresponding films as forms of communication for those interpretations and understandings. I discuss this in more depth in the following chapter, where I focus explicitly on the application of the developed methodology.

Finally, Cole and Knowles (2008) discuss the aesthetic aspects of the chosen art form, which relates to the physical appearance of the created work in regards to the specific principles and standards typical for this genre. In the case of the fashionable clothing form, this can potentially relate to (a) fashion trends forecasts; and (b) craftsmanship and/or pushing boundaries of technical/technological innovation. Those aspects, however, do not necessarily apply to clothing as an art form. This withdrawal of clothing from the commercial and technical world of fashion can be observed in the work of artists such as Lucy Orta, Susie MacMurray or Azra Aksamija, who exploit the boundary between fashion and art in order to allow "*clothing to become an expression of identity and to speak of our experience of the world around us*" (Soriano, 2010, p.7). In contrast, I strive for a balance between the requirements of the fashion and art aesthetics, as well as the requirements of the sound social research encapsulated within the form of clothing. In this sense, arguably, the beauty of the work can be achieved via the authenticity and sincerity of the research process; I return to these considerations in the final chapter where I discuss the role, value and quality of the produced artefacts.

RELEVANT ARTS-INFORMED STUDIES

Similarly to the situation with the IPA studies, there is much sound arts-informed research that I can learn from and that the present study can draw on (e.g. Thomas, 2004;

Cole and McIntyre, 2006; Luciani, 2006; Butler-Kisber, 2007). Correspondingly, this section in many ways mimics the earlier section in which I presented the selection of the IPA studies relevant to this body of work. Likewise, my aim here is not to present the vastness of the arts-informed research in its entirety, but to identify those elements most important and influential to my project. In doing this, I will focus on three studies from different fields that involved different research processes and were informed by different forms of artistic inquiry. However, they do share a common denominator of utilising various forms and methods within the visual arts genre. This is not to say that the arts-informed research utilising, for example, music, or the written word in the form of prose or poetry has not been informative to me in the process of developing my methodology; but that I simply have often found their operational procedures, as well as created outcomes, too distant from my own, and for these reasons I do not discuss them here.

Firstly, Latham's (2010) study on leadership was significant for the present study because of its unique attempt to explore the point of convergence between the arts-informed research and positivist methodologies. At first glance, her aims seem positivistic and completely removed from arts framework research. Her aims were to develop an in-depth understanding of the leaders' life experiences and to understand how these individuals were influenced by others, as well as how they influenced others (Latham, 2014). Of interest for the present study was that Latham extended standard case studies of leaders through traditional interviews, and included her participants' 'life histories', augmented by her examination of the participants' photographs and artefacts and her own visual work. By doing this, she facilitated a research process in which both "*researchers and their participants [had] the opportunity for reflective thinking and an awareness of self within the dynamic and complex social system in which they live* (ibid, p.125). Similarly, it is the possibility of enabling the alternative research conditions for knowledge co-production and accumulation that I have strived to achieve by merging the methodologies of IPA and Arts-Informed Research.

While the above study was relevant to the present research in regards of the methods used for data collection and data analysis, the following study demonstrates its significance in relation to the alternative means of knowledge dissemination. Lapum et al.

(2012), in their narrative study about patients' experiences of open-heart surgery and recovery, conducted a series of interviews with the participants who also kept personal journals in which they had a chance to report on their insights and experiences in the transitional period after the operation. The collected data was then transformed into poetry and photographs and presented in the form of an art installation. Although, at the beginning of this section, I somewhat distanced my work from being directly informed by the artistic form of creative writing, such as poetry, my interest in this case does not lie in the production of such poetry per se, but rather the simultaneous interplay between the imagery (fig. 3.2) and the written poetry (shown below), and its role in the installation's narrative. Importantly, what these researchers achieved was creating visual art where text and imagery were unified into one form of expression: an installation entitled "The 7,024th Patient" (fig. 3.3), "convey[ing] the sentiments and perspectives of patients" (Lapum et al., 2014, p.1). Consequently, text and imagery were designed to augment each other, rather than the imagery merely illustrating the text, or the text explaining the imagery. Arguably, a similar idea was explored by the artist Sonia Delauney collaborating with the poet Blaise Cendrars on a book entitled *Prose on the Trans-Siberian Railway* (1913). It is the fact that both these works exploit text and imagery as two different forms of communication which are integrated, rather than parallel, that I explore in the present body of work.

Figure 3.2 *Un-dressed*, 2011 (Lapum et al., 2012, p.7)

Figure 3.3 Overview of *The 7,024th Patient* art installation, 2011 (Lapum, et al., 2014, p.3)

Finally, I feel that it is of a tremendous importance for this project to connect with other research projects that not only are located within a similar area of practice to mine, namely fashion and clothing, but are examples of successfully completed PhD investigations. In this vein of thinking, I am strongly inspired by Kathleen Vaughan's PhD project (2006), completed at York University in Toronto, Canada. Despite being situated within the Education department, the artist explored and interpreted a photo album belonging to her deceased father, focusing especially on the images picturing her father in different attires, to which she then responded via a series of life-sized clothing based sculptures entitled "Unwearables" (fig. 3.4). Likewise, she explained that the truth that she sought to represent in that body of work is that of "*her own experience and understanding of her father*" (Vaughan, 2007, p.95). At the same time she noticed that the processes of translating the photographs into the produced sculptures involved a series of in-depth academic research studies on clothing, such as theories of clothing consumption, and clothing construction, as well as fashion theories.

Furthermore, Vaughan stressed the point that by no means did those sculptures mimic the garments they referenced; to her creating a series of un-wearable clothing artefacts metaphorically represented the loss of her father and emphasised the silence caused by his absence in her life. In this sense, Vaughan's work sought to disrupt the ubiquitous tendency to privilege the written modes of knowledge over others, such as visual, tacit or embodied. My work shares this goal with Vaughan's project, but also seeks to significantly extend the arts-informed scholarship by merging its practices and processes with IPA techniques. Furthermore, Vaughan's work inspires me to consider another issue relevant to my work, namely, the relationship between fashion and art, which some authors link to the concept of conceptual fashion design. In the following section, I briefly describe both these phenomena.

Figure 3.4 *Unwearable: Parka*, Kathleen Vaughan, 2004 (Vaughan, 2005, p.15)

NOTE ON FASHION AND ART

The issues of “fashion and art”, or even “fashion as art” are not the main concern in this body of work; they are, however, important to it for two reasons. Firstly, as I have already explained in the previous sections, I am a trained fashion and textiles designer whose practices are distant from industry-oriented fashion design and often overlap with different forms of arts; secondly, the developed methodology shares some methods of analysis and presentation with the processes and practices of the so called “conceptual fashion design” linked by many authors to conceptual art¹² (e.g. Clark, 2012, Tseëlon, 2012) and illustrated by the exhibitions such as *Looking at Art – Looking at Fashion* (Florence, 1996) or *Aware: Art Fashion Identity* (London, 2010). At the same time, however, it is simply not within the scope of this thesis to investigate the phenomena of “fashion and art” or “conceptual fashion

¹² Here I subscribe to a rather simplistic, yet useful, explanation of conceptual art as “a deviant movement in the visual arts which employs unprepared eccentric materials (...) and everyday media (...) in serial or aleatory ‘installations’, ‘environments’, performances, (...) and documentary displays, for the deliberately paradoxical presentation of concepts drawn from philosophy, linguistics, art criticism and ordinary life” (Martin-Hoogewerf, 1999, p.153).

design” per se. While in this body of work I do indeed draw on my skills, sensibilities and experiences as a fashion designer and artist to produce and present a series of artefacts, and my argument is that they can function as valid modes of knowledge about older men’s experiences of fashion and clothing, I feel that my research aims differ significantly from those of conceptual artists and designers. In the following paragraphs, therefore, I will only briefly link my work to a few, selected conceptual artists and fashion designers by whom I am especially strongly aesthetically and/or methodologically informed.

Firstly, I feel that it is important to highlight that, in my practice as a fashion designer and artist, I am indeed inspired by the work of many different contemporary fashion and art practitioners such as Helen Storey, Dai Rees, Di Mainstone, Hussein Chalayan or Alexander McQueen. My work is also especially strongly informed by the various works of the French artist Louise Bourgeois, mainly because of her use of a form of clothing installations, often referring to her own wardrobe in order to communicate her personal memories, experiences and histories (Teunissen, 2009). Bourgeois, particularly, skilfully interpreted the knowledge available exclusively to her, and used clothing to disseminate it. Within her work, she often incorporated elements of performance, such as in her project entitled *A Banquet/ A Fashion Show of Body Work* presented on 21 October 1978 in Hamilton Gallery Of Contemporary Art In New York, US (fig. 3.5), written language such as in the case of the *She Lost It* performance in 1992 (fig. 3.6), or installation, such as the *1996 Untitled* work (fig. 3.7). Furthermore, Herkenhoff (2009) argues that Bourgeois developed her own clothing-language, based on the act of interpretation and use of metaphor, that allowed her “to pass from the imaginary to the symbolic” (ibid, p.238). The methodology developed strongly resonates with such utilisation of the act of interpretation.

Figure 3.5 *A Banquet/ A Fashion Show of Body Work*, Louise Bourgeois, performance in Hamilton Gallery Of Contemporary Art In New York, US, 21 October 1978 (Harkenhoff, 2009, p.241)

Figure 3.6 *She Lost It*, Louise Bourgeois, performance in Fabric Workshop, Philadelphia, 5 December 1992 (Harkenhoff, 2009, p.236)

Figure 3.7 *Untitled*, Louise Bourgeois, 1996 (Harkenhoff, 2009, p.240)

I find the work by the German artist Joseph Beuys similarly inspiring, for example, his seminal piece entitled the *Felt Suit* (fig. 3.8). Beuys, by working on what he described as a “*social sculpture*”, attempted to integrate fields such as nature, art and science. Schacknat (2009, p.316) comments that this resulted in creating the conditions where “*any differences between creative acts in the worlds – whether artistic, social or judicial, monetary, agricultural or educational – were abolished*”. In my work, I build strongly on the ideas exploited by both Bourgeois and Beuys; interpretation as an act, but also interpretation extended to the processes and produced objects, plays a key role in the methodology developed here; moreover, such *creative*, often metaphoric interpretations, informed by various forms of arts and fashion design, are to be of an equal value throughout the involved disciplines. I discuss this further in this chapter where I provide a brief note on the role of metaphor in the research process.

Figure 3.8 *Felt Suit*, Joseph Beuys, 1970 (Tate, 2015: online)

While in the previous section I explained how my work is informed by the two artists who engaged with the form of clothing, in this section, I focus on a parallel explanation in regards to fashion designers. There are several different (conceptual fashion) designers that I find inspirational, and whose practices inform my own. However, as I have already explained, my intention is not to list them all, but to briefly explain the impact of the few who I find the most influential. For this, I must start with Lucy Orta, and especially her project *Identity + Refuge* (fig. 3.9). For this particular work, Orta organised a series of workshops with the residents from the Salvation Army hostels in Paris in 1995, and in New York in 1996, during which the participants had a chance to design and create a collection of womenswear, as well as “*built confidence and reconstructed a psychology through the therapy of creating*” (Orta, 2010, p.35). This project has a twofold meaning for my work;

firstly, it clearly touches on the issues of identity and clothing relevant to my work; secondly, like Orta, I also utilise second-hand clothing to explore the interplay between the original and the added meanings of each (re-)created artefact.

For the same reason, my work is connected to the work of Christopher Coppens, who in his various projects also reaches out for abandoned objects. His 2008-9 **No Reference** (fig. 3.10) project has been extremely influential on this project because of the way in which the designer integrated the use of an installation of accessories with the publication of the corresponding book (Seymour, 2010). This, as I have already explained in relation to work of Sonia Delaunay and “The 7,024th Patient” research exhibition, is an important point of exploration for this project. But Coppens’ project is also of interest to me because of his attempt to break with any potential references, historical or professional, which might impact on his work, including referring to his own previous body of work. This is an intriguing idea from the perspective of the hermeneutic circle and the pre-conceptions that the researcher inevitably carries into the process (Smith, 2007), discussed previously in this chapter. In contrast, in my work I strive to detect, understand and acknowledge my pre-conceptions and pre-understandings that can potentially influence the produced written and visual interpretations. I explain this in a greater detail in the following chapter.

Figure 3.9 *Identity + Refuge*, Lucy Orta, 1995-96 (Orta, 2010, p.35)

Figure 3.10 *No Reference*, Christopher Coppens, 2008-9 (Coppens, 2015: online)

METAPHOR IN RESEARCH PROCESS

In the previous sections of this chapter, I provided brief notes on two relevant concepts: these were “tacit knowledge” and “fashion and art”. Both these concepts emerged through reviewing the relevant IPA and Arts-Informed Research, and they resonate strongly with this project and my research practices. Another important concept that came to the fore is that of a metaphor¹³ as an analytical and interpretative tool in a research process (Gray and Malins, 2004). Before I explain this further, I must first define the term in the context of this study.

¹³ Although some authors (e.g. Gray and Malins, 2004) argue for the close connection between the concepts of metaphor and analogy as analytical and interpretative tools, this research utilises explicitly the process of exploring metaphorical understandings as a means of enhancing my interpretations rather than by analogy to different models or situations.

In linguistics, metaphor is a figure of speech where a word, or a phrase, is substituted with a different one, which serves as a comparison or symbol for the other (Soukhanow, 1992; cited in Malinski, 2009). This, as Malinski comments, is an accurate, yet rather prosaic definition of the term, which as she describes in her research has a “*transformative potential*” and offers researchers “*a creative form of expression whose meaning can be unique to an individual or commonly intuited*” (ibid, p.310). Indeed, metaphor has been widely acknowledged as being a meaningful tool for enhancing individuals’ understandings through creating imaginative connections and engagement (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson, 1983; Ortony, 1993; Gray and Malins, 2004) and has also been effectively used in IPA studies (e.g. Shinebourne and Smith, 2010; Robinson and Smith, 2009). But Gray and Malins (2004), who adopt the metaphor of “journey of exploration” to represent the research process, comment also that metaphors can equally efficiently stimulate and convey shared meanings, and Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p.85) argue that metaphor offers “*a device of representation through which new meaning may be learned*”.

In this project, I use metaphor as a tool through which I can learn new meanings derived from a set of an empirical data gathered from the participants; furthermore, I use it as a means of sharing these meanings with others. As a consequence of this, I actively utilise metaphor as a research tool in order to stimulate and enhance my interpretative analysis. As I explain further in the subsequent chapter, as part of a multi-modal and multi-layered data analysis, I use various second-hand garments to metaphorically represent elements of the participants’ stories and experiences and apply different techniques and materials in order to facilitate a metaphoric dialogue between the research material and the researcher. The unique transformative potential of this is that it often generates a series of questions and, in this way, it stimulates new interpretations. I discuss this further in the following chapter, as well as in Chapter 5, where I describe the processes of the development of the artefacts based on my metaphoric interpretations of the research material.

3.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, my aim was to present the reader with the overall theoretical background for the developed methodology, which was necessary to fully appreciate its practical application as presented in the following chapter. For this, I introduced two components of the developed hybrid methodology, namely Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), and Arts-Informed Research. I supplemented this by re-articulating the research aims for this study, and explaining my epistemological position, as well as the paradigm within which this study is situated. This allowed me to demonstrate the good fit between the topic under study, the researcher herself, and the two methodologies. Furthermore, I showed that these sub-methodologies are good fit to each other in the sense that they complement, rather than contravene, each other. I additionally augmented this by presenting a small number of selected relevant studies and projects, which allowed me to present both approaches not only as well-established within the international contemporary scholarship, but also as appropriate for a PhD investigation. Moreover, the cited projects exposed certain relevant concepts such as “tacit knowledge”, “fashion and art” or “metaphor in research process”. Despite not being the main concern of this study, these concepts are significant to the way in which the developed methodology operates and, for this reason, have briefly been addressed in this chapter. Below, I present a concise summary of the key points discussed throughout this chapter. This is an essential step, because I build on these ideas in the subsequent chapter, in which I introduce the Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis methodology, and explain its practical application.

Firstly, it is important to re-articulate that this work aims to push the boundaries of fashion research and practice by developing a methodology, the implementation of which can offer new insights of the under-researched phenomena of male ageing and older men’s experience of fashion and clothing. Moreover, this methodology equally accommodates the positions of a fashion researcher, designer and artist. In this, the proposed methodology is based on a hypothesis that interpreting through “making” offers alternative insights into the participants’ lived experiences that can only be achieved through creative artful practices. This involves the acknowledging of the active role of the researcher-practitioner-interpreter in

this process, but, even more importantly, it involves a continuous negotiation between the subjectivity and objectivity of the involved practices and processes. For this reason, this project is strongly linked to the phenomenological concepts of hermeneutics and the hermeneutic circle, which I explained in this chapter and to which I refer further in the following one.

Secondly, stimulated by my epistemological position, in this research, I am adopting the position of “artist-as-researcher” and “instrument” in developing potentially fresh understandings of the human condition. This offers certain possibilities and certain limitations. By acknowledging my own presence in the study, I can draw on my expertise as a fashion designer and artist, as much as a researcher, and utilise it to stimulate the process of interpretative analysis. On the other hand, I must acknowledge that my subject position is only one of the possible perspectives from which the gathered data can be interpreted; there are many others. This rules out the possibility of any generalisations as an outcome of this study; this, however, does not hinder its status of a trustworthy study as a result of the values of persuasiveness, authenticity and plausibility present throughout the coherent and transparent research process (Reissman, 1993; cited in Butler-Kisber, 2010).

Finally, in the following chapter, I build upon all the theoretical backgrounds and concepts introduced in this chapter and present a practical application of the Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. This methodology is based on blurring the boundaries between fashion theory and practice, and integration of writing and making as equally important and valid research activities, enhancing my interpretations and understandings. Furthermore, this methodology allows me to produce different formats of research outcomes, such as artefacts and films, which together with the written text constitute a carefully designed and meaningfully executed composition of research outcomes. In turn, these alternative research outcomes provide me with a foundation for utilising an alternative mode of their dissemination, a research exhibition, as I discuss in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

4. ARTS-INFORMED INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS: practical application

4.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This project was based on developing an in-depth understanding of a small and homogenous sample of older men's experiences of ageing through the lens of fashion and clothing, and extending interpretative research strategies through various creative and artful fashion- and clothing-related practices. Consequently, this project sought novel research ways of data analysis and knowledge dissemination that are alternative to those typically utilised in fashion and ageing research, via engagement with various materials and techniques and creation of fashion and clothing artefacts. For this, I took two complementary methodologies: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Arts-Informed Research, and combined them into one integrated research process. The resultant hybrid methodology, Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, opens up the possibility of new ways of thinking about data analysis and interpretation, as much as knowledge production and dissemination within the field of fashion studies. Arguably, by allowing the researcher to interpret through "making", as well as "writing", the developed trans-disciplinary methodology offered alternative insights into the participants' lived experiences produced through creative, embodied, emotional and intellectual engagement with the data. Having discussed the two influential approaches in the previous chapter, I will now discuss the practical application of the developed hybrid methodology. This is a direct prelude to the project's resultant artefacts presented in the following chapter.

The aims of this chapter are to introduce Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as a valid and meaningful research methodology, and to present the reader with the details of its practical application. I will begin by describing the practical relevance of the key concepts involved, namely the role of interpretation and the hermeneutic circle, further contextualised in the research model. I supplement this with a note on the personal reflexivity employed. The chapter continues by describing the practical application of the methodology throughout the stages of the research process: recruitment of the participants, data gathering, data analysis, and knowledge dissemination. Each of the research stages required the employment of different research methods, practices, tools and techniques; I discuss these in the corresponding sections. The two last stages, data analysis

via practical explorations and knowledge dissemination, continue to be discussed in the subsequent chapter. This chapter concludes with a brief summary in which I re-articulate the main points discussed throughout.

4.2 ROLE OF INTERPRETATION

As I have already indicated in the previous chapter, drawing from the interpretative phenomenological approach, the methodology utilises interpretation as a key analytical technique. In doing so, I acknowledge the threefold role of “interpretation”: (a) as a single act of interpreting the older men’s experiences of ageing by engaging with texts, recordings, objects and images; (b) as a process of continuous unfolding of the interpretations and re-interpretations of the data explored through writing, physical and emotional engagement with materials and techniques, and captured in the form of texts, sketchbooks and short films; and (c) as a product – a series of written accounts disseminating the developed understandings of the participants’ experiences alongside metaphorically corresponding fashion artefacts. Below, I introduce these three roles briefly; I elaborate more fully on them in the “Data Analysis” section.

‘Interpretation as a single act’ relates to developing my understanding of certain aspects of how my participants experienced ageing as biological, psychological and social processes, by engaging with texts, recordings, objects and images. Texts, in this instance, refer to participant interview transcripts. Whilst analysing these documents, I read and re-read the transcripts, marked the intuitive points of interest and coded them in an exploratory manner, including descriptive¹⁴, linguistic¹⁵ and conceptual¹⁶ commentary, in order to produce a basic understanding of the role that fashion and clothing have played throughout the participants’ lives, and their relevance to these individuals’ experiences of growing old. In the same manner, I approached images collected through personal inventories, including photographs

¹⁴ Here my focus was on describing the content of what the participants said, the subject of the talk within the transcript (Smith et al., 2009).

¹⁵ Here my focus was on exploring specific use of language such as pauses, laughs, hesitations, tones, metaphors, stutters etc. (Smith et al., 2009).

¹⁶ Here my focus was on engaging the transcriptions at a more interrogative and conceptual level i.e. questioning the underlying meaning behind phrases and accounts of experiences provided by the participants (Smith et al., 2009).

of the participants and the garments they decided to bring to their interviews. The result of this was a set of emergent themes, individual to the each of five participants of the study; I explain this further in the following sections of this chapter.

'Interpretation as a process' relates to the continuum of unfolding interpretations and re-interpretations of the explored data. For this, I engaged with the activity of writing interpretative accounts and making artefacts. I experimented with the relevant fashion techniques such as stitching, embellishing and dyeing which in turn inspired and enhanced my interpretative writing. Within this process the two interpretative activities of writing about the role of fashion and clothing in participants' lives in relation to the process of growing old and re-making second-hand men's jackets were interconnected and complementary to each other, and encouraged a more experiential, often metaphoric, understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Finally, 'interpretation as a product' relates to the set of final written interpretative accounts and objects of (re-)designed and (re-)created men's jackets and corresponding short films. These are the outcomes of both single acts and processes of interpretation that I engaged with throughout the analysis process and directly represent the co-constructed meanings of the participants' lived experiences. I present the visual and textual outcomes of this study in the subsequent Chapters 5 and 6. In the following section, I continue explaining the role of interpretation in regards to hermeneutics and the hermeneutic circle.

4.2.1 MY HERMENEUTICS

The key concept used in the developed methodology is the hermeneutic circle. As already explained in the previous chapter, the concept relates to the process of developing the researcher's understandings and interpretations as the constant movement between part and whole (Smith et al., 2009; Smith, 2007). In the case of this project, as in traditional IPA research, this relates to the constant dynamics between different elements of the data, and can be illustrated by the example of a single interview and a set of interviews. To put it simply, I developed my understanding of each individual interview always in relation to the whole

body of research material and vice versa. Similar dynamics occurred in relation to the pre-understandings of the phenomena that I inevitably carried into the research and which became newly developed understandings in the process of analysis and interpretation. In the “Reflexivity” section, I explain relevant facts from my personal and professional life in order to add to the transparency of this process. In both these aspects, my hermeneutic circle adopted the basics of the hermeneutic circle concept.

The unique features of my hermeneutic circle (fig. 4.1) are the virtual “checkpoints” and constant research actions through which I developed meanings. In this manner, there are five critical checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle: firstly, Text (I), which refers to the interview transcripts; secondly, Images, meaning the photographs and sketches taken during the interviews; thirdly, Objects and Materials, consisting of the purchased second-hand men’s jackets and the various materials I used for my interpretative analysis; and, fourthly, Artefacts, which refers to the re-made men’s jackets. Finally, the fifth checkpoint, Text (II), encompasses the final written accounts illustrating and explaining my understanding of the participants’ experiences. I explain this in greater detail in the “Data Analysis” section, and in Chapter 6, where I provide explanations of this process in regards to each theme developed.

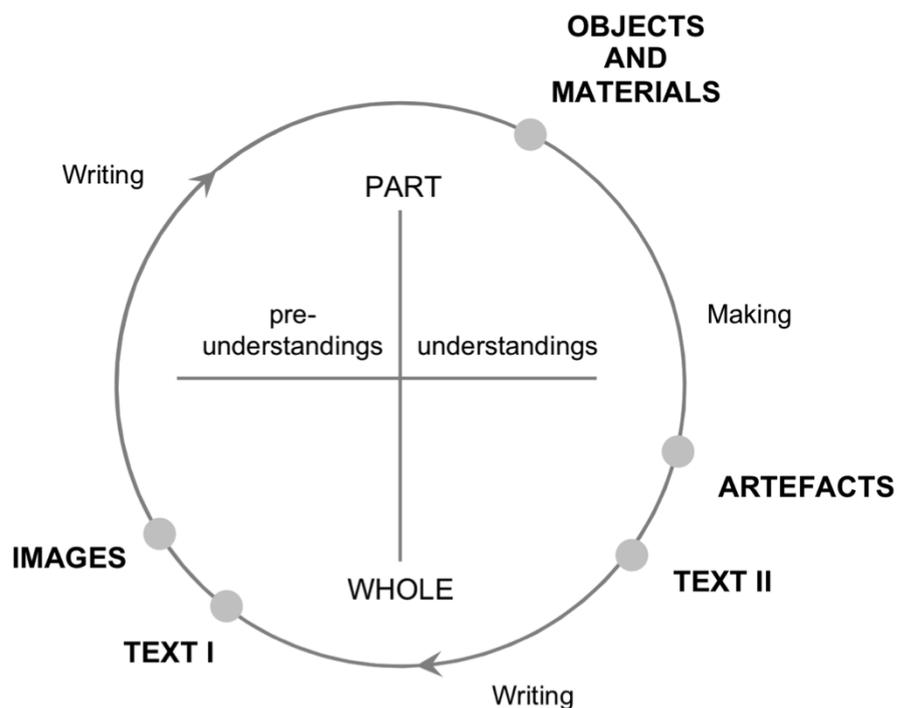


Figure 4.1 The hermeneutic circle developed for this study (Sadkowska, 2014)

Tami Spry (2006; cited in Leavy, 2008b) implies that, in accessing experiential knowledge, researchers should seek to ascertain “*enfleshed knowledge*” (p.346). This not only emphasises the knowledge in the body, which is accessible through the bodily experiences, but also acknowledges the body “*as a powerful [research] agent*” (Spry, 2006, p.205). It is precisely by interlocking the activities of writing and making as equal elements of embodied exploring, understanding and co-constructing of meanings that this methodology enters the terrain of the “*enfleshed knowledge*”. Building on Merleau-Ponty’s (1962/2002) theory of embodiment, within this methodology, I sought to shed light on the lived experience of ageing through my own embodied experience of its interpretation. In the following section, I expand upon the above ideas, and present a graphic research model of the Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

4.2.2 MODEL

The practical elements of the methodology included methods such as semi-structured interviews, personal inventories and the intertwined practices of writing and making (practical explorations). The writing practices were stimulated by my immersion in the data and my reflexivity, techniques typical for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The making contained elements of creative techniques and artful material explorations, common to Arts-Informed Research and, in this case, located within the field of fashion and clothing design. The integration of these research components resulted in the creation of a novel hybrid research methodology: Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, presented in the research model (fig. 4.2).

The research model presented in fig. 4.2 follows the stages of a standard research process: data collection, data analysis, knowledge production and knowledge dissemination (e.g. Kawamura, 2011; Crouch and Pearce, 2012). My brief description of it here is extended throughout the subsequent sections of this chapter. The initial stage of setting up the research, including the selection and recruitment of the sample and piloting study, is not shown on the model; however, it is discussed in the present chapter.

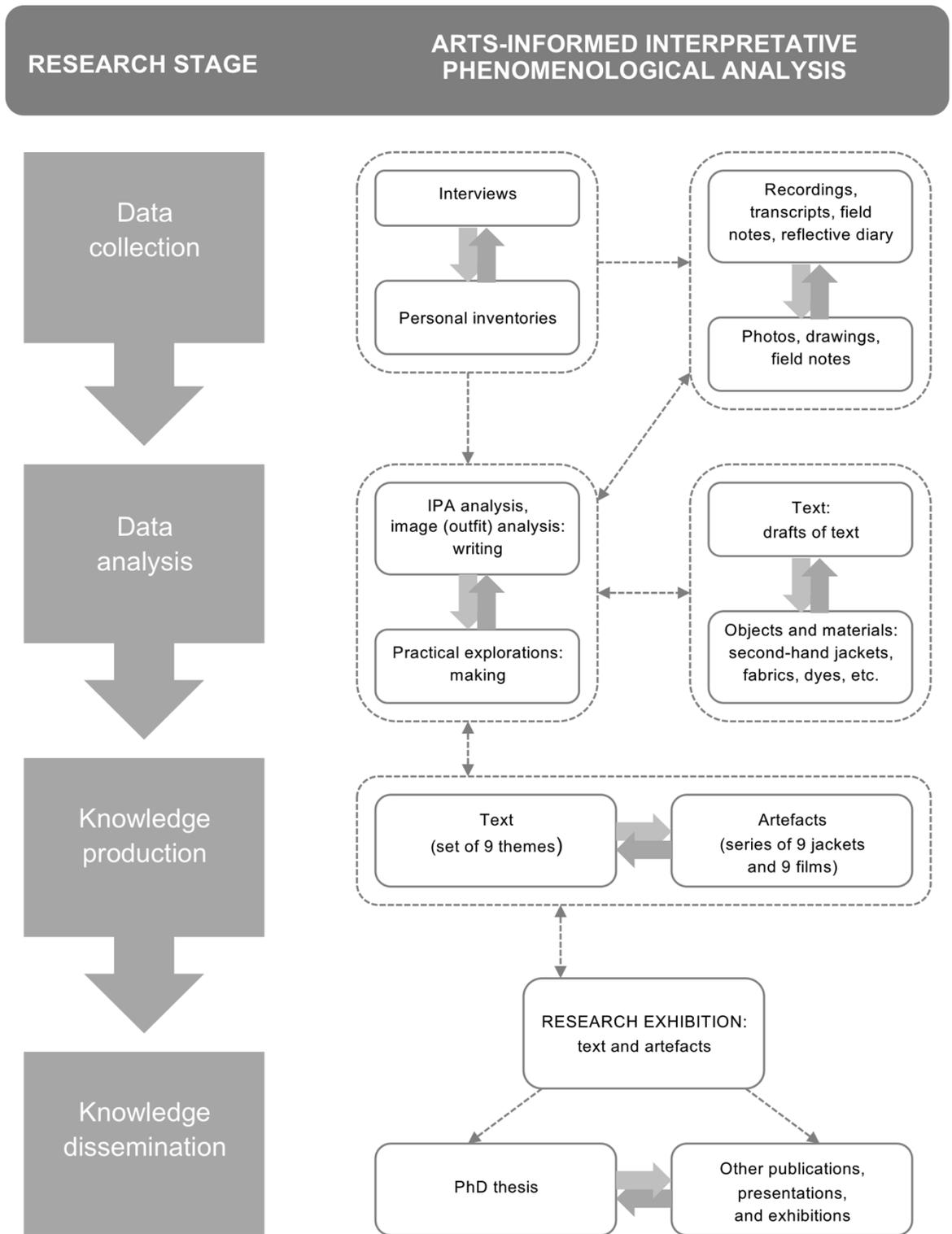


Figure 4.2 Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis – research methodology model¹⁷ (Sadowska, 2016)

¹⁷ For presentation clarity the model presented is a simplified, largely linear representation of the research process – the cyclical occurrence of the research stages was indicated by using lines with arrowheads in both directions.

The data collection used two research methods; these were semi-structured in-depth interviews and personal inventories. Consequently, the data was captured in the form of interview recordings and transcriptions, as well as a series of photographs, drawings and field notes. Following this, the next stage of data analysis was based on two creative activities: writing and making. So the data analysis involved a standard textual IPA analysis of the interviews' transcripts, extended to selected photos of the participants and their artefacts gathered during the personal inventories and resulting in the outfit analysis. These two 'types' of analysis were then enhanced by analysis through practical creative explorations, based on my embodied engagement with various objects and materials that had metaphorical relevance to the participants' experiences. The starting point for each series of these explorations was a selected second-hand men's suit jacket, the role of which I explain further in this chapter. The resultant artefacts, and the series of the practical explorations leading to their creations are explained in Chapter 5.

The stage of knowledge production resulted in a series of written accounts and corresponding artefacts as well as a research exhibition, the narrative of which was based on the integration of both textual and visual elements: quotations from the interviews, jackets and films. It is also worth noting that, as presented in the model in fig. 4.2, the research exhibition did not fit neatly within just one stage of the research, but instead was a functional and transitory element between the stages of knowledge production and knowledge dissemination. Consequently, the shift of the arrow between the text and artefacts box and research exhibition box is towards the text; visitors of the research exhibition provided me with feedback on my visual interpretations (jackets and films), which influenced the final written interpretations presented in this PhD thesis (and other related pretentions and publications, as presented in Chapter 1). I explain this further in Chapter 5. In the following sections of this chapter, I focus on the application of the developed methodology, throughout the stages of the research process, starting with the explanation of the research settings. Before I do that, however, it is crucial to explain the role of reflexivity as a methodological technique, and its application in this study.

NOTE ON REFLEXIVITY

To start with, it is worth pointing out that a “reflexive attitude” is well-established within most qualitative approaches, especially in social sciences (Etherington, 2004). Furthermore, reflexivity has gained growing recognition within the field of arts and design (Gray and Malins, 2004; Crouch and Pearce, 2012). Nonetheless, the concept behind reflexivity still remains problematic to many researchers; not only its value, but also its meaning in general are often questioned by scholars across the fields and disciplines (e.g. McNay, 1999; Skeggs, 2002; Archer, 2010). Consequently, before I explain its role in this particular research mechanism, it is important that I establish its meaning within this research, which is strongly linked to my epistemological position.

To me as a researcher interested in researching the richness and complexity of human experiences, reflexivity gives the capacity to acknowledge my own fluid and changeable experiences and contexts (Etherington, 2004). Crotty (1998, p.81) explains the importance of the researchers’ pre-understanding in relation to a reality and their potential concept(s) of it as follows:

We are the kind of beings we are, we rely on concepts. We have a need to define and classify. Unfortunately, our definitions and classifications displace what they stand for in our experience of them so that, rather than concepts pointing us to realities, realities are relegated to being more exemplifications of concepts. Yet a concept is never able to exhaust the richness of a phenomenon.

Indeed, as a researcher bound by my own contexts, interests and experiences, I entered this study with some concepts about the older men’s relationships with fashion and clothing. Consequently, I could either strive for the impossible task of the complete removal of those concepts in order to create impersonal and fully objective research conditions; or I could acknowledge them and open up to the possibility of a perhaps subjective, but exciting personal research journey. In this vein, such reflexive openness, as argued by Etherington (2004, p.25), enhances the possibility of not only learning more about the topic under study, but also about the researcher herself. I agree with such an argument. Furthermore, I believe that employing reflexivity can augment the researcher’s objectivity, as explained in Holland’s (2004, p.193) insightful comment on research objectivity:

Objectivity does not have to mean that the researcher maintains an almost superhuman distance from the participants and then afterwards coolly assesses the data. Objectivity can mean being reflexive and accurate and acknowledging one's subjectivity whilst maintaining a professional, rigorous approach.

It is precisely this post-positivistic type of "reflexive objectivity" that I strived to achieve in and through this research. In doing this, I was indirectly following Giddens' (1991) optimistic premise that individuals need to acknowledge how various institutions impact their relationship with the world. To implement the exercise of reflexivity allowed me, therefore, to more fully contextualise myself as an inherent cog in this precise research mechanism, yet avoid producing a narcissist, over-indulgent account of myself (Maton, 2003; cited in Crouch and Pearce, 2012). Crouch and Pearce (2012, p.49) argue that such conscious and well-balanced implementation allows the researcher to "*reflexively engage with the experiential learning cycle of theorizing, action, observation and reflection and the dynamic cyclical relationship of cause and effect*". In this manner, I implemented reflexivity in two stages. In stage one, presented below, I provide what Willig (2001) describes as "personal reflexivity"; this is an attempt to describe the relevant personal circumstances that might have shaped this research. In stage two, in the subsequent sections of this one and the following chapter, and in regards to the "*experiential learning cycle*" cited above and Schön's (1984) "*reflection-in-action*", I attempt to (more fully) understand and explain the research activities I conducted. This, as Sullivan (2010) explains, has further significance when researchers, as I do in this study, aim to extend the traditional written constructions of meanings towards visual forms, in this case, artefacts and films.

PERSONAL REFLEXIVITY

In this section, I provide the reader with what I believe is the most relevant information about my values, experiences, interests and beliefs that might in any way have shaped and informed this research. Reciprocally, I aim to explain this research's impact upon me; I address this further in the final chapter of this thesis. This is in line with the phenomenological approach I adopted. In doing this, I do not intend to repeat the information that I have already provided in Chapter 1 or to re-iterate that which is provided in the previous

chapter. I do, however, aim to supplement this by adding my personal context that is inextricably linked to this study and its processes.

At the time of writing this PhD thesis, I am a twenty-nine year old white female. I was born in Poland; however, for the past 9 years I have been living in UK. I was born and raised in a working class family with strong inter-generational relations. My grandmother, to whom this thesis is dedicated, lived with my family until her death in 2002. This is an important piece of information because every time I try to understand my interest in fashion and clothing, my grandmother is the first person who springs to my mind. I cannot say that fashion was something especially important in her life, and I suspect she was never influenced or even aware of fashion trends. However, this hard working seamstress, who in her early teens during World War II spent several years in a work camp in Germany, had an extremely defined dress code. This dress code was important to her to the extent that well before her death and on many occasions she instructed her daughter (my mother) about the attire she wanted to be buried in. This story then, shared at various family gatherings, mixed with my own deeply vivid memory of my grandmother working on her sewing machine, often mending her own, and even more often her grandchildren's clothing, is what I believe triggered my initial interest in fashion and clothing.

This interest was then developed further during my time as a textile student at the Technical University of Lodz, Poland. The years spent at university were of a tremendous importance when it comes to the textiles expertise I developed. However, of equal significance in this personal story was the place; Lodz. Fifty years ago it was the centre of the Polish textile and clothing industry, but in early 2000, when I was living and studying there, it displayed just a faded glory of its past fame. In fact, as a textile student, I was exposed to the deteriorating industry and lack of professional perspective, juxtaposed with the exported mass-produced low-quality and quickly going out-of-fashion clothing around me. This impacted on me as a person and as a designer. On both these levels, I wanted to re-live the joy I once witnessed when looking at my grandmother carefully making and/or mending our clothes; furthermore, I wanted to understand why clothing was so important to her that she devoted so much attention to the careful selection of her attire.

These factors, amongst others, influenced my decision to continue my education at MA level in the UK. In this place, I will not re-iterate the details about my MA project, which I have already provided in the “Introduction” Chapter and which were a direct prelude to me undertaking this PhD research. I must, however, add to it that completing the MA Fashion and Bodywear programme at De Montfort University, Leicester, under the excellent supervision of Michèle Danjoux, gave me the opportunity to explore different ways of being a fashion practitioner; it is Michèle who I need to thank for encouraging me to push my own boundaries as a researcher and designer and to discover that I equally strongly identify with being an artist.

Finally, as already indicated in Chapter 1, this research, in the form that it is presented in this thesis, is a result of many, often-interlinked research choices. For this, I feel that it is important to explain that this research in its early stage was to be on exploring older *women’s* relationships with and experiences of fashion and clothing. Furthermore, as a practice-based study, it was to result in a series of contextual fashion prototypes targeting mature female consumers. It was only when I fully embarked on this research and initially reviewed the relevant literature that I started to understand that this study should also include men; here, I need to acknowledge my own pre-conception that older men and fashion were not an “interesting” or “exciting” topic of investigation. I link that to the presence in my life of two men, my father and my husband, who share a strong lack of interest in fashion or clothing. Furthermore, this pre-conception is significant because it explains why it was not until the stage of initial analysis of the data gathered from two comparative samples, one of five older men and the second of six older women, that I was empowered to make the informed decision of focusing this study exclusively on the male sample.

This decision was dictated by two main reasons: firstly, the two samples exhibited not only significant differences in their experiences, which indeed would be interesting to explore further in a comparative study, but more importantly from the artist and designer’s point of view, the research material I gathered from these two samples required different operational codes of analysis. The older women I interviewed were straightforward about their design expectation and their narratives focused mainly on their physical changes. Furthermore, the topic of older women’s experiences of ‘issues’ with, and expectations towards, fashion and

clothing has been successfully addressed by many researchers and designers (e.g. Twigg, 2013; Hurd Clarke et al., 2009; Kozar and Damhorst, 2008; Peters et al. 2011; Risius et al., 2012) and I did not want to simply duplicate their work. Secondly, while the material generated from older men was much more 'settled', it was also in many instances touching upon sociological and psychological issues, which opened up the exciting possibility of conducting this trans-disciplinary study and blurring the boundaries of a sociological, psychological and design fashion inquiry. This stage of the study is important to acknowledge because, in the following sections, I explain the pilot study, which involved both male and female participants. This is also significant because, as it turned out, the two samples required different recruitment techniques, once again highlighting their contextual disconnection. I discuss this further in the "Sampling" section.

These are the key points of my personal reflexivity that I believe led me to embark on this particular study and in this particular form. Throughout the subsequent sections of this and following chapters, I present the second layer of reflexivity, in the form of my reflections upon the research process and key research decisions.

4.3 APPLICATION

In this section, I explain how the methodology was implemented. This includes the presentation of the relevant research methods throughout different stages of the research process. I start with the description and evaluation of the research settings, including sampling and recruitment, and the pilot study.

4.3.1 RESEARCH SETTINGS

Kawamura (2011, p.39) points out that the initial stage of any research process must involve the determination of "*how broad an area of social world is covered*". Furthermore, she notices that this selection is mainly determined by the research questions, but also argues for the importance of taking into account factors such as the researcher herself, as well as the availability of the target population. The issue of the sample accessibility should not, however,

be the decisive factor over its appropriateness (ibid). In the previous chapters, I have already explained my focus on older British men as a response to the established gap in knowledge. In Chapter 2, I described the relevant socio-cultural and historic aspects. Earlier in this chapter, I explained the development of this study, supporting my selection of a particular part of the population. But what is paramount here is that by focusing on creating the conditions for developing an in-depth understanding of the complexity and richness of individuals' lived experiences, this research has never had an ambition to approach and analyse the population of older men as a whole. Instead, in this research, I utilised a highly idiographic approach; therefore, my aim has always been to recruit a small, yet homogenous sample of individuals for whom the experiences of fashion and clothing have been significant throughout their life courses. Thus, in the following section, I explain the process of selection and recruiting an appropriate, yet accessible, research sample.

SAMPLING

Since my goal for this study was to explore the potential richness hidden within a small sample of third age individuals in relation to appearance, and especially fashion and clothing, great care was taken to obtain a closely defined group of participants for whom the research questions were significant and meaningful. A homogenous and purposive sample was recruited through word-of-mouth and snowball recruitment methods; this included recruitment of two parallel samples, the men and women who were recruited originally for this study. As part of the recruitment strategy for both samples, the project was advertised through Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Age UK regional newsletters (for the full text of this advertisements see Appendix 1). However, while this method proved to be fruitful in recruiting older women and generated in total twenty-four responses from potential participants, no male participants were successfully recruited this way, which induced the use of alternative recruitment methods, such as word-of-mouth and snowballing. These recruiting techniques were used to identify potential participants with relevant characteristics who were approached individually. Each was given a letter of introduction explaining that the study was seeking to recruit older individuals who during their life courses have been interested in and had

engaged with fashion/or the fashion industry. In this way, I approached eight participants suggested to me by my peers and supervisors. Two of them suggested two other potential participants, both of whom I approached in the same way. Of the ten men approached, five participated in the study. Below I present their characteristics.

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES

All the study participants were white, British, heterosexual, middle-class men with a significant interest in their appearance, and especially in fashion and clothing, with the majority living within Nottinghamshire, UK (n=3), one participant living in Derbyshire, UK, and one in Leicestershire, UK (but who were both strongly linked to Nottingham, UK) (tab. 4.1). The participants had various occupations, with two of them being linked in the past to the fashion industry, and another being at present connected to higher fashion education. Additionally, all the participants shared a similar fashion past, including being members of distinctive British youth subcultures from the 1950s onwards, such as Mods, Hippies, and Punks. Furthermore, they employed various body management techniques such as exercising and dieting, and embraced what, more generally, could be explained as a healthy-life style. These characteristics are significant because they allow me to characterise this sample as homogenous, which is important in order to fully appreciate the findings of the project presented in Chapter 6, stemming from my analysis of the research material.

Table 4.1 Sample characteristics

Name*	Age	Occupation	County of residence
Eric	60	Artist	Nottinghamshire
Grahame	61	Social care worker	Derbyshire
Henry	54	Academic	Leicestershire
Ian	58	Company director	Nottinghamshire
Kevin	63	Lecturer	Nottinghamshire

*Pseudonyms are used to preserve participants' anonymities

FROM METHODOLOGY TO METHODS

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2008, p.2) assert that “*methodology [is] the bridge that brings epistemology and method together*”. In this sense, the key elements of a methodology are the methods selected as the means to conduct the research. Typically, research methods are associated with the generation of the research data that is then analysed in order to answer the research questions. For this purpose, I used two data collection methods: in-depth, semi-structured interviews and personal inventories; I discuss these below. In the following sections, I also discuss methods, tools and techniques as the means of the data analysis and knowledge dissemination.

4.3.2 DATA COLLECTION

Gray and Malins (2004, p.99) rightly comment that it is “*good quality data, derived by the rigorous application of appropriate research methods, [that] are the bedrock of any research argument*”. In this section, I focus upon describing the carefully selected research methods for collecting data in this research process. These are interviews and personal inventories, of which I provide a short description as a research method, the rationale for their selection and, finally, I explain their practical application within this research process. First, however, I briefly describe and reflect on the pilot study.

PILOT STUDY

Between March and April 2013, I conducted a small (n=4) pilot study. At this stage of the project, I still aimed at including both men and women and I was considering the possibility of joint interviews. Therefore, the pilot study sample included both men (n=1) and women (n=3) (tab. 4.2). Bryman (2004, p.159) points out that “*piloting (...) has a role in ensuring that the research instrument as a whole functions well*”. The pilot interviews were crucial for me not only to test the effectiveness of the interview schedule, which was re-drafted after every pilot interview, but also to test and improve my performance as an interviewer, especially building my confidence in active listening skills, such as prompting

participants, and staying silent when they were considering their answers. The pilot study also involved me transcribing one interview (interview no. 2) in order to a) develop my transcribing skills, and b) evaluate the time required for the transcription process. Furthermore, the stage of transcribing the selected pilot interview was extremely useful in order to further reflect on my performance as an interviewer.

Table 4.2 Pilot interviews

Pilot interview	Participants	Date	Place
No. 1	1 woman	14/03/2013	Nottingham, UK
No. 2	1 man	21/03/2013	Nottingham, UK
No. 3	2 women	11/04/2013	Leicester, UK

INTERVIEWS

Kvale (1996, p.125) proposes a useful definition of a research interview as “*an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest. It is a specific form of human interaction in which knowledge evolves through a dialogue*”. Much in the same vein, Gray and Malins (2004) identify the interview as a key method allowing for gathering particular opinions from individuals on the topic of research. Furthermore, they list its advantages, such as efficiency in eliciting participants’ values, beliefs and attitudes and conditions enhancing a direct verbal interaction that can facilitate the participants to be more responsive, compared to, for example, the method of questionnaires. At the same time, however, they point out certain disadvantages of this method, such as its potential susceptibility to enhance the interviewer’s subjectivity and biases, and they observe how important is the selection of suitable interview settings, including securing the right place and recording equipment. These are the basic characteristics of using interview as a research method.

However, as pointed out by Kvale (1996) in the above definition, the interview first and foremost is a specific interpersonal situation allowing the researcher to achieve much

more than just recording a verbal account from the participant. Consequently, he observes that during the interview the researcher gains access to a whole array of various forms of interpersonal communication, as well as a direct entry to the participant's lived world:

The interviewer has an empathic access to the world of interviewee; the interviewee's lived meanings may be immediately accessible in the situation, communicated not only by words, but by the tone of voice, expressions, and gestures in the natural flow of a conversation. The research interviewer uses him- or herself as a research instrument, drawing upon an implicit bodily and emotional mode of knowing that allows a privileged access to the subject's lived world.

(Kvale, 1996, p.125)

However, precisely because this method has the capacity to facilitate such an in-depth and "*privileged*" access to the participants' lifeworlds, some considerations of the power relations involved cannot be escaped and must be addressed. Kvale (ibid) comments upon this issue in regards to the existence of a certain power asymmetry between the interviewer, who holds the power to define the situation by selecting and introducing the topics of conversation, and the interviewee, who follows the delineated interview schedule. However, in the case of this research, this issue requires further consideration, in regards to, for example, the clear age and gender difference between the interviewed participants and myself. Despite the fact that my aim as an interviewer was to create conditions of a mutual dialogue, rather than an interrogation, I cannot deny that those differences had an impact on the way I formulated the questions, and also must have had an impact on the way the participants formulated their answers. Furthermore, I observe that these power relations came to the fore at a much earlier stage of my research, when I recruited my sample; during this process, I could argue that the power relations might be the reverse of those proposed by Kvale, lying entirely on the side of the potential participants who might or might not agree to participate in the study.

While, so far, my aim was to present the interview generally as a research method, suitable for studies where the focus is on entering the participants' personal worlds, in the following section, I focus upon explaining its status within the IPA methodology. As I have already explained in the previous chapter, IPA was selected as one of the core elements of the methodology because it is a qualitative and idiographic methodology where the researcher attempts to develop an in-depth understanding of a certain meaningful experience in the participants' lives and worlds. Furthermore, in IPA, the researcher responds to the

gathered data by creating a series of highly interpretive accounts based on the co-construction of meanings and understandings between her and the study participants.

In order to facilitate the conditions for such an in-depth understanding, IPA researchers choose methods that allow them to “(...) *invite participants to offer a rich, detailed, first-person account of their experiences*” (Smith et al., 2009, p.56). Therefore, semi-structured, in-depth interviews are the most common research method used in IPA, which acknowledges also the importance of the interviewer’s role in the process of listening and reacting to the interviewees’ given accounts. Additionally, the choice of this method was supported by its growing recognition within the fields of art and design (Gray and Malins 2004; Martin and Hanington 2012; Crouch and Pearce 2012; Ni Chonchuir and McCarthy, 2007) and fashion (Bugg, 2006).

For the purpose of this project, I interviewed a purposively recruited homogenous sample of five men who were identified as being interested in fashion/clothing¹⁸. I explained the recruitment process in the previous sections of this chapter. Five interviews¹⁹ were conducted separately with each participant between May and July 2013 (tab. 4.3). At the beginning of each interview, I introduced myself and clearly explained the purpose of my study as well as the participants’ rights in the process, including their rights to withdraw without providing any explanation. The introduction to the interview explained that the interview would have the characteristics of a conversation and that the study aimed to explore the participant’s past and present experiences of fashion and clothing. Each participant was asked to complete a participant details form, comprising of name, age, contact details, preferred pseudonym and questions regarding to potential future participation in the study (for the introduction to interview and consent forms see Appendix 2).

¹⁸ I recognise that this identification was somewhat problematic in that it was others who identified these men in this way, rather than their self-identification. This is discussed in more depth in Chapter 6.

¹⁹ Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the Joint Inter-College Ethics Committee at Nottingham Trent University.

Table. 4.3 Interviews settings

Pseudonym	Date of interview	Place of interview
Eric	20/05/2013	His accommodation
Grahame	24/05/2013	His accommodation
Henry	30/05/2013	Nottingham Trent University, office
Ian	05/06/2013	Nottingham Trent University, lecture room
Kevin	05/07/2013	Nottingham Trent University, meeting room

Each interview lasted between 90-120 minutes and was recorded with the consent from each participant. The interview schedule consisted of eight open-ended questions about the different aspects of their experiences of fashion and clothing, including questions about the participant's personal definition of the term "fashion", their past and present practices and future expectations and, furthermore, about their current relationship with fashion and clothing and how this has changed over time. Additionally, a critical incident technique was employed during the interview whereby participants were asked to describe occasions when they felt really good/bad about the way they looked, their perfect fashion item, and fashion artefacts with personal meaning for them (for the full interview protocol see Appendix 3). Prompts and probes were used to encourage the participants to elaborate further when unexpected, but potentially interesting, areas of discussion arose, and to clarify ambiguities and avoid misunderstandings.

Three participants were interviewed at Nottingham Trent University (UK) and two participants were interviewed in their own homes in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire (UK). The interview settings were always in a quiet, and free from disturbance space, and in a relaxed atmosphere. Each interview was followed by a short debriefing, as recommended in Kvale (1996). This involved informing the participant that I did not have any more questions, and asking if there was anything they would like to add before we finished. No reimbursement or compensation was given to any of the participants.

Prior to, and soon after, every interview I completed an entry into my research diary in which I reflected on the interview process, including my observations from previous interviews as well as the overall comments on my performance as a researcher, including points to improve (for an example of the entry in the research diary see Appendix 4). This was part of my reflexivity and it allowed me to capture the process of my unfolding interpretations, initiated often at this early stage of listening to the participants during their interviews. This method of data collection generated in total over ten hours of audio recordings, which were then transcribed verbatim. In the following section, I briefly explain the process of transcribing.

TRANSCRIBING

Each interview was digitally recorded using an Olympus DM-670 voice recorder and fully transcribed by myself (for an example of the interview transcription see Appendix 5). The names of all of the participants were replaced with pseudonyms, which were given to them by me and responded to the order in which the participants were interviewed (that is, the first interviewed participants' given pseudonym starts with A, second – with B etc.; this involved also a parallel sample of women, hence, the male given pseudonyms start with letters E - participant 5, G - participant 7, H - participant 8, I - participant 9, K - participant 11). Any other potentially identifying information was either anonymised or removed.

A transcript template purposely created for this study was made that followed a conventional IPA style of a transcript as it appears in Smith et al. (2009, pp.79-107). The template (tab. 4.4) incorporated a landscape-oriented table with three sets of columns and a page number. The middle column contained the full interview transcription. The right column was designed for the initial comments, the left one for documenting the emergent themes. Each interview, depending on its length, generated different lengths of transcript with the shortest being 18 pages and the longest 29 pages²⁰. The transcript analysis followed a typical IPA procedure, which I explain in the "Data Analysis" section. In the following section, I describe the application of the second research method, which is the formation of the personal inventories.

²⁰ At this stage there were no line numbers on the transcripts; these were added later, after the coding stage.

Table 4.4 Interview transcript - example (Kevin, page 1)

Emergent themes	Transcript KEVIN	Exploratory coding
	<p>A: Can you tell me about yourself first and what connection you have to fashion? What does fashion mean to you?</p> <p>K: Phew...That's a huge question. What does fashion mean to me? Er...It's probably always meant the same to me. Er... I think one's personal appearance is obviously what you show to the world and... I think ever since I had a choice of what I can wear, probably from about the age of 13, I've chosen to wear clothes that perhaps are a little unconventional. Although quite often wearing unconventional clothes means being part of a group that always wears the same kind of clothes. So, on the one hand you're kind of being unconventional, whilst being conventional within a group. Um... and I think that's another part of why people wear particular kinds of clothes to be part of a group, to be seen to be part of a group and having the values, if you like, of that group. But that changes, as you get older. I don't feel part of a group anymore um... but I think I still consciously um... decide to wear clothes that people my age and occupation and class, etc. don't wear. Um... and I guess that's still, that same motivation not wanting to be er... the same as everybody else. I think that's easier to do the older you get with fashion because as you get older fewer... I</p>	

PERSONAL INVENTORIES

The aim of this study was to develop an in-depth understanding of the participants' relationship with fashion and clothing. While the in-depth interviews allowed me to generate research material revealing both the richness and complexity of my informants' experiences, my aim was to enhance this by means of using more visual and tactile elements. Martin and Hanington (2012, p.102) note that “[i]nterviews can be made more productive when based around artefacts”. Thus, the second research method chosen as a means of data collection for this project was that of personal inventories. Being a relatively novel research method, there is limited literature explaining its application and potential advantages and disadvantages. Martin and Hanington (2012, p.130), within the context of design studies, provide this rather uncomplicated definition of personal inventories as follows:

Personal inventories are representative collections of artifacts (sic) selected by the participant for the designer-researcher, most commonly solicited through paired methods such as guided tours, contextual interviews, and photo and diary studies.

Indeed, this is useful when it comes to explaining my motives behind the selection of this particular method, allowing me to understand the significance of fashionable clothing in my participants' lives from their points of view, and to empathetically witness their needs and

the values they attach to these objects. In this, my work shares a common goal with a study by Csikszentmihályi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) in which they explored the significance of common domestic material objects in the lives of American families. They comment that in order “[t]o understand what people are and what they might become, one must understand what goes on between people and things” (ibid, p.1). Therefore, the use of personally meaningful objects as the stimuli for conversation is pertinent to the research described herein, which aimed to explore the variety and complexity of the types of relationships that participants have developed with fashion and clothing as they matured and grew older.

Although the personal inventories method is rarely used in IPA research, because it focuses on encouraging participants’ autonomy in selecting the significant artefacts (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Odom et al., 2008; Odom and Pierce, 2009), it is consistent with one of the central concerns of IPA, which is meaning making. For this reason, it was critical to allow the participants in this study not only to freely choose the artefacts they wanted to bring to, and discuss, during their interview, but also to be open as to what kind of artefacts they were to be. Consequently, in this study, the participants were asked to bring along 3-4 “fashion-related artefacts” that held a special meaning for them such as garments, accessories, textiles and photographs. This was addressed as the final part of the interview in which the participants were invited to speak about the objects they brought. While most of them simply wore their ‘special’ garments to the interview, others brought in some old artefacts with them and some participants presented the interviewer with photos from their past, often of garments that no longer existed. Arguably, such diversity of the types of artefacts that participants selected in an otherwise small sample accentuates the diversity of their experiences. Furthermore, this once again highlights, as indicated in the previous chapters, the need for a more holistic approach to understanding individuals’ experiences of ageing, and acknowledging the role of the past episodes in the present experiences. I discuss this further in the “Data Analysis” section, as well as in Chapter 6.

The presentation so far of the definition and process of the application of this method might have created an impression of it being rather straightforward and uncomplicated to implement. However, allowing the participants to have an entirely autonomous selection of the objects in their personal inventories proved to be problematic when it came to the

documentation of these objects. The difficulty lay in finding the most suitable way of recording the richness of this research material in a valid and rigorous way, allowing for the transparency of the research methodology as a whole. The selection of photography, as a medium allowing me to capture the “*precise records of material reality*” (Collier and Collier, 1986, p.10) was somewhat an obvious choice. For this, I turned my attention to what Rose (2012) describes as visual research methods; the following section explores this more fully.

Rose (2012) identifies three types of visual research methods, namely photo-documentation, photo-elicitation and photo-essay. All three methods differ significantly in their use of photography; however, what is common for all of them is that, at the various stages of the research process, they utilise photographs taken specifically for a particular research project. As Rose points out, what is important is that these photographs do not function as a mere illustration of some aspects of the research, but instead serve as evidence and always alongside other research material, such as interview transcriptions or field notes. Thus, photography was relevant to this body of work on multiple levels, as well as at different stages of the research process.

Firstly, as I have already explained, one of my biggest challenges was to develop a unified and rigorous way of capturing what the participants presented me with as part of their personal inventories. The challenge rested precisely in how to capture the richness and diversity of the presented materials. As I have already indicated, some of the participants wore their “favourite” outfits, while others brought in objects and/or photos from their past. As can be seen in table 4.5, there was a significant discrepancy between the numbers of objects brought by different participants; with one participant, Eric, presenting me with as many as 22 objects (8 clothing pieces and 14 photos), while Kevin did not bring any artefacts at all.

Such discrepancy can be interpreted in a twofold way; firstly, when we compare tables 4.5 and 4.3, it is clear that the 2 participants who were interviewed in their own homes, Eric and Grahame, presented the researcher with more artefacts than the three participants who were interviewed within the university settings. This could easily be explained by the fact that these two participants simply did not need to carry these objects with them to the interview, and in a sense they did not even need to plan in advance showing them to the

researcher. Such an explanation would be in line also with the fact that, in general, the three interviews conducted at the university were shorter, suggesting that perhaps home settings did influence how relaxed the participants felt and potentially influenced the depth of the interview. On the other hand, however, I would distance myself from any such theories, and instead I would highlight that all the participants in this study, while having certain characteristics in common (this small sample was a homogenous sample as I discussed previously in the “Participants’ Profiles” section), varied significantly in the way they explained their experiences and offered their interpretations. In this sense, it may well be that Kevin, who was the only participant who did not bring any artefacts with him, although admitting to having a private fashion archive at home, simply did not feel the need to do so, which would be in line with his interview’s narrative, where he often displayed a strong disconnection from any forms of social participation. I discuss this in more depth in Chapter 6, where I present my interpretative analysis of the data.

Additionally, it is also worth noting that on many occasions this potential research data was presented to the researcher in a rather chaotic manner; in the case of two interviews conducted in the participants’ homes, the interviewed men tried on some of their garments, changing them quickly and often providing little verbal commentary about them, even when prompted. This indeed posed certain challenges for the researcher to capture this potentially rich research data. Using photography as a means of photo-documentation allowed me to capture the sensory richness of these material objects. This generated a series of photographs, taken by the researcher, capturing the participants themselves wearing the artefacts (fig. 4.3 a-b), artefacts belonging to participants (fig. 4.4 a-b) as well as the photos shown to me by the participants (fig. 4.5 a-b). Such a variety of the generated images required being selective when it came to the analysed material; I discuss the process of this selection and of establishing the meanings of the selected photographs in the “Data Analysis” section.

Table 4.5 Personal inventories

Pseudonym	'Special' outfit worn (Y/N)	Artefacts demonstrated	Photos
Eric	N	8 (4 Paul Smith suit jackets, 1 tie, 1 hat, 2 silver rings)	14 (collection of images from his childhood to the present time)
Grahame	Y (favourite shirt)	13 (2 rain jackets, 1 suit jacket, 1 Levi's denim jacket, 1 denim shirt, 2 tops, 2 hoodies, 1 scarf, 1 hat, 2 bags)	0
Henry	Y (suit and shirt by Gresham Blake)	2 (2 Vivienne Westwood suit, 1 tie by Barbara Hulanicki)	1 (Henry aged 18 in his first suit)
Ian	N	3 (G-Force cardigan, Paul Smith shirt, Nick Coleman jacket)	1 (image of the Johnson's shirt; e-mailed to the researcher after the interview)
Kevin	N	0	0



Figure 4.3 Participants on the day of their interview wearing their "special" fashion garments; a. Henry (54); b. Grahame (61) (Photo: Anna Maria Sadkowska)



Figure 4.4 The artefacts the participants presented during their interviews; a. black leather jacket presented by Ian (58); b. blue hooded jacket presented by Grahame (61) (Photo: Anna Maria Sadkowska)

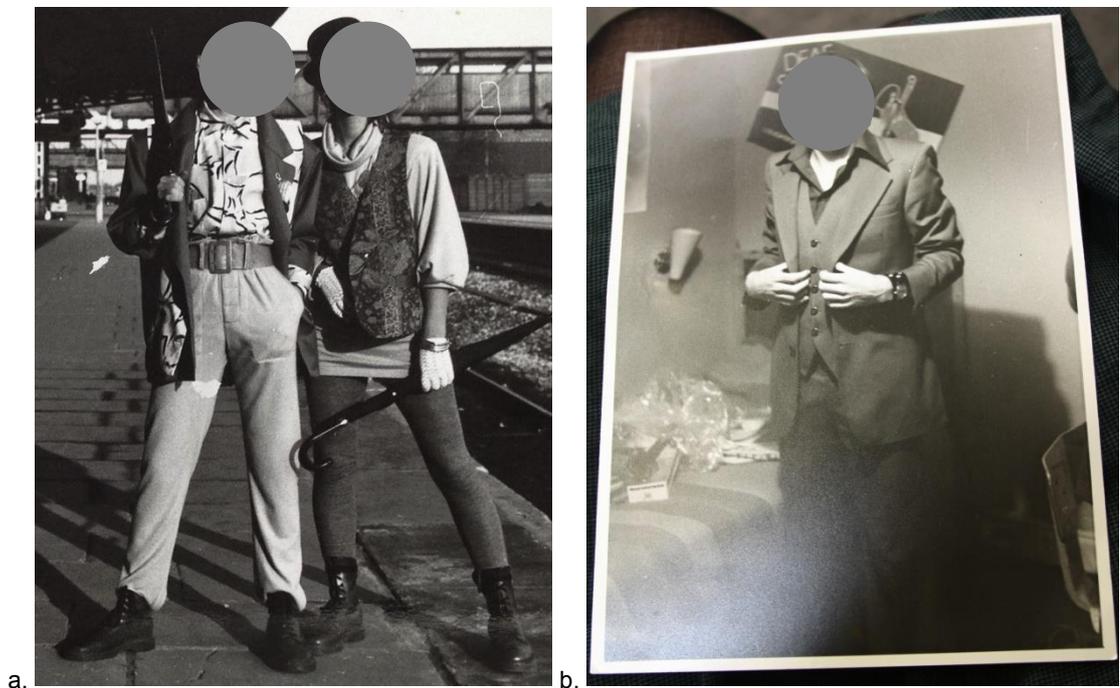


Figure 4.5 Photos of the participants brought in to the interview; a. photo of Eric (60), circa 1981; b. photo of Henry (54), circa 1977 (Photo: Anna Maria Sadkowska)

Furthermore, I also acknowledge the significant similarities to the processes of photo-elicitation; similar to the 2004 study by Namiko Kunimoto (cited in Rose, 2012, p.305), where presenting the participants with photographs resulted in evoking different kinds of memories in the interview process, and talking about old images evoked nostalgic emotions in some of the participants. This is corresponding to Kvale's (1996) explanation of the aim of an interview to be to take the participant back to a previous point in time, to the situation under discussion, and objects and photos can facilitate that process. Furthermore, in the ca

se of my study, these images were selected and supplied by the participants themselves, not by the researcher, adding significance to the process of the participants explaining them, including their socio-historic context. The argument for the significance of these photos can also be extended to the objects they represented, especially those no longer existing, as well as the past fashion artefacts brought in by the participants to the interviews.

Arguably, including a variety of research methods and using different forms of data recording, such as texts and photographs, can reflect the complexity of the participants' lived experiences. Producing such diverse raw research material can, however, be problematic when it comes to its analysis. In the following section, I explain this in relation to this project.

4.3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

In the previous sections, I explained the process of collecting the data. This was an important initial step in building up my understanding of the participants' lived experiences and was based on generating textual and visual research material. However, as Gray and Malins (2004, p.97) rightly note, the "*data (...) only become information when used, questioned and interpreted in particular contexts.*" Arguably, this process of questioning and primary data interpretation was already activated at the stage of interviewing the participants and transcribing the recordings of the interviews. In this section, however, I focus exclusively on the process of data analysis that followed the gathering and organising of the data collected via the interviews and personal inventories.

Combining visual and textual research material does indeed pose certain analytical challenges. Two separate approaches can be distinguished as to how such a complex analysis can be conducted. Firstly, some researchers (e.g. Dodman, 2003; cited in Rose, 2012) argue for treating the images and interview transcriptions as one unified body of data, and, in this way, stress the importance of analysing it through a unified coding system. However, while I agree with this approach to the degree that both these types of material are a unified depiction of the one phenomenon, in this study, the visual and textual research material do represent different aspects and qualities of the phenomenon, and, for this reason, require different forms of analysis. This is not to say that these processes should be separate; instead, they should be integrated and complementary to each other. Consequently, I subscribe to Keats' (2009) concept of the "multi-dimensional" data analysis based on analysing the textual and visual data separately at first, and then exploring the connections between them. Following this, the data analysis in this study was based on two activities: writing and making. These two activities were used alternately in the data analysing process and were grounded in two types of research material: interview transcriptions and photographs. Below, I explain how these two activities relate to the first two levels of data analysis. In chronological order, these were: IPA analysis, image (outfit) analysis. The third level of data analysis, practical explorations, is introduced in this chapter and further explained in Chapter 5.

IPA ANALYSIS

IPA as a methodology deals nearly exclusively with text; the analysed text comes usually from interview transcriptions, which can be supplemented by the researcher's comments, reflections, field notes etc. Consequently, conducting an IPA analysis is based mainly on the activity of reflexive writing. In this vein, the first stage of data analysis was devoted exclusively to written coding of the five interview transcriptions.

Many sources offer guidelines on how to use writing to analyse written data in IPA

(e.g. Langdridge, 2007; Smith et al., 2009²¹; Willig 2001; Finlay, 2011). Yet, since IPA's main concern is with personal lived experience, particularly the meaning of it and how individuals make sense of it, those outlines are often flexible and not prescriptive. Smith et al. (2009) observe that researchers new to IPA often follow the guidelines only once, which allows them to develop their own sense of how to conduct the IPA data analysis. Here, this first stage of data analysis followed the standard IPA analysis guidelines, as provided in Smith et al. (2009, pp.79-107) and as advised during the London IPA training²² attended in June 2013 which was facilitated by Dr Elena Gil-Rodriguez and Dr Kate Hefferon. Additionally, there are many sound IPA studies explaining in a detailed manner the stage of data analysis, such as Eatough and Smith (2006), Smith and Osborn (2007) or Gee (2011), which were of help here.

Consequently, for the conducted analysis, I followed these steps:

Step 1: reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts

Step 2: initial note taking (including descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments)

Step 3: developing emergent themes

Step 4: searching for connections across emergent themes

Step 5: moving to the next case

Step 6: looking for patterns across cases

Steps 1-4 were conducted separately for each of the transcripts and I only moved on to the next step when the 4th step for each transcript was completed. Transcripts were analysed in the following order: Kevin²³, Eric, Ian, Grahame, and Henry.

No software was used at any stage of this analysis; as explained in the "Transcribing" section, I used a hard copy of each transcript in a landscape format with wide margins on either side, allowing me to complete the exploratory coding and to note the emergent themes (for the example of IPA coding see Appendix 6). Throughout the whole process of data analysis, I kept my reflexive diary in which I noted my thoughts on the process, including how

²¹ The book by Smith et al., (2009) is the main IPA text, and I based my IPA analysis heavily on the detailed guideline provided by the authors.

²² London IPA Training, Introduction to IPA Workshop, 8th and 9th June, 2013; venue: Derbyshire House, St Chad Street, London, WC1H 8AG.

²³ Here, I must reflect that, although at the time of selecting the order of analysing I would describe it as "chosen at random", at the time of writing this thesis, it seems to me that, as a novice to IPA analysis researcher, I was driven to Kevin's interview because it was the shortest one and the last one conducted, which meant that while my memory of conducting it was quite "fresh" at that stage, I also had an overview of all the interviews, and for these reasons might have selected Kevin's interviews as the first to be analysed.

my understanding of the older individuals' experiences of fashion and clothing was unfolding. The stage of the IPA data analysis was completed for all eleven transcripts, including the six interviews with the women. Below, I explain the practicalities of the IPA analysis in regards to the five interviews with the men.

At the initial stage of the IPA data analysis, each transcript was read and re-read several times. This was done in order to immerse myself entirely within the raw data. This initial stage of analysis, as Smith et al. (2009, p.82) argue, is critical in order "*to ensure the participant becomes the focus of analysis*". To add to the significance of this early stage, it was the period when my key initial impressions were created, and when I had a chance for the first time to fully enter the world of my participants. Furthermore, it was the time when I was the most prone to feeling overwhelmed with the exuberance of potential interpretations and connections (Smith et al., 2009). Indeed, as a novice IPA researcher, I encountered feelings of confusion and puzzlement regarding the richness and complexity of the data. This was mainly caused by the lack of experience within IPA processes, but was additionally enhanced by the strongly exploratory character of this study, and, therefore, feelings of particular uncertainty as to how I was yet to utilise my practical expertise within it. For these reasons, I recorded all my initial observations, including my concerns regarding the process itself, in my research diary. This, as Smith et al. (ibid) explain, has the potential to "*reduce the level of 'noise'*" in order to remain focused exclusively on the data, as well as to enhance the researcher's attempt to bracket off her pre-understandings regarding the phenomenon under study.

The second stage was devoted to exploratory coding, separately conducted for each case. This, as suggested by Smith et al. (2009), should involve descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments. While descriptive and linguistic comments are somewhat self-explanatory terms, the conceptual coding takes an interrogative form and is more interpretative than the previous two. Consequently, this initial coding was executed in two stages; firstly, I noted all my initial coding without much consideration of the comments type; secondly, using highlighters, I colour-distinguished each type of coding.

In stage three, separately for each interview transcript, I transformed my initial set of notes into specific themes (tab. 4.6). Smith et al. (2009) maintain that at this stage there is a shift in analytic focus from being grounded in the original data, to working primarily with the initial notes. In this manner, the underlying aim of this stage was to substantially “*reduce the volume of detail (...) whilst maintaining complexity, in terms of mapping the interrelationships, connections and patterns between exploratory notes*” (ibid, p.91). In regards to the concept of the hermeneutic circle, it involved the analyst in exploring the complex network of relations between the smaller parts of the interview, such as sentences or even single words and bigger parts, such as specific utterances. Accordingly, each transcript coded in this manner resulted in different amounts of emergent themes. Interestingly, the amount of emergent themes did not always correspond to the length of the transcript itself²⁴, and was as follows: Kevin – 51; Eric – 54, Ian – 61; Grahame – 64 and Henry – 87.

Table 4.6 Example of the initial emergent themes (Grahame, 61); related themes are underlined

Grahame – initial themes
1. Early interest in fashion continued into present
2. Being part of a group in the past – sense of belonging
3. Importance of clothes - need to be recognised within a group
4. Looking for the admiration in the past – from others and self
5. Fashion – part of a bigger movement (art)
6. Being intuitive about fashion
7. <u>The act of seeing others – importance of</u>
8. Development of fashion sense as a part of who he is; identity
9. Fashion - part of him, of who he is – organic not artificial relationship
10. <u>Seeing – appreciating others’ looks – being inspired by them</u>
11. Clothing – ‘providers’ of the structure in his life, mood stimulator and regulator
12. Coherence – compromising physical and mental comfort; comfort and look
13. <u>Comparing himself to other men – criticising their negligence</u>
14. <u>Importance of being surrounded by nice things/objects - experience of looking and seeing</u>
15. Clothes as objects; tactile experience
16. Personal development of fashion style (inside him; natural processes)

²⁴ Here I acknowledge my intuitive, yet false, pre-assumption that the longer the transcript was, the more themes would emerge.

17. Personal and social age limitations – “too young” clothes
18. <u>Appreciation of clothes – “beautiful’ objects- indulging experience</u>
19. Knowledge and experience enabling his judgments (fashion and clothing)
20. Showing his identity, his inside through the objects around him
21. Need to physically own objects - being comforted by them
22. <u>Seeing - being visually attracted to objects</u>
23. ‘Metaphysical’ experience of the objects from the past
24. Enjoying element of surprise (clothing wise)
25. Established aesthetics: simplicity
26. <u>Being inspired by other people’s clothes – observing others; visual research/scanning</u>
27. Confidence to wear certain clothes – not being constrained by the potential critique
28. Importance of constant development and not being stagnant (falling behind)
29. <u>Seeing things - being attracted to them</u>
30. His fashion sense development - unconscious progress; developing into ‘new’ him
31. His own personal development - together with fashion trends development
32. Change; the importance of
33. Connection between his past as a ‘Mod’ and his further interest in fashion
34. Clothes - identity makers in the past; continuation into present
35. Clothes - tool to create the sexual attraction (attract females)
36. Avoiding clothes that are really close to the body, clinging to it; hiding behind clothes
37. Following fashion trends but in his own individual way - being inspired not blinded by them
38. Looking for suitable to him fashion trends “equivalents”
39. Body changes
40. Vanity
41. Being “fashion-forward”
42. Suit - continuation of wearing but only for the special occasions; importance of
43. Clothes - mood enhancers (feeling “classy”)
44. Keeping clothes but only for a limited time; periodical clear outs
45. Avoiding unsuitably “young” fashion that “adds” years (rather than making him look younger)
46. <u>Being judgemental about his own look; checking his own appearance</u>
47. Purchasing clothes from various different sources
48. Having very particular (sublimed) expectations towards clothing
49. <u>Rejecting some brands but still visiting their shops – seeing; need for visual stimuli</u>
50. <u>Interest in fashion - noticing it around; being “sensitive” to it</u>
51. Development of fashion “sensitivity”
52. <u>Critique of men who neglect their appearance</u>
53. Staying in strong fashion connection with his 2 daughters – mutual feedback and evaluation

of his choices
54. <u>Being “visually disgusted” by men who don’t care how they look - strong negative emotions</u>
55. Generalisation that men are appearance careless
56. “Fashion autism” (term used by Grahame) vs. not being fanatical about it
57. Economic limitations in his past
58. Importance of details
59. Co-design in the past; influence on his fashion “sensitivity”
60. Need to be complemented to be noticed
61. “Loving” clothes – personal relationship with (limited)
62. Being noticed thanks to clothes
63. Realising his uniqueness-‘considering himself unique due to his interest in fashion (unlike other men)
64. Clothes - way to celebrate himself

The fourth stage of the IPA analysis was to establish the connections between the emergent themes, equal to once again reducing the amount of data by clustering some of the emergent themes together. For example, looking at the initial emergent themes from the interview transcript with Grahame (tab. 4.6), it can be seen that the themes number 7, 10, 13, 14, 18, 22, 26, 29, 46, 49, 50, 52, 54 (underlined) all relate to the same idea of seeing either other people or objects and being visually inspired by them, whether that would be in a positive or negative sense; as such, these themes were clustered into one overall theme of “Seeing (others, objects, etc.); Need to see (observe)” (theme 5a in tab. 4.7). This was done separately for each case.

Table. 4.7 Example of the clustered emerged themes (Grahame, 61)

Grahame - emerged themes	
Past	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being part of a certain fashion group <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Development of early interest in/ sensitivity to fashion b. Sense of belonging c. Using clothes to attract women/ looking for admiration/recognition d. Co-designing his clothes 2. Economic limitations
Present	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criticising men who are not interested in/ neglect their appearance; feeling unique due to his interests in appearance 2. Established fashion style 3. Sense of coherence – compromising physical and mental comfort 4. The experience of clothing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tactile experience b. Mood enhancer 5. Seeing (others, objects, etc.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Need to see (observe) b. Need to be seen 6. Vanity 7. Change/ constant development (moving with time) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Body changes b. Trends
Future	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoiding clothes that reveal his body shape 2. Importance of details 3. Following fashion trends but with the age awareness

In terms of the technical organisation of this stage, I printed out all the themes and cut each theme out to be on a separate strip of paper; this allowed me to freely arrange and re-arrange them several times on a large surface such as a floor or table. At the beginning of this stage, I was also using the initial groups of 'past', 'present' and 'future' (fig. 4.6) as a starter point to search for connections between themes. This was due to the complicated nature of the experiences that my participants had told me about, and gave me a certain amount of organisation and clarity about the time frame to which the theme was applying. This once again resulted in a different amount of themes for every transcript, as it was organised with regard to their past and present experiences as well as their future expectations towards fashion and clothing. I only moved to the next case in the sample after exhausting this process on each transcript.

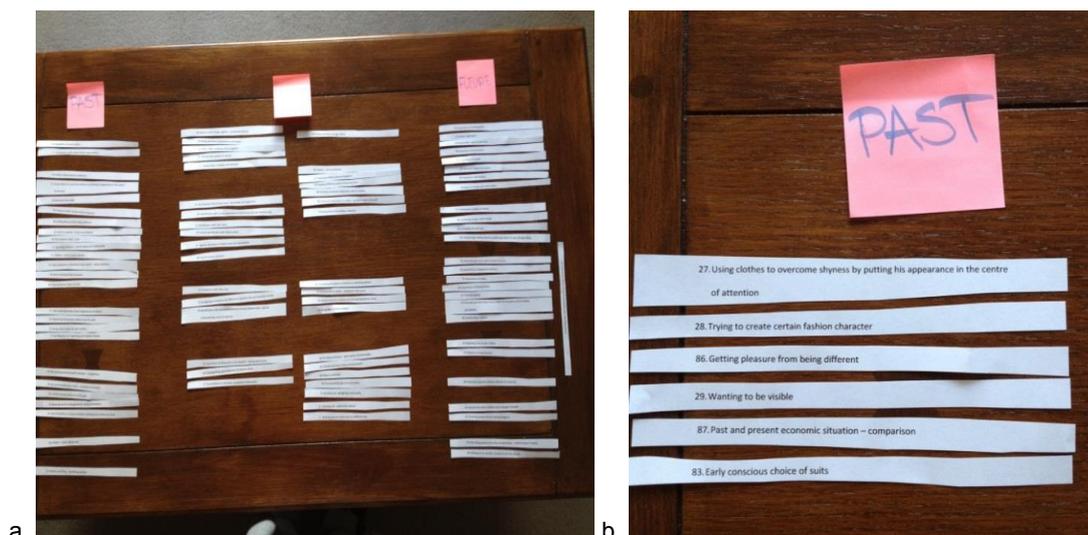


Figure 4.6 a-b Organising emergent themes (Photo: Anna Maria Sadkowska)

Following the analysis of all five transcripts (steps 1-5), I embarked on the final stage of analysis, in the form of a cross-case comparison. Smith et al. (2009) refer to this stage of analysis as being particularly creative. However, I found this process also rather challenging, especially the quest to accurately represent the dual character of my analysis – to stay in touch with the idiosyncrasies of the experiences peculiar to each individual as well as to speak for the “*shared higher order qualities*” (ibid, p.101). From the phenomenological point of view, it was at this stage when the concept of the hermeneutic circle came to the fore even more significantly than in the previous stages; I continuously moved between the themes emerging from each of the five coded transcriptions, and specific items to each of the interviewed individuals in order to analyse their relation to the sample as a whole. This was a difficult task, which required a certain degree of external validation in order to maintain the trustworthiness of these initial findings, which I explain in the following section.

Meetings with my PhD supervisors played a significant role at this stage of the project and allowed me to discuss the emerging themes and their validity. Another activity that was important during this period was participating in the IPA Analysis Yahoo Discuss Group²⁵, which gave me the opportunity to discuss my concerns regarding the coding. Additionally, in order to further validate my unfolding interpretations, I attended another training session

²⁵ IPA Yahoo Discuss Group: <http://www.egroups.com/neo/groups/ipanalysis/info>.

organised by the London IPA training²⁶, where I had a chance to present the early results of my coding not only to the training facilitators but also to the group of fourteen other workshop attendees, all of whom were IPA researchers. This was important because it gave me the opportunity to obtain peer feedback on the credibility and trustworthiness of the fruits of my analysis. The received comments and feedback were significant because they “confirmed” the developed initial set of themes in a way that reassured me I was not “stretching” my analysis “too far” and that the developed themes were grounded in the transcripts. This stage of IPA textual analysis concluded in creating a set of themes (tab. 4.8) consisting of three superordinate (master) themes with three subordinate themes each.

Table 4.8 Emerged themes after the process of IPA textual analysis

SUPERORDINATE THEMES		
Learning Fashion	Fashion Sense	Fashion-Self-Performance
SUBORDINATE THEMES		
Mirroring	Pioneering	Branding
Dis-Comforting	Non-Conforming	Styling
Peacocking	Distancing	Materialising

It is worth pointing out that the stage of the IPA textual analysis was completed for all 11 transcriptions, which included the interviews with both men and women. Furthermore, as explained in the “Reflexivity” section in this chapter, it was after this stage of data analysis, enchanted by the richness of the data from older men, that I made the final decision of focusing this PhD thesis solely on them and their experiences of fashion and clothing.

However successful, completing the stage of textual IPA analysis was only the first level of the overall process of analysing the data. Moreover, it was only after completing this

²⁶ London IPA Training, Data Analysis Clinic, 1st March, 2014; venue: Derbyshire House, St Chad Street, London, WC1H 8AG.

stage that I fully realised the importance of the visual material that I had gathered and the need for the careful consideration of the relationship between the photographs I had collected, what the participants expressed verbally and my field notes. I explain this further in the following section.

IMAGE (OUTFIT) ANALYSIS

So far, I have explained how I analysed the textual data gathered through in-depth interviews using IPA. As I have already discussed, however fruitful, this stage of data analysis opened up the important question of how to code the visual material gathered via the participants' personal inventories utilising IPA data analysis techniques. Moreover, it was crucial to facilitate the analysis conditions where I could constantly move back and forth between the images and the participants' verbal accounts, so one informed the other in a form of hermeneutic dialogue. However, before I can explain this stage of analysis any further, I need to make explicit the process of selecting the visual material for such an analysis.

As I have already explained, the personal inventories conducted as part of the interviews differed significantly from case to case; the participants presented me not only with a different types of artefacts but also with different amounts of them. To recap: three of the participants presented me with their images from their past, two of the participants wore their favourite outfit/garment to the interview and four participants showed me their "special" garments, of whom two invited me to see their entire wardrobes. Arguably, this multiplicity of artefacts selected by the participants, as the means of their experiences of fashion and clothing is already significant in the way that it highlights the diversity of their experiences; I acknowledge this further in Chapter 6. However, such diverse material was impossible to analyse in any systematic and unified way²⁷. For this reason, I made the decision that I would analyse the common factor for each participant, which was a photograph of what they were

²⁷ At the stage of participants' recruitment and introduction to this study, it was my decision to create conditions for an exploratory study where the participants freely selected the types of artefacts they wanted to present me with and discuss. I only provided them with an indicative guideline in regards to the amount of the artefacts (3-4), so it is important to reflect that if I had provided a more prescriptive guideline (e.g. two pieces of clothing that are currently your favourite garments), the outcomes of the personal inventories could potentially have been more orderly and consistent.

wearing on the day of the interview (fig. 4.7 a-e). This is not to say that the other material collected during the personal inventories was discarded, instead this data played a significant role in the final stage of analysis based on practical explorations, which I explain in more detail in the subsequent chapter.



Figure 4.7 The participants on the day of their interviews; a. Eric (60); b. Ian (58); c. Grahame (61); d. Henry (54); e. Kevin (63) (Photo: Anna Maria Sadkowska)

There is a relatively limited amount of reported IPA studies that extend their analysis of verbal accounts to include images (e.g. Shinebourne and Smith, 2011; Boden and Eatough, 2014; Kirkham et al., 2015). Furthermore, the rare examples tend to focus exclusively on the images drawn by the participants during their interviews. This indeed highlights IPA's connection with various health (including mental health) studies, where interviewing participants and utilising the method of drawing can have a therapeutic impact. In this sense, the drawings completed by the participant are treated as an illustrative representation of their experience and are analysed as such (Kirkham et al. 2015). However, such an approach to the visual material differs significantly from the one presented in this study because, instead of drawn images, in my work, I was analysing photographs, which in this study were a part of an inventory of the material reality of what each participant was wearing on the day of their interview. Hence, the provided visual analysis is not an 'image analysis' but an 'outfit analysis', which I describe in the following sections of this chapter.

Although they are limited in their scope, the existing studies reporting on analysing images in IPA were inspirational. Interestingly, these studies often draw on different visual methodologies, including content analysis, semiology, and psychoanalysis or discourse analysis. Moreover, these visual methodologies build on traditions of interpreting verbal data, which suggests close contextual links between some forms of analysing textual and visual research materials. Rose (2012) and Pink (2006) suggest that although the visual methodologies have established protocols of data analysis, the researchers embarking on employing them need to show a certain degree of creativity when it comes to organising and interpreting the visual material and, if necessary, invent new methods of doing so suitable to their study. Consequently, the approach I adapted draws on an Expanded Phenomenological-Hermeneutic Analysis as developed by Boden and Eatough (2014). In this approach, based on IPA and compositional analysis, the researchers proposed to interpret the image on three interconnected levels, namely, how it was made, how it was composed, and its potential meanings (ibid).

Boden and Eatough (2014) created a framework for the analysis of the drawings produced by the participants in the course of their study consisting of 15 topics (theoretical probes), allowing the researchers to give a detailed description and interpretation of the

produced artwork, including its individual elements. I treated my visual data similarly; in this, the first stage of the visual data analysis was made by using an analytical framework description of each outfit, adapted from Boden and Eatough (2014), yet modified to these study conditions, and extending it, for example, to take into account the relationship between clothing and the body (tab. 4.9). The visual data were then analysed and interpreted alongside the data from the interview transcripts following a similar procedure: first, describing in detail the image (through the framework), followed by its interpretation in relation to the commentary provided by the participants during their interviews as well as my field notes. This was done separately for the image of each participant of the study on the day of the interview and resulted in five cases of ‘outfit analysis’ (for the examples of the outfit analysis see Appendix 7).

Table 4.9 Framework for the ‘outfit analysis’ (adapted from Boden and Eatough 2014, p.167)

Outfit analysis	
1.	General contents: name and describe each of the distinct elements of outfit; how many elements have been used to create this outfit and what are their roles?
2.	Balance: describe the interplay between different elements; is there a sense of harmony or disproportion between elements; are there any elements that capture the attention above others?
3.	Relationship to the body: what is the relationship between the participant’s body and each garment; do they cover or reveal the body; do they follow the body shape; do they draw attention to/ conceal any particular parts of the body?
4.	Patterns: describe the general characteristic of the patterns; do they contain geometric or organic shapes; is the composition symmetrical or asymmetrical; are these in majority or minority to the whole outfit; is there any pattern repetition or rhythm; how would you describe the interplay with other elements of the outfit?
5.	Materials: name the materials used for each element; are these natural, synthetic or combination?
6.	Texture: describe the textural characteristics of each element.
7.	Colour: how many different colours have been used; name the colours and describe their saturation and value; describe the relationship between different colours used within the outfit; is this a monochromatic/polychromatic combination; how is the colour used; is there any colour-blocking?
8.	Style: can the outfit be classified as any particular fashion trend or style e.g. romantic, boyish, classic, country etc.; does the outfit contain any elements/details that can be classified as belonging to certain fashion style or trend e.g. cowboy boots, studs, baseball cap etc.?
9.	Signs/symbolism: are there any overt symbols or cultural references included e.g. cross or skulls that can be associated with certain group/subculture?
10.	Additional comments:

The following stage consisted of returning to the transcripts and themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview transcriptions in conjunction with the images in order to immerse myself in the data even more fully. This allowed me to re-enter the verbal and visual data I had already analysed in a different, more 'multi-modal' way and to approach all the data generated to date in a unified interpretative way. This took the form of a "thought wall" (fig. 4.8), research diaries and sketchbooks with interview transcriptions alongside images of participants where I could explore the conceptual similarities between the verbal accounts of the participants and their outfit analysis, and note and reflect on my unfolding interpretations. This was a crucial stage for me when I finalised the process of organising all the emergent themes from all the interviews into a final table of superordinate and subordinate themes (tab. 4.10). Rather unsurprisingly, this stage of analysis had an impact only on the themes referring to the participants' current experiences of fashion, as reflected in the two superordinate themes "Defining the Fashion-Self" (previously "Fashion Sense") and "Fashion-Age(ing) Performance" (previously "Fashion-Self-Performance"), and some of the corresponding subordinate themes. Furthermore, this stage of analysis was also significant due to allowing me to start exploring, via sketchbooks, the possibilities of using artful creative practices in order to enhance my interpretations. Below, I briefly explain this final stage of the data analysis based on practical explorations; I provide a more full explanation of this stage in regards to each subordinate theme in the following chapter.

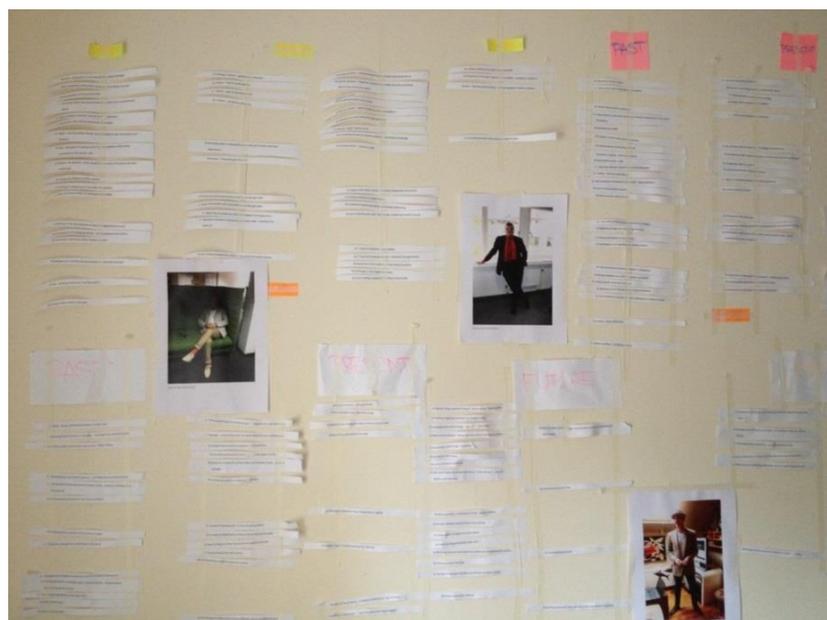


Figure 4.8 Thought wall (Photo: Anna Maria Sadkowska)

Table 4.10 Final superordinate and subordinate themes in the study

SUPERORDINATE THEMES		
Learning Fashion	Defining the Fashion-Self	Fashion-Age(ing) Performance
SUBORDINATE THEMES		
Mirroring	Pioneering	Presenting
Dis-Comforting	Non-Conforming	(Un-)Fashioning
Peacocking	Distancing	Re-Materializing

PRACTICAL EXPLORATIONS

In the previous sections of this chapter, I explained the process of data collection, which involved in-depth semi-structured interviews and personal inventories with five male participants captured via audio recordings, interview transcriptions and a series of photographs. Consequently, the first two levels of analysis of the visual and textual research material generated were based mainly on the practice of reflexive writing. Those two stages of interpretative data coding, explained above, resulted in a set of themes describing the participants' experiences of fashion and clothing, as they grow older (tab. 4.10). I now turn my attention to the final stage of data analysis, in which each of the nine subordinate themes was re-analysed using various creative artful practices in order to enhance its interpretative capacity. Below, I introduce and briefly explain this stage of data analysis; I expand upon this in the following chapter, where I explain it in relation to each of the nine subordinate themes.

Gray and Malins (2004) identify "practice" as one of the emergent research methods in Art and Design. These authors define it as an explicit and intentional method of "*developing and making creative work (...) for specific research purposes*" (ibid, p.104), and identify several of those research purposes, including gathering and generating data, analysis and communication of research findings. In this project, "practice" was utilised as a means of data analysis, and even more precisely as a means of enhancing and deepening such analysis. In

this vein, the same authors identify one of the possible roles of practice in research for higher degrees as “*using the skills of the artist/designer to visualize and understand complex processes (perhaps in other fields) – making the invisible visible*” (ibid, p.105). Likewise, as I explained in Chapter 3, this stage of data analysis was often based on exploring metaphorical connections and meanings in order to enhance the development of my new understandings. In this thesis, I argue that these new, more experiential understandings were developed by entering the terrain of using practice to “*making the invisible [more] visible*” to the researcher, such as it was the case in Kathleen Vaughan’s 2006 PhD project, discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, allowing my practical explorations to stimulate my thinking about the data resulted in a series of artefacts, the exposition of which in the form of a research exhibition I discuss in the following chapter. Adopting an exhibition as a method of knowledge dissemination can influence this research’s accessibility and open it up to non-academic audiences.

In much the same vein, Merleau-Ponty (1961/1993) argues that art can be the key to our better understanding of phenomena; “*art (...) draws upon this fabric of brute meaning which operationalism would prefer to ignore. Art and only art does so in full innocence*” (ibid, p.123). Building on this, Boden and Eatough (2014, p.162) point out that:

[u]nderstanding more fully is not about understanding a phenomenon more “correctly” (multiple interpretations are possible), but about investigating an experience more comprehensively by acknowledging and exploring its sensory aspect, thereby producing a more layered and nuanced account of the phenomenon.

It is precisely for its potential of advancing my understandings of the complexity of the participants’ lived experiences of ageing, a phenomenon that typically would be explored within fields such as sociology or psychology, rather than art and design, that the method of practical explorations was selected and utilised.

But utilising (art) practice as a research method is not unproblematic and straightforward. Gray and Malins (2004) point out that practice as a research method can be a subject of criticism for its potential over-subjectivity and argue for the need for its methodological rigour and transparency. I share their concern and subscribe to the view that utilising this research method requires careful consideration and meticulous application at the

same time; I return to this aspect of my work in Chapter 7, where I offer my reflections on the quality and validity of this body of work.

In the previous chapter, I provided a brief note on tacit knowledge. I return to it here in order to show its significance in this final stage of the data analysis. Niedderer and Imani (2008) note that there is insufficient understanding of how to attach the relation between tacit and explicit knowledge to research methodology, regardless of the intensified focus on classifying practice as a research method, while Sullivan (2010, xii) argues that “*when art making is placed within the culture of research, imaginative practices have the capacity to reveal new truths*”. In this sense, in this project, a series of practical experimentations enhanced my interpretations of the participants’ experiences, metaphorically exposing to me and allowing me to understand, what otherwise was difficult to grasp. For this, throughout the re-analysing of each of the nine subordinate themes, I utilised various practical skills such as drawing, stitching, dyeing, embellishing or de-constructing; skills that on many occasions are difficult to verbalise but which I know how to apply practically. My intention for doing so was to extend my interpretation of each of the emergent themes. In the course of interpreting passages of text and images relevant to each theme, including the images that were not analysed as a part of the outfit analysis, I experimented with various materials and techniques as much as with the elements and technical aspects of traditional men’s tailoring. This allowed me to extend my written accounts (interpretations) by producing a series of artefacts: suit jackets and accompanying short films, presented in the following chapter.

Despite these clear three stages of analysis, in practice, at the final stage, each and every theme required a different practical approach. This mirrored the different characters of every emergent theme and was reflected in utilising different skills, materials and techniques when analysing each of these themes. Such an approach could be metaphorically equated to the Aristotelian cosmology, in the sense that within the broad approach of intertwining the activities of writing and making (as explained in the “My Hermeneutic Circle” section), each theme had in fact its own path of development. As can be seen in the model in fig. 4.9, each of these theme’s epicycle, represented by dashed lines, was unique in length with its own internal dynamics of the hermeneutic circle; I discuss each of these processes separately for each theme in the following chapter.

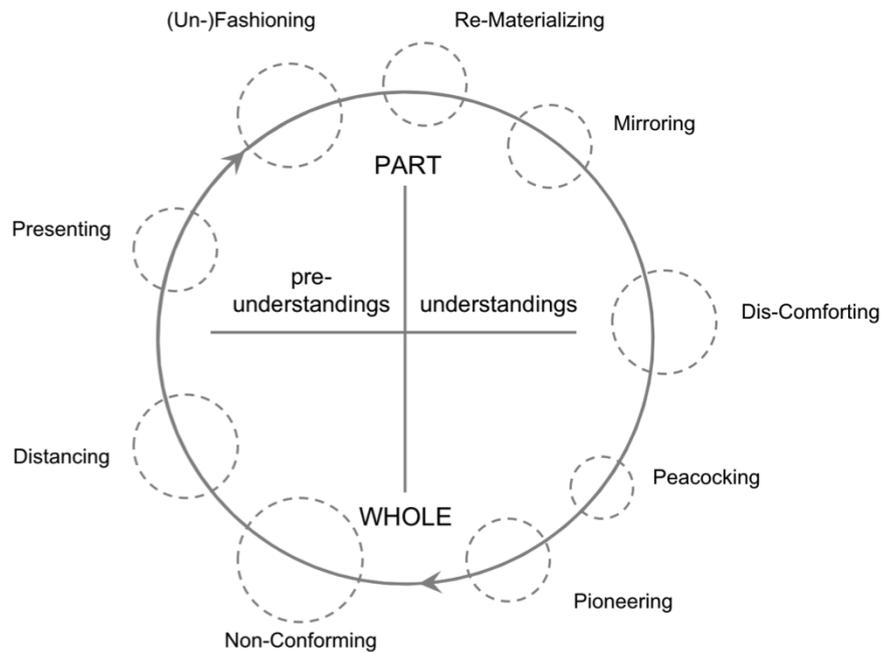


Figure 4.9 The hermeneutic circle developed for this study with the epicycles of the each theme (Sadkowska, 2015)

What was common for all the developed artefacts was that, in each case, I began my exploration with a second-hand men's suit jacket. Such a common starting point was adopted because during my analysis of the images of my participants' attires (outfit analysis), I noticed that most of them wore suit jackets (including one participant who wore a full suit). Suit jackets were present in the narratives of all of the participants, and most of them referred to these as either their favourite items of clothing or as an item that carried a significant meaning or memory. Moreover, many fashion scholars present the suit as the most appreciated element of men's attires (e.g. Hollander, 1994; Hamilton, 2007; Cunningham, 2008). Many argue that behind the successful history of the suit as the most popular, yet often the most sophisticated element of men's clothing, is hidden more than its functionality; they ascribe it to the unique aesthetics of a suit, or even its potentially hyper-masculine and idealising characteristics. For example, for Hollander (1994) the suit is an independent visual form with its own capacity and agency for masculinity, which made it an ideal space for my practical explorations.

Consequently, a process of selecting and purchasing a "suitable" second-hand jacket was a starting point of an extensive re-interpretation of each one of the nine subordinate

themes. These jackets were acquired from the local (Leicestershire, UK) charity shops. Moreover, in the case of every theme I first spent several hours of just observing each jacket, pinning it on the mannequin, drawing and photographing it in order to understand its possible metaphorical relevance to the participants' stories. In a few instances, this also involved buying more than one jacket to select from and experiment with. By doing this, similar to Townsend's 2011 study, I approached these jacket as an already meaning-loaded "canvas"; I manipulated and exploited their visual properties in order to construct narratives that referenced the knowledge co-construction occurring between myself, the participants' personal histories and these artefacts.

As I have already explained at this stage of data analysis, each of the nine emerged subordinate themes was re-approached separately using practical artful explorations in order to enhance my analytical thinking, discover new connections and possibilities of its meaning and relevance. The superordinate themes were not re-analysed because their significance lies in the grouping of the subordinate themes, rather than in being an independent thematic entity.

To explain such a complex process of analysis of each theme is not an easy task, and needs to be done separately for each developed theme and the corresponding artefacts in the form of a jacket and a film; I do this in the following chapter, where I also describe and reflect on the research exhibition that I curated for the purposes of this study. Below, however, in table 4.11 in order to indicate and introduce these processes and, therefore, present the reader with the complete explanation of the stage of data analysis, I present the short synopses of how each of the jackets was produced and how this was relevant to my unfolding data analysis.

Table 4.11 Practical explorations (synopses)

THEME: MIRRORING			
Second-hand jacket	Materials / Techniques	Process of exploration (discovering and exploring metaphorical meanings; posing new questions)	What I have learned from doing this? (my expanded interpretation; learning outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand: Marks & Spencer • Pattern: checked • Colours: light beige and grey, orange stitching on the edges • Fabric: 100% wool • Lining 50% viscose 50% acetate • Size: medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lego men • Clear elastic thread (various thickness) • Grey stitching threads • Silver spray paint • Stitching • Spraying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembling Lego men (metaphorically Lego man mirrors a man's attire; trousers and shirt) • Sewing the Lego men onto the jacket (relationships between men; how they mirror each other's appearance) • Threading the elastic threads in-between the Lego men; causing tension by pulling it; deforming the jacket's shape (those past relationships and tensions might still have significance for the way the participants dress themselves/ fashion their appearance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong connection between the participants' fashion past, especially being members of various youth subcultures, and their current fashion style. The complicated network of past and present interpersonal relationships, especially between men, are crucial for the way the participants negotiate their ageing identities through clothing. As part of developing their personal fashion style, participants often mirrored the appearance of others. 



THEME: DIS-COMFORTING

Second-hand jacket	Materials / Techniques	Process of exploration (discovering and exploring metaphorical meanings; posing new questions)	What I have learned from doing this? (my expanded interpretation; learning outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand: Henry's menswear • Pattern: checked • Colours: brown, grey, green and blue • Fabric: 50% polyester 30% wool • Lining: 100% viscose • Size: 42 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10mm spiral metal corset wire • Corset wire caps • Clear thread • Deconstruction/ Reconstruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting jacket with a scalpel and inserting metal corset wire within its structure (the relationship between comfort and dis-comfort; finding balance between physicality and mentality) • Constructing the shell of the corset (one garment encompassing both comfort and dis-comfort) • Inserting a typically feminine garment (corset) within a men's suit jacket (what is the relationship between fashion dis-comforting practices and gender, masculinity and pain handling?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participants in this study have developed a unique system of values where physical comfort has been often compromised for the sake of a fashionable look. This has both psychological and physical significance. The bodily dis-comforting might be stereotypically associated with women and femininity but is not absent from the lives of the participants. For this generation of men, there might be still a certain tension between their interest in fashion and being a man. 



THEME: PEACOCKING

Second-hand jacket	Materials / Techniques	Process of exploration (discovering and exploring metaphorical meanings; posing new questions)	What I have learned from doing this? (my expanded interpretation; learning outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand: Ted Baker • Pattern: striped • Colours: light beige and light blue with orange stitching on the edges • Fabric: 100% linen • Body lining: 100% cotton • Sleeves lining: 50% viscose 50% acetate • Size 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translucent small beads (black with shades of reds, blues and greens) • PVA Glue • Various colour matching threads • Embellishing • Stitching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting a “peacocking” jacket (flamboyant outside shell; body lining with colourful flowers pattern, sleeve lining – translucent fabric) • Observing and photographing the inside of the jacket (inside lining more attractive than the outside, yet invisible to the external observer; concept of invisible, embodied peacocking) • Undoing the back seam (the exterior vs. the interior; visible and invisible peacocking) • Finishing off the edges; inserting button holes and sewing into the buttons (6 ways to wear it) • Gluing beads onto the lining (making invisible peacocking visible again) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peacocking is something that the participants experienced and practised throughout their life courses; it has become embedded within their identities. Nowadays, it is as important as it was in the past but it sometimes can have a much more settled form; it does not always have to be obvious and sometimes it is not even visible. However, it is important for the participants that they still retain the sense of active practising it, even if it is hidden and only they know about it; as they grow older the character of their peacocking is changing. Importance of gender relations. 



THEME: PIONEERING

Second-hand jacket	Materials / Techniques	Process of exploration (discovering and exploring metaphorical meanings; posing new questions)	What I have learned from doing this? (my expanded interpretation; learning outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand: Verteks • Pattern: hounds-tooth • Colours: black, white and blue • Fabric: 55% Polyester 45% virgin wool • Body lining: 100% viscose • Size: 40 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black and white safety pins (Punks subculture) • Velvet jacket collar (dyed black; Teddy Boys subculture) • Deconstruction • Reconstruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deconstructing the jackets' structure; unpicking sleeves and collar (these elements are always defined in relation to each other, the garment they form, the body parts they cover) • Re-inserting the un-picked parts but in different position, shape, form; sleeve hole becomes a neck hole (if and how does a changed context influence the perception of these elements?) • Using safety pins to construct a "new" garment; safety pins used as stitching; imitating the hounds-tooth pattern using black and white safety pins (new context – new meaning vs. pioneering) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the participants expressed their pioneering past. Furthermore, the participants extended this pioneering to their current behaviours and practises. This is clearly something important to them and how they define themselves currently, influencing their experiences of ageing and relationship with fashion and clothing. But there seems to be more in this than just them being the first generation of men who have been influenced by youth subcultures and being interested in fashion; they are actively re-defining the context of what it means to age. If the definition of ageing changes, then fashion and clothing will need to be defined differently too. 



THEME: NON-CONFORMING

Second-hand jacket	Materials / Techniques	Process of exploration (discovering and exploring metaphorical meanings; posing new questions)	What I have learned from doing this? (my expanded interpretation; learning outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand: The Suit Factory • Pattern: corduroy • Colours: pink • Fabric: 100% cotton • Body lining: 100% viscose • Size: 40 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACE bleach • Dylon pink flamingo dye (Real Men Wear Pink – Joop advert) • Pink matching thread • Unpicking • Bleaching • Dyeing • Re-stitching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpicking all stitching (there are certain rules as to how a garment is put together; following those rules we conform to them) • Bleaching each element of the jacket (men stereotypically wear darker; they conform to the rules of masculinity) • Dying each element pink (how have the masculinity codes changed?) • Re-stitching all the element (once black elements are now pink, but, the black old stitching is still visible; the ideas of masculinity might have changed, but the participants still relate to the old ones) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-conforming to certain rules has been important to the participants; it is one of the characteristics they use to define who they are. But some of the rules, which they might have non-conformed to in the past, have changed, including what it means to be a man. However, these men might still enact the masculinities as they did when they were younger. Old rules, ideas, concepts always leave a trace; they cannot be bleached out completely and they influence the shade of the new ones 



THEME: DISTANCING

Second-hand jacket	Materials / Techniques	Process of exploration (discovering and exploring metaphorical meanings; posing new questions)	What I have learned from doing this? (my expanded interpretation; learning outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand: C&A • Pattern: striped • Colours: light grey and dark grey • Fabric: 55% wool 45% polyester • Body lining: • 100% viscose • Size: 38 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeves from three second-hand jackets • Stitching (inserting) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting into the jacket sleeves and inserting "extra" sleeves (physical understanding of distancing as creating space between individuals, objects, etc. one of the ways to do it is by sticking out an elbow: stay away message) • Inserting a "sharp" and customized element into the collar (how the participants might be creating the distance between them and other individuals; being different and actively defining yourself as being unique) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participants are partially defining themselves by distancing themselves from other individuals whose characteristics are negative. But for some individuals distancing from "others" was also separating oneself from a certain fashion image, either as older men overtly interested in fashion, or as old men who reflect a lost interest in fashion. Finding the balance between these two seems to be the key to understanding how these participants enact their interest in fashion as they grow older. 



THEME: PRESENTING

Second-hand jacket	Materials / Techniques	Process of exploration (discovering and exploring metaphorical meanings; posing new questions)	What I have learned from doing this? (my expanded interpretation; learning outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand: Boss • Pattern: plain • Colours: light grey • Fabric: 100% pure new wool • Body lining: 100% viscose • Size: 42 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Dylon dye • Marking tape • Hand dying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projecting a shadow on the wall by directing a light onto the “Distancing” jacket (what is the connection between the “Distancing” and “Presenting” themes? If and how do they impact each other?) • Marking the shapes of the shadows (is presenting is a more focused form of distancing?) • Transferring these shapes onto the jacket by hand applying a dye black powder; different shades of a shadow (it is important to make explicit the connection and relationship between these two themes; they shape each other) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is clear that for all of the participants in this study it is important how they present themselves in relation to how old they are. In this sense, this theme can be understood as a strongly linked to the distancing theme; the participants distanced themselves from wearing clothes that were too young or too old for them; they strive to find a balance between these two. Presenting might be understood as a shadow theme to distancing; it is through understanding of the distancing theme that the presenting theme can be understood. 



THEME: (UN-)FASHIONING			
Second-hand jacket	Materials / Techniques	Process of exploration (discovering and exploring metaphorical meanings; posing new questions)	What I have learned from doing this? (my expanded interpretation; learning outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand: Boden • Pattern: regular herringbone • Colours beige and brown • Fabric: 40% wool 32% linen 28% silk • Body lining: 51% viscose, 49% acetate • Size: 42 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beige bouclé thread • Marking tape • Hand-knitting • Stitching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpicking some threads from the woven fabric that the jacket is made of (idea of an embodied fashion awareness; the participants do not follow fashion trends, they “sense” it) • Hand-knitting a loose structure in corresponding colours similar to a suit vest (how the fashion DNA might “look”? Woven vs. knitted; irregular vs. regular) • Marking the lines of a suit vest onto the jacket (the participants skilfully incorporate their skills into their everyday clothing choices; woven jacket becomes a knitted vest) • Inserting the vest within the loose threads of the jacket (fashioning through (un-) fashioning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participants have developed a unique sense of fashion as well as fashion awareness. They “sense” upcoming trends and know how to adapt them in order to work best for them. Due to this, they identify themselves as unique individuals who are somewhat outside the fashion trends, and who represent a higher level of fashion know-how. Because they have these high skills to fashion their (ageing) bodies, they effectively have the ability to un-fashion it; they do not feel that they are restricted by fashion trends imposed on them. 



THEME: RE-MATERIALISING

Second-hand jacket	Materials / Techniques	Process of exploration (discovering and exploring metaphorical meanings; posing new questions)	What I have learned from doing this? (my expanded interpretation; learning outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand: Daks London • Pattern: irregular herringbone with stripe • Colours: dark olive green, light brown and orange • Fabric: 100% pure new wool • Body lining: 100% viscose • Size: 40 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amazon Valencia Lamb Napa leather (GH Leathers, Northampton) • Metal poppers • Orange thread • Stitching • Adding poppers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpicking the jacket's collar (the participants told me about various garments from their past they remembered very fondly; how these objects can be re-materialised?) • Inserting new, circular leather collar, corresponding to the various artefacts the participants told me about (those past objects were actively worn by the participants, how did they make them feel? How they would make them feel now? Is it about re-materializing the objects or re-feeling them?) • Covering the stitching (keeping it wearable) • Elongating the jacket (suit-coat transformation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each participant told me about some garments special to him. In most cases, these artefacts were connected with their past and often no longer existed. However, the participants had either photos of them or could describe them in great detail. Despite the clear significance of these objects, my interpretation is that it is not the objects themselves that the participants wish to re-materialise but it is the feeling of wearing them that they would like to re-live. Re-materialising is therefore significant, but less in a direct sense and more as a mental aspect. 



4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, my aim was to explain how the developed trans-disciplinary methodology was applied. In doing so, I followed the fairly standard stages of a research process; that is, I outlined the steps of data gathering, data analysis, knowledge production and knowledge dissemination. In this chapter, my focus lay primarily on explaining the stages of data gathering and analysis. I also briefly described the stages preceding the data gathering in a pilot study, including project advertising and sampling. The detailed description of all of these stages, together with personal reflexivity, allowed me to present the reader with a comprehensive overview of how the project developed from its early stages, when my interest lay in older women and their experiences of fashionable clothing, through to the idea of conducting a comparative study with men and women, to its final settings when the focus shifted entirely to older men. This was important to explain because it allows the reader to fully appreciate this project for what it is, but also the researcher's journey. Below, I offer the summary of the key insights presented in this chapter.

Firstly, although my aim for this chapter was to provide a detailed overall description of the full research process, one of the main foci of this chapter was on the detailed description of the processes of the multi-modal data analysis. This was important because it was the stage of the research process where the merging of the two adopted methodologies, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Arts-Informed Research, came to the fore especially clearly. Arguably, such complex data analysis permitted a fuller appreciation of the richness of the research material and production of highly interpretative written accounts and fashion artefacts, including garments and films, in comparison to the standard text-based processes. These outcomes, presented over the following two chapters, were achieved through engaging with an array of research methods, tools and practices, with some of them being typically utilised in Art and Design. As evidenced in the following chapters, the composition of the textual and visual research outcomes more fully represent the complexity of mature men's relationships with fashion and clothing, as well as documenting some of the steps in the process of developing the researcher's interpretations.

Secondly, as I have already indicated, my intention for this chapter was to present the steps undertaken throughout the research process as my own journey. Conducting this personal reflexivity carried equal importance with explaining the research methods, practices and tools utilised. It is precisely via this exercise that I had a chance to explain the significance of this particular topic to me as a researcher, but also my own pre-conceptions regarding it. It is the unique combination of the topic of the study, the methodology I employed and the skills and sensitivities of the researcher conducting the study that impacted on the form(s) of the research outcomes presented in the two subsequent chapters.

Finally, what I need to highlight as one of the key points in this chapter is that of the dynamic character of the hermeneutic dialogue occurring throughout each stage of the research process. Arguably, the process of constant negotiation between what the participants said and how the researcher interpreted it had begun as early as the stage of data collecting; the stage of data analysis was, therefore, a period of time when the researcher developed in-depth understandings of the participants' experiences through exploring different levels and forms of these interpretations. Finally, while these dynamics have defined the stage of data collection and analysis, as well as knowledge production, the final research stage of outcomes dissemination is co-determined by the research and the research audience. In this spirit, I distinguish between the academic and non-academic research audiences, which I attempt to reach via different forms of dissemination of the fruits of this research. Consequently, the research outcomes are presented in chronological order in the two subsequent chapters; in Chapter 5, I describe the processes of development of artefacts, and in Chapter 6, I present the corresponding written interpretations.

5. PRACTICAL EXPLORATIONS: processes and artefacts

5.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I explained the practical application of the hybrid methodology, Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, designed for this study. Such a novel fusion of different research processes resulted in an integrative research mechanism with the capacity to encapsulate both fashion theory and practice. Moreover, implementing such a hybrid research methodology allowed me not only to respond to the topic I was investigating but also accommodate and utilise my skills, expertise and sensitivities as an artist and fashion designer. As I explained in the previous chapter, the novelty of my approach was not in the way I gathered the empirical data but in how I analysed the combination of textual and visual elements. The processes of data analysis had three interconnected stages: IPA analysis, outfit analysis and practical explorations; all three of these stages were explained in the previous chapter. But the processes of practical explorations require further explanation because this stage of the data analysis was a transitional one, when not only the data were analysed but also some findings were disseminated. This chapter reflects this and its aim is to show the transition between the research stages of data analysis, knowledge production and dissemination. Consequently, below I explain the processes of re-analysing each of nine subordinate themes using practical explorations as a method of enhancing my interpretations; I explain each of these processes in relation to my hermeneutic circle. Explanation of the processes of creation of each of the artefacts, nine jackets and nine films, is a direct introduction to the corresponding written interpretations, which I present in the following chapter.

Brown (2003, p.2; cited in Sullivan, 2010, p.79) notes that *“considered as the outcome of research, artworks are represented as the product of poetic, technical, and other measures of cultural investigation”*. In a similar vein, the series of fashion artefacts discussed in the following sections are the result of my investigation into older men’s experiences of fashion and clothing. Such an analysis was based on a certain mode of “thinking through making”, and, as explained in the previous chapter, was often based on exploring metaphorical references and connections. Moreover, these processes of interpretations involved utilising my skills and sensibilities as a designer and artist by *“employ[ing] experimental and hermeneutic methods that reveal[ed] and articulate[d] the tacit knowledge*

that is situated and embodied in specific artworks and artistic processes" (Borgdorff, 2006, p.23; cited in Sullivan 2010, p.79). Here, I argue that these artefacts metaphorically embody my understandings. Furthermore, as introduced in Chapter 4, they are a peculiar form of the 'side-effects' of my interpretative processes. Unlike side-products, however, they are fully integrated within the composition of this body of work and I present them here as part of my results. From the methodological point of view, while each jacket was produced as a creative interpretation and response to the empirical material, the role of each film was to capture and document the key moments of this complex process. I expand upon this in a later section of this chapter, where I discuss the role of and relationships between the artefacts and the themes in the research exhibition which I curated.

5.2 PRACTICAL EXPLORATIONS: PROCESSES

This section contains detailed explanations of how practical explorations were used as an analytical and interpretive tool. Thus, in the following sections are extended descriptions of the processes signalled to the reader in Chapter 4 in table 4.11 (pp.160-168). However, while in the previous chapter my intention was to explain the role of practical explorations as a stage of the multi-layered data analysis, in this chapter, my aim is to explain the significance of each of these series of practical explorations in relation to each of the themes, as well as to introduce the resultant artefacts. As I explained in the previous chapter, at this stage of the data analysis, each of the nine emergent subordinate themes was re-approached separately and re-interpreted. For this, I engaged with various artful creative practices as a way to stimulate and enhance my thinking about the data and initial findings (subordinate themes). This stage was based on a fusion of interpretative writing and creative making, and had a unique path of development for each and every theme; I explain this in more depth in the following sections.

However, although each of these processes of practical explorations were different and unique, they all involved a selection of an *appropriate*²⁸ second-hand suit jacket, which I explain in the subsequent sections. So, before I can explain these processes further, I must

²⁸ I use the word '*appropriate*' here as a representation of my own subjective selections; a jacket that to me *felt* relevant and appropriate.

return to the idea of approaching each of the jackets as a “canvas” that, on the one hand, was already meaning-loaded, but on the other, had a capacity to stimulate as much as accommodate my unfolding interpretations. Townsend (2004, 2011) in her study on denim garments explored similar creative possibilities and argued that 3-dimensional garments can successfully accommodate a designer’s creative interpretations. Indeed, in my work, each second-hand jacket was utilised as a starting point for the development of a new artefact. In this sense, and as I explain below, these processes were indeed complex transformations from one artefact to another. In parallel to these physical transformations in the appearance of these objects, these processes were conducted to facilitate and stimulate transformations in my unfolding understanding of each theme. These processes were captured via short (1-3 min) films²⁹, presented in this chapter alongside the produced jackets. The sound for each of these films was made using the recordings of the interviews³⁰. I present these processes, jackets and films below; I build upon them in the following section, where I explain how these elements were conveyed in the curated exhibition.

5.2.1 MIRRORING

Following the standard IPA protocol (Smith et al., 2009) throughout the process of the initial reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts, I marked the intuitive points of interest and coded them in an exploratory manner in order to produce a basic understanding of the role that fashion and clothing have played throughout the participants’ life courses. This iteration process made me aware of the strong emerging theme of “Mirroring”; in many instances, the participants described how in the past it was important for them to mimic the appearance of others, as explained, for example, by Eric (60):

Going back to when I was very young, I don’t know. Probably 14... I suppose fashion was important but it was very different then because being very young you tend to go along with what’s happening. You’re not really forming your own opinions of fashion. You tend to going along with the crowd.

Eric, 3-7

²⁹ These films were directed by myself, but the shooting, montaging and editing was done by the professional photographer Fraser West.

³⁰ Each sound was created as a creative collaboration between myself and the musician Neal Spowage. This collaboration was based on mutual knowledge exchanged between two artists with all the specified by me sound elements (participants’ voices) arranged and composed into the final version by Neal.

Significantly, each participant described such experiences very differently. While some of them related very strongly to the various subcultural groups, others referred to music idols, older siblings, or certain fashion designers. The role of gender seemed to be significant in relation to mirroring with most of the participants explaining it as a practice occurring exclusively amongst men, as previously discussed for example by Polhemus in *Street Style* (2010). This marked the first checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with texts. Simultaneously, I began looking at how the concepts of mirroring and mimicry have been used in fashion, for example, in Hussein Chalayan's Panoramic (A/W 1998/9) or Alexander McQueen's Voss (S/S 2001) collections, as both used mirrors as elements of the catwalk (Evans, 2003), and artists such as David Bowie, who often utilised such concepts within his stage costumes. These visuals were not informative in an analytical sense but provided me with a conceptual understanding of how such themes can function within the fashion context.

At the same time, most of the participants expressed the current significance of observing other men and being inspired by their look. This, however, as they reported, was different to their past 'direct' mirroring practices, or even copying others' appearance. All of these factors made me question how these past practices had influenced the participants' behaviours in the present. I felt very strongly visually inspired by this; I wanted to aesthetically explore the relationship, as well as the tension, between mirroring someone else's appearance in the past and a more settled and confident form of being inspired by another's image as a mature man in the present. Furthermore, I found it puzzling when looking at the images of my participants including the various artefacts that they brought to the interview; clearly all of them over the years have developed a very distinctive fashion sense and style, such as Henry (54) who took great pride in his collection of very colourful and flamboyant suits, including many from designers Vivienne Westwood (fig. 5.1) and Gresham Blake. Even more interesting was that, in my opinion, there was nothing ordinary about the way the participants presented themselves on the day of their interviews. This marked the second checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle, namely, engaging with images.

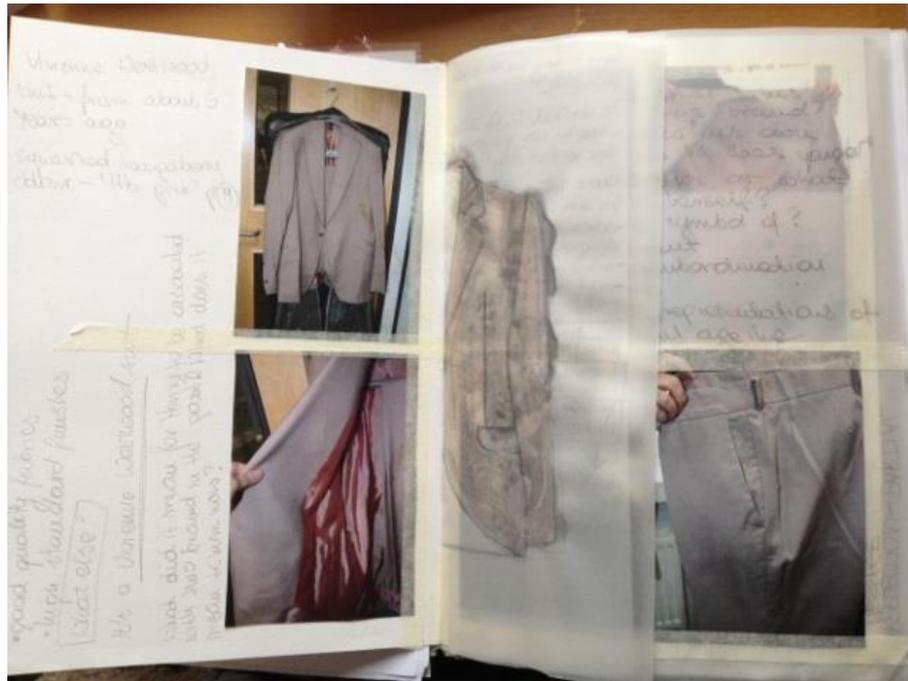


Figure 5.1 “Mirroring” sketchbook; Vivienne Westwood’s suit brought in by Henry (54), Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2013

Intrigued by this developing understanding of the collected data, I began my practical explorations by purchasing a second-hand men’s suit jacket. I was not searching for any distinctive shape, colour or form; just the opposite, I was subjectively targeting what I perceived to be an *ordinary*³¹ jacket; one of many similar items available to buy in local charity shops. This was my first attempt to metaphorically experience and understand how it would be to purposely acquire a garment that is just like everyone else’s, something that, in my opinion, had nothing distinctive about it.

I then spent several hours just observing this jacket placed on a mannequin while re-reading and re-listening to the corresponding passages from the interviews. In parallel to this, I completed a mind map exercise on what the Mirroring theme might mean (fig. 5.2). Doing this allowed me to capture the early stages of my unfolding interpretations. At this point, I had also a very strong visual idea of using the jacket as a “pin board” for a large amount of similar, almost identical, elements and to see how these would influence the jacket. I chose to work with Lego™ plastic model men, purely because they directly related to a male figure. Inspired

³¹ “Most of the meaningful references in fashion are submerged in the look of the ordinary dressed persons at any given moment, because fashion is mainly engaged in acting out its own formal history, and reacts most vividly only to itself (...)” (Hollander, 1994, p.16).

by this idea, I ordered 300 Lego™ men from eBay. Once delivered, I began to plan how I could incorporate them on to the surface of the jacket, through a series of visual notes and drawings. Importantly, while assembling the Lego™ men, I discovered that, for me, there was a metaphorical relevance between doing this process of surface placement/ decoration and men assembling their attire day-by-day. I decided to capture this idea by making a short fashion film (film 5.1 on the memory card).

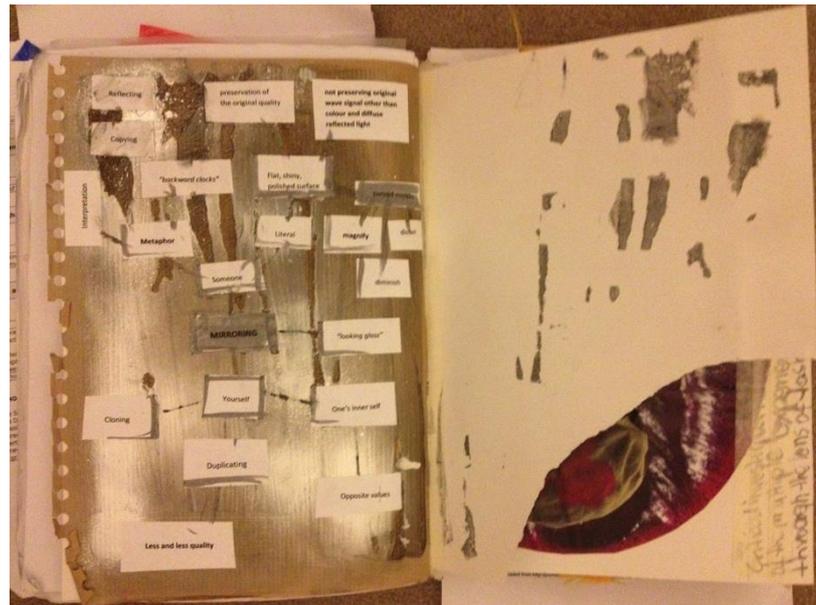


Figure 5.2 “Mirroring” sketchbook pages; mind map exercise, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2013

In addition to placing the Lego™ men, I was experimenting with attaching reflective glass beads on to the surface of the jacket because they had a very strong visual resemblance to the silver surface of a mirror. However, while experimenting with them influenced my thinking about the data, I also realised that I did not find them aesthetically interesting and engaging in the sense that the connection there was too literal; so I decided to focus exclusively on attaching Lego™ men to the surface of the jacket. It also became apparent to me that the Mirroring theme was not only about the individuals but even more so about their relationships, or in some cases, the bonds or tensions between individuals and their agencies in regards to the peer groups they belonged to and how they were defined by, or within, these groups³² (Polhemus, 2010). For this reason, I started to experiment with wrapping clear elastic threads around the Lego men sewn into the surface of the jacket, and

³² The groups most often mentioned by the participants were Mods, Rockers and Punks.

introducing tension by pulling it (fig. 5.3). Doing this significantly changed the shape of the jacket. By engaging with these objects and materials, I marked the third and fourth checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle, engaging with objects, materials, and artefacts.

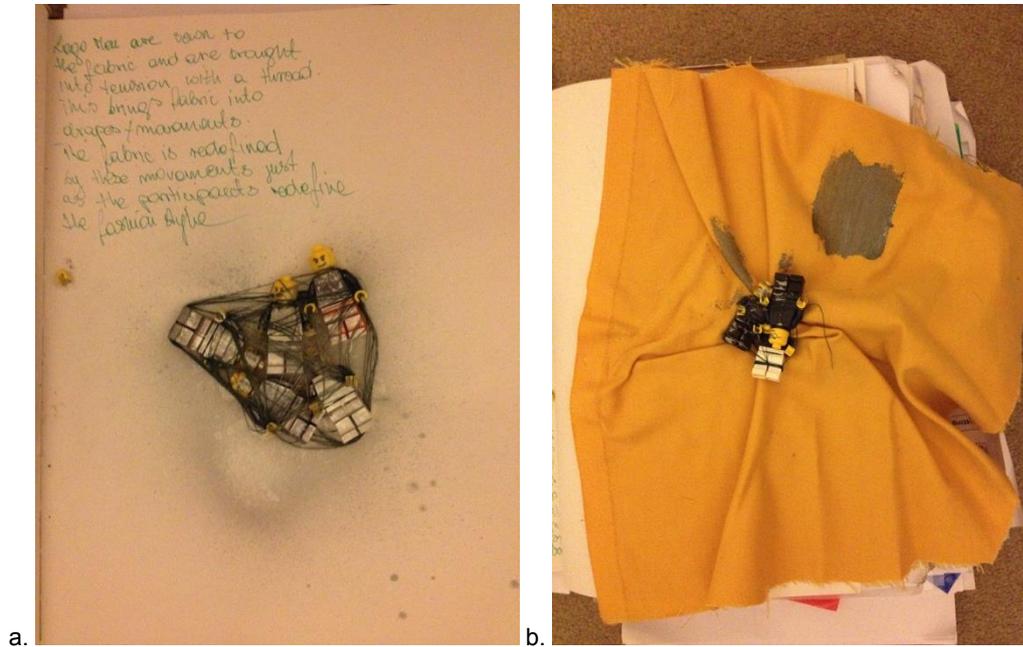


Figure 5.3 Experimentations with Lego men, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2013

All these practical explorations made me more aware of the complexity of the theme, and its many potential forms. Furthermore, through my physical engagement with materiality and manipulation of the fabric i.e. experimenting with bringing tension into play using the clear elastic thread and watching how it strategically altered the shape of the garment, made me realise more fully how strong the relationship between the participants' past mirroring practices and current behaviour had become. It is through this duplicating of the appearances of others that they had developed their current fashion autonomy and/or gained the courage to pursue their individual clothing styles. I completed the jacket by spraying it with silver paint, enhancing its mirroring quality (fig.5.4).

It was at this stage that I began writing up the mirroring theme. It is only through completing different layers of analysis, namely, textual, visual and these highly metaphorical practical explorations, that I felt that I understood the theme enough to embark on writing about it, which marked the final point on my hermeneutic circle, re-engaging with text. I present my written interpretative analysis of the theme in the following chapter.



Figure 5.4 The “Mirroring” Jacket a. front; b. back, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2013 (Photo: Fraser West)

5.2.2 DIS-COMFORTING

The processes of the textual coding also brought my attention to several passages in which the participants referred to their physical comfort. This included various aspects of physical and mental comfort; for example, while some of the participants discussed physical comfort as a result of their mental comfort (feeling good wearing a certain garment), others discussed it in the context of their past participation in various youth subcultures (comfort as a result of ‘fitting within’ a group’s standards). However, the biggest “surprise” for me as a researcher was the realisation of the presence of the body dis-comforting practices in the participants’ past and present fashion behaviours. This was opposed to my pre-conception of older men’s relationship with fashion; I entered the study with the belief that older men value highly their physical comfort and they would not sacrifice it for the sake of the fashionable look; dis-comforting practices in my understanding were reserved to youngsters, and perhaps even more specifically to young women.

At this stage, I re-approached the images of the participants on the day of their interviews and I started exploring the images of the artefacts they chose to bring with them. I once again looked for the connections between the interviews, images and my field notes. Since some of the artefacts that the participants brought along were photos of the artefacts

that no longer existed, I quickly discovered that some of these photos carried special memories of the dis-comforting caused by those garments. This understanding emerged through the interplay between what the participants said about dis-comforting their bodies, the garments and images they showed to me, and what I thought this might have meant; this was the first step of my unfolding interpretation and it marked the first and second checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with text and images.

I then sought to process this data further. I wrote about it, testing my own ideas on paper. I tried to stay reflexive and to acknowledge my own pre-conceptions and how they were influencing my developing understanding. As a result of this, I noted some of the ideas of what the “Dis-Comforting” theme might be (fig. 5.5). I became strongly driven by one of the passages, in which Henry discusses his willingness to wear a corset in order to get into fashionable clothing:

Comfort... no. Style first. I will breathe in, and fasten anything, and live with it for the day, if I have to. I would probably consider a corset, if I had to get into something.

Henry, 489-492

Inspired by this, I experimented with materials that corresponded to my unfolding understandings, such as metal corset wire, while developing the theme further. I chose this material because, to me, it metaphorically represented the stereotypical ideal of masculinity, strength and roughness hidden within its hard metal structure; historically, however, it was an innovative material for the female corset in the early 20th century in Britain and Germany (Eleri, 2010). I drew in my sketchbook some ideas - I tried to understand. I felt lost and I realised that I did not understand enough to write up the theme.

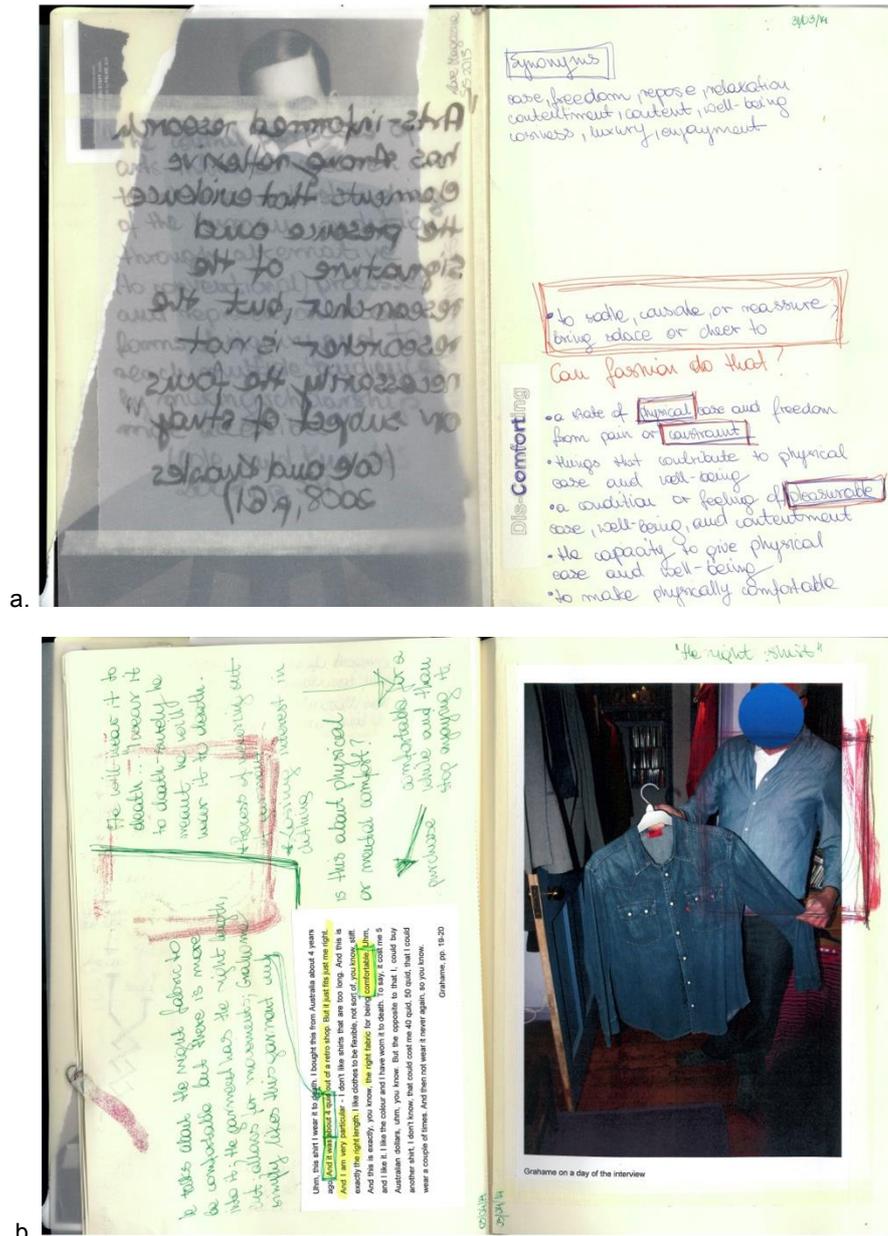


Figure 5.5 a-b "Dis-Comforting" sketchbook: initial notes, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

I asked a male model³³ to wrap the metal spiral corset wire around his body. This proved to be a stimulating and thought-provoking exercise as it allowed me to observe the physical signs left on his body by the metal wire in the process of the direct body dis-comforting. It resulted also in the set of photos (fig. 5.6a) and a written account given by the model (fig. 5.7b) in which he reflected on his bodily experience. This, once again, allowed me to analyse the previously gathered data from yet another perspective, but also to capture the

³³ Although, throughout this chapter I use the word "model" I refer to the male relative/volunteer with a similar physique to some of the participants, not a professional model.

process of my unfolding interpretation. This marked the third checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: materials and objects.

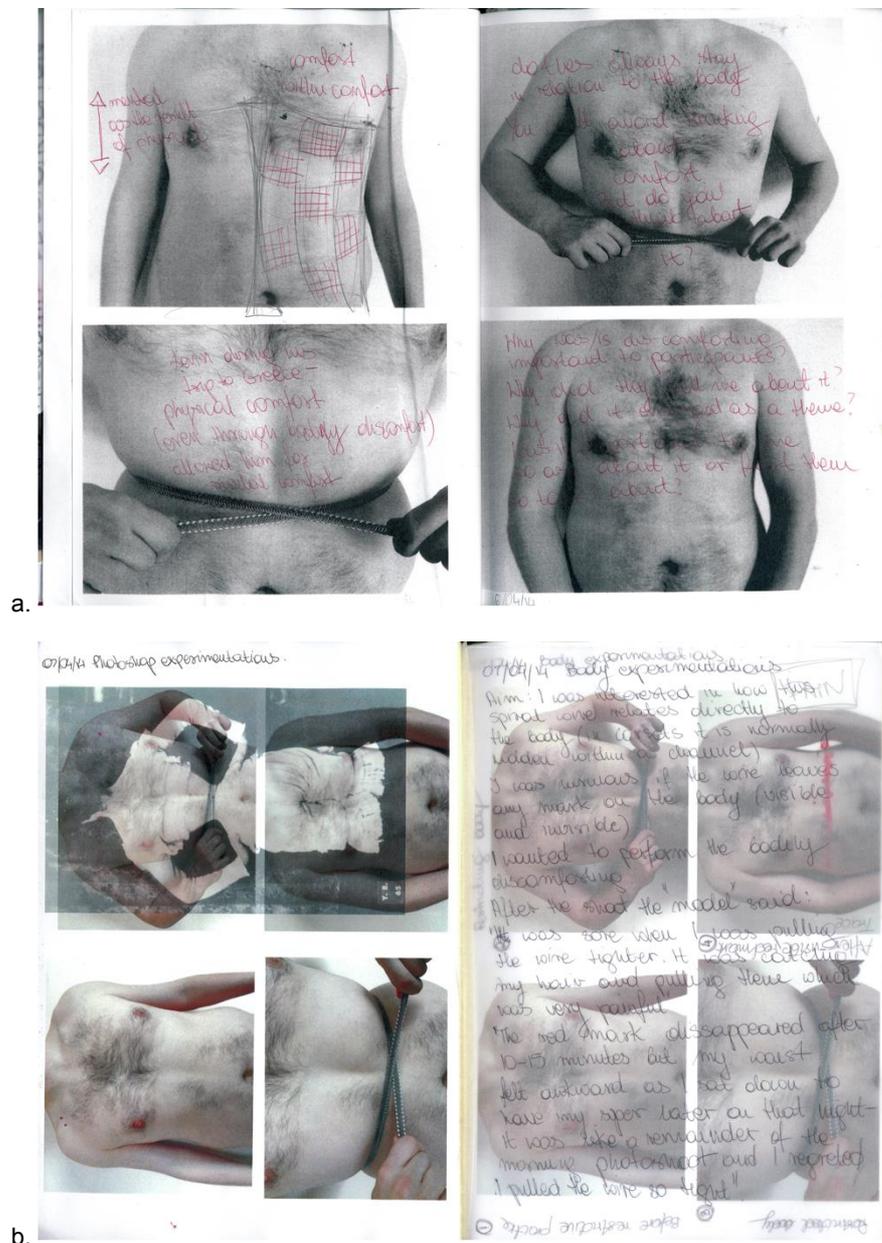


Figure 5.6 “Dis-Comforting” sketchbook; a. images taken while experimenting with wrapping metal wire around a male model’s body; b. the model’s reflection on his experience during the experimentation, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

At this stage I purchased a second-hand men’s jacket and I started planning how I could incorporate the metal wire within it. I re-read and re-listened to the relevant passages. I started to “make” my design (fig. 5.7); I tried not to impose myself on the data; instead I let the data lead and stimulate my making. Correspondingly, making this jacket proved to be a

physically painful process for myself, causing bruises and cuts on my hands. I completed the “Dis-Comforting” jacket (fig. 5.8) and I re-created the experiments with the metal wire and model documenting it in a short film (film 5.2 on the memory card); this was, I believe, the key moment allowing me to more clearly formulate my ideas about the theme. This marked the artefacts checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle. I felt that I could finally understand the various experiences of men dis-comforting their bodies that my participants told me about. As the result of this iterative process of making and writing, I finished writing up yet another draft of the Dis-Comforting theme. This marked the final checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle, text II.



Figure 5.7 a-d “Dis-Comforting” theme: practical experimentations (Photo: Sadkowska, 2014)



Figure 5.8 The “Dis-Comforting” jacket a. front; b. back, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014 (Photo: Fraser West)

5.2.3 PEACOCKING

Through the textual and visual analysis of the interview transcripts and the participants' outfits, the "Peacocking"³⁴ theme emerged as one of the strongest. After completing these stages of data analysis, it was clear to me that it was important for the participants to be recognised and appreciated for their clothing style, including attracting women, as explained by Grahame (61):

And I think, you know, I am pretty sure that there is, you know, a big connection between fashion and being a peacock. It's what attracts the girls when you're a teenager, or when you get older, or whatever. It's all part of that.

Grahame, 249-252

Intrigued by this idea, I extended my analysis by looking at the images of various artefacts that the participants brought in to the interviews, which marked the first two checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with text and images.

While it is justified to say that most of these artefacts were rather flamboyant, one stood out especially strongly, a shirt brought in by Ian (58). This shirt by Paul Smith (from the 1980s) was not only very colourful, including intense oranges, pinks and violets (fig. 5.9) but was also covered in a loud flower pattern. At the same time, Ian commented "*I can't believe I did wear it*". Indeed, while comparing this shirt to the garments that Ian wore on the day of his interview, there was a sense of a strong visual discrepancy. This could simply be explained by clothing for different occasions (Entwistle, 2015); this shirt was perhaps suited only for special occasions, such as nights out, as opposed to a garment that is worn as a part of an everyday outfit. However, I also found interesting the time that had elapsed between Ian's past and present garments being produced/purchased and worn, which I wanted to explore further.

³⁴ The term "peacocking" has a got threefold significance here; firstly as McDowell (1997) notes: "*throughout history, the peacock male – memorable, magnificent or assertively confident – has strutted across the pages of men's fashion*"; secondly, it relates to the so-called "*Peacock Revolution of the 1960s*" first initiated by Teddy Boys who "*began to emancipate themselves from traditionally sedate dress and donned more prismatic colours*" (Sadako Takeda et al., 2016, p.208); thirdly, as I explain in the following chapter the term was often used by the study participants themselves to explain their behaviours and practices.

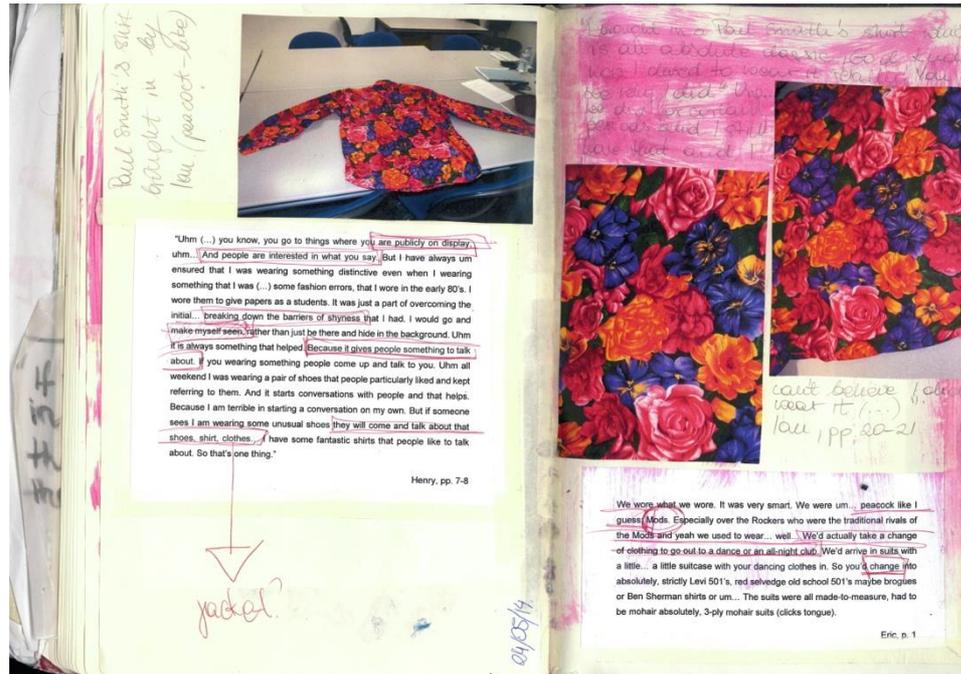


Figure 5.9 “Peacocking” sketchbook pages; shirt by Paul Smith brought in by Ian (58), Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

Consequently, I began the process of practical exploration by purchasing another second-hand suit jacket from a local charity shop. This was interesting because, while on the outside the jacket was plain dark grey fabric, inside it was fully lined with bright purple translucent viscose fabric. I spent several hours looking at its inside and outside and trying to understand why the flamboyant part of this garment was hidden inside where it was invisible to the external viewer. I intuitively felt that this held a metaphorical resemblance to the peacocking that my participants told me about. I decided to unpick the back of the jacket and arrange it in a way so that half of it was showing the outside of the grey shell, while the other half of it was showing the purple lining (fig. 5.10), which marked the third checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with objects and materials. This was an inspiring exercise that triggered completing a short mind map exercise in which I noted my initial ideas regarding the Peacocking theme, including the idea of the constant negotiation between the “private” and “public” types of peacocking (fig. 5.11).



Figure 5.10 “Peacocking” sketchbook pages; purple lining jacket experimentations, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

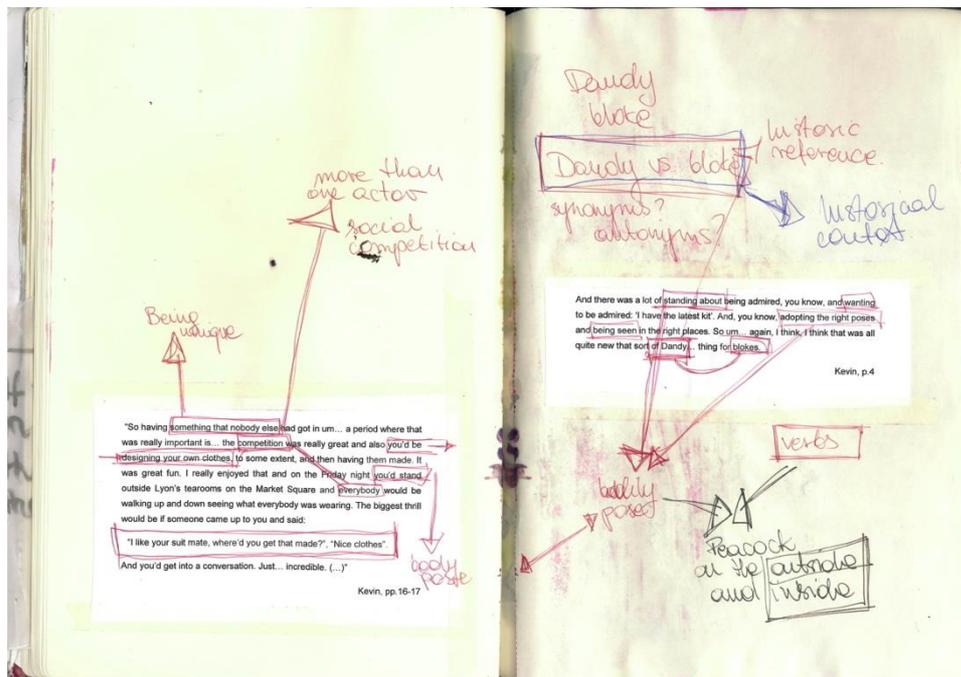


Figure 5.11 “Peacocking” sketchbook pages; mind map exercise, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

However, at the same time, I felt that the jacket that I was experimenting with was quite reflective of the flamboyant character of the experiences that I was attempting to understand. At the same time, when visiting one of the charity shops I found a jacket by Ted

Baker, which similar to the jacket I had previously selected had a settled striped grey exterior shell, but a colourful and intricate lining inside (fig. 5.12). I was intuitively driven to it, as visually the lining fabric was very similar to the shirt by Paul Smith brought in by Ian that had sparked my interest at the earlier stage of the analysis. I purchased the jacket and followed the steps I had undertaken with the previous jacket; unpicking the back seams and twisting it around so half of it was inside out. I completed more writing and started to plan how I could “finish” the jacket. It was important for me to further explore its wearable qualities in the sense that an individual, while wearing it, would have a chance to conceal or reveal the flower pattern of the lining. I felt that this was directly corresponding to how my participants felt about their peacocking practices: that it was their initiative to embark on it or not; something they have learned how to do throughout the years of practising it.

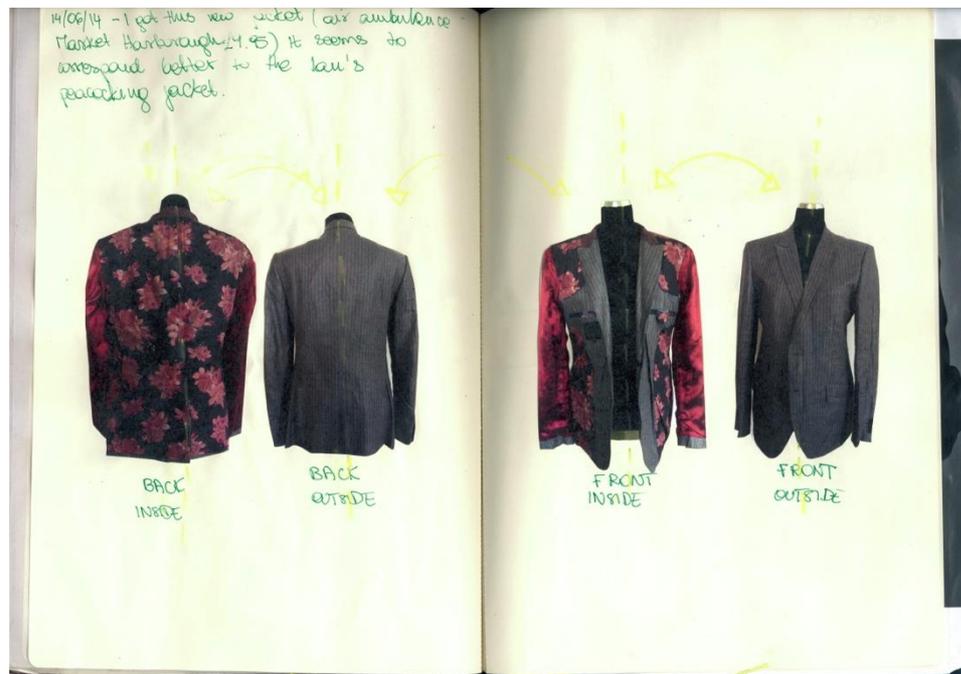


Figure 5.12 “Peacocking” sketchbook pages; a purchased second-hand jacket by Ted Baker, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

Consequently, I decided to neatly finish all the unpicked seams as well as adding extra buttonholes and buttons in order to enhance the multiple possibilities of wearing this garment. It then could not only be worn inside out and half inside out, but also back to front and front to back. This really encouraged my thinking about the importance of the participants’ (fashion) agency, not only when selecting clothes to wear but also in the way they decided to

wear and style them, developed through years of their active engagement with fashion and clothing. Intrigued by this idea, I visited the clothing archives in Barrow-upon-Soar (Collection Resources Centre) where I had a chance to see various historical menswear artefacts, including highly decorative jackets (fig. 5.13) and waistcoats from the 18th century; interestingly this re-marked the third checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle. This was significant because I became more familiar with the historic context of decorative menswear, something to which some of the participants referred in their interviews.



Figure 5.13 “Peacocking” sketchbook pages; jacket seen in the Barrow-upon-Soar clothing archives, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

Although at this stage I had completed the final draft of my written interpretation of this theme, I still felt that the jacket was not yet finished, that it was simply not fully corresponding to what I was trying to describe in words. I began a series of experimentations with various beads and collages (fig. 5.14). My final step to finish the jacket was to embellish one side of the lining with translucent beads. These corresponded to the colour of the lining and it added yet another option to the wearer of the jacket; this was to show the ‘hyper-peacocking’³⁵ embellished side of the garment, or to hide it, so remaining the only one who

³⁵ This closely links to the introduced in Chapter 2 idea that it was the “male dress [that] was always essentially more advanced than female throughout fashion history, and tended to lead the way, to set the standard, to make the aesthetic propositions to which female fashion responded” (Hollander, 1994, p.6).

would be aware of its existence (fig. 5.15). This marked the final two checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle, however, in a reverse order: text II and artefacts. In the short corresponding film, I documented the possibility of different ways of wearing the jacket in which the wearer can reveal or conceal the beads (film 5.3 on the memory card).



Figure 5.14 a-b “Peacocking” sketchbook pages; collages and experimentations with beads, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014



a.



b.

Figure 5.15 The “Peacocking” jacket; a. front; b. back, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014 (Photo: Fraser West)

5.2.4 PIONEERING

“Pioneering” emerged as a strong and relatively straightforward theme, touching upon the participants’ past connections with the various subcultures, which resulted in their current attitudes towards ageing stylishly. All five participants expressed their beliefs that, in the past, they pioneered certain youth movements and related menswear styles, as explained by Henry (54):

[H]aving grown up in the 60s and 70s I have probably lived through (...) some of the most exciting changes and developments in male clothing.

Henry, 3-6

While all of the participants felt very strongly about their pioneering past, they also felt that currently their generation of men is actively influencing and re-defining what it means to grow older. Inspired by this, I began the process of practical explorations by looking into the relevant historical aspects, including the history of menswear from 1950s to 1980s (fig. 5.16). This was a significant first step towards developing a deeper understanding of the theme, because it allowed me to better understand the social aspects of the youth fashion, which started in the 1950s. Admittedly this is how we understand fashion to be today; however, for the participants in this study, youth-oriented fashion was something that was associated with cultural change, or for some, even a kind of rebellion or revolt (Hebdidge, 1979; Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Polhemus, 2010). Furthermore, I was interested how, for some participants, pioneering became so deeply engraved in who they have become that it is an inherent part of their everyday practices and behaviours, as discussed by Grahame (61):

I never needed anybody to tell me that a new band's in fashion, you know, music. Because I am already there. I know it's in fashion because I bought it last week.

Grahame, 300-302

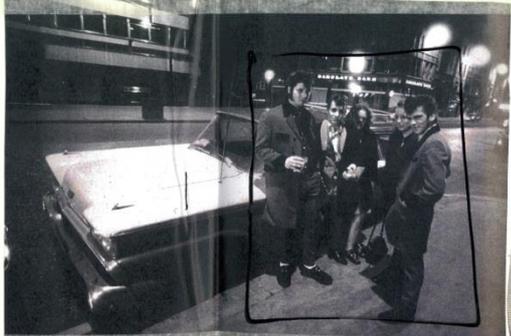
I supplemented this primary understanding of the theme by completing a mind map exercise (fig. 5.17), after which I returned to the relevant passages from the interviews (fig. 5.18) and the images from the participants' past, which marked the first two checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle, engaging with text and images. Especially useful here were images provided by Eric, who presented me with a collection of 14 photos starting from his early childhood; his attire in each of these photos was a direct representation of the contemporary fashion trends. I used these photos to create a short fashion film (film 5.4 on the memory card) because I wanted to understand how his clothing style has changed over the years and how this might relate to the pioneering theme. These activities gave me a sense of an overall, yet basic, understanding of the theme; I wanted to explore it further.

Fig. 16 "Covet" style topcoat with a parallel velvet collar, 1953. Made by Jace & Company of Abchurch Lane, London. Jace won the International Dandy Tailoring Trophy awarded by *The Tailor & Cutter* magazine five times.
The London Book, p. 114

10/07/14

Velvet collar

packet flaps and trims.


Toddy Boys in Trafalgar Square 1953 (Photograph by Henry Grant (Henry Grant Collection, Museum of London))
The London Book, p. 115.

What happens is not the creation of objects and meanings from nothing, but rather the transposition and rearrangement of what is given (and honored) into a pattern which carries a new meaning, its transition to a new world, and its celebration. (Barthes, p. 117)

Reds outside the Black Rovers Pub, Bishopsgate, City of London, c. 1972. Photograph by Peter Henry. *The London Book* (Steinmetz, Ehrmann, Evans) p. 103 (2005)

a.

What was the subject of pioneering?
 • the jacket itself (or other clothes)?
 • the meaning attached to it?
 How was the context changed, or the meaning relocated? Clothes-commodities, source of self-indulgence

Pioneering at "style of ageing"?

Pioneering at pioneering

The simultaneity between what the image defines projecting a style and pioneering? Role of commodity (my pioneering) practice (my pioneering)



Steampacket, 1965. Red Stewart (called as Red the Mad and The Mad's Delight), King John Balding, Julie Driscoll, Brian Auger
The Book, pp. 60-61

* Ageing is not a new phenomenon but its meaning has been relocated to different context -
 • What context?
 • What meaning?

11/07/14

b.

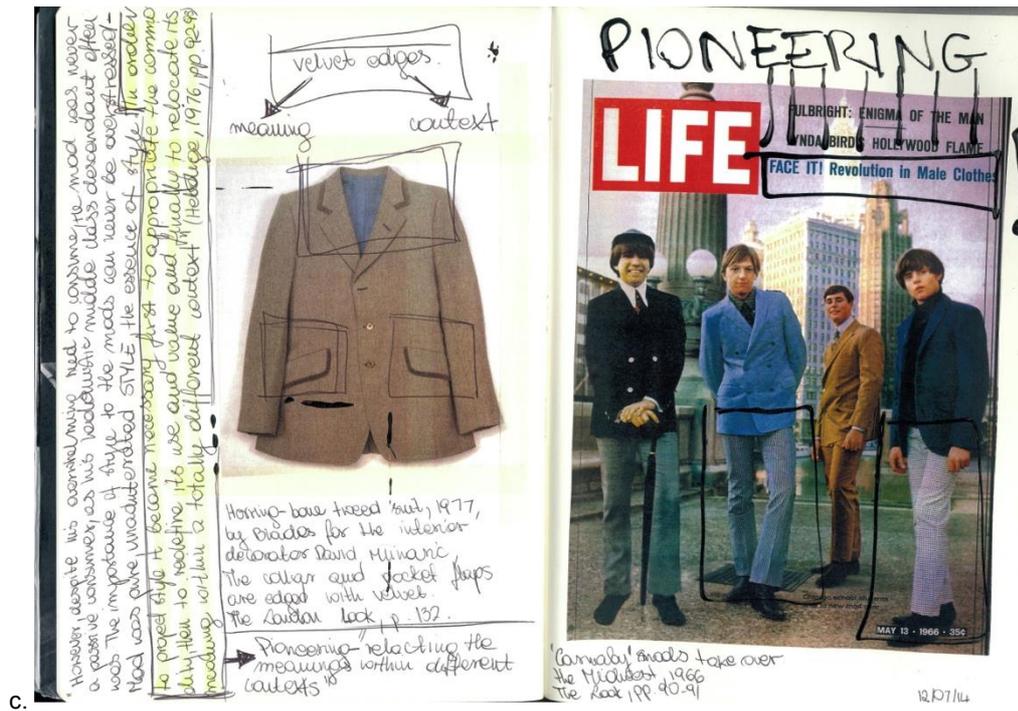


Figure 5.16 a-c "Pioneering" sketchbook pages; understanding historic context, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

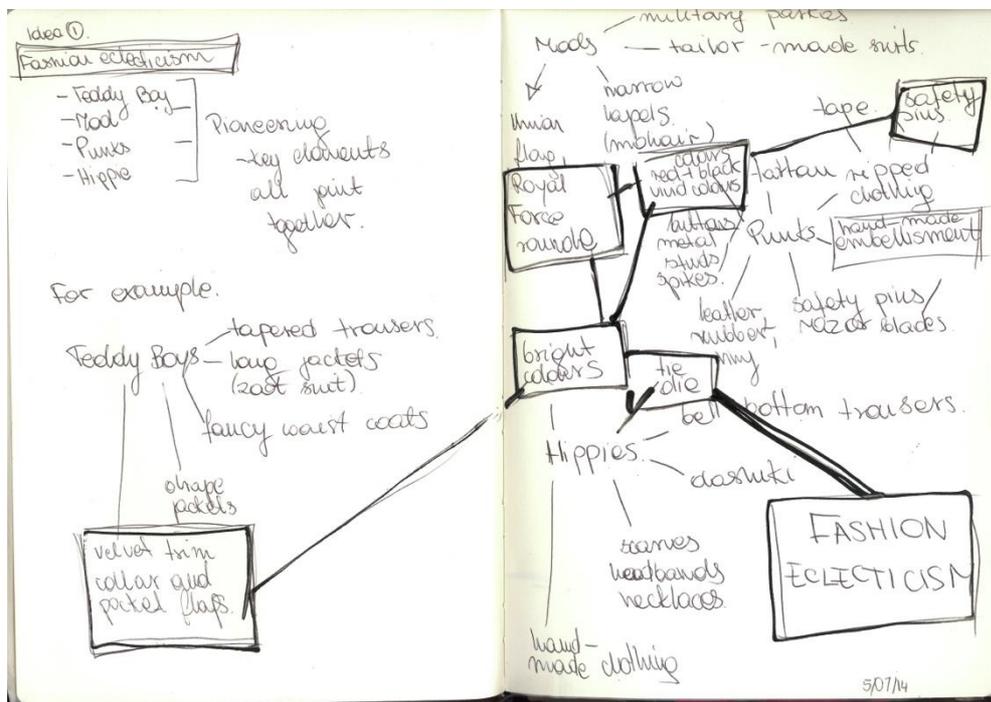


Figure 5.17 "Pioneering" sketchbook pages; mind map exercise, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

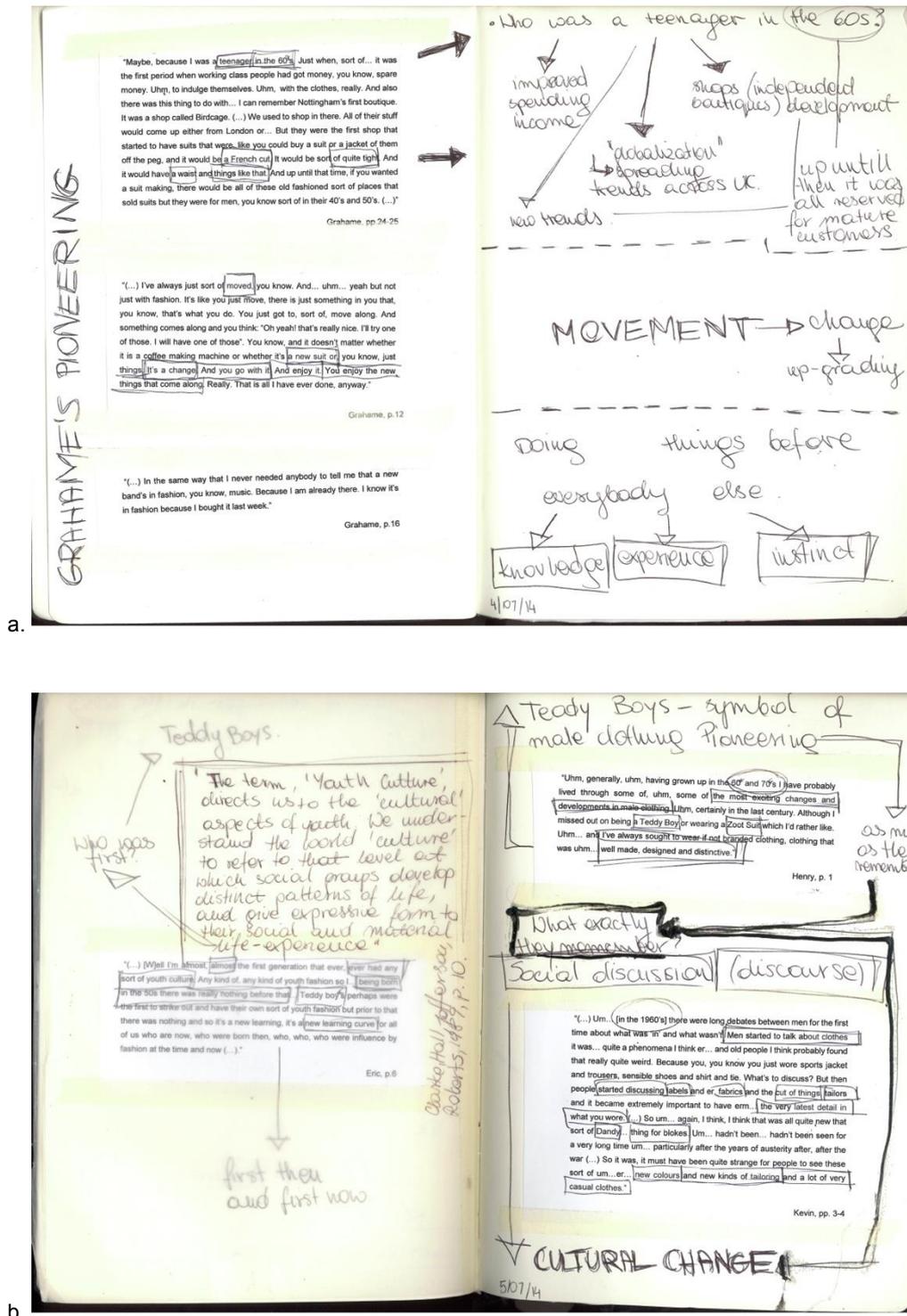


Figure 5.18 a-b "Pioneering" sketchbook pages; interview passages, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

However, I felt that before I could truly embrace the interpretative potential of the practical explorations within the Pioneering theme, I first needed to understand it better from the sociological point of view. For this reason I embarked on reading various sources related to subcultures and their theories. Two books, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* by Hebdidge

(1979) and *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (1976) edited by Hall and Jefferson, were especially inspiring. It is from reading this literature that I realised the importance of the various contexts surrounding these subcultural movements, and the key elements of attire adopted by them as a form of identification and affiliation. Especially influential was this quote from Clarke (1976, p.178):

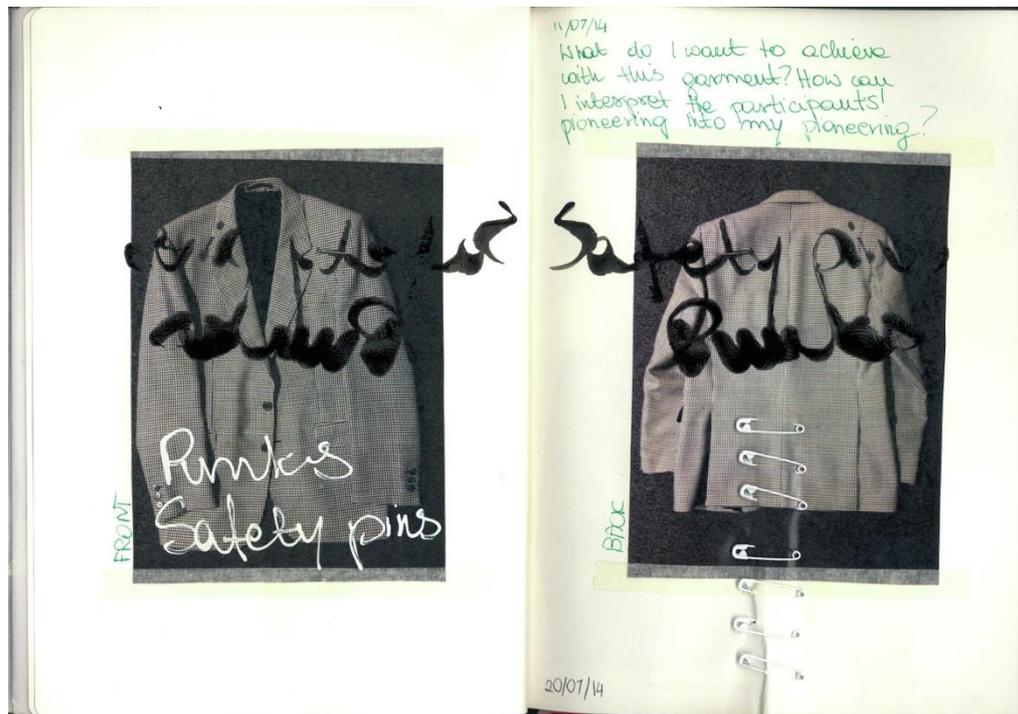
[w]hat happens is not the creation of objects and meanings from nothing, but rather the *transformation* and *rearrangement* of what is given (and 'borrowed') into a pattern which carries a new meaning, its *translation* to a new context, and its *adaption* [emphasis in original].

I felt that this quote strongly related to what the Pioneering theme was touching on: (new) context(s) influencing (fresh) meaning(s). Inspired by this, I went back to the historical accounts and images (both from Eric's archives and books) of menswear from the period of the 1960s onwards and identified various elements typical to different groups; my focus lay primarily on men's suits. These were, for example, velvet collars for Teddy Boys, narrow lapels and the use of the Union Jack for Mods, or safety pins and raw edges for Punks. I was wondering how I could understand the context in which these elements are normally used in order to give them new meanings; I saw this as a direct parallel to the current generation of the third age men (including my participants) actively influencing new meanings of male ageing. These re-marked the first two checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with texts and images.

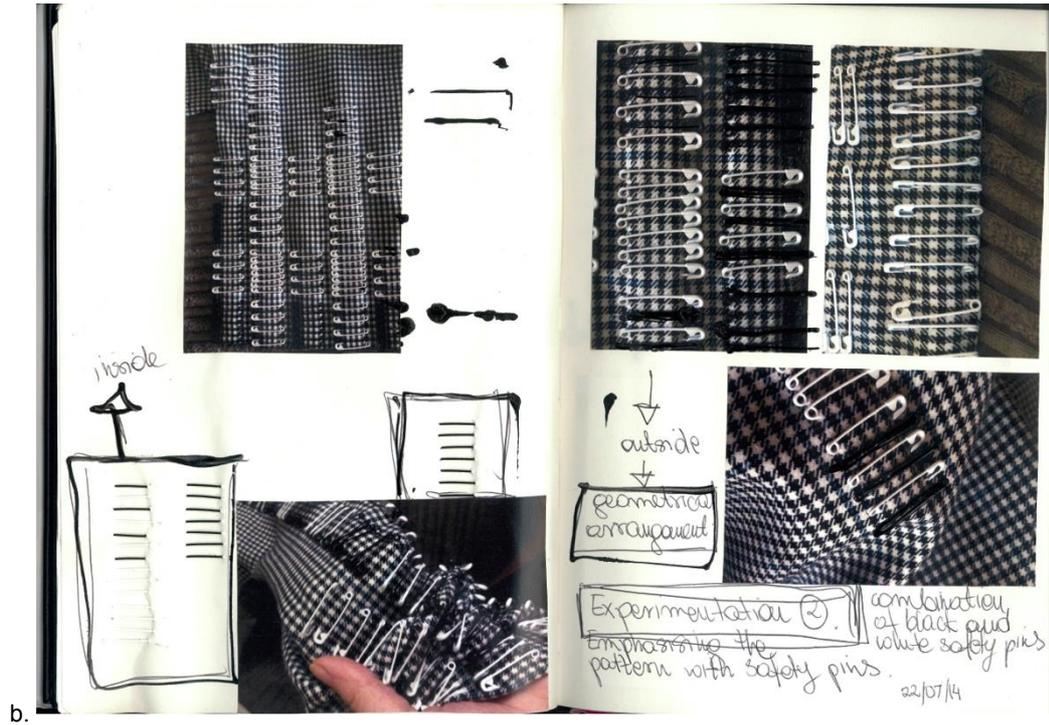
At this stage, I purchased a second-hand men's jacket; this was selected because of its black and white dogtooth pattern wool alluding to the Mod aesthetics. I photographed the jacket and completed a series of collages in my sketchbook through which I explored different concepts as to how I could incorporate the identified typical to different subcultures elements within it. Also, in parallel to this activity, I was noting all my conceptual ideas regarding the pioneering theme. As this progressed, my writing was stimulating my making and vice versa. With especially strong convictions about the idea of creating new concepts, I finally deconstructed the jacket³⁶, removing the sleeves and the collar. I then re-applied these and other elements in different forms, shapes and positions; a sleeve hole became a neck hole,

³⁶ Here, informative and inspirational were designers such as Martin Margiela, Vivienne Westwood, Helmut Lang or Rei Kawakubo whose works often allude to "*the philosophical projects of deconstruction, to rethink the formal logic of dress itself*" (Evans, 2003, p.250).

the collar was changed to a black velvet collar (Teddy Boys and Mods) and the safety pins (Punks) were used as a method of joining the elements superseding standard stitching, as well as the black and white safety pins that were used to emphasise the dogtooth pattern, as well as to imitate the tartan pattern (Punks) (figs. 5.19 and 5.20). Throughout this process, I was using my sketchbook to explain how applying these elements differently was changing my perception about them. These marked the third and fourth checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with materials, objects and artefacts. This allowed me to verbalise my interpretation of how the participants and their contemporaries are influencing our fresh perceptions of mature men and their fashion-oriented masculinities, which marked the final checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: re-engaging with text.



a.





d.

Figure 5.19 a-d "Pioneering" sketchbook pages; de-constructing and re-constructing a second-hand jacket, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014



Figure 5.20 The "Pioneering" jacket, a. front; b. back, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014 (Photo: Fraser West)

5.2.5 NON-CONFORMING

The “Non-Conforming” theme, similarly to the “Pioneering” theme, emerged as a theme linking the participants’ past affiliations with various youth subcultures to their current attitudes and values. However, in contrast to the Pioneering theme, in the case of this theme, the connection was less direct and overt; instead, it was more a general and settled tendency to go against the flow of mainstream trends and behaviours. In some sense, the Non-Conforming theme was also linked to the rupture of these past subcultural connections. In this manner, this theme emerged as especially complex, multifaceted and open to various creative interpretations.

Before I started my practical explorations of this theme, I re-read all the relevant passages, including the results of the outfit analysis. This marked the first two checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with text and images. Here, I found myself drawn to a particular section: Henry (54), in his interview, commented on the various colour associations linked with the male and female genders. In this, he openly discussed his liking of the colour pink, and how, through wearing pink clothes, he felt he was going against the male clothing standards:

I wear a lot of pink. And a lot of men still have difficulty with that. And still mention it. And they come to me and say: “I wish I dared to wear it”. And I think: “Well, why daren’t you?” Yeah, it is a lovely colour. And there is nothing wrong with it.

Henry, 328-331

Coincidentally, at the same time, I came across the JOOP aftershave advert in which a young and muscular male model commented that “*real men wear pink*” (fig. 5.21). I found it especially intriguing, particularly the disconnection between what Henry reported and the alleged new norms of masculinity, as presented in the JOOP advert. With this in mind, I purchased a black plain corduroy jacket. My first instinct was to somehow explore the process of change from what Henry as a young man viewed as the norms of masculinity and what contemporary young men might view as such; the progress from dark, sober masculinity to the “pink” image, as presented in the advert.

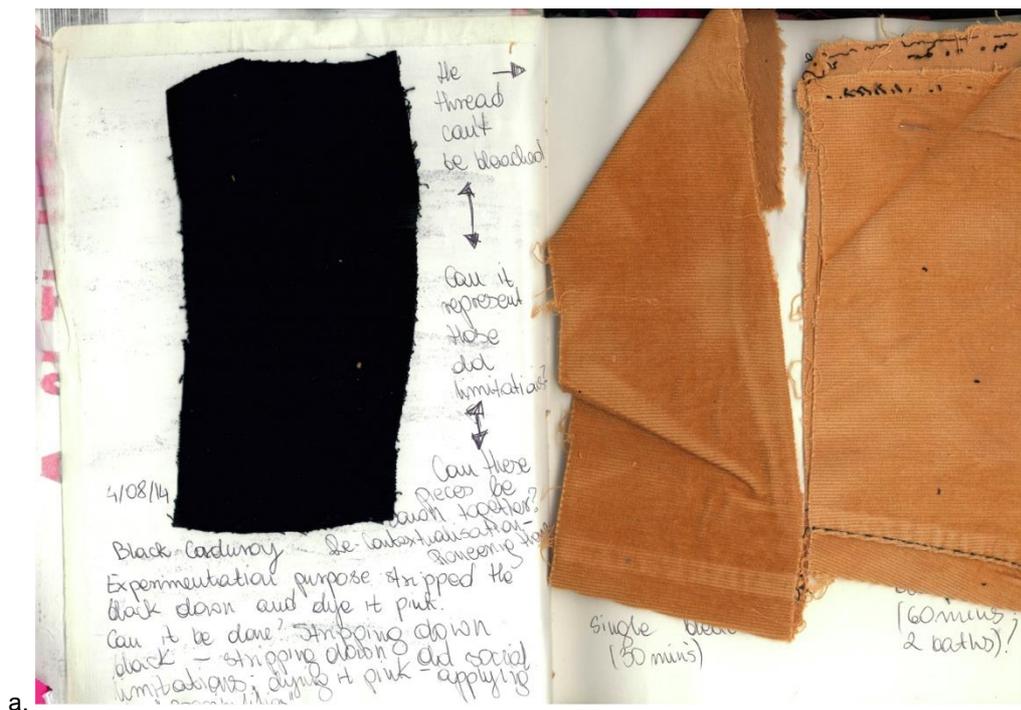


Figure 5.21 “Non-Conforming” sketchbook pages; JOOP aftershave advert, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

I started a series of practical experimentations in which I tried to attach to the purchased jacket a row of parallel panels that were black on one side, and pink on the reverse. My idea was that such a ‘device’ would allow me to quickly change the colour of the garment from one to another; just as the social norms of masculinity and male attire are in constant flux. Importantly, my aim was not to mimic the fashion trends, but, instead, I was attempting to understand the changing social norms regarding masculinity (indeed, arguably the pink colour on the menswear catwalks might be just a reflection of quickly changing trends). This marked the third checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with objects and materials.

I began to metaphorically question colouring processes more generally; the underlying question I was trying to answer was: “if and how was it possible that a black garment could become a pink garment?” This corresponded to how it evolved that the ‘old’ masculinity became the ‘new’ one. As an integral part of this process, I was trying to answer through my writing whether it was possible that the limitations of the social norms that the participants experienced in the past might in fact have changed with younger generations of men being no longer restricted by them. And, in turn, how might this relate to the various non-

conforming attitudes clearly so important to these participants? Furthermore, I was looking at how these concepts were influencing their current experiences of ageing. It was at this stage that I dropped the idea of a panel device; instead, I started a series of experimentations in which I bleached the black cotton corduroy only to dye it pink (fig. 5.22). I was especially interested in the resultant shade of pink which was intense and deep (closely resonating with 'shocking pink' used often by Elsa Schiaparelli); I felt this was relevant to what could be described as the 'contemporary shade of masculinity'. This was indeed an intriguing idea of an interplay between the old-black and new-pink masculinities, one that I would not be able to explicate in any other way but via these practical experimentations, and which I explored further in a short film. For this, I invited a male model to act in a 'masculinity fashion advert', in which this change was depicted as a sequence of quick changes between pink and black colours (film 5.5 on the memory card).



a.

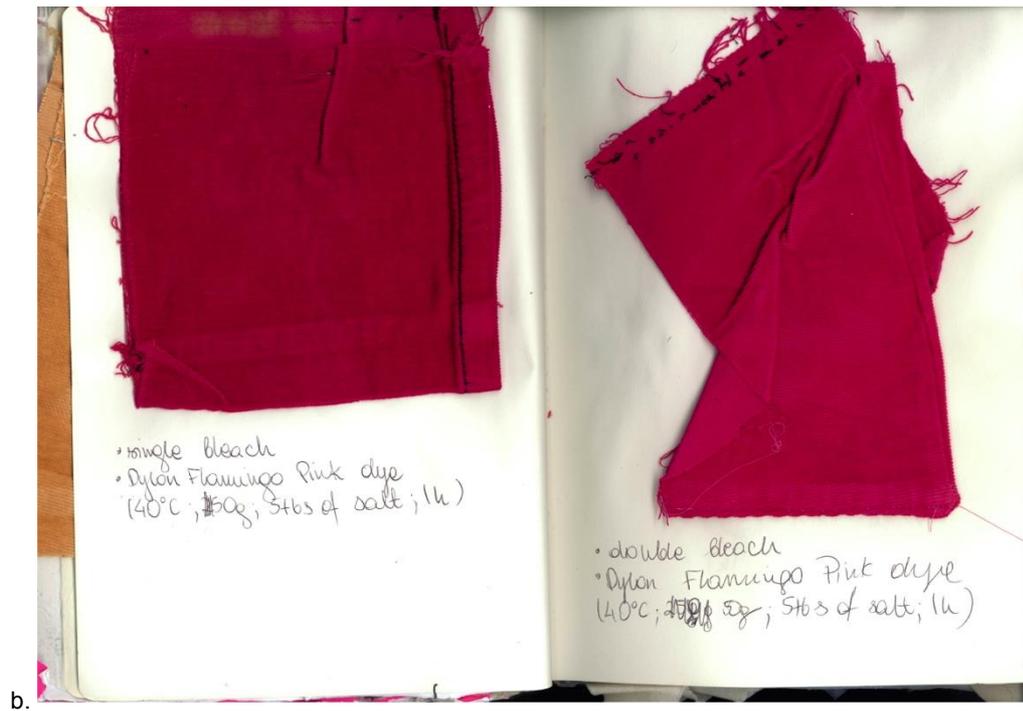


Figure 5.22 a-b “Non-Conforming” sketchbook pages; bleaching and dyeing experimentations, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

I returned to the purchased corduroy jacket and unpicked all its elements; this was significant because I felt that the Pioneering and the Non-Conforming themes had a lot in common and, for these reasons, some steps of the practical analysis should also correspond i.e. deconstruction processes. I then bleached all the elements, dyed them pink and re-stitched them together (fig. 5.23). What was interesting in this process was that, while the black jacket was indeed transformed from black to pink, the old threads stayed black in spite of the intense bleaching and dyeing processes. This marked the fourth checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: artefacts. Consequently, I verbalised my interpretation of the Non-Conforming theme focusing on my newly developed understanding that, while the various social norms regarding masculinity and masculine attire might have changed in the last few decades significantly, in this study, participants might still relate to the norms present when they were younger and ones that they once rebelled against. This marked the final checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: text II.



a.



b.

Figure 5.23 The “Non-Conforming” jacket a. front; b. back, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014 (Photo: Fraser West)

5.2.6 DISTANCING

After completing the stages of the IPA textual and visual data analysis, my understanding of the “Distancing” theme was very simplistic: the study participants exhibited the tendency to define themselves by explaining how they are different in comparison to other individuals and mainstream trends. Significantly, this seemed to be a tendency that all of the participants shared; however, different informants exhibited this in their unique way. For

example, some participants distanced themselves from other older men who did not care about their appearance and “gave up on fashion” as they grew older; others, from their contemporaries who, in their opinions, cared excessively about their appearance; and one participant, Ian (58) distanced himself from a particular clothing brand that according to him was too easily available to the masses:

So then... it was in the 90s... that I started wearing G-Star then. [...] And started buying their stuff, which was absolutely brilliant at the time. Right up to about 2000 (...). As soon as they opened up the Nottingham G-Star I knew that was the end of it. Uhm... and it was. (...) Everyone (...) on Jeremy Kyle wearing G-Star. You knew it was the end. But in the early 90s, when really it was catching on in Amsterdam and a couple of shops in London used to stock it. But nobody else did. But they got bigger and bigger. And that was the end of it.

Ian, 114-25

In order to understand this theme more fully, I once again embarked on the process of my practical explorations, firstly, by re-reading the relevant extracts as well as completing a mind mapping exercise, which marked the first checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle, namely engaging with text. It is through this exercise that the idea of physically distancing ourselves from a busy environment, such as a bus or tube train, emerged, and I felt especially intrigued by Hall’s concept of “personal space” that was introduced in 1966. This, I felt, had a strong resonance with the mental distance that the participants experienced as being between themselves and other individuals who did not share the same values as them. I felt that there was something particularly interesting in the way that people might physically create this distance in busy environments, for example, by placing their hand on their hip and sticking out their elbow³⁷; interestingly such a pose is often used in fashion editorials, which I began to explore in my sketchbook (fig. 5.24), and which marked the second and third checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with images, objects and materials.

This bodily pose was my first point of interest and when I purchased a grey men’s jacket, I tried it on several times and re-created this position. This made me question the techniques the participants implemented in order to create this mental distance between themselves and others, and whether this had any resonance for them feeling unique and different. I noted all my early thoughts about this in my research diary.

³⁷ This links also to the informal British phrase “elbow room” meaning an adequate space to freely move.



Figure 5.24 “Distancing” sketchbook pages; creating a physical distance, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

I then decided to experiment with how it would be to multiply the potential to use the elbow movement in order to create a physical/bodily distance between individuals (fig. 5.25). Inspired by this idea, I incorporated various additional jacket sleeves within each sleeve of the purchased jacket (figs. 5.26, 5.27 and 5.28), which marked the fourth checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: artefacts. This, in my understanding, corresponded to the different layers and forms of distancing presented by the participants. Crucial for my final writing and marking the final point on my hermeneutic circle, namely text II, was the performing of another short exercise, where wearing a created jacket I completed a series of similar elbow movements, captured on a video recording and used to create a short corresponding film (film 5.6 on the memory card). This exercise, modelled by myself, gave me an opportunity to enact a series of these movements creating my embodied experience of distancing.

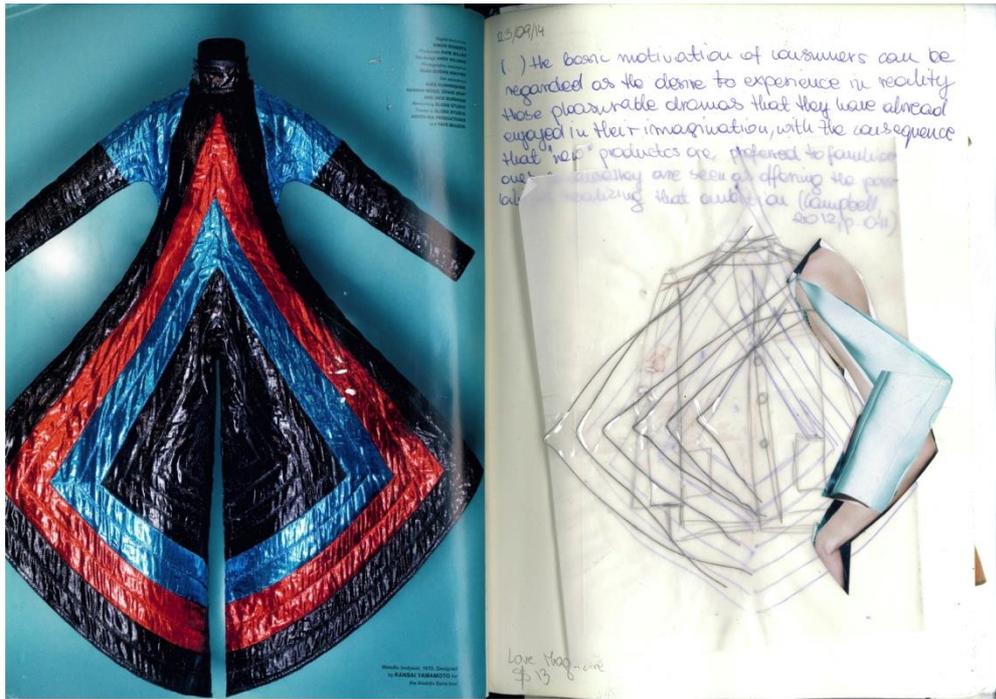


Figure 5.25 "Distancing" sketchbook pages; multiplying the elbow movement, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014



a.

Figure 5.26 "Distancing" sketchbook pages; planning of how to incorporate multiple sleeves, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014



b.

Figure 5.27 “Distancing” sketchbook pages; incorporating multiple sleeves, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014



a.

b.

Figure 5.28 The “Distancing” jacket a. front; b. back, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014 (Photo: Fraser West)

5.2.7 PRESENTING

In contrast to “Distancing”, the “Presenting” theme was one of the most complex themes that emerged from the IPA textual and visual data analysis. This was due to its inextricable connection with the Distancing theme; in a sense, the Presenting theme was an extension of the Distancing theme. For this reason, I felt that while it was important to absorb

the relevant Presenting passages (fig. 5.29), I also needed to go back to the various passages of the Distancing theme; this marked the first checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle, engaging with text I. I felt that it was crucial to explore the relationship further between these two themes. It is through this process that I developed an understanding that the Presenting theme could be metaphorically understood as a projected shadow of the Distancing theme. Both shared a similar background concept – the participants distanced themselves from certain stereotypes that mature individuals attempt to present themselves as more youthful, masking and disguising their real age. Instead, as explained, for example, by Kevin (63), the participants in this study did not want to be perceived in this way:

[W]hat I'm looking for is... I guess truthfully it's something I can get away with that looks fashionable but doesn't make me look as if I'm trying to... look young. That would be very embarrassing... if people thought that.

Kevin, 220-224

However, the properties of the two themes were somewhat different, the essence of the Presenting theme lying not in the distancing itself but being about what the participants were distancing themselves from, metaphorically, like a faded shadow.

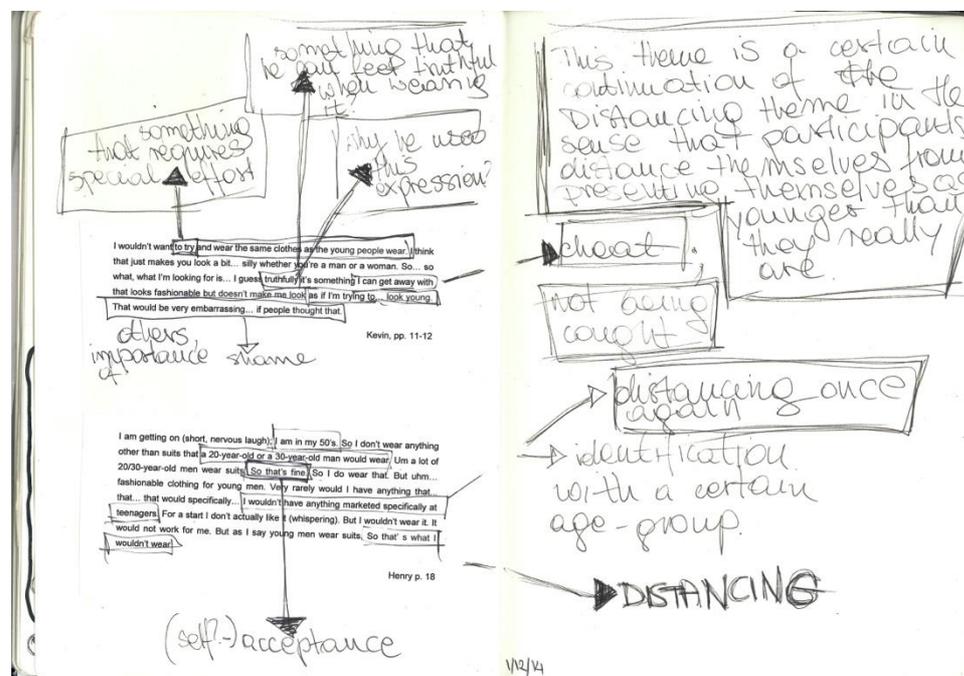


Figure 5.29 “Presenting” sketchbook pages; connections between “Distancing” and “Presenting” themes, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

In this light, I began my exploration by projecting a series of shadows from the Distancing jacket made by placing it on a mannequin and moving a lamp around it. This resulted in a series of photographs capturing sometimes very intricate shadow shapes (fig. 5.30). It was also captured via a video recording, fragments of which were then used to produce a short film (film 5.7 on the memory card). I then thought I could take this idea further by using those shapes as an inspiration to create elements similar to those inserted onto the sleeves of the “Distancing” jacket and I began experimenting with grey, matt, plastic material I had purchased from the Cloth House in London (fig. 5.31). This was interesting because I felt that this material shared a lot of qualities with a shadow phenomenon, including that it was to some degree transparent and, therefore, could be layered, mimicking the gradual projection of a shadow. This marked the third checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with materials and objects. Inspired by this, I completed the first draft of the writing in which I tried to explain my understanding of the Presenting theme and its relationship to the Distancing theme, which marked the final point on my hermeneutic circle: text II. At the same time, however, I felt that the created artefact did not entirely represent my understanding of the theme.



a.



b. Figure 5.30 a-b "Presenting" sketchbook pages; shadow projecting, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014



Figure 5.31 "Presenting" sketchbook pages; experimenting with grey plastic foil, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

For this reason, I went back to the shapes created by projecting a shadow from the “Distancing” jacket and I purchased another second-hand jacket. I photographed the jacket and I completed a series of collages in which I placed the resultant shadow shapes onto the jacket. I finally chose to place them on the front of the jacket, asymmetrically towards the right sleeve. This held a twofold significance; firstly, it highlighted the central role of the Distancing theme in the development of the Presenting theme and, secondly, it was what I found most interesting from an aesthetic point of view. This arrangement worked for me both from a contextual and aesthetic point of view. I began the application of the “shadow pattern” by marking the pattern’s shape on the jacket using black and white marking tape. I then applied the black dye powder using a small sponge. Using this technique gave me the ability to re-create the uneven quality of a shadow (figs. 5.32 and 5.33). This proved to be a successful approach, which resulted in a unified textual and visual interpretation of the Presenting theme, which marked two final checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with artefacts and text II³⁸.



Figure 5.32 “Presenting” sketchbook pages; powder dye application, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

³⁸ As can be seen from this description of the particular set of practical explorations, I did not engage with images (second checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle), while the checkpoint of text II was marked more than once.



Figure 5.33 The “Presenting” jacket a. front; b. back, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014 (Photo: Fraser West)

5.2.8 (UN-)FASHIONING

The “(Un-) Fashioning” theme emerged as the most complex and multifarious theme. On the one hand, the participants exhibited a strong interest in fashion trends, together with a high level of skills coupled with rich experiences when it came to selecting, purchasing and otherwise engaging with fashionable clothing. In fact, fashioning their bodies, which I understand as constructing a particular meaning through their use of fashionable clothing, was something that had become an inseparable part of their everyday lives. On the other hand, however, these participants felt that because of their knowledge and experience, they were no longer bound by the fashion trends; they felt confident in their choices to go beyond those trends. This somewhat contradictory character of the theme was perhaps best captured by Ian (58), who commented on his awareness, yet conscious rejection, of fashion trends:

I am always aware of what is going off... and I sort of have something at the back of my mind. Just by looking around and looking at magazines. I have something at the back of my mind that that is what is going to be... sort of very fashionable or something. Although I would not say I am very fashionable... at all.

Ian, 153-158

After completing the stages of IPA and outfit analysis, I felt that this theme was somewhat encompassing divergent characteristics; something that I found intriguing, yet rather difficult to explore more deeply through practical explorations.

For the above reasons, this was the theme in which I spent the most time re-reading the relevant passages and looking at the corresponding photographs, which marked the first two checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle, namely engaging with text I and images. Consequently, I completed a brief mind map exercise (fig. 5.34). I also went back to the interview recordings and re-listened to how the participants were talking about their experiences. I was not questioning the theme itself, which I felt was evident, but I was questioning my understanding of it. Through this process of re-immersing myself in the raw data, I developed the concept of a “fashion DNA”³⁹; this is a term for the different understanding of fashion the participants seemed to have in comparison with other individuals around them. In their understanding of fashion and trends, they appeared to achieve a higher level of ‘fashion know-how’ . I purchased a second-hand men’s jacket, intuitively choosing one that was corresponding to the colour of human flesh (fig. 5.35). I felt that embodiment was relevant here, yet I could not explain why or how.

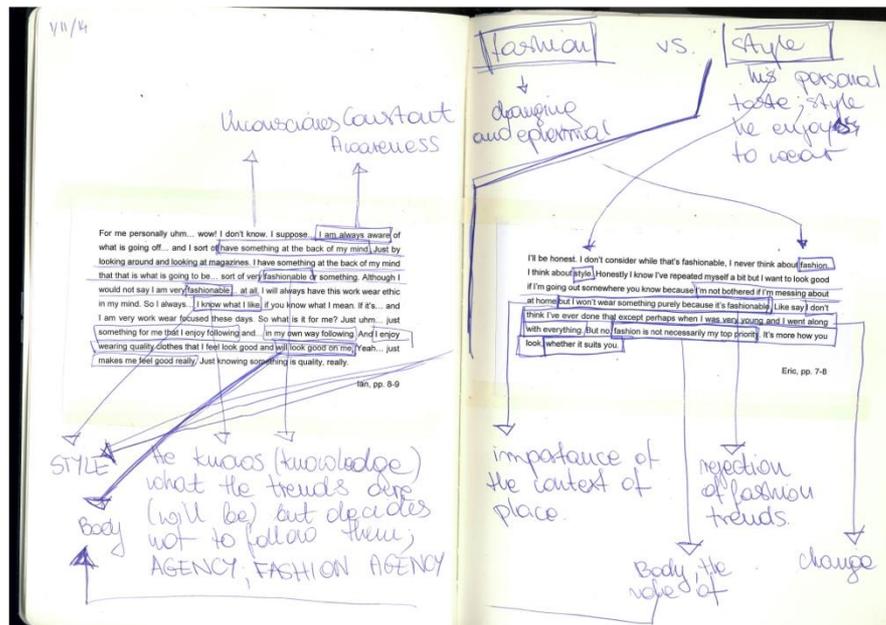


Figure 5.34 “(Un-)Fashioning” sketchbook pages; mind map exercise, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

³⁹ A nucleic acid that carries the genetic information in cells; its visual representations consists of two long chain twisted into a double helix. Here inspirational was the idea that DNA is a matrix varying particular information and any modifications/ mutations of any of the chains of such a structure would affect the information transmitted.

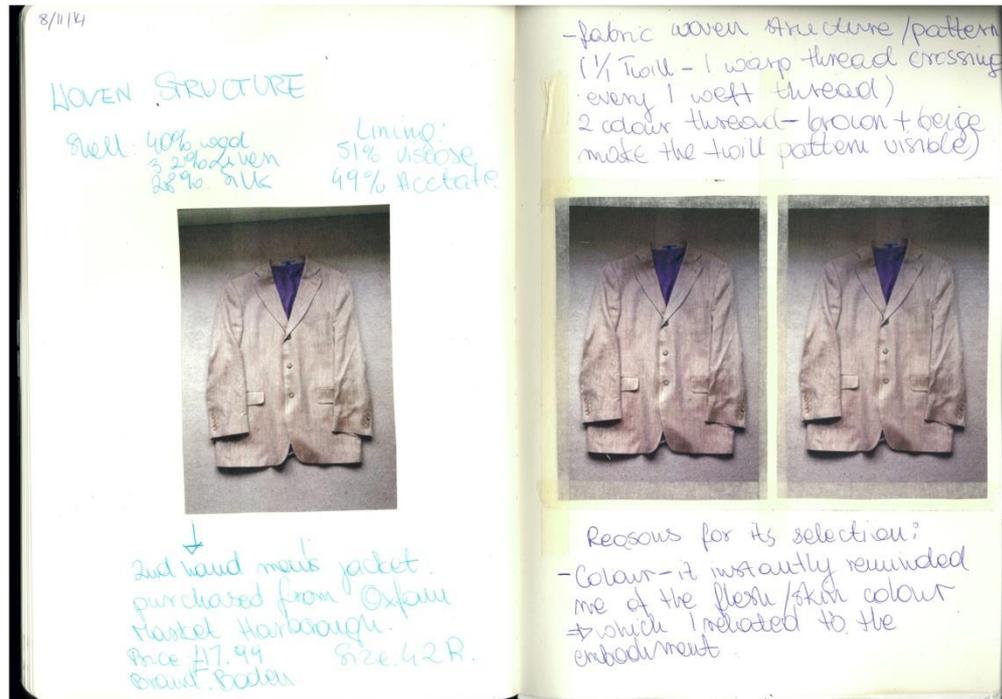


Figure 5.35 “(Un-)Fashioning” sketchbook pages; purchased second-hand jacket, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

I began writing about the theme and, at the same time, I started to remove some threads from the outside shell of the jacket (fig. 5.36); this simultaneously marked as many as three checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with objects and materials, artefacts and text II. I did not have any plans as to what I was to achieve by doing it; I just wanted to explore further the idea of the “fashion DNA”; how it could look and how it could feel to experience it. In parallel to this, I began hand-knitting a DNA-shape inspired loose structure in a corresponding colour to the jacket. The resulting knitted structure was inspired by the shape of the men’s suit waistcoat, which I thought was interesting because it is the element of a suit that is normally hidden under the jacket (fig. 5.37). However, it was not fully defined by this form, in contrast, the created knitted structure was open to various arrangements.

15/11/14



STEP ① - removing thread from the back of the jacket
=> changing the structure => DNA



TRACES - what does it tell me? => traces, from the past, from before the mutation occurred
How does it relate to my participants? => to their ability to un-fashion themselves by their past?

a.



Figure 5.36 a-b “(Un-)Fashioning” sketchbook pages; removing threads from the outside shell, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

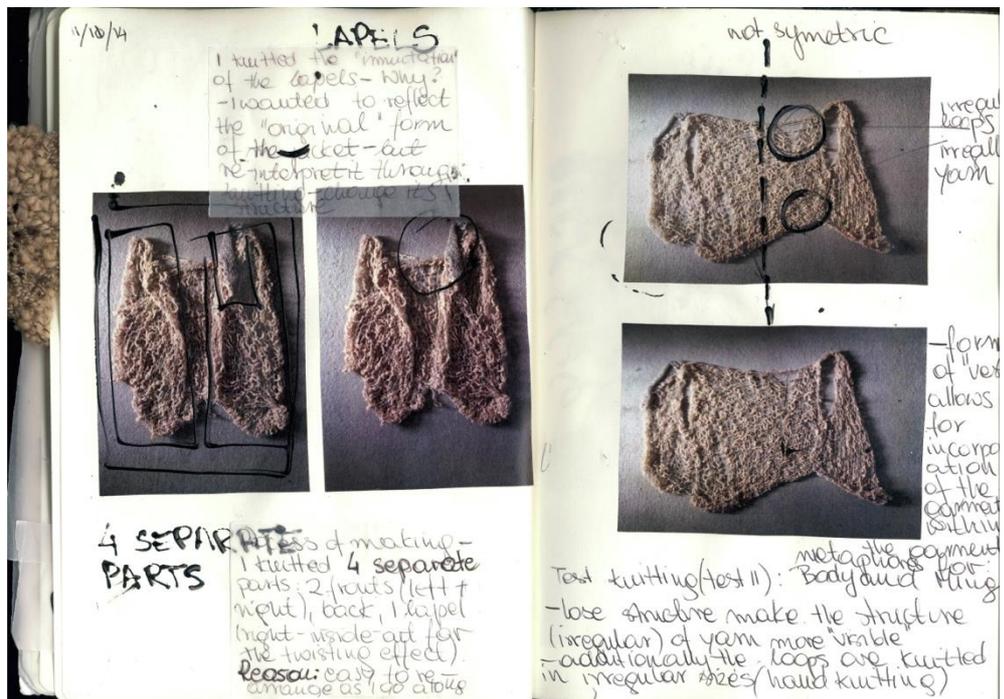


Figure 5.37 “(Un-)Fashioning” sketchbook pages; knitted vest structure, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014

I started developing a metaphorical understanding of the woven and knitted structures as corresponding to different DNA mutations; it became important to me to see if I could join them together, thus visualising my idea of the ‘fashion DNA’. I embarked on a

lengthy process of joining these two structures into one unified woven-knitted jacket (fig 5.38). Empowered by doing this, I re-drafted my written interpretation of the “(Un-)Fashioning” theme. I felt confident about my understanding of the theme and that I could verbalise what I was trying to visualise. At the same time, I created a short fashion film in which I tried to show how these two structures permeated each other (film 5.8 on the memory card); these re-marked the two final checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle, namely artefacts and text II.



Figure 5.38 The “(Un-)Fashioning” jacket a. front; b. back, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2014 (Photo: Fraser West)

5.2.9 RE-MATERIALISING

The “Re-Materialising” theme emerged as a relatively straightforward theme based on a series of accounts in which participants referred to particular garments from their past towards which they had a strong sentimental connection. Importantly, most of these objects no longer existed and, therefore, were not available to the participants. But while this aspect of the theme was to me rather straightforward, it was the way in which the participants reported the desire of having these garments back nowadays that brought a certain level of complexity to my potential understanding of it, as explained for example by Kevin (63):

I've had a thing about $\frac{3}{4}$ length coats ever since the 60s when I came into possession of a $\frac{3}{4}$ length green leather coat, which was just the bee's knees. You know... and I never wore anything else. (...) I lost it and I really wish I'd still got it. I'd probably have it framed.

Kevin, 127-132

Firstly, some participants reported their willingness to wear these garments again in the present. Secondly, others reflected that, due to the changed trends in fashion, as well as their altered physicality, they would no longer wish nor be able to wear them. These participants still, however, had a strong desire to have them back, to look at them and still being able to engage with them on a tactile level. This was an interesting idea and one which, as a designer and artist, I found intriguing. Taking this as a first step in the practical exploration of this theme, I went back to all the relevant images and passages, and noted all these sentimental garments as their owners explained them, which marked the first two points on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with text I and images. The objects described by the participants were as follows: a green leather $\frac{3}{4}$ length coat (Kevin), Jonson's *Clash of the Titans* shirt (Ian), and khaki green trousers, with zips from the ankle to the thigh so they could be worn in a tight or loose style (Henry) (fig. 5.39). My first instinct was to find a way to combine all these garments into one jacket, to create a form of a "fashion collage" using the key elements from each of these significant garments.

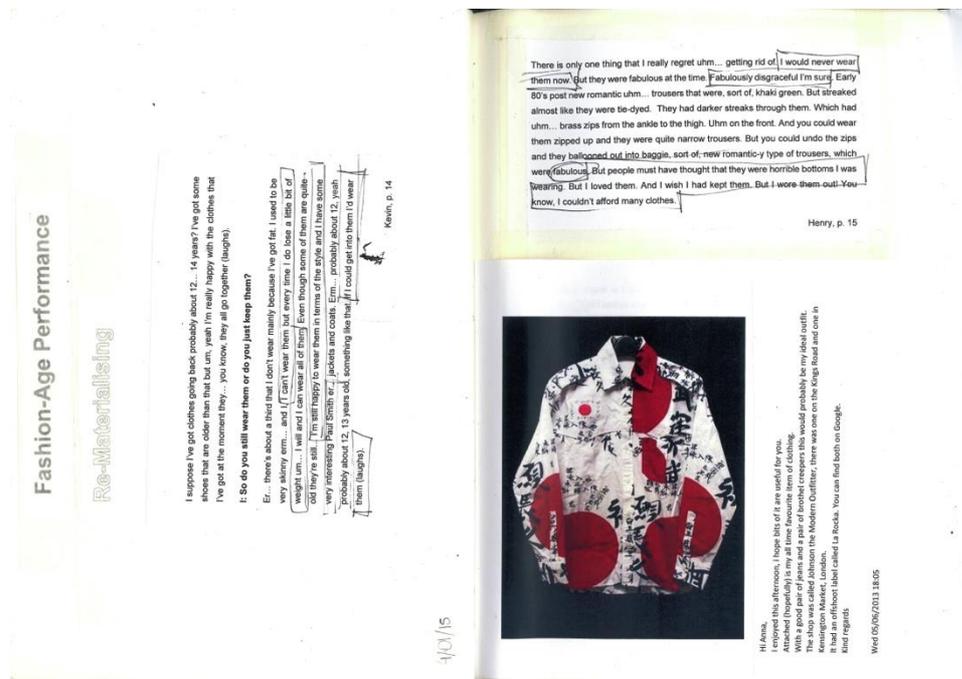


Figure 5.39 "Re-Materialising" sketchbook pages; participants' "special" garments, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2015

Intrigued by this idea, I purchased a second-hand jacket, which had both red and green stripes within its pattern, the significance being that I wanted to keep the colours that the participants mentioned as part of their “special” garments. At the same time, I completed a mind mapping exercise in which I explored the various possibilities of creating such a “collage” artefact. Eventually, my choice was to produce a jacket with poppers on the bottom that could be used to elongate it to a $\frac{3}{4}$ length coat⁴⁰. I tried to include some green leather elements (fig. 5.40) as well as to create some kind of a circular pattern on the garment. This marked the third checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with materials and objects.

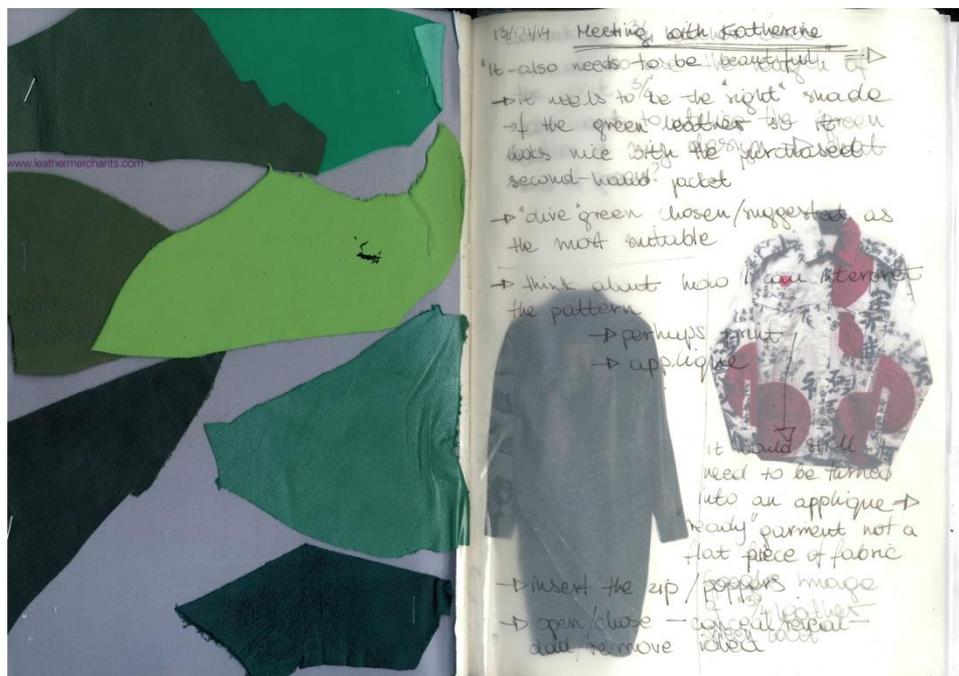


Figure 5.40 “Re-Materialising” sketchbook pages; green leather swatches, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2015

At this stage, I experimented with different kinds of leather, as well as dyeing, printing and embellishing. However, none of these practices provided me with any stimuli or enhancement for my understanding of the theme; I questioned this in my reflective writing. I felt that it was important to my understanding of the theme more generally, that somehow my struggle as a maker to utilise these elements was significant to the way the participants were able or not to wear these garments. I felt that something really important was there that I just

⁴⁰ A $\frac{3}{4}$ coat aesthetically alludes to a drape coat popular amongst the Teddy Boys and Mods in 1950s and 1960s, once again highlighting the significance of the participants’ past experiences of fashion and clothing and their individual histories.

could not verbalise even to myself. I looked through all the photos from the participants' past again. I was for once not only looking at the garments but at the participants wearing them and was particularly interested in the interplay between the garment and the body. In other words, I was interested in understanding the essence of the embodied experience of a fashion garment. Doing this re-marked the second checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with images.

I embarked on a second series of experimentations, this time questioning not the garment I was aiming to create but the experience it could bring to its potential wearer. It was at this point that I realised that, in fact, what these participants had told me about was not the objects themselves, but the memories of how they felt when wearing them. They all had very positive embodied experiences while wearing them. I finally felt that my aim for this particular garment was to create something contemporary and wearable, yet something that would encompass those identified elements.

I completed another series of drawings and collages (fig. 5.41), and chose to produce the design in which the original jacket collar was replaced by a circular green leather collar. I documented this via a video recording (film 5.9 on the memory card). This marked the fourth checkpoint on my hermeneutic circle: artefacts. It was a simple, wearable and contemporary solution which I felt my participants would wear⁴¹; furthermore, that each of them would connect to those elements relevant to them while wearing it. After I finished sewing the last thread of this jacket (fig. 5.42), I completed a final draft of the written interpretation of the theme. This marked the final point on my hermeneutic circle: text II.

⁴¹ Although the "Re-Materialising" jacket was not directly presented to the study participants to obtain their feedback, some study participants visited the corresponding exhibition, and one of them (Kevin) offered to buy the jacket.



a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



f.

Figure 5.41 a-f “Re-Materialising” sketchbook pages; “special” artefacts collages, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2015



a.



b.

Figure 5.42 The “Re-Materialising” jacket a. front b. back, Anna Maria Sadkowska, 2015 (Photo: Fraser West)

5.2.10 PRACTICAL EXPLORATIONS: REFLECTIONS

So far in this chapter, my intention was to present a series of practical explorations; this is describe how, by using various creative artful, often fashion- and clothing-related practices, I enhanced my interpretations of the participants' experiences. For this, I explained each of these explorations in regards to the nine subordinate themes which emerged through IPA and outfit analyses explained in the previous chapter. My descriptions were supplemented by images from my sketchbooks, which were used throughout this stage of the data analysis as a form of visual and reflective diaries. Furthermore, each section contained an image of the final jacket, as well the corresponding short film (on the memory card). My descriptive focus in each case was on the process of explorations, as well as the artefact itself. Below, I offer my brief reflections on this stage of the data analysis, directly leading to, and overlapping with, the stage of data production in this research process. I build upon these reflections in Chapter 7, where I present the conclusions and recommendations that have emerged from this body of work.

Firstly, I must reflect on the relevance and function of the concept of the hermeneutic circle within this research process. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the concept of the hermeneutic circle is useful in explaining how the researcher gradually develops interpretive understandings; the concept is based on a constant movement between various elements of the phenomenon, including movement between parts and whole. In IPA, this is applicable because the researcher constantly progresses her analysis from elements such as single words and sentences via passages and full interviews from a single individual, and finally towards a sample of participants (Smith et al., 2009). As I explained in Chapter 4 in this study, I adopted the basic concept and extended it by adding virtual checkpoints corresponding to the activities of writing and making, which I utilised during my interpretative analysis. These checkpoints were: text (I), images, objects and materials, artefacts and text (II) and corresponded to my reading and coding the interview transcripts, describing the outfits the participants wore on the day of their interview, engaging with different artful practices, such as drawing, hand and machine stitching, dyeing or embellishing, as well as with second-hand men's suit jackets and making films leading to the writing up my final interpretative accounts. These accounts are presented in the following chapter.

However, as I indicated in the previous chapter, within this overarching model of my hermeneutic circle at the final stage of data analysis, namely practical explorations, each of the interpreted themes imposed a secondary hermeneutic circle in a distinct way. So, while common starting points were the selected passages, the following process had very unique dynamics. The checkpoints were marked at different stages, and often they were re-visited several times before the final writing up occurred. For these precise reasons, while in the pervious chapter I briefly described practical explorations as one of the stages in my data analysis, in this chapter, I extended this by providing a detailed description of each of these internal processes separately, explaining it in regards to my hermeneutic circle. This has an important role in this thesis, as it directly introduces and contextualises the interpretive accounts presented in the following chapter.

Secondly, as I explained in Chapter 4, throughout this body of work my intention never was to develop an objective stance and I am distant from the positivistic exploitation of data as a quantifiable matrix of an existing external (to the researcher) world. My constructivist understanding of the world around me and the role of research and researchers is close to Law's (2004, p.2) insightful comment:

if we [researchers] want to think about the **messes of reality** at all then we're going to have to teach ourselves **to think, to practice, to relate and to know in new ways**. We will need **to teach ourselves to know some of the realities of the world using methods unusual to or unknown in social science** [my emphases].

Indeed, this chapter documented my attempt "*to think, to practice, to relate and to [get to] know in new ways.*" Moreover, my intention in this chapter was not only to explain practical explorations as an analytical research tool, but also to explain the role of my subjectivity within it, as explained by Crotty (1998, p.9): "*meaning does not come out of an interplay between subject and object but is imposed on the object by the subject*". Consequently, the explained throughout this chapter the series of practical explorations are indeed the series of my subjective attempts to make sense of the *messy* reality, resulting in the intuitive production of visuals (jackets and films), that are charged with my often metaphoric understandings. My aim in being transparent about these is, thus, to explain my own role within this research process not as a subject, but as an inherent and significant element of it. Consequently, the

interpretations presented in the following chapter are *my interpretations*; I return to this concept in Chapter 7.

Finally, employing practical explorations as a way of enhancing my interpretations had an important implication for the results of this research; the results of this research include not only my written interpretations, but also the jackets and films I produced during my practical explorations. These elements are corresponding and integrative to each other; nevertheless, they do not have the same status within this research. This is somewhat linked to the chronology of their production; as a rule of thumb, the production of these objects were intended to enhance my written interpretations, so they were to be created before the final text. However, as was explained in this chapter, in many instances, writing and making was happening in cyclical loops and in a few cases making continued after the writing. And so, as I have already indicated in the previous chapter, these jackets and films have a twofold meaning in this body of work; they are somewhat side-products of me employing my *practice*; they are also independent outcomes of this research process. This explains the utilisation of the research exhibition as a way of their dissemination, which I describe in the following section.

5.3 RESEARCH EXHIBITION

In the previous section of this chapter, I described how various creative and artful practices were used to deepen and advance my interpretations during a series of practical explorations, which resulted in the creation of a series of artefacts, men's suit jackets and films, with my focus being on explaining the processes and introducing the artefacts. These visual elements, together with written interpretations, are the results of this PhD project and were used as components of the fashion research exhibition entitled "Fashioning Age(ing): Mature men's experiences of fashion and clothing", which took place at Nottingham Trent University 16-18 December 2015 and was curated by myself. In this section, I discuss my preparation for the exhibition, as well as describing and reflecting on the exhibition itself.

At the very early stage of this project, I identified an exhibition as a suitable form of knowledge dissemination. Central to my objectives was to reach an audience outside

academia. Consequently, my first step in preparation for the exhibition was to decide about its scale and complexity, selecting its main components, identifying a suitable space and the required technical equipment. After reviewing spaces available within the university, I selected a medium size, rectangular shaped studio-type space with plain white walls and good quality lighting. These parameters were important because I wanted all the artefacts to be clearly visible against the white background of the wall and not be disrupted by any other detailing, such as light switches or pipes. My preparation of the room involved covering all of the walls with plain plasterboard and painting them white in order to create a simple and clean exhibition space, inspired by the 'white cube' concept. Further decisions involved selecting plastic clear torsos to display the suit jackets, flat screens to display the films (films 5.1-5.9 on the memory card) and white plaques with black text (fig. 5.43). All these elements were selected because of their relative neutrality and lack of any distinctive characteristics that could potentially dominate over my work.



Figure 5.43 Exhibition settings; mannequins and screen (Photo: Anna Maria Sadkowska)

All of the artefacts were clustered chronologically in three groups: *Learning Fashion*, *Defining the Fashion-Self*, and *Fashion-Age(ing) Performance* (tab. 4.10, p.155). This directly reflected the superordinate themes that emerged through the process of the phenomenological analysis of the interview transcriptions and photographs of the participants'

attire collected during the interviews; from their past, to current and potential future experiences, as presented in table 4.10 (p.155) in the previous chapter. Each grouping consisted of three suit jackets and three short films corresponding to three sets of the subordinate themes. While each jacket was displayed on a separate mannequin, each group of three films was shown on one screen. Furthermore, due to each film having separate sound that was produced using the interview recordings, the exhibition settings included the projection of only one of the films at the time in a constant loop of all nine of them (films 5.1-5.9 on the memory card). Finally, after all the jackets and films were arranged, I decided to include the key quotations⁴² from the participants' interviews. These were printed out separately, each on A3 white sheets of paper and were mounted to the wall on white foam boards. Such supplementation reflected more fully my hermeneutic circle based on the activities of writing and making, as well as offering the viewers fuller access to the participants' stories and experiences (fig. 5.44; film 5.10 on the memory card). The exhibition was opened on Wednesday 16th December at 4 pm and closed on Friday 18th December 2015 at 5 pm.



Figure 5.44 Exhibition settings, 16th December 2015 (Photo: Anna Maria Sadkowska)

⁴² All these quotations are presented in the following chapter.

While, as I already indicated, the organisation of the research exhibition as a means of disseminating my findings and reaching a non-academic audience was an inherent part of this project from its beginning, the actual role and impact of it on this research and within this research methodology was not fully recognised until its implementation. It was not until after the exhibition that I realised that its role was more than facilitating a space for presentation and communication of this project's findings, as was the case in the project by Lapum et al. (2012, 2014) described in Chapter 3 where I explained the relevant Arts-Informed Research (section 3.4.2). From the methodological point of view, this exhibition offered me a time and space to even more fully immerse myself in the analytical, reflective and interpretative processes. Its capacity to facilitate and stimulate conversations between myself and the visitors to the exhibition (fig. 5.45) offered me a unique opportunity to get feedback and to validate my work and its processes. But this feedback differed significantly from the feedback available to me during the various academic presentations that I gave in the course of this study, and which were listed in Chapter 1. The feedback given to me by the exhibition visitors, academics and general public, was often of a personal and subjective nature and its value was based on how they related to my work and often the questions they asked about it. Consequently, it became the final interpretative and reflective tool that drew together all the previous stages of analysis of the empirical data, influencing the final written interpretations presented in the following chapter; I return to this in the final chapter of this thesis.



a.



b.

Figure 5.45 “Fashioning Age(ing): Mature men’s experiences of fashion and clothing” exhibition – opening event 16th December 2015 (Photo: Anna Maria Sadkowska; for more images see Appendix 8)

5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, my aim was to explain the processes of the practical explorations, the final stage of my multi-modal and multi-layered analysis of data. This was the stage of the analysis when I had a chance to utilise my *practice* as a fashion designer and artist and use various artful creative practices as a means for stimulating and enhancing my interpretive writing. By virtue of implementing such a method of data analysis, I arrived at a variety of results including a series of corresponding jackets, films and texts. In this chapter, the jackets were presented in the form of photographs and the corresponding films were presented on the attached memory card. Such different forms of research results inevitably must involve different forms of exposition and dissemination and, while the resultant written accounts are presented in the following chapter of this thesis, the corresponding films and jackets were presented in the form of a fashion research exhibition, also discussed in this chapter. Below, I offer the summary of the key insights stemming from this chapter.

Firstly, it is important to once again highlight the uniqueness of each of the processes described herein. Just as each of the themes presented in the following chapter is an independent thematic entity, the practical explorations of interpreting each of these themes required different materials and techniques. But while these processes and themes were indeed distinctive, they are not disconnected from each other; instead they form a network of mutual dependencies and relationships. I utilised this analytical thinking in my practical explorations, as was evidenced, for example, in the case of the “Distancing” and “Presenting” themes, where the “Distancing” jacket was directly used in the process of creating the “Presenting” jacket and, furthermore, this was documented via a short film.

Secondly, it is important that I reflect on the role and impact on this body of work of the research exhibition that I utilised as a means for presenting my practical results. The primary reason behind organising the research exhibition was to expose and disseminate my research findings, especially to audiences outside academia for whom academic research is usually difficult to access. The “Fashioning Age(ing): Mature men’s experiences of fashion and clothing” exhibition that I curated fulfilled this aim by showing some potential for reaching the alternative to academic audiences via this form of knowledge dissemination, which could potentially have been further increased by factors such as a different location and timing. I reflect upon this further in Chapter 7, where I offer my conclusions and recommendations stemming from this research. However, this exhibition exceeded my expectations as to what its impact on the written interpretations might have been. I must acknowledge that, by offering me a space and time when and where I had chance to discuss my findings with the visitors, my interpretations of the accounts were influenced and enhanced. Consequently, in regards to the overarching model of my hermeneutic circle, I acknowledge that this exhibition reinforced my marking of the final two checkpoints on my hermeneutic circle: engaging with artefacts and texts but in this case including third parties.

Finally, this chapter’s role within the global structure of this thesis is to directly introduce the following one, where I present my written interpretations. Consequently, some of the quotations from the participants’ interviews introduced in this chapter re-appear in the following chapter. The descriptions provided in this chapter of the various creative processes

connected to the practical explorations offer the reader a further context of how the resultant interpretations were developed, including the role of the exhibition. Such transparency about the research processes, including acknowledging my often subjective and intuitive choices and selections, is crucial when it comes to assessing the quality and validity of this body of work, which I present in this thesis in Chapter 7.

6. FINDINGS:

written accounts

6.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

So far my aims in this thesis have been to highlight a particular gap in the existing knowledge, to introduce a suitable research methodology that allows for production of the knowledge that contributes to the filling of this gap, and to explain a practical application of such a methodology, including the distinctive stage of data analysis, during which I utilised practical artful explorations. Below, in order to introduce the present chapter, I briefly summarise Chapters 2-5 and explain their role within this PhD thesis.

Firstly, in Chapter 2, I presented a multi-disciplinary review of a selection of the relevant literature; this allowed for the resonance of the topic of older men's experience of fashion and clothing as valid, yet neglected, in the contemporary research on the ageing agenda. Furthermore, in the same chapter, I outlined phenomenology as a philosophy stimulating a research approach where the focus was placed upon individuals' lived experiences; such an approach was identified as the most suitable for this study.

Consequently, the phenomenological approach has influenced the selection of the first core component of the proposed hybrid research methodology as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Here, what was critical is the concurrence between the strongly embodied character of ageing inevitably reflected in individuals' experiences of, and relationships with, fashion and clothing and the highly interpretative and idiographic characteristics of IPA. This allowed me to focus on the narratives from particular individuals and about their idiosyncratic experiences. In contrast, the second methodological component, Arts-Informed Research, was selected because of its capacity to accommodate the skills, abilities and predispositions of the researcher, as well as for opening alternative avenues for the research to reach the audiences beyond academia. Such theoretical considerations were presented in Chapter 3, while the practical application of the resultant hybrid methodology of the Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was described and reflected upon in Chapter 4. Hence, the structure of Chapter 4 followed the stages of a standard research process and the main focus was placed upon the explanations of how the various research methods, tools and practices were utilised for the purposes of the study.

Following from this, in Chapter 5, I focused explicitly on explaining the processes of the final stage of data analysis, namely practical explorations, and presented the resultant artefacts (jackets and films); in the same chapter, I also described the research exhibition I curated as part of this project, and especially explained its role within this research methodology.

All previous chapters shared a common goal of preparing the reader for the present chapter, in which I present the outcomes of the empirical work. It is in this chapter that I show the understanding(s) that I developed through a long and complex process of untangling and making sense of what the participants have said and showed. In this manner, this chapter has two important aims; firstly, to give an accurate account of the gathered data; and secondly, to present my interpretation(s) of the data. Consequently, in the following sections, I present a series of written interpretative accounts⁴³; this mode of research communication and findings dissemination is standard not only for IPA, but also more generally for most contemporary qualitative phenomenological studies. These written interpretations, together with the films and jackets presented in the previous chapter, constitute a multi-modal composition of the research outcomes, which is a consequence of the multi-modal data analysis that I adopted for the purposes of this study. I reflect upon this aspect of my study in the final chapter of this thesis.

6.2 WRITTEN INTERPRETATIONS

In the previous two chapters, I presented the complex process of data analysis consisting of three separate yet interdependent stages: IPA analysis, image (outfit) analysis and practical explorations. Since these stages were discussed in-depth in those chapters, I do not intend to replicate that discussion here. However, it is important to remind the reader that this multi-modal and multi-layered process of analysing data gathered via in-depth, semi-structured interviews and personal inventories with five mature British men, who during their life courses, have actively engaged with fashion and clothing, resulted in the proposing of a

⁴³ Elements of this chapter were published in: SADKOWSKA, A., WILDE, D., and FISHER, T. (2015). Third Age Men's Experience of Fashion and Clothing: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. *Age, Culture, Humanities: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 2(1), pp.33-68.

set of themes describing this sample of men's experiences of fashion and clothing as they grow older, which offer fresh insights into the generation of men who are currently entering their third age experiences' of ageing (tab. 4.10, p.155). These themes were organised in a way that can be described as chronological, which means that I started with two superordinate themes, accompanied by their respective sets of subordinate themes, that related strongly to the participants' past experiences, followed by the final set of subordinate themes that describes their most current relationship(s) with fashion and clothing. The last set of themes allows me also to draw some careful speculations of the participants' future expectations. The superordinate themes fulfil an important role of providing an overall organising structure for the nine subordinate themes, where the finer details, data and interpretations can be found. Below, I briefly introduce each of the superordinate themes.

The first superordinate theme, "Learning Fashion", is concerned with the various past practices through which the respondents developed their fashion sensibilities, allowing them to engage actively with fashion. The three subordinate themes of "Learning Fashion" are "Mirroring", which describes the participants' past practices of copying others' appearance, especially in relation to youth idols and other members of youth subcultures; "Dis-Comforting", which outlines the active sacrificing of physical comfort in order to create the desired look; and "Peacocking", a term used to highlight the pleasure derived from being recognised, praised, and admired for the way the participants presented themselves.

The "Defining the Fashion-Self" superordinate theme is concerned with the ways in which the participants have constructed and defined their fashion identities, especially in relation to continuity and transition. It comprises the subordinate themes of "Pioneering", which is concerned with the participants' sense of being part of important social and cultural revolutions, including the creation and development of mass- and youth-oriented fashion; "Non-Conforming", which describes respondents' often rebellious approach to fashion trends and certain social limitations; and "Distancing", which is concerned with the importance, as expressed by the respondents, of not being associated with certain fashion looks and/or behaviours or even brands and individuals.

The final superordinate theme, “Fashion-Age(ing) Performance”, focuses on the participants’ social performance relating to ageing through the medium of fashionable clothing, with the main locus in the present. It includes three subordinate themes: “Presenting”, which relates to the participants’ changing physicality and its influence on their social performance in relation to fashion; “(Un-)Fashioning”, which describes the respondents’ cautious navigation between various fashion styles, trends, and so-called “timeless solutions”; and “Re-Materialising”, which focuses on the participants’ reminiscing about unique fashion artefacts from the past and their desire to reconnect with them, consequently influencing the creation of a certain prism through which they currently experience fashion and clothing.

In the following sections, I briefly introduce the written interpretations of each of the superordinate sets of themes supplemented in each case by a table showing the presence of each of the corresponding subordinate themes within the sample (tabs. 5.1-5.3). Such an approach is recommended by Smith (2011) in his IPA quality evaluation guide, where he argues that the employment of the measure of prevalence of themes is a good practice allowing the achieving of credibility and transparency of the analysis process. Furthermore, I would argue that such an approach allows the reader to fully appreciate the participants as individual meaning-makers as well as for their significance within the sample. This is followed by the in-depth interpretation of each of the subordinate themes. Such a presentation of analysis, where the focus is on detailed description of the subordinate themes, rather than on superordinate ones, the role of which is to provide an overarching structure rather than to be a thematic entity itself, is in line with a standard IPA protocol for results presentation (Smith et al., 2009). Consequently, while each superordinate theme is explained briefly, each of the subordinate themes involves a number of quotations from the participants (Smith, 2011). The written interpretations are followed by a discussion of my findings in regards to the selected literature, some of which were introduced and discussed in Chapter 2. The final section of this chapter is the chapter summary. Thus, the presentation of the findings begins with the first set of subordinate themes, clustered under the label of “Learning Fashion”, which I discuss below.

6.2.1 LEARNING FASHION

The narratives of the five men participating in this study provided multiple insights into their embodied experience of ageing and their masculine subjectivities through the lens of fashion and clothing. Interestingly, all of the participants, when asked about their personal understanding of the term “fashion”, started their narratives by describing their past relations with clothing, often going as far back as their childhood and early teenage years. Below, I recount three strongly recurrent themes which relate directly to their past experiences of fashion and clothing; these I argue are important in terms of how the participants in this study attempt (re-)constructing their sense of masculine identities as they age. These themes, “Mirroring”, “Peacocking”, and “Dis-Comforting”, indicate the inherent complexities in the relationship between older men’s negotiation of their own embodied masculinities and practices of making their bodies fashionable. Furthermore, as can be seen in table 6.1, all three themes emerged as especially strongly present within this sample of participants, with two themes, Mirroring and Peacocking, being present across the sample, and the Dis-Comforting theme being present in the interviews of four out of the five men in this study. Below, I continue the presentation of the findings via an in-depth exploration of the first of the three subordinate themes, beginning with Mirroring.

Table 6.1. Prevalence of the “Mirroring”, “Peacocking” and “Dis-Comforting” subordinate themes within the sample

Participant	Learning Fashion		
	Mirroring	Peacocking	Dis-Comforting
Grahame	X*	X*	X
Henry	X*	X	X*
Kevin	X*	X*	X*
Ian	X*	X	
Eric	X	X	X

* Names of the participants whose quotes were used to support my description and interpretation of each of the three subordinate themes.

MIRRORING

For the participants of this study, their masculine identity was never the isolated construction of an individual, but instead their reflections about it were always placed within a wider context of other individuals. In all five interviews, the practice of mirroring the appearance of others was significant in terms of how the participants had developed their own personal styles of clothing. The act of being visually inspired, or even imitating the way others dressed, served as a form of social validation, often directly copying other individuals' appearance. Just like any other 'discipline', this process was slow and systematic, a peculiar form of research that involved testing solutions and evaluating results to develop a gradual creation of confidence to pursue their own, personal style. This process also required the careful selection of a suitable role model, as Ian (58) explains here:

I think I was influenced by my sister who is... 3 years older than me. And... uhm... she's very... always been into fashion. When I was 12 or 13 and she was 16/17 then uhm... and a teenager and getting into the things that teenagers uhm... get into. I think I was influenced by... uhm what she wore and... uhm and it has sort of been a big part of my life that I... that it started off so young. I think at 13 I started, you know, sort of copying her as a few years older and developing a fashion taste for myself. Sort of thing. And I have just carried it on through the years. I have got, I would say, a real, sort of, interest... in it.

Ian, 3-13

Firstly, an important point in this account from Ian is the way in which he characterises his and his sister's interest in fashion and clothing as a teenager's pursuit, subscribing to the view of fashion as a youth domain. But Ian's interest did not terminate when he stopped being a teenager; indeed, just the opposite, he highlights the fact that for him this interest had started in his youth but he continuously practises and develops it further. The connection between his present interest in fashion and his adolescent past, when his own sense of masculinity was forming, suggests that, for Ian, his gender identity might be closely linked to his interest in fashionable clothing.

Secondly, the fashion authority of Ian's older sister is central to this account. It seems that, for Ian, his sister symbolises a person who, on the one hand, was older and more experienced and, therefore, a trustworthy model to follow in matters of appearance, while, on the other hand, she was someone who, back then, was still young enough to be part of the youth culture, a teenager like Ian himself was. This is interesting, in terms of how Ian currently

interprets the past norms of what might have been classified as masculine behaviour; in this, he not only admits copying someone else's appearance but to copying the appearance of a female.

Arguably, such practice relates strongly to the idea of a masculine gaze, which was discussed by Grahame (61) in the next extract. Interestingly, in this case, such a gaze is not dictated by heterosexual desire but purely by the appreciation of a female's good fashion taste. Consequently, Grahame suggests that his way of perceiving fashionable female individuals is, in fact, something unique and not something that other heterosexual men would like to be associated with. This highlights the individual character of the experiences participants in this study reported, including their own sense of masculinity, and also how they use a certain social distancing in order to define it:

You know, you could be just sat in the pub and somebody... a woman could walk in in [sic] something. It doesn't have to be male. A woman could walk in in [sic] a nice, you know, whatever and I would look and think: "That's really lovely. She looks really nice in that". You know, that has nothing to do with fancying the woman. I just think she is wearing something that looks really nice. I am sure lots of men would say they wouldn't do that.

Grahame, 416-422

The system of a generational segregation into 'us-young' and 'them-old', discussed above in the case of Ian's account, was in fact present in all of the interviews, but especially visible in the account given by Kevin (63), who notices how important it was in the youth movements of 1950s onwards not to be identified with the previous, old-fashioned generation of their 'fathers' but to represent new, modern movements such as Mods:

So it was almost like um... compulsory that you did not dress like your father. You found another role model um... I think The Beatles were it for me to begin with. Urm... and through that we all became aware of other movements, such as Mods. Ah... (...) It was a lifestyle um... it was a very cool er... persona. Um... everything about it was designed to be sophisticated in comparison to what else was going on er... so yeah.

Kevin, 43-51

Importantly, this account is tied to the wider social, cultural and political changes of the times, including the creation of a masculine youth culture with its emphasis on clothes, popular music, and vocabulary, but also to certain attitudes such as being rebellious and taking a non-conformist approach. Central to Kevin's account is the differentiation between those two

generations of men, old and young, and describing the new culture designed to be more “*sophisticated*”. In this comparison, the previous generation equals unrefined and grey, and ‘old’ gains a rather pejorative meaning. This utterance can also be interpreted as Kevin distancing himself from the older generation, but also possibly from other subcultures such as Rockers, who were perceived negatively by the members of the Mod culture. Again, this highlights the importance of distancing as a way for the men in this study to explain their own masculine subject positions. But, what is also interesting is that “Distancing” emerged also as another independent subordinate theme and is discussed further on in this chapter.

Analysing Kevin’s account further, it is worth noting the especially expressive function of the word “*compulsory*” used by Kevin in the first sentence. There are two possible interpretations of this word in this passage: the first, as a compelling principle of looking in a certain way in order to fit in within the group; the second, as a mandatory rule where, in order to be permitted entry to the desired group, one needs to fulfil its particular image expectations. Somewhat regardless of the assumed interpretation, the word suggests that there were ‘consequences’ for those men that did not dress in the modern way, such as social exclusion. It can also be argued that, for Kevin, his clothes at this particular point of his life functioned as a kind of social filter, a quick way of assessing who was ‘in’ the fashion (and, therefore, in the group) and who was not. Moreover, being recognised as a part of a defined cultural group was important in all of the participants’ narratives, reflecting the implication of the episodes they reported in forming their subsequent clothing and body sensitivity, and their emerging masculine identity. Most of the participants were members of the 1960s and 1970s subcultures that were often music related, such as Mods, Rockers or Punks, and still have very vivid memories of attending events, clothes worn and feelings from the past.

Furthermore, these youth subcultures were often characterised by a ‘do it yourself’ (DIY) approach. As Ian noticed in the period during the 1970s and 1980s, “[p]eople copied themselves (...) people just made up their own fashion then”. There is a twofold meaning behind the development of this DIY approach. On the one hand, this was a group activity, something that ‘everyone’ was involved in and something that marked their attachment to the Punk movement. On the other hand, it gave them a chance to customise their clothes in a unique way, the effects of which were under the scrutiny of peers and could either become a

passport to recognition, and popularity, or equally their exclusion. This DIY approach was also discussed by Henry (54). Although he explained his past economic limitations elsewhere in his interview, it is the location limitations that were the most significant to him:

[Y]ou couldn't buy Vivienne Westwood clothes in [this city] where I lived. There was a shop selling punk clothing. It was quite amateurish. (...) I used to make my own clothing, my own Vivienne Westwood clothing. And this was me. I had no skills whatsoever. I just bought cheap t-shirts, ripped holes in them and then sew zips onto the holes. So I made my own 2 or 3 t-shirts. But wore them to death.

Henry, 56-65

Interestingly, for Henry, mirroring happened not only on the level of a role model or mirroring peers around him, but also on the level of mirroring the style of the certain fashion designer, in this case his "*own Vivienne Westwood clothing*". This approach was especially significant, thanks to its creative confidence; Henry did not directly copy any particular Westwood's garment but created his own 'interpretation' of her style. As a result, he embodied the roles of a designer and the wearer within his own being. This, of course, influenced both his manual skills and tacit knowledge of styling his own and others' outfits, which he referred to later in his interview. Likewise, it is especially interesting how these young men, as they were back then, willingly adopted practices of producing their own outfits, including practices such as sewing or embellishing. This, again, has a twofold meaning. On the one hand, it can be associated with the typically masculine capacity for 'production'; on the other hand, sewing (excluding male tailors) is stereotypically understood as a feminine practice that some men might not want to be associated with.

Another striking point of Henry's account is the nostalgic reminiscence of those self-made garments, which he "*wore (...) to death*". This signals the importance of this particular time in Henry's life, when so much love and attention went into something so easily and cheaply made, but was so important in terms of his passion and identity, that 30-40 years later he still remembers so fondly having made a lasting impression. Death in nearly all cultures is a symbolic passing between the states of existence and nothingness. In this extract, death seems to become a metaphor for practices that are no longer available to him as a mature male professional, and the sense of loss of the joy and pleasure he got from them is evident.

Mirroring emerged as a theme strongly present in the narratives of all of the participants, which indicates its significance for the way they currently interpret their past experiences of fashion and the impact on them of being able to 'learn' fashion, thus, recognising and developing their own critical fashion tastes. In terms of current experiences, there was a shared sense of nostalgia and sentimental idealisation of the past amongst nearly all of the participants who, while currently rejecting the possibility of being limited by group rules, recognise the fruitfulness and variety of the experiences they were exposed to at this stage of their lives. A similar tendency to idealise the past events and experiences is continued in the next theme, "Peacocking", which is discussed below.

PEACOCKING

The way the participants used their clothes to generate and attract attention is another theme that is especially meaningful within this sample. Although such "*peacocking*" - using clothes as a visual stimuli for attraction - was present in all of the narratives, not all the participants used the same strategies to attract attention, and the motives for this demeanour varied markedly from case to case. For some participants, attracting attention/presenting oneself was connected with the group identity that was discussed in the Mirroring theme, where being recognised, appreciated and praised for their clothing selection was the highest honour and a valid proof of one's credibility and authority.

The peer recognition gained by peacocking was especially important between the men themselves, with the act of comparing as the main practice adopted. In the following extract, Kevin illustrates the importance of being appreciated and involved within the competition between members of the group:

And there was a lot of standing about being admired, you know, and wanting to be admired: "I have the latest kit". And, you know, adopting the right poses and being seen in the right places. So um... again, I think, I think that was all quite new that sort of Dandy... thing for blokes.

Kevin, 66-70

What characterises the Peacocking theme is its inextricable linkage to embodiment – the right bodily actions being performed in the right place. So, it is not only clothes that indicate one's

affiliation to the group, but also the *way* in which they are worn – “*adopting the right poses*”. The interplay between body and clothes is central to this account, where the “*right*” clothes allow the body to behave in a certain way, and vice versa; this is where the “*right*” poses allow clothes to be presented in a way that effects the individual being recognised as a young, trendy and attractive man. Location was also important in such a peacocking ‘ritual’. To fully exploit this potential to present an appropriate ‘type of’ masculinity, it was not only necessary to look and behave in a certain way but also to be visible in and associated with a popular place of meeting. The following passage consists of a compelling description of these group settings, the rules of scrutiny that applied in them and the level of rigour with which they were implemented:

So having something that nobody else had got in um... a period where that was really important is... the competition was really great and also you'd be designing your own clothes, to some extent, and then having them made. It was great fun. I really enjoyed that and on the Friday night you'd stand outside Lyon's tearooms on the Market Square and everybody would be walking up and down seeing what everybody was wearing. The biggest thrill would be if someone came up to you and said: “*I like your suit mate, where'd you get that made?*”, “*Nice clothes*”. And you'd get into a conversation. Just... incredible.

Kevin, 307-317

In this account, Kevin continues to discuss the importance of a social comparison. In his eyes, this was a specific type of “*competition*”, where his presence, judged through a male-male observation, could decide about either his inclusion or exclusion. Interestingly, here he explains how an important part of creating his masculine image was by being actively involved in the process of making his own unique clothes, as in the Vivienne Westwood example from Henry discussed above. This type of activity allowed ‘the peacock’ to present a look that not only was framed within a certain fashion, but also by his personal expectations, adjusted to him as a young masculine individual. Referring to his bespoke suits, Kevin recalls the manner in which those masculinity “*competitions*” were held. This engaged way of acquiring clothes, whether from a tailor or by making them, was present in most of the narratives, but, in this instance, it gave a specific character to the social comparison towards which the peacocking was directed, derived from the clothing as much as the individual’s creativity and charisma.

The very 'masculine' way in which Kevin presents the interviewer with his description is also compelling. A phrase such as "*I like your suit mate, where'd you get that made?*" is reminiscent of the word "*blokes*" in the previous passage, which speaks of the hierarchy and status that characterised the social world the male in this period grew up in, emphasised in this memory of the group's internal rules. Here, though, Kevin positions himself in a more feminine situation, where he was judged not on his achievements, in the production sense, but by the way he looked. His use of language indicates the changing social associations of fashion, from a feminine domain into a more gender-neutral system. However, it might also suggest that Kevin felt some unease about sharing this with the female interviewer and his need to highlight his 'male' affirmation in the language he used.

Finally, in order to fully exploit the interpretative potential of this account, it is appropriate to note that, on many occasions in Kevin's interview, he highlighted his current disconnection with any social groups and his negative reaction when people comment on his appearance. The reason for this change in Kevin, from him describing getting comments from others on his look as "*the biggest thrill*", to now rejecting them completely may be connected to the improved social and professional position that has accompanied his maturing. In this sense, it can be interpreted that Kevin no longer wants to be recognised as someone overtly interested in fashion and his appearance, hoping to attract attention by the way he looks. Instead, he wants to be associated with other male professionals who do not talk about such trivial aspects of life; this, however, does not influence his interest in, or practices of, an active fashioning of his body.

Another practice that is seemingly similar to the peacocking just discussed, although with different motives, was creating attention aimed at attracting females. This was mainly focused on impressing chosen individuals, rather than gaining peer recognition; however, they seem connected or even interdependent. For example, in the following account, Grahame highlights fashion's communicative potential – a tool to display his heterosexual masculinity to gain and maintain recognition from "*the girls*":

But, you know, if you wanted any street cred that, you know, that was sort of, you know, it was how you got the girls really. That's, you know, what I think that is what a lot of fashion is about, you know. That it's, you know, we are all peacocks⁴⁴ at the end of the day. And we all like to strut our feathers.

Grahame, 14-18

In this passage, Grahame puts his belief that clothes mean he can express and highlight his masculine attractiveness at the centre of this account. Strikingly, when juxtaposed with his previous utterance cited in the Mirroring theme, in which he reflected on gazing at women not linked to sexual titillation but simple appreciation of the presented aesthetics, the changed social norms of accepted gender practices emerge respectively. In this case, it is no longer exclusively the male actively gazing at women who put effort into their appearance; instead, it is equally acceptable for men to actively attract the female gaze by expending equivalent effort.

This analysis can be stretched further to suggest that Grahame might consider clothes as something artificial, an external layer that is not necessarily consistent with his inner self. Grahame claims, that to earn "*street cred*" in the past, he needed not only to be noticed but also to be recognised for his skills and effort; however, past and present seem to mix and connect in this short passage. At first glance, it looks as if he talks entirely about the past but, in the second part of this passage, he uses the present tense, which suggests that this is something that still features in his life. Moreover, elsewhere in his interview, he comments: "*It's [appearance] what attracts the girls when you're a teenager, or when you get older, or whatever. It's all part of that. It's all part of sexuality (...). Well it has been for me, anyway.*" This confirms that there is continuity in how Grahame has maintained his sense of heterosexual masculinity in relation to fashion and clothing, so his account can be understood as a declaration of his unfolding sense of masculinity, sexual potency and stamina. He realises that this is the way he used clothing in the past, but, at the same time, he says that this is not something that is beyond him and that he is still capable of wearing this external shell to actively and efficiently attract and seduce women, highlighting the importance of the continuance of these practices in the process of his masculine self-identification. On the other

⁴⁴ I need to acknowledge that it was Grahame's account that was influential in capturing the essence of the Peacocking theme. Grahame's use of the word "peacock" inspired the subordinate theme title by virtue of that succinct gathering of multiple related concepts in a quite visually engaging image.

hand, it also might suggest that he struggles to accept the changes caused by ageing and has problems with understanding and acknowledging his own ageing body's limitations.

Peacocking was one of the key ways in which the participants in this study developed their sense of their current masculine identity in regards to fashion and clothing. This often appeared as a clear interest in their appearance, or in impressing others by the way they looked, though the 'others' who those practices were aimed at varied from potential sexual partners, to both male and female members of the social group during the night out, to work colleagues. The common ground underlying all those incidents was the way fashion and clothing allowed the participants to successfully perform certain roles: admired member of a youth subculture, sexually attractive male, or successful professional. Moreover, although there was a general sense that these practices belong to their past, none of the participants made this explicit; instead, they discussed peacocking in the context of the continuation and assimilation of such practices into their mature male identity. This suggests that these men attempt to construct their ageing masculine identities by using their youth as a touchstone: such an aspect is present also in the following theme, "Dis-Comforting".

DIS-COMFORTING

Another recurrent theme in my analysis, "Dis-Comforting", points to a system of values where the participants' physical comfort was compromised for the sake of a fashionable look. Alongside its potential psychological significance, this had particular physical effects on some of the participants, most of whom recounted memories of uneasiness or even physical pain caused by their outfits. This past willingness to sacrifice bodily comfort has had implications for their present expectations towards fashion and is reflected in their current fashion behaviours, especially the negotiation between physical and mental comfort.

Most participants reported some willingness to suffer bodily constraint and discomfort as a consequence of creating a desired fashion image to be admired by others. In terms of bodily affliction, the young body factor is significant; the discomfoting practices, for most of the participants, were something limited to their past only. However, it is important to point out

that all of the participants in this study, at the time of their interviews, were physically active and had no body related problems, except for a few weight issues that were mentioned. In the following extract, Henry presents his memory of the past experience of wearing an uncomfortable garment:

I remember having a red t-shirt with an EP record on it. And the printing was so hard that it really itched all the time. Particularly, I can still feel it on my right nipple. It was so hard. It was like solid plastic. And it was rough, but you still wore it.

Henry, 58-61

This extract clearly shows that in the relationship between the garment and wearer, the former may manage bodily behaviours. In this sense, Henry still needed to behave in a certain, expected and self-imposed way; persevering even through bodily pain. On the other hand, the act of wearing this particular trendy top also influenced Henry's behaviour, allowing him to gain a certain social identity through the group association. As a result, this one garment for Henry became a source of a somehow contradictory bodily stimulation: on the one hand, it caused him discomfort and pain; on the other, it made him feel good about himself.

Furthermore, it is compelling how in the last sentence Henry tries to rationalise this somewhat irrational behaviour of wearing a garment that caused him so much pain, by saying "*and it was rough, but you still wore it*". He suggests that this was a general pattern of behaviour; everyone, all the young men around him, did it that way, so he did it as well. He cannot be, therefore, judged on the irrationality of those practices because he did not have complete control over them. Those sorts of reflections were common to all the participants, especially when it came to their reminiscences of being part of youth subcultures. This might suggest a shared sense of a lost or limited masculine agency when it comes to clothing, compared to that period and those circumstances. Furthermore, this sense of a lack of control also explains the struggle between participants' individuality and the look dictated to them by the group rules, discussed above.

To add to this interpretation, it is also significant to note the very direct way in which Henry talks about his experience. His invocation of the material qualities of the garment allows the listener not only to imagine the look of the garment, but to almost feel for themselves the bodily sensation caused by it. Not only is Henry's account of the past

important, but so is his current, embodied, recollection of it – the fact that he “*can still feel it*”. As well as showing the level of his past commitment to the idea of staying fashionable at all costs, it indicates that those practices might not be entirely in his past, as explained by him in the following utterance:

When I am wearing clothes... comfort... noooo I don't think so. As long as I can get my increasing size into it, I am happy. Comfort... no. Style first. I will breathe in, and fasten anything, and live with it for the day, if I have to. I would probably consider a corset, if I had to get into something. If I had to but... no. It is shape and form and colour.

Henry, 488-492

In this extract, Henry continues his account on the role of the discomforting practices in his life, comparing past and present and tracing the roots of his current habits in those previous practices. While there is an underlying assumption that similar practices are typical behaviours for younger rather than older individuals, his account can be read as the youth asserting his still masculine bodily functions. Moreover, when a typically ‘masculine’ way of handling pain is considered, we arrive at a strong sense of continuity between both of Henry’s extracts, where he presents his body as an entity that can still be a subject of restrictions, or even modifications, and he can still ‘handle’ the pain, as a man in his prime ‘should’.

Accordingly, here, similarly to Grahame, Henry emphasises that those practices are not yet beyond him and that he still can shape his body as he wishes. Two interpretations suggest themselves for this. Henry might indeed still feel young and capable of discomforting his own body, or he might be trying to persuade the interviewer and himself that this is his corporeal reality. Although he specifically points out how his body has changed with age, his account overall contradicts the image that he is scared to present and accept – the image of an older, less capable body.

What is also compelling in this extract is Henry’s use of an expressive parallel to a corset, which can symbolise, especially for women, bodily oppression and limitation. Henry says, “*I will breathe in, and fasten anything, and live with it for the day, if I have to. I would probably consider a corset, if I had to get into something*”. In this sense, Henry, further subscribes to discomforting practices. But, in order to more deeply exploit the interpretative potential of this extract, it is helpful to consider instances where Henry expresses his belief that fashion is a problematic field for men to enter and to be associated with. For example,

Henry describes his past and present practices of wearing pink colour garments (discussed later in this chapter as part of the “Non-Conforming” theme), which suggests that, for him, fashion became a way to resist gender stereotypes, emphasised by his choice to use a typically feminine garment as an example.

Finally, it is worth noticing the change of temporal referents from second to third conditional present in Henry’s account. This move from “*I will breathe in, and fasten anything, and live with it for the day, if I have to*” to “*I would probably consider a corset, if I had to get into something*”, reveals a lot about his relation to the actual possibility of those events. While, in the first sentence, he signals that he is talking about real and possible situations, in the second sentence, those situations are rendered impossible and ‘unreal’ - his potential fight with gender stereotypes indicated in the previous paragraph is somehow limited to the verbal account only, rather than actual wearing this garment.

The theme of Dis-Comforting is present also in Kevin’s account, in a description of his trip to Greece during which he actively and purposively discomforted his body:

Well, there is this funny fashion story. I went to Greece in 1975 for a long break. (...) [A]nd I rather foolishly bought a pair of boots, not the kind of boots you would imagine for hiking around Greece but 3-inch Cuban heeled boots with pointy toes from Kensington market and they were bright blue. I always wanted some boots like that and so I spent about 6 weeks walking on craggy hills and mountains of Greece with these boots on and lost all sensation in my big toe. And it’s never come back. That’s a tragedy. (...) And I didn’t even bother trying to buy a new pair of shoes while I was over there, I just wanted to look like I did with these boots on. (...) That sort of look, and that’s the kind of thing I wouldn’t do anymore. Still got a numb toe.

Kevin, 337-357

Interestingly, Kevin’s description strongly separates his past and present practices. He openly admits his previous practices of discomforting his body, but he also indicates that this is something that he does not “*see the need for doing [anymore]*”. This functions as a declaration of his acceptance of the man that he has become, and, especially on the bodily level, his lack of a need to interfere with it. Arguably, this is built on changes in his thinking about those practices through the intervening years. Now, nearly 40 years later, he is critical of his own fashion choices, noticing that he “*rather foolishly bought*” this pair of boots and reflecting on their lack of fit for purpose. But Kevin is also able to precisely reconstruct his past rationale for wearing the boots - his need to be associated with “*this Kensington market*

sort of image". This, once again, signifies the importance of achieving a certain look in order to participate in certain trends typical of that period for the participants in this study.

Finally, bodily fatigue is also significant here, with the results of past discomforting and mistreating carried into the present in the memory, and inscribed on his body. Kevin distances himself from the past, with *"that's the kind of thing I wouldn't do anymore. Still got a numb toe"* and points to the fact that the lost feeling in his toe is a daily reminder of his own body fragility and vulnerability, and might also be the reason for his strong withdrawal from similar practices. This is especially appealing, because, as I have already indicated, the theme of "Distancing" emerged as one of the subordinate themes being part of the "Defining the Fashion-Self" superordinate theme discussed in the following section. Consequently, although Kevin's account unequivocally belongs to the Dis-Comforting theme, it is a clear example of the situation where the emerging themes overlapped and created a network of interdependent thematic entities; it is only this network as a whole, with its all intricacies and nuances, that has the potential to present the full picture of the complexity of the participants' experiences. I return to this concept in the "Discussion" section of this chapter.

In summary, the theme of "Dis-Comforting" emerged as a strong, but multifarious, theme in this analysis. Its multi-layered character, composed of both physical and mental aspects, together with its presence in both the past and present, and the complicated interdependence of both, allows me to draw on and exploit its richness in relation to the ageing phenomenon and the complexity of the men's actions and their experience of it.

In this section, I presented a set of subordinate themes relating strongly to the participants' past but which were significant in the way they influenced their present fashion practices and behaviours. But this analysis outlined also a number of recurrent themes, which, while still rooted in the past, are more revealing of the ways in which the participants at present construct and define their current fashion identities. In this sense, these themes' focus is shifted more towards the present than was the case in the "Learning Fashion" superordinate theme just discussed. Accordingly, in the following section, I describe the second superordinate theme, which is "Defining the Fashion-Self".

6.2.2 DEFINING THE FASHION-SELF

The second superordinate theme, “Defining the Fashion-Self”, is telling in regards to how the participants create, project, and negotiate their male identities and how this influences their experiences of fashion and clothing. It is important to reinforce here that all of the participants perceived themselves as authoritative entities with pioneering pasts within the field of fashion, yet also as individuals who conform neither to social norms nor to fashion trends, and for whom the practice of distancing was key to how they perceived themselves in relation to certain types of others or undesired images.

Likewise, central to the accounts presented in this section was the experience of fashion through the lenses of fashion-aware individuals. In this vein, all three subordinate themes: “Pioneering”, “Non-Conforming”, and “Distancing”, emerged strongly within the sample. As can be seen in table 6.2 the Pioneering theme was present in the narratives of all five of the participants, while both the Non-Conforming and Distancing themes were present in the narratives of four out of five interviewed men. These subordinate themes can be described as having their origins in the participants’ past, and yet can also be seen as concurrent central influences in their present-day social identification. This is similar to the previous superordinate theme, “Learning Fashion”, but in the present set of themes the locus is shifted more towards the present experiences, practices and behaviours. Thus, both superordinate themes suggest the important influence of the past in the creation of the present, and exercise the concept of identity as the process of personal and social becoming, rather than a fixed state of being, as discussed, for example, by Goffman (1959/1990). Furthermore, it is important to notice that, in the present set of the subordinate themes, more than in other two sets, the various mutual dependencies between the subordinate themes emerge, which, despite being independent entities, are often linked and intertwined. This once again highlights the complexity and intricacy of the phenomena under study; I discuss this further in the final section of this chapter.

Table 6.2 Prevalence of the “Pioneering”, “Non-Conforming” and “Distancing” subordinate themes within the sample

Participant	Defining the Fashion-Self		
	Pioneering	Non-conforming	Distancing
Grahame	X*	X	X*
Henry	X*	X*	
Kevin	X*	X	X
Ian	X		X*
Eric	X	X*	X*

* Names of the participants whose quotes were used to support my description and interpretation of each of the three subordinate themes.

PIONEERING

The notion of “Pioneering” - the idea of being the first who developed a certain set of fashion practices - was in some way inscribed across the sample of participants, who grew up in Great Britain in the 1950s and onwards. Consequently, Pioneering emerged as one of the strongest themes within the analysis, and often functions as a first-person account of the witnessing and participation in the socio-cultural transformations of the period. As an example of this, in the following extract, Kevin talks about his recollection of the development of fashion trends for men:

[In the 1960s] there were long debates between men for the first time about what was “in” and what wasn’t. Men started to talk about clothes it was... quite a phenomena I think er... and old people I think probably found that really quite weird. Because you, you know you just wore sports jacket and trousers, sensible shoes, and shirt and tie. What’s to discuss? [...] So um... again, [...] I think that was all quite new that sort of dandy... thing for blokes. Um... hadn’t been... hadn’t been seen for a very long time um... particularly after the years of austerity after, after the war.

Kevin, 53-72

Indeed, Kevin’s account could be seen as a direct reflection of changes in the social discourse on men and masculinity. Moreover, he explains how these “*phenomena*” were the results of a young, modern men’s innovative approach, highlighting that it was precisely this attitude that differentiated them from older generations. Thus, the key to the interpretation of

Kevin's account seems to be what it says about the group identity of the new, modern type of men, who were no longer restricted by social norms or cultural limitations, and who felt free to express and expose their shared interest in fashion and to become the "*new [...] sort of dandy... thing for blokes*". Arguably, in the light of those changes, masculinity gained new meanings of openness, progressiveness, and trendiness. This observation creates an interesting overlap with the themes discussed in the following sections, "Non-Conforming" and "Distancing." In this sense, it can be argued that, for Kevin, the rejection of the decaying social expectations of how a man should look laid the foundations for pioneers like him to look and act differently.

But Kevin's recollection needs also to be understood in a temporal context between those incidents and the given account. What Kevin remembers is the very vivid backdrop of the important social changes that characterise that period: rebellion against old norms and fragmentation between youngsters and "*old people*". My interpretation of this is that now, nearly fifty years later, Kevin's account seems to be quite empathetic towards the older generation, who "*probably found that really quite weird*" and for whom "*it must have been quite strange (...) to see these sort of um... er... new colours and new kinds of tailoring (...)*" (74-76). This also suggests the shift in Kevin's self-identification from young to old and, furthermore, can also be interpreted as his increasing self-awareness of growing old.

Interestingly, while Kevin frames his past experiences within the historical context and relates it to World War II, in the following extract, Henry refers to the development of the 'Teddy Boy' subculture. These references to the past are significant when it comes to understanding how both participants still negotiate their identities as fashion pioneers. In Kevin's case, the key seems to be in the use of the past perfect passive tense: "[it] *hadn't been... hadn't been seen for a very long time um... particularly after the years of austerity after, after the war*", which indicates that in fact Kevin considers his generation as re-pioneering the idea of men's fashion that had already been prominent before. Continuity with an earlier trend can also be found in the use of the term "*dandy*", which historically was associated with the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, and which was reinvented by the youth generation in the 1950s and beyond, as Henry notes here:

Uhm, generally, uhm... having grown up in the 60s and 70s I have probably lived through some of, uhm, some of the most exciting changes and developments in male clothing. Uhm... certainly in the last century. Although I missed out on being a 'Teddy Boy' or wearing a Zoot Suit, which I'd rather like.

Henry, 3-9

Henry historically references the 'Teddy Boy' subculture, which for him symbolised and embodied the pioneering spirit of the youth culture and trendy male clothing of that time. In this sense, Henry sees his own pioneering contribution as building on the achievements and inheritance of the 'Teddy Boys.' But there is also a regret present in Henry's account, as someone who "*missed out on being a 'Teddy Boy'*" and, consequently, on the true pioneering of the youth ideals, such as rebellion often visualised through an unconventional look.

From a different perspective, the importance of social changes in the fashion system in the middle of the last century was also discussed by Grahame. For him, pioneering was not only about the development of men's fashion, but also about the creation of a so-called mass fashion:

Maybe, because I was a teenager in the 60s. [...] [I]t was the first period when working class people had got money, you know, spare money. Uhm, to indulge themselves. Uhm, with the clothes really. And also [...] I can remember Nottingham's first boutique. [...] We used to shop in there. All of their stuff would come up either from London or. . . [...] And [clothes from that shop] would have a waist and things like that. And up until that time, if you wanted a suit making, there would be all of these old fashioned sort of places that sold suits but they were for men, you know sort of in their 40s and 50s.

Grahame, 466-483

It is in the context of improved earnings for the working class and cheaper and more widely available fashion goods that Grahame's account gains significance. It is in the light of those transformations that he reveals his insights into clothes as indulgent commodities; designed, distributed, and consumed with the aim of giving pleasure and satisfaction up until then reserved only for the wealthy. Thus, pioneering for Grahame means being part of the first generation of working class men who had a chance to exercise actively the emerging consumer and material culture, not only to enjoy fashionable clothing and its availability to them, but also to reject the old-fashioned shops distributing out-dated goods. This highlights the intersection of the "Pioneering" and "Non-Conforming" themes; I discuss such intersections further in this chapter.

However, Grahame's account allows me also to explore deeper levels of interpretation when it comes to the theme of Pioneering. Firstly, one could ask what does indulging in fashion mean? Should it be associated only with the possibility of buying clothes? And, if so, what was the promise hidden within this purchase? My understanding is that, for Grahame, indulging in fashion has become synonymous with social performance, as clothes allow him to project his desired social image. Secondly, in Grahame's account, his personal expression of pioneering is tightly intertwined with the group and the generational sense of it. Grahame begins the extract with a first person account of the first boutique in Nottingham, which he frequented, exposing the importance in his current self-identification of this very private reminiscence about the concrete place and situations connected with it. Yet nearly immediately, Grahame slips into the plural form, "[w]e all used to shop in there", which highlights the equal importance of sharing this experience with other young men who participated in those activities. These two interwoven and inseparable identities of Grahame as an individual and Grahame as a part of the group can be understood as the result of a certain level of social intimacy shared among members of the youth cultures, and they can be found in the accounts of nearly all of the participants in this study.

Finally, this particular experience Grahame talks about has a specific geographic location in the first boutique in Nottingham. Interestingly, for Grahame, the character and standard of this place can only be defined by relating it to London, a city famous for its fashion trendiness and forwardness. London, therefore, functions in Grahame's account as a geographical reference point allowing him to define his own fashion identity at that time. This shows the strong connection between fashion experience and the context of place, discussed by him also elsewhere in his interview.

Importantly, the theme of Pioneering was an especially significant in Grahame's narrative as a whole. In his interview, he expressed several times how important for him as an individual it was to try and adopt new tendencies and new fashions in his everyday life. For Grahame, pioneering was not only something connected with the past and the socio-cultural changes he witnessed in the 1960s, but also the practice that he has adopted as his general life style. Keeping up with trends and personal progress, in Grahame's case, was deeply

embedded as a routine and common practice, and it also provided him with a rationale for acquiring new goods to indulge in.

As can be seen in the accounts presented above, pioneering functions as the practice that has a strong connection to the participants' pasts. Nearly all of the participants considered themselves pioneers of the various socio-cultural changes initiated in the second half of the twentieth century. These involved transitions in the contemporary fashion system, with the key changes such as the development of mass fashion, of youth-oriented culture, and of fashion trends for men often intertwining with the themes "Non-Conforming" and "Distancing", which are discussed in the following sections. But, for some participants, pioneering is also a present practice, a method they assimilated as the part of their everyday realities that allows them to continue to develop it further as their life progresses. What was common across all the cases is the importance of the pioneering practices, whether they belonged to the past or still function in the present, and in the way that allowed the participants' constant re-negotiation of their constantly evolving fashion identities. A similar attitude is visible also in the "Non-Conforming" theme, which I discuss next.

NON-CONFORMING

The second subordinate theme within the "Defining the Fashion-Self" superordinate theme is entitled "Non-Conforming". It focuses on the practice of rejecting certain social expectations or limitations, or simply avoiding fashion trends, which was seen by most of the participants as a way to display a high level of their fashion expertise. Interestingly, such non-conforming was especially visible in the context of offsetting the participants' fashion sense. In the following extract, Eric illustrates how the rejection of trends has been an important part of his fashion identity:

I've never been a big fan for... going with trends, if you like. Where some designer will tell you this year you're going to be wearing your jeans half way up your leg and I'm saying: 'No, I'm not' (laughs) 'No, I'm not because I'd look ridiculous!'

Eric, 85-88

In this sense, non-conformity for Eric equals demonstrating his high level of fashion 'know-how', skills that allow him to consciously manoeuvre between current fashion trends and his own fashion style. Central to this account is Eric's confidence, and his clear rejection of unsuitable trends artificially dictated by others, which in his opinion would make him "*look ridiculous*". In a similar manner, in the subsequent extract, Eric explains how his reluctance to cease his interest in fashion and clothing as he ages influences the way in which he now critically assimilates fashion trends:

[N]ow we find ourselves nearly drawing pensions and thinking: 'What? What now? Put a cardigan on and grey shoes? No. What do you wear?' I think [...] you can still remain if not bang on fashion at least you can still stay a little bit stylish if you like and wear certain things out of the current crop of fashion, whatever's going on at the minute. But I think you got to be careful basically. You don't want to be looking a bit, you know, too young in your clothing and er... [...] I have no problem going out in tight jeans because I'm, I'm slim. I don't feel like I'm pretending to be 19.

Eric, 109-119

Central to Eric's account is the constant negotiation between the old and the young images of himself. On the one hand, Eric objects to "*pretending to be 19*", but, on the other hand, he also refuses to "[p]ut a cardigan on and grey shoes". Accordingly, Eric's bodily features are significant in the process of this negotiation, especially his lack of weight gain, which is often associated with biological ageing. Eric claims that the reason for him being able to avoid wearing "*some old man kit*" (123), perceived by him as akin to losing his own fashion identity, is because he is still slim, so there is no clash between his body and the clothes that this body is wearing. This poses an immediate question about the future, and how this standpoint will change if Eric's body deteriorates and he fails to carry off stylish clothing. On the other hand, equally important for Eric is distancing from certain practices, such as wearing clothes that mismatch with one's biological age. Significantly, Eric presents this as a prescriptive action for all older men who find themselves at this potentially problematic point of life, highlighting once more the importance of the possible shared social identity within this generation of men.

Probably, the purest form of non-conforming was represented by Henry, who clearly refuses to be subservient to the social norms limiting colours that men should or should not wear. In the following extract, he discusses his practice of wearing pink, a colour that is stereotypically associated with women and femininity:

[In the past] I wore colours that boys wouldn't wear. [...] I mean hippies would wear the colours I wore. But no ordinary schoolboys in the North East of England would wear pink. [...] I wear a lot of pink. And a lot of men still have difficulty with that. And still mention it. And they come to me and say: 'I wish I dared to wear it.' And I think: 'Well, why daren't you?' Yeah it is a lovely colour. And there is nothing wrong with it. [...] Army uniforms used pink in the Napoleonic period uhm... [...]. So it is not something associated with femininity. It is directly oppositely associated with the manliness and the warrior status of men.

Henry, 322-337

Firstly, what is striking in this account is Henry's own recognition of the continuation of his active non-conforming, and also to some extent pioneering, approach throughout his life; he did wear pink when he was a young boy (when it was not acceptable and only certain subcultures did so), and he does so now (when it is acceptable, but still not a common practice).

Secondly, it is in the context of being noticed and admired by other men that Henry's account of his own uniqueness can be fully recognised, especially when it comes to the very specific geographic location of the "*North East of England*" in the time of Henry's youth. Therefore, the historical background, which Henry provides later in his account, is quite unexpected and seems to function as a direct 'rationale' for Henry's 'right' to wear pink. Central to this account is, therefore, the discrepancy between the male gender and masculinity and the importance of the role that clothes can have to either highlight or suppress it. It is intriguing how, on the one hand, Henry expresses his intentionality in creating such a rebellious appearance, but, on the other, he feels that it is essential to explain (to the interviewer and to possible readers of his account) his strong connections with the male gender.

The non-conformist approach seems to be the key tool that nearly all of the participants in this study use to conceptualise their masculine ageing identities. In this sense, it is strongly connected with past experiences and especially with their pioneering, youthful ideals. But this theme functions most expressively when it comes to the participants' negotiation of their place in the current youth-oriented fashion system. In this context, the participants' non-conformism allows them to rebel against social expectations that they should 'tone down' as they age. For some, non-conforming functions also in other spheres of fashion, such as extravagant choices of colours, or not subscribing to the general trends of fast

fashion. My interpretation is that, in general, non-conforming should be understood as central to the way the respondents experience their current relationships with fashion and, therefore, as significant to their self-identification. Accounts of the importance of such processes of self-identification are present also in the following subordinate theme, namely “Distancing”. As I discuss below, there are some significant conceptual overlaps between these two themes.

DISTANCING

The final theme within this set of subordinate themes, “Distancing”, focuses on the need common to most of the participants in this study to declare that they are not connected with, or supportive of, certain fashion practices or behaviours. This theme often functions in relation to ‘others’ who represent characteristics not desired by these participants. Furthermore, this type of critique was frequently utilised as a way to express the participants’ individuality or ambitions and is especially evident in the context of distancing from ‘others’ who do not display the ‘right’ level of involvement with contemporary fashion trends. It is worth noting that what was perceived as the ‘right’ level varied significantly for different participants; some of the participants distanced themselves from ‘others’ who in their eyes engaged with fashion too much, others from those who did not engage with it enough.

In the following extract, Grahame reflects on the practice of not following the most current fashion trends; for him such a practice symbolises not only backwardness but also bad taste in general. Central to his account is his own identification as a person who is capable of progressing with (fashion) modes:

[W]hen I was growing up in the 60s, sort of, Elvis was really popular. And there would be lots of men in their 50s that, even though Elvis was like maybe gone out of fashion sort of 10 years [...], they were teenagers when Elvis was at his height. So they wanted to look like Elvis. And 20 years later they still wanted to look like Elvis! [...] I work with a few men my age, who say they will never listen to hip-hop [...] they’re stuck in the period [...] I have never had to purposely change. It’s just always been, just like breathing, it’s just natural. [...] You, yourself are organic. You just change and develop into something new.

Grahame, 193-215

Undoubtedly, popular music is one of the most influential factors in the process of fashion trends formation. Thus, the relationship between various music genres and fashionable

clothing can be a direct one in which a performer's, such as Elvis Presley's, appearance is copied by his fans. But this relationship can also take the more subtle form of the various youth subcultures articulating themselves through their clothing choices, such as associations between rock music and the Punk style. Interestingly, it is the music and the stylish appearance connected with it that Grahame refers to in the above extract, commenting widely on men who are "*stuck in the period*", and who "*will never listen to hip hop*", who in fact became stagnant in once-pioneering practices. Consequently, music here becomes a metaphor for progress and not fossilising in terms of style. However, the reference to the hip hop culture, well known for its associations with physical activities, might suggest a further interpretation, where Grahame attempts to self-identify not only as modern and keeping up with trends, but also as a physically still-youthful man.

Yet, another interesting aspect of Grahame's account is the metaphor of breathing, representing his own personal development as something "*natural*" and "*organic*". This analogy is especially expressive when the actual process of biological breathing is imagined as the exchange of oxygen from the air between the organism and the environment through the lungs. While Grahame assimilates new types of music, he also filters it through his own body of past experiences, allowing for the creation of a new, private experience. In this, certain fashion awareness and responsiveness to aesthetics became, for Grahame, instinctive and automatic. But the interpretation offered here might also suggest a certain level of discrepancy between Grahame's intentional choices of clothing and his unconscious action of responding to fashion.

Similar to Grahame, Eric also distances himself from others; in this instance, one of his friends, by criticising his bad fashion taste and his tendency to blindly follow fashion trends without recognising the possible age restrictions:

God it sounds terrible. I don't look... I don't... I want you to know I don't live my life looking at people going: 'Errgh, ergh.' I don't. But occasionally... you know I have friends who I think slip into that category sometimes who, who are perhaps not the right shape to wear certain things but they will because they're fashionable. I have a friend who's well known for it the most. Not just me, all his friends think so. He just dresses inappropriate.

Eric, 407-14

In the above extract, it is interesting to note how Eric tries to justify his critical judgment, or even looks for excuses to do so by saying “*all his friends think so*”. Consequently, the concept of ‘others’, for Eric, represents not only the people he wants to distance himself from, but also those individuals with whom he shares his opinions and beliefs. Eric realises that “*it sounds terrible*” to criticise his friend’s fashion choices, even though they are “*inappropriate*”, and, therefore, by splitting the responsibility for doing it equally between him and some of his friends, he tries to rectify it. Paradoxically, Eric’s need to distance from ‘some others’ places him even closer to the ‘other others’, creating an interesting distinction between the ‘appropriately-dressing’ individuals (who accept their ageing and dress accordingly) and ‘inappropriately-dressing’ individuals (who reject it) around him. Here, Eric’s account can also be seen as an interesting extension of his previous utterances presented as part of the “Non-Conforming” theme, where he reflected on the way in which he balances out following fashion trends and his own sense of fashion as part of growing old.

A further account of distancing from trying to look younger than one really is comes from Ian, who clearly separates himself from the undesired practices of using clothes to create a fake image of youthfulness:

Obviously these days, I am 58, so you can’t... you’ve got to be careful about what you wear you won’t... uhm... always wear what you like. Because “mutton dressed up as lamb” as is the female version of it (laughs). But you know, I think uhm... you know, you’ve got to be careful that you are not trying to look too young. [...] [A]lthough I don’t think that has ever happened to me.

Ian, 207-213

Significant in this account is the use of the gendered phrase “*mutton dressed up as lamb*”, a phrase typically reserved for women, meaning a woman who dresses younger than her years. It is interesting to note that the use of this gendered phrase implies the lack of comparable vocabulary for men which somehow ‘forces’ Ian to cross the boundaries of his own masculinity. His laughter might suggest that this makes him feel rather uncomfortable. Furthermore, this triggers Ian’s nearly immediate response: “*I don’t think that has ever happened to me*”. By saying that, Ian draws a clear line between him and the shameful practice, but also between him and female characterisation.

While, in his previous account, Ian distanced himself from a certain image, in the following one, he separates himself from the brand that represents negative (in his eyes) characteristics. It appears that it is uniqueness that determines a brand's value for Ian:

So then... it was in the 90s... that I started wearing G-Star then. [...] And started buying their stuff, which was absolutely brilliant at the time. Right up to about 2000 [...]. As soon as they opened up the Nottingham G-Star I knew that was the end of it. Uhm... and it was. [...] Everyone [...] on Jeremy Kyle wearing G-Star. You knew it was the end. But in the early 90s, when really it was catching on in Amsterdam and a couple of shops in London used to stock it. But nobody else did. But they got bigger and bigger. And that was the end of it.

Ian, 114-125

It is in the context of a popular TV programme, *The Jeremy Kyle Show*, that distancing for Ian comes to function distinctly. He says that he “*knew that was the end of it* [the G-Star brand]” when it became widely available. But what Ian means is not the termination of the brand's existence, which is still present on the market, but the end of his own personal relationship with it, the discontinuation of his interest in the brand. Furthermore, of great significance in this account is the concept of place, reproducing the sense of Nottingham being on the fashion periphery, as evident in Ian's utterance. In this context, places such as Amsterdam or London mentioned in the account function as the definers and highlighters of the G-Star brand's uniqueness and distinctiveness, traits that are personally meaningful and important for Ian's self-identification.

In addition to the interpretation of Ian's utterance presented above, there is also an interesting intersection of the “Distancing” and “Pioneering” themes present within this account. I argue that the reason for Ian to discontinue his interest in the G-Star brand lies precisely in the fact that wearing their clothes is no longer a pioneering practice; hence, the relation between those two themes can be described as cause-and-effect. This once more highlights the richness and the level of complicity of the embodied experience of ageing displayed and described by the participants in this study.

Distancing, just as non-conforming, plays a key role in the participants' self-perception. It is through separating from others who represent undesired characteristics that participants negotiate their own identities. In this context, ‘others’ are often associated with not being able to find the balance between fashion maxima and minima: looking too young or

too old; too fashionable or not fashionable enough. By distancing themselves from these practices (potential 'fashion faux pas'), the participants were able to explain their own position as sitting in the middle and not subscribing to any of them, which consequently could be understood as reaching a certain state of fashion equilibrium. Here, my interpretation is that distancing emerged also as an important component of many other subordinate themes discussed throughout this chapter, allowing the participants to accommodate their fashion uniqueness through the medium of social comparison with others. Below I present the final superordinate theme, the "Fashion-Age(ing) Performance", which describes the participants' most contemporary experiences of fashion and clothing in relation to their ageing.

6.2.3 FASHION-AGE(ING) PERFORMANCE

The final superordinate theme, "Fashion-Age(ing) Performance" focuses on the participants' social performances in relation to ageing and fashionable clothing. In contrast to the other two superordinate themes, "Learning Fashion" and "Defining the Fashion-Self" discussed previously, the main locus of this theme is in the present. This, however, is in no way to abate the significant impact of the past practices, behaviours and incidents on the participants' current, often complicated, relationships with fashion and their experiences of it. As opposed to that, many interpretations presented in this section refer to, and draw on, the subordinate themes such as "Mirroring", "Dis-Comforting" or "Pioneering" where the focal point was placed mainly in the past. The three themes discussed below, "Presenting", "(Un-)Fashioning", and "Re-Materialising", describe the way in which the respondents socially negotiate their ageing bodies through their engagement with contemporary fashion. As can be seen in table 6.3 two themes, Presenting and (Un-)Fashioning, were present across the whole sample, while the Re-Materialising theme was present in the narratives of four out of the five men in this study. In this sense, this set of themes explores the significant and complex network of connections between the participants' personal sense of style and self-awareness of their age-related bodily changes, as reflected in their clothing preferences and choices. Below, I discuss the first subordinate theme, namely Presenting.

Table 6.3 Prevalence of the “Presenting”, “(Un-)Fashioning” and “Re-Materialising” subordinate themes within the sample

Participant	Fashion-Age(ing) Performance		
	Presenting	(Un-)Fashioning	Re-Materialising
Grahame	X*	X*	X
Henry	X*	X	X*
Kevin	X	X	X*
Ian	X*	X*	X*
Eric	X*	X*	

* Names of the participants whose quotes were used to support my description and interpretation of each of the three subordinate themes.

PRESENTING

The accounts of the importance of the way the participants present themselves to others through using fashionable clothing were common in the narrations of all of the respondents. This was often connected with the role that clothes play in the process of social performing, indicating their significance for the respondents’ construction of their emerging social identities around and through clothing, but also in the social discourse on ageing more generally. Most of the men in this study acknowledged their changing physicality and the need to adjust their fashion choices accordingly; however, this was often expressed indirectly. Some of the participants frequently struggled to directly articulate the connection between their fashion choices and ageing, and others denied such a connection at all. However, this relation was often reflected in their clothing choices. While none of the participants expressed being restricted or limited by their age when it came to fashionable clothing, they certainly did not want to be identified as wearing ‘too young’ (nor ‘too old’ as was discussed in the “Non-Conforming” and “Distancing” themes) clothing. This was exercised through the careful avoidance of clothes that could influence the participants’ social recognition in such a way.

It appears that the process of the social construction of the participants’ age identity and status, within the clothing context, is often reduced to the choice between the garments

that, in their opinion, are age-suitable or age-unsuitable. The participants highlighted the importance of presenting themselves in a certain, age-conscious way and they identified wearing clothes that might signal that they are trying to look younger than they really are as a shameful, foolish and disgraceful practice. In the following extract, Eric describes the importance of avoiding such a fashion presentation and reflects on how this is different in comparison to when he was younger:

I don't think I'm vain (...) I can leave the house looking unshaven and scruffy kit on. It doesn't really bother me but if I am going out somewhere and I'm not using aka [also known as] then I will definitely make an effort. It is important to me. It's important (...) [and] I want to look good. (...) I don't think I'm vain, people might disagree but I don't think I am. But yeah it is important but um... that I look good, fashionable to a degree I guess but like I say it's more important to me that I don't look a fool [laughs]. I don't want to look a fool and it sounds crazy but I'm sure you might find out in quite a few years' time that you do have to make decisions. You do definitely have to make decisions as to whether that is suitable or appropriate. It obviously doesn't apply when you are 19... or 20. It doesn't matter, does it? You can do what you want... yeah.

Eric, 164-178

Firstly, central to this account is the way in which Eric presents clothing as a medium that can potentially impact on the way in which he is perceived within society, highlighting the relationship between fashion and social performance. Interestingly, this clearly links to the previously discussed "Peacocking" and "Pioneering" themes, and especially strongly to the "Distancing" theme, creating a string-alike relationship between these themes. All the participants in this sample throughout their life courses were noticed and often admired by others for the way they presented themselves and the clothes they wore. Currently, however, as pointed out by Eric, due to the changes in his physicality, he feels that he faces a difficult decision about whether certain garments are "*suitable or appropriate*". As such, Eric, similarly to most of the participants in this study, actively distanced himself from attempting to give any impression of trying to look any younger than he really was. Moreover, this signals that Eric experiences a certain degree of social constraint when it comes to his fashion choices.

In the same way, what is significant in Eric's account is also his somewhat split identity between him-self and his-aka-self. In this way, Eric's claim is that when he is identified as Eric, rather than his "*aka*" identity, his appearance is much more important to him, once again emphasising the role of fashion and clothing for his social performance. This also creates an interesting background to the linguistic composition of Eric's account based on the repetition of

phrases such as *"it's important"* and *"I want to look good"*, which makes it nearly impossible to distinguish between those two identities in this utterance. My interpretation of this is that Eric indeed finds it problematic to keep up the façade of the age-appropriate appearance, and, at least to some degree, enjoys experiencing less pressure when he thinks that his clothing choices will not be connected to his true identity.

Another important feature of Eric's account is his realisation of the way in which his possibly over-consciousness of his appearance can be perceived by others as *"vain"*. This, however, is only the first, descriptive level of the possible interpretations of this account. The second, more conceptual, interpretation is that, for Eric, his interests in fashion and his appearance in its *"vain"* manner can by some be classified more as a female than a male attribute. It is important for him, therefore, to somewhat distance himself from this. Thus, Eric recognises that others might view him in this way and, therefore, he limits the importance of looking *"fashionable to a degree"*, placing his emphasis on the rather masculine characteristics of *"unshaven and [with] scruffy kit on"*. This once again highlights the significant overlaps between the "Presenting" and "Distancing" themes.

Furthermore, the way in which Eric 'imitates' interacting with the interviewer in order to present his own interpretation of his actions as a general rule is also interesting. Eric compares the differences between his clothing choices when he was young and now, by relating to the visibly younger interviewer and saying: *"I'm sure you might find out in quite a few years' time that you do have to make decisions"*. Similarly, in a rather rhetorical manner, Eric asks: *"It obviously doesn't apply when you are 19... or 20. It doesn't matter, does it? You can do what you want... yeah"* and strengthens it even further by his choice of adverbs such as *"obviously"* and *"definitely"*, typically used to place emphasis. This can be interpreted as Eric trying to present the younger interviewer with the inevitable future and the possible pitfalls involved in clothes choices, as she grows older, but also as Eric looking for confirmation and verification of his beliefs.

Finally, the present account can also be interpreted in relation to the commonly functioning stereotype that members of older generations care less about and engage significantly less with clothing than their younger counterparts. In this vein, Eric's account can

be illuminating also in regards to the youth fashion clearly idealised by him. It could be interpreted that the sense of freedom connected with this idea that Eric tries to impose in this utterance is rather deceptive and illusory. In this sense, there is a certain degree of contradiction with the “Mirroring” theme and, in particular, with Eric’s own account in which he used the meaningful metaphor of “*uniform*” to describe the ‘rules’ existing in the Mod subculture that he was a member of in relation to clothing. In that utterance, Eric clearly indicated that for the young person that Eric was back then it was crucial to look according to the strict canons adopted by the group. Therefore, it might be interpreted that, in this utterance, Eric is projecting his lack of acceptance of his ageing processes which he formed over the years, and a certain over-idealisation of his fashion past in comparison to what he now experiences as difficult and problematic.

Age constructing through the medium of fashionable clothing is present also in the interview with Henry. His approach, however, differs significantly from the one presented by Eric. In the following extract, Henry discusses his connections with younger generations, emphasising the similarity between his own and younger men’s clothing choices:

I am getting on (short, nervous laugh); I am in my 50s. So I don’t wear anything other than suits that a 20-year-old or a 30-year-old man would wear. Um a lot of 20/30-year-old men wear suits. So that’s fine. So I do wear that. But uhm... fashionable clothing for young men. Very rarely would I have anything that... that... that would specifically... I wouldn’t have anything marketed specifically at teenagers. For a start I don’t actually like it (whispering). But I wouldn’t wear it. It would not work for me. But as I say young men wear suits.

Henry, 341-348

The key characteristic of this account from Henry is the somewhat ambiguous and contradictory way in which he presents his understanding of the ageing processes he is subjected to, especially in relation to clothing. In this sense, it is interesting to start the interpretation of it by looking at the first sentence of this utterance and the colloquial phrase of “*getting on*” used by him, which itself can be interpreted in a twofold way. Firstly this expression could be understood as Henry saying: “I am getting old”; secondly, as: “I am managing/dealing with the (difficult) situation well”⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ Although this meaning needs the addition of “with it”, it can be interpreted that Henry avoided completing this phrase, and hence the short, nervous laugh in his utterance.

In the first instance, Henry simply indicates that he is growing older which is in line with the second part of the sentence in which he provides his age frame. This suggests that, in this sentence, Henry might try to signal his awareness of his bodily changes caused by the ageing processes. But in the following sentence Henry emphasises his connection with younger generations by highlighting that his clothes do not differ to those chosen and worn by younger men. What is interesting is also that Henry draws a clear distinction between his fashion-sense and teenager-oriented fashion. But, even though Henry clearly articulates those discrepancies, he does not link them with his bodily changes but with his fashion agency; this is his own taste and his conscious rejection of such styling as part of his skilfully and thoughtfully administrated social performance. This suggests that, for Henry, associations with younger generations are split into two categories of the 'acceptable', where the perceived age difference is still a relatively small one of 20-30 years compared to him, and 'not-acceptable', where the perceptible age difference is larger than that. In this case, the social performance that Henry manages by wearing a suit is to remain 'acceptably' fashionable for his age. But this could also suggest an interpretation where Henry's clothing and fashion self-identification has somehow paused at the age of 20/30-years-old. In this sense, Henry does realise his real age of 54 years, but aims at the social identification of a much younger person.

In the second instance of the possible interpretations of the "*getting on*" phrase, Henry's attitude towards his ageing processes seems to be even more ambiguous. In this sense, Henry himself admits that this is the problematic sphere of his life; one, however, that he manages to deal with and find solutions to. Thus, Henry refers to a specific type of clothing that aligns him to younger men – the suit, which is almost timeless in most people's eyes as a particular piece of clothing, one that looks good on men of any age, an ageless vehicle of masculinity. In this sense, the suit becomes for Henry a 'leveller' in terms of an age distinction, perhaps worn not because it makes him look younger, but, in terms of his social performance, because it brings a degree of ambiguity to the way people might perceive his visibly mature physicality.

Moreover, Henry's account is interesting also from the linguistic point of view. Firstly, it is compelling the way in which he repetitively uses a series of short statements, which emphasise the preciseness and clarity of the message that Henry is trying to convey. This

suggests that this is something he has given a lot of thought to and has a very definite view about. Secondly, it is intriguing the way in which Henry uses the word “but” at the beginning of sentences such as in the instance of “*But I wouldn’t wear it*”, which can be interpreted as a certain enforcement of the previously whispered statement of his rejection of certain styling. Finally, it is riveting how the whole utterance is based on the opposite values of “*would*” and “*would not*”, causing a certain level of confusion in the utterance as a whole and which can be interpreted as Henry himself feeling lost and overwhelmed by the ageing reality.

The importance of avoiding ‘too young’ clothing was expressed by all of the participants in this study. In the following extract, Grahame presents his understanding of this issue, based on the concept of evolution:

No, no my age never really comes into it. The only time age comes into it, is if I was to put something on that was too young for me. Then I would know instantly and I would think “Oh God! No, that is not it. It might look nice hanging up, but that is not right for you”. But no I never... I don’t dress for my age. I virtually dress in the same way that I have always dressed, but it has moved slightly, you know. It is just like a rolling thing. You just go with it. You slowly move with it.

Grahame, 218-224

Grahame, similarly to Henry, clearly states that age, in general, is not a problem when it comes to his fashion choices, and that he does not dress for his age. This, however, is not the case when it comes to clothing that he considers as being “*too young for him*” and which he knows would be not right for his mature body. This discrepancy creates an interesting paradox in the way in which Grahame performs his social identity in regards to how old he is: on the one hand, he does not take his biological age into account when choosing his clothes; on the other, he fully recognises the limitations caused by it and avoids unsuitable garments. And, although Grahame might be attracted to the visual aesthetics of an item when it is on the hanger, detached from the real (aged) body, Grahame instinctively knows that his body would not match such a garment.

It is also important to highlight that central to the interview with Grahame as a whole was the sense of his constant personal evolution alongside progressing fashion trends, present also in this account. However, in this excerpt, Grahame’s concept of a “*rolling thing*” can be interpreted in a twofold way: firstly, as the personally important ephemeral fashion trends, but, secondly, also as his personal development as he grows older. In this sense, the

“*slowly mov[ing] with it*” reference in Grahame’s account can be interpreted as the process of his growing recognition and internalisation of the changes in his physicality and the limitations caused by it.

On the more conceptual level of interpretation, it is interesting to consider the highly visual metaphor offered by Grahame in this account. In this sense “*the rolling thing*” expression used by Grahame to explain how his fashion sense has evolved with his biological age can be visually pictured as a wheel, a peculiar type of Perpetuum Mobile which cannot be stopped and which inevitably snowballs all of the elements on its way. Analogous to the rolling motion of a wheel, the concept of ageing can be understood as unstoppable linear process of moving forward only. Consequently, this visual comparison imposes some important questions about Grahame’s agency and the potential implications of rejecting this constant progress. Furthermore, this once again highlights the important role of the participants’ previous experiences in shaping the current ones, discussed throughout this chapter.

Ian, who, in a similar way to Grahame, reflects on the peculiar fashion limitations he is subjected to due to his age, also provides his understanding of the importance of social presentation. In the following extract, Ian describes the first time when he recognised such restraints during one of his shopping experiences:

I was in a shop in Newquay once and it had some quite good labels in it. And I spotted a... a shirt. And I don’t know what was outrageous about the shirt, but I thought it was really nice and really well made. But then I thought: ‘it is not really me. I cannot carry it off at my age’. I can’t remember what it was like at all but I knew... that was the first time it sort of hit me, which was about 12 years ago, I think. The first time I thought: ‘no you have got to be careful there, yeah, mid 40s I shouldn’t really be wearing that’. And I didn’t. So that is the first time that I can stick in my mind as that is the first time it really happened, you know. And it is quite upsetting, in a way (laughs).

Ian, 228-238

There are a few interesting points in this account. What is initially compelling is the fact that after 12 years Ian still remembers in great detail the first time when he felt that he should not buy something precisely because of his age, even though he liked the garment itself. This suggests the great significance of the incident for Ian and his fashion self-identification in relation to his ageing.

Secondly, what is intriguing in this extract is the way in which Ian describes the shirt as being “*outrageous*” and himself as not being able to “*carry it off at [his] age*”. One could question Ian’s rationale behind describing the garment in this way, which is synonymous to being outside any reasonable limits. If the interpretation that, for Ian, buying and wearing the shirt that would make him look beyond what is acceptable for his age is assumed, how does it then relate to Ian not being able to “*carry it off*”, a phrase that is synonymous to escape something without a penalty? One of the possible interpretations here is that Ian, similar to Eric, is fearful of being socially ridiculed or even rejected if he wears clothes that would be ‘too young’ for him. Such an interpretation is strengthened by Ian’s own self-talk of: “*I thought: ‘no, you have got to be careful there’*”, which can be understood as his own self-cautioning against taking a path which may lead to a socially unpleasant outcome.

Finally, Ian describes this particular memory as being “*upsetting*”, which again suggests the deep psychological impact of it on Ian’s self-identification and presentation. This, however, is quickly broken by his laughter as the reaction to this statement and his quick self-response that he knows what he likes and what suits him, suggesting Ian’s struggle to express his feelings and possible denial of the true importance and impact of the incident on his self-perception.

As the presented extracts show, clothes play an important role in the way the participants perform their ageing identities through presenting their fashioned bodies. All of the participants recognised the potential pitfalls of being identified by others as trying to look younger than they are, a practice which they all perceived as undesirable, shameful and disgraceful, and from which they actively distanced themselves. But they also acknowledged their need not to fall behind or outside the fashion circle, looking for a balance between being fashionable and yet not giving any impression that they might use fashionable clothing to falsely pose as younger than their real age. This indeed indicates not only a disconnection but also a strong contradiction between what is socially associated as characteristic of ‘old’ and ‘fashionable’. Below, I continue these considerations in regards to another strong subordinate theme “(Un-)Fashioning”.

(UN-)FASHIONING

Within the interviews, the practice of actively fashioning one's body was significant to all of the participants. The fact of being aware of the current fashion trends, and the conscious choice of following them or not, has had a continuous impact on shaping the participants' social self-identification. Most of the participants recognised those practices as being integral and habitual parts of their everyday lives, deeply assimilated in their everyday routines. Indeed, for some participants, those practices were developed into skills that allow them to sometimes purposively un-fashion their bodies by choosing timeless stylish solutions over ephemeral fashion trends. In this sense, a long-term engagement with fashion that allowed the participants to absorb contemporary trends from various sources, such as magazines, shops and peers, but also to fully identify their aesthetic tastes as much as needs, was critical. Arguably, it was such 'training' that resulted in the development of their contemporary fashion sensibility.

The internalisation of fashioning practices was common amongst all of the participants, especially in the context of clothing. In the following extract, Grahame illustrates how deeply such practices have become embedded in his everyday life:

That's the same with fashion, you know, you will see it. I don't know. It's just like it is inside you. And you don't think about it. You know, I have never really had to think about what I wear. It just happens, you know. Uhm.... And I don't think it... uhm, I don't think it matters how old you get. You never think, well, I don't. (...) You don't think: 'I should uhm... I should buy one of those because they are in fashion now'. It doesn't work like that. It just evolves in you. That's what you do, (...) I have never felt I have needed to keep 'in' fashion. It just happens. Because that's the way you are. It's, you know, you just see something on one person, either in Nottingham or in London or.... wherever you just look and think 'wow, they are cool'. And that's it. That's all you need to see.

Grahame, 34-48

There are several interesting points in this account from Grahame. Firstly, it is compelling how openly he acknowledges the highly visual properties of fashion. This could be interpreted as his understanding of fashion as a system receptively limited to the sense of sight. However, in the next sentence, Grahame adds, "*it is inside you*", which suggests that in fact Grahame's interpretation of fashion is more an integral, visceral part of his body. In this light, Grahame's fashion sense functions a bit like an 'organ' inside him, which allows him to visually scan and

experience the world around him in order to trigger a primitive, embodied and intuitive level of the gathered data processing.

But there is also an interesting interplay between Grahame's internalisation and externalisation of fashion present in this account. This is expressed through the interchange of the sentence subjects from "I" to "it" and "you", especially visible in the second part of this account, when Grahame says: "*It just evolves in you. That's what you do, you know. And so it has never been really any... I have never... What I am trying to say is that I have never felt I have needed to keep 'in' fashion. It just happens.*" These suggest Grahame's constant negotiation between what influences him from outside (e.g. fashion trends) and his own fashion intuition, taste and drive.

Another interesting point is Grahame's choice of verbs such as "evolves" and "happens", suggesting his sense of being powerless when it comes to controlling his fashion practices. The sense of Grahame being 'helpless' towards fashion is intensified further in his interview by the comparison of his interest in fashion to a neural disorder of autism: "*because I am so fussy, you know. And there might be just one thing on it [a garment] I might see... it's crazy, isn't it? It's like autism.*" This comparison plays an illuminative role in the possible interpretation of his experience. It suggests that Grahame's internalisation of fashioning his body makes him feel not only out of control, but also it affects the way he communicates with the environment around him. This highlights the significant role of fashion in Grahame's social and self-performance.

Finally, there is also an interesting overlap with Grahame's account presented in the "Pioneering" theme, in the sense that he once again identifies London and Nottingham as places that for him especially strongly connect with the ideas of being in fashion and fashion forwardness; traits that he relates to and wants to be associated with.

In a similar vein to Grahame, another participant, Ian, also explains his deep assimilation of fashioning practices:

I suppose... I am always aware of what is going off... and I sort of have something at the back of my mind. Just by looking around and looking at magazines. I have something at the back of my mind that that is what is going to be... sort of very fashionable or something. Although I would not say I am very fashionable... at all. I will always have this work wear ethic in my mind. So I always... I know what I like, if you know what I mean. If it's... and I am very workwear-focused these days. (...) [Fashion is] just something for me that I enjoy following and... in my own way following. And I enjoy wearing quality clothes that I feel look good and will look good on me. Yeah... just makes me feel good really.

Ian, 153-164

Similar to Grahame, Ian uses the metaphor of his own body, "*the back of his mind*", to illustrate his sense of the deep integration of fashioning practices. Nevertheless, he also draws a clear line between his instinctive awareness of fashion trends and his choice of not following them entirely. Ian expresses his own personal style as the "*workwear ethic*", which for him seems to function as a filter through which he selects his clothing. In this sense, he follows certain fashion trends but he does so "*in his own way*". In this manner, Ian represents a different approach to fashion from Grahame. While Grahame's account was to some extent deprived from the main actor, Grahame himself, Ian acknowledges his own agency and his role as the main decision maker in the process of (un-)fashioning his body.

This passage also captures the degree of Ian's self-division; he presents himself as a person who recognises the changing fashion trends, yet denies being a "*fashionable*" person. This can be interpreted as Ian not wanting to be associated with certain stereotypes functioning about men interested in fashion. Importantly, this also links to the account given by Eric, previously discussed in the "Presenting" theme, which could be interpreted as him not wanting to be perceived as acting in an effeminate way. Thus, what is common for both participants is their apprehension about weakening their masculine recognition through being associated with the feminine fashion practices. Moreover, in both these instances, there is an interesting overlap with the "Distancing" theme, in the sense that these participants accentuate their disconnection with what by others could potentially be classified as not masculine but feminine. This is especially significant when considering the sample's characteristics as a whole. For this, it is necessary to once again highlight the fact that all the men in this study were heterosexual, and most of them recalled various occasions when they were identified as homosexual men, due to their interest in clothing. This, indeed, might suggest the

interpretation that (un-)fashioning was significant to the participants because it allowed them to distance themselves from identification as someone (being gay) who they are not.

In contrast, Eric, who several times during his interview indicated his detachment from fashion trends, discusses a different approach to fashioning his appearance, as thus:

I'll be honest. I don't consider while that's fashionable, I never think about fashion. I think about style. Honestly, I know I've repeated myself a bit but I want to look good if I'm going out somewhere you know because I'm not bothered if I'm messing about at home. But I won't wear something purely because it's fashionable. Like I say I don't think I've ever done that except perhaps when I was very young and I went along with everything. But no, fashion is not necessarily my top priority. It's more how you look, whether it suits you.

Eric, 139-147

Firstly, what is compelling in Eric's account is his own realisation of how his attitude towards fashions and trends has changed over the years. Eric avowedly admits that in the past he "*went along with everything*", which can be interpreted as his previous lack of a critical insight into fashion. Now, however, this situation is different; nowadays, Eric's aim is not look (overtly) fashionable, but instead to look good and stylish. This creates another interesting differentiation present in this account. While fashion is an ephemeral domain of youth, style for Eric symbolises the sustainable and skilful ability to choose effective and appropriate clothes solutions. This seems to create two hierarchical levels of fashion-awareness: first, an unconditional and uncritical adopting of all of the fashion trends, discussed previously in the "Mirroring" theme; and, second, a more critical and skilful selection, based on sublimed adaptation of the chosen elements only. However, what can be interpreted from Eric's account is that, in his case, he had to complete the first stage, often full of mistakes and errors (discussed in the "Learning Fashion" superordinate theme), in order to develop this higher, more critical level of fashion knowledge.

Secondly, this account also triggers an intriguing interpretation of fashionable clothing as a part of Eric's social rather than personal habitus. Eric explained that he was not "*bothered if [he's] messing about at home*", once again categorising fashion as an external and artificial feature; not the internal domain as Ian or Grahame did. This divergence within the sample suggests the richness of the experience of ageing for British older men, who even though they share similar interests in fashion and clothing and might have similar past experiences of it,

throughout the years have developed different ways of approaching fashion trends and levels of fashion assimilation.

Within this theme, the presented extracts and my interpretations of them show the importance of the (un-)fashioning practices for the way the participants perform their ageing identities, socially and individually, but also for their embodied experiences of ageing and clothing. While for some the constant connecting with selected current fashion trends became the way of social negotiation of the bodily ageing processes they are subjected to, for others the key became the conscious navigation away from the mass trends. All of the participants have recognised the different practices involved in fashioning one's body, such as shopping, planning one's outfit and wearing it, yet acknowledged the importance of the appropriate manoeuvring amongst them in order to achieve the required level and form of fashion 'involvement'. This has also some relevance to the final theme presented in this chapter, entitled "Re-Materialising", which I discuss below.

RE-MATERIALISING

The final subordinate theme within the "Fashion-Age(ing) Performance" superordinate theme is entitled "Re-Materialising" and is concerned with the participants' memories of various fashion items which have a special meaning to them. In this vein, within the majority of the interviews, relating to various fashion artefacts from the participants' past was common and significant in terms of the participants' current relationships with clothing as much as their current fashion style. Interestingly, the reminiscence of a unique relationship with a particular fashion object often functioned as an idealistic prism for the participants to self-analyse and understand their current experiences of fashioning their bodies in relation to their social performance.

It is important to highlight that most of the participants no longer possessed the objects they talked about in their interview; but instead they delivered lively descriptions of the items and anecdotes connected with them. In terms of these descriptions, there was a shared sense of nostalgia and idealisation of the no longer existing or available objects amongst all of the participants. The items were often described as embodying the unique visual aesthetics

or solutions, which participants still admire and identify themselves with, but which they know they could no longer wear, either due to different current trends or their bodily changes.

Common between nearly all of the participants was the desire to re-materialise the artefact(s) even if their actual functionality was limited, if not terminated completely. This suggests that the desire to re-materialise the idealised artefact can often be interpreted as their hidden wish to re-live the joy they experienced while wearing those items.

Within a fashion context, the desire to re-possess the garment(s) from the participants' past sometimes functioned as a contextualisation for their current fashion taste. It is in the situation of a material contact with the garment, and embodied and haptic experiences of it, that it comes to function distinctively. In the following extract, Kevin presents his wish to re-possess a green leather coat that he wore when he was younger and explains its impact on his current fashion choices:

I've had a thing about ¾ length coats ever since the 60s when I came into possession of a ¾ length green leather coat, which was just the bee's knees. You know... and I never wore anything else. I wore that as a coat for about 2 years until I lost it and I really wish I'd still got it. I'd probably have it framed.

Kevin, 127-132

There are several points to note in this short passage. In terms of description Kevin is very clear about the impact the coat had on the development and continuation of his fashion taste. It can be argued that the experience of wearing this particular garment for Kevin was the key determinant for his current fashion sensitivity, and that the green leather coat represents to him the ideal material structure that he wishes to re-experience in a tactile way.

Another interesting point in this account is Kevin's peculiar choice of language when it comes to the description of the coat. The informal expression "*bee's knees*" can be understood as an object or a person of an outstandingly good quality. One, rather metaphoric, interpretation of this passage, yet still grounded in the text, might be to associate bees with honey. In such an interpretation, the coat could be described not only as being of extremely high quality but also representing something tender that Kevin recalls as possible to experience with his senses such as smell or touch. Overall such an interpretation is one of reminiscences of a very full and sensual experience of the coat that might be one of the reasons why the memory of this particular coat is still so important to Kevin.

But there is also another, also quite abstract interpretation of the role of this particular phrase in this extract, which is still grounded in Kevin's interview as a whole. The common knowledge is that bees live in social-type communities with distinguished roles of the queen and the workers. In this caste-oriented society, it is the workers who share the labour and the queen who performs other, higher-level, duties. Visualisation of such a hierarchical organisation delivers another striking observation that all workers look identical. Thus, it can be interpreted that, for Kevin, the green coat became a symbol of his difference and uniqueness; Kevin being a "queen", a trendsetter to others who look the same. Although abstract, this interpretation creates an intriguing framework for Kevin's previous utterances discussed in the "Peacocking" and "Pioneering" themes; adopting this framework reveals that that, for Kevin, his fashion choices are indeed strongly related to his need to stand out and visually differ from others in his environment.

Yet another interesting manipulation revealing the possible meaning of the Re-Materialising theme is to juxtapose Kevin's previous account about the garment that is no longer available to him, with the one below in which he describes his approach towards his past garments that are still in his possession:

I suppose I've got clothes going back probably about 12... 14 years? I've got some shoes that are older than that but um, yeah I'm really happy with the clothes that I've got at the moment they... you know, they all go together (laughs).

I: So do you still wear them or do you just keep them?

Er... there's about a third that I don't wear mainly because I've got fat. I used to be very skinny erm... and I, I can't wear them but every time I do lose a little bit of weight um... I will and I can wear all of them. Even though some of them are quite old they're still... I'm still happy to wear them in terms of the style and I have some very interesting Paul Smith er... jackets and coats. Erm... probably about 12, yeah probably about 12, 13 years old, something like that. If I could get into them, I'd wear them (laughs).

Kevin, 272-279

They are two focal points in this passage: firstly, what is striking is Kevin's contentment with his current clothes collection; secondly, equally important is his reconnection with the past by keeping the garments whose the actual wear-ability might be limited. Clearly, the key reference point for Kevin lies in the present: "*yeah I'm really happy with the clothes that I've got at the moment they... you know, they all go together*". In this sense, Kevin's current clothing satisfaction is possible through his past purchases which allowed him to accumulate a

synchronised collection of clothes that “*all go together*”, which he can and does still wear, but also in which he clearly takes pride. Consequently, his clothing collection might be equalled here to his life-long achievement.

This resonates also with Kevin’s relationship to his past; although some of the clothes he has collected through the years are no longer available for him to wear, he does not dispose of them. On the surface, it might indeed look like Kevin, by drawing on the past, presents his future aspirations of going back to his weight when he was younger and being able to wear certain garments again. However, what is interesting from the linguistic point of view here is that he finishes his account using the second conditional form of “*If I could get into them I’d wear them*” signalling his own doubts in the fact that he will lose weight and will ever be able to wear those clothes again. This can be interpreted as Kevin’s sentimental relationship with those objects, where the possession of the garments is a way of embodying his past identity, one that he fondly recalls. Furthermore, it can also suggest a battle for identity between who Kevin currently is, and who he was in the past, materialised through the garments he keeps.

But, significant in this extract is also Kevin’s need to rationalise, to himself and possibly to others, the decision to keep those garments. In this manner, an additional rationale for him keeping clothes that are too small is the fact that they are branded, good quality and possibly expensive garments: “*I have some very interesting Paul Smith er... jackets and coats*”. This once again resonates with the pride and achievement factors that might be behind Kevin’s decision to keep those garments, even beyond their functionality.

A similar account is presented by Ian, who displays his regrets of not keeping some of the garments from the London retailer Lloyd Johnson:

My biggest regret is I don’t think I’ve got one single item of clothing left from Johnson’s. And I had so many. I had so much stuff. So much stuff and I don’t know what happened to it (laughs). I had some amazing stuff, some amazing stuff which now fetches absolutely for thousands. (...) And uhm... people still, you know, talk about Johnson’s clothes (...) The most influential thing ever! That was superb with the ideas they came up with. It was ground-breaking and I loved it. Loved it. And then, after they went, I think they stopped in 1990, I think they stopped selling, trading around 1990, and then I got into, I don’t know what actually (laughs).

Ian, 83-102

From the linguistic point of view, it is interesting how Ian repeats the same terms such as “*I had so much stuff. So much stuff*” or “*I had some amazing stuff, some amazing stuff*” which can be interpreted as him reinforcing the enormity of the impact the clothing from the Johnson’s brand had on him. It also appears that, for Ian, the main point of regret is expressed through the juxtaposition of the multiplicity of the Johnson’s garments he had in the past by saying “*I had so many. I had so much stuff. So much stuff (...)*” with the nothingness and emptiness of the present: “*I don’t think I’ve got one single item of clothing left from Johnson’s*”. This description, by being based heavily on the opposition values of fullness and emptiness, indicates Ian’s tendency to idealise and romanticise his memories about this brand. This interpretation is in line also with the highly positive description of the garments, which Ian depicts as “*amazing*”, “*most influential thing ever*” and “*ground-breaking*” and the very emotive verb of “*love*” pointing to the particularly emotional currency he invests when talking about them.

Similarly, the last sentence of this account in which Ian openly admits that he does not know what he “*got into*” after the closure of the brand is compelling, once again highlighting this brand’s importance for his fashion affirmation. Ian’s utterance of “*then I got into, I don’t know what actually*” does not suggest a failure of his memory but more a failure of the brands after Johnson’s to create a memorable impression for Ian, leaving him lost and disoriented. So, it is in the light of this account that the following one, about his all-time favourite piece of clothing, comes to function expressively:

That shirt is, to me is an absolute... classic fashion item that would say everything (...)
Certainly I couldn’t wear that shirt (...) I would be too old for that. (...) But that is the classic
the absolute classic piece I have ever seen. And I would wear it with brothel creepers as
well. The shirt, jeans and brothel creepers as well... but I wouldn’t go out in it (laughs).

Ian, 363-382

The key point in this account is Ian’s very sentimental reminiscence of the shirt from his past, resulting in him being able to re-imagine how it would be to wear it and to even plan what he would wear with it. However, on the other hand, equally important is Ian’s realisation of the unsuitability of his aged body to ‘carry off’ this garment. It can be interpreted, therefore, that what Ian wants is to re-materialise his experience of wearing the garment, which ultimately links to him being young. At the same time, he recognises the elapsed time, the emergence of

the new fashion trends and changes in his physicality that makes it impossible. This links to the “Presenting” theme previously discussed, in which the notion of the identity battle emerged and was developed by some participants who struggled to fully comprehend their current physical circumstances.

Another interesting element of this extract is the repeated use of the word “*classic*”, which can be understood as something that has lasting significance or worth, something that endures, or is continuously in fashion because of its simple and basic style. Arguably, in this case, the word itself makes a strong statement about the ageing body. In this spirit, the ageing body that Ian currently experiences is lacking the ability to carry off wearing this timeless garment and is failing in the visual performance of handling such aesthetics.

In the following extract, Henry, who similar to Ian, no longer possesses clothes from his past, describes his current feelings towards such clothing. Interestingly, in his utterance, Henry displays a certain level of regret, indicating a peculiar sense of loss or even grief caused by this artefact’s absence in his life:

There is only one thing that I really regret uhm... getting rid of. I would never wear them now. But they were fabulous at the time. Fabulously disgraceful I’m sure. Early 80s post new romantic uhm... trousers that were, sort of, khaki green. But streaked almost like they were tie-dyed. They had darker streaks through them. Which had uhm... brass zips from the ankle to the thigh. Uhm... on the front. And you could wear them zipped up and they were quite narrow trousers. But you could undo the zips and they ballooned out into baggie, sort of, new romantic-y type of trousers, which were fabulous. But people must have thought that they were horrible bottoms I was wearing. But I loved them. And I wish I had kept them. But I wore them out! You know, I couldn’t afford many clothes.

Henry, 280-292

There is a clear sense of nostalgia in the way Henry in a very detailed way describes those trousers and presents them as “*fabulous*” and “*disgraceful*” at the same time. But there also is an interesting point on the personal and social character of fashion present in this account. Henry notices that “*people must have thought that they were horrible bottoms I was wearing. But I loved them*”. This suggests that Henry might interpret fashion on two levels: his own personal experience of wearing a garment, but also how it creates the visual experience for those exposed to it. This influences posing of interesting questions as to why it did not matter what people thought about Henry’s attire and why he was not affected by their dislike of those trousers? This relates closely to what was previously discussed in the “Presenting” theme

account given by Eric. In this sense, Henry seems to somewhat confirm Eric's belief in a certain freedom involved in the youth fashion, yet also reveals something of a need to understand his clothing experience through its impact on the others around him.

Consequently, it could be argued that the reason why Henry enjoyed wearing this particular garment so much was precisely because he knew that people would have noticed him more because of it.

In a similar vein, it is also interesting to consider the relation between those two experiences of Henry. In his interview, Henry several times stressed how important being different from others, or even "*annoying*" people by his appearance, was to him. It can be argued, therefore, that Henry's personal experience of clothing in general is stimulated, yet not completely determined by, the way others experience him wearing the garments. This again links to discussion around the issue of intentionality as part of the "Pioneering" theme, where some participants wore specific clothing with the deliberate intention to create an impression on others or rebel against limiting social rules. In such a context, it can be interpreted that the stronger others' reactions were, the more intense Henry's experience of wearing this "*fabulously disgraceful*" item became, which is consistent with Henry's interview as a whole.

Another compelling interpretation of this account is hidden within Henry's explanation of the reason why he was not able to keep this garment, which also needs to be related to Henry's interview as a whole, in which, on many occasions, he referenced his improved economic status and, as a result, his much higher disposable income as compared to his youth. Henry, thus, admits that the only reason for him not holding on to those trousers is because he "*wore them out*" as he "*couldn't afford many clothes*". This provokes the interpretation that Henry's nostalgic feeling towards those garments was additionally influenced by their unavailability to him and even more so by their connection to the period of his life that Henry recognises as especially challenging for his fashion identity; limits that he has since managed to overcome.

Finally, at this point of the analysis, it is worth returning to Henry's account discussed previously in the "Dis-Comforting" theme where he talked about the t-shirt that caused him a lot of pain and discomfort. In this sense, the peculiar bodily sensation of "*itching*" that Henry

can still feel on his “*right nipple*” provides also an interesting form of re-materialising, one where Henry rather than wishfully re-experiencing the joy and happiness caused by the garment, cannot possibly forget the level of pain and distress caused by it.

Within the presented extracts, “Re-Materialising” emerged as a significant theme in terms of how the respondents relate to fashion artefacts from their past and the way those relations influence their present attitudes towards fashion and clothing. The wish to re-materialise the various artefacts from their past was present in the narratives of almost all of the participants, reflecting the importance not only of the objects themselves but also the critical incidents in the participants’ lives in which they were involved. This, for some of the respondents, was seen through their relations with others and their reactions to the participants’ clothing, both in the past and at present. For others, however, those relationships, and desires to re-experience the materiality of the past objects, were strongly connected with their changing physicality and their reminiscence of their past bodies; this could be interpreted as a peculiar attempt if not to turn back, than at least to stop the passing of, time and the inevitable progressing of bodily ageing. In both cases, re-materialising, even if limited to the imagination level only, was an important part of the participants’ unfolding fashion identities. Arguably, for many, those objects became a specific type of datum in their current experiences of clothing and determinant to their social performance.

So far in this chapter, I have presented a series of interpretative accounts in regards to the nine emergent subordinate themes, grouped and organised under three sets of superordinate themes. Below, I refer to these thematic entities by providing a discussion of the key findings borne from my interpretative analysis, with regards to the relevant literature as introduced in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

6.3 DISCUSSION

In the above sections of this chapter, I have presented my interpretations of the meanings that a small sample of British men in their 50s and 60s constructed and attributed to their past and present experiences of fashion and clothing with respect to their ageing masculine identities. The Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the

empirical material gathered via interviews and personal inventories outlined a number of recurrent superordinate themes, including, “Learning Fashion”, “Defining the Fashion-Self”, and “Fashion-Age(ing) Performance”, with three subordinate themes each. These sub-themes, namely, “Mirroring”, “Dis-Comforting” and “Peacocking”; “Pioneering”, “Distancing” and “Non-Conforming”; “Presenting”, “(Un-)Fashioning” and “Re-Materialising”, emerged through the tensions and contradictions reported by the participants in the process of the complicated negotiation of their ageing male identities, and through the mediums of fashion and clothing.

Below, I offer a discussion of the key points that arose throughout this part of the chapter in regards to selected existing literature, some of which was introduced and discussed in Chapter 2. Here, I focus explicitly on the concept of identity as a constant process of becoming, rather than a fixed state of being, as discussed, for example, by Goffman (1959/1990); I build on this in the final chapter, where I present the conclusions and recommendations which emerged through this body of work.

Firstly, as was already presented throughout this chapter, the participants in this study exhibited the extreme richness and complexity of their various experiences of fashion and clothing, as they continue to age. This complexity especially strongly relates to the intersection of continuity and transition in the ways these individuals negotiate their ageing bodies. Moreover, this is also significant when it comes to consideration of how fashion and clothing impact on these individuals’ experiences of ageing in regards to their constant mediation between their social and individual identities. Accordingly, I set the following discussion within the context of the classics of fashion theory, such as Blumer (1969, p.277), who asserts that fashion “*operates over wide areas of human endeavor, that it is not aberrant and craze-like, and that it is not peripheral and inconsequential*”. This links closely to the fashion typology proposed by Crane (2012), and discussed in Chapter 2, which is based on four different ways of how fashion is manifested (via clothing), including spheres such as: material culture used for bodily decoration; interpersonal communication; network of business organisations; and finally, an inherent part of our personal and social identities and subject positions. Importantly, traces of all of these different forms of fashion manifestations were present in the participants’ narratives, yet “*the way in which fashionable clothing (...) have*

been used to express and shape personal and social identities" (ibid, p.2) surfaced especially strongly.

To add to this picture, Kaiser (2012, p.172) offers an insightful comment on such a process of (fashion) becoming:

Intersecting, embodied subject positions are not just about *who* we are becoming; they are also about *when* and *where* we are becoming. Time and space are abstract and yet crucial concepts that shape how we style-fashion-dress our bodies, and what we know (and how we know it) about ourselves in relation to others [emphasis in original]

In this sense, the participants' experiences need to be understood in the context of a particular time and place: concerning when and where they were young, where they continue to grow older, and their social relations with significant 'others'. In much the same vein, Julia Twigg (2009b) argues for the possibility of exploring older women's narrations of dress through the interplay of three trajectories: ageing, historical time, and an individual's life. Through the findings presented in this part of the chapter, I can recognise the importance of similar trajectories in the narratives of the men who took part in the study. Moreover, I acknowledge the specific pattern evident in which personal histories, especially a flamboyant and rebellious fashion past, underpin the ways in which the participants' fashion identities continue to unfold. Therefore, in the context of the findings from this research, I would add to Kaiser's quote above the importance of when and where we have "become" from. This is especially interesting when highlighting the fact that none of those contexts was directly addressed by the interviewer. Yet time, place, and 'others' have emerged as the key contexts allowing the men in this study to navigate through the processes of self-interpretation and self-identification.

Indeed the presence of various 'others' emerged as an important component of both the participants' social and individual processes of becoming. As stated by Mikhail Bakhtin, "*I achieve self-consciousness, I become myself only by revealing myself to another, through another and with another's help (...)*" (cited in Todorov, 1984, p.96). In this study, the participants' (re-)assessment of the self was always via the relation between themselves and others. Firstly, as already indicated, the participants felt strongly about their shared, arguably generational, identity, which once again links to the concepts of time and place. In this sense,

the participants shared experiences of witnessing and initiating various socio-cultural changes and they widely reflected on these experiences' significance in framing their subsequent social identity and affiliation.

Secondly, most of the participants perceived themselves as having an important role in the creation of the modern fashion system based on the development of a fashion conscious man and a youth-oriented culture. Accordingly, the themes such as "Mirroring", "Peacocking" and "Pioneering" were meaningful in terms of their impact on the participants' self-perception and social identification with the centrality of a shared experience of uniqueness and resultant generational integrity. Being part of the first generation that pioneered certain fashion-related behaviours was often described as having a key impact on the participants' current attitudes and social expectations. Moreover, the participants often adopted this self-perception and, indeed, applied the pioneering and non-conforming practices as a part of their general life style, not only when it comes to clothes, but also in other domains, such as choice of music.

To add to this, the consideration of the participants' potential generational identity needs to be placed within the framework of identity in relation to a theory of subcultures and especially the male dominated subcultures of the 1950s onwards – this was strongly present in the narratives of all of the participants. Here, Dick Hebdige (1979, p.102) argues that "[t]he communication of a significant difference, then (and the parallel communication of a group identity) is the 'point' behind the style of all spectacular subcultures". Consequently, as discussed in the "Pioneering" theme, for the participants in this study, the communicated difference lay precisely in the break with an old-fashioned 'production-oriented' type of masculinity represented by their fathers, and replacing it with new, 'appearance-conscious' forms of masculinity that they shared with other contemporary young men, as discussed, for example, by Edwards (2011). In this vein, being part of a specific group in a specific historical time and in a specific place was, for the men in this study, a way to emphasise their affiliation with those new constructions as they rose to the fore. Currently, those memories function for them not only as something in which to take pride, but also to justify their often-rebellious attitudes towards the current fashion system that actively discriminates against older people; I return to this further in the following chapter.

Yet another way in which the significance of 'others' for the participants' identity constructs came to fore was by an active distancing from them. Most of themes discussed throughout this chapter touch on the participants' need to express and highlight their individuality and fashion autonomy, especially when it comes to their social identity. Consequently, for all of the participants, distancing was important mainly on the level of their fashion differentiation from 'others' who represented negative and undesirable characteristics, such as lack of body-awareness or following unsuitable fashion trends, as discussed in the "Distancing" theme. Here, the pivotal point was not to be associated with others who visibly deny their biological age by choosing 'too young' clothing. But equally important for the participants was to distance themselves from the idea of wearing clothes that might impact on their social recognition as "old"; traces of both forms of distancing were present in the themes of "Non-Conforming", "Presenting" and "(Un-)Fashioning".

Various forms of distancing from others, I argue, continue to have a significant impact on the participants' self-identities, which was especially evident in the "Presenting" theme. In this manner, the men in this study define themselves through others. In the past, being part of a certain group allowed them to define their fashion-selves by the shared experience of pioneering fashion behaviours. Now, when the bonds of group identity are dissolved, it is equally important for these men to separate themselves from others who choose not to continue their youthful practices, but instead limit or terminate their formerly active interest in fashion. At the same time, the participants did not want to be identified as trying to look any younger than their biological age might suggest. Outwardly, this could be viewed as an inconsistency or contradiction. But my interpretation is that these participants reached a certain state of fashion equilibrium - that is, a balance between their fashion taste, knowledge, and a full assimilation and acceptance of their biological age, yet not without a struggle. In this sense, continuity functions as the development of a certain fashion identity, rather than preservation of one particular style, and is also relevant to the way that distancing functions as an inherent component of many themes presented in this chapter.

The presented themes and their interpretations suggest that fashion and clothing for the five men in this study play a significant role in the way these individuals experience growing older. The study reveals that, for the participants, the embodied processes of ageing

can best be understood at two levels: the individual and the socially shared experience. Moreover, the contexts of time, place, and 'others' discussed here allow me to acknowledge the specific pattern evident in which personal histories, especially their pioneering fashion past, underlies the ways in which the participants' fashion identities progress and unfold.

To continue from the previous point, I also recognise that while all the presented themes function independently by shedding some light on the under-researched phenomena of male ageing, they also work as filters to each other, creating a coherent rather than fragmented complex of segments through which the participants define their fashion selves. As can be seen in the model presented in Figure 6.1, all the superordinate themes, and most of the subordinate themes, link greatly to each other. Furthermore, these connections occur both between the subordinate themes within one superordinate theme, as well as amongst the subordinate themes of two or even all three superordinate themes.

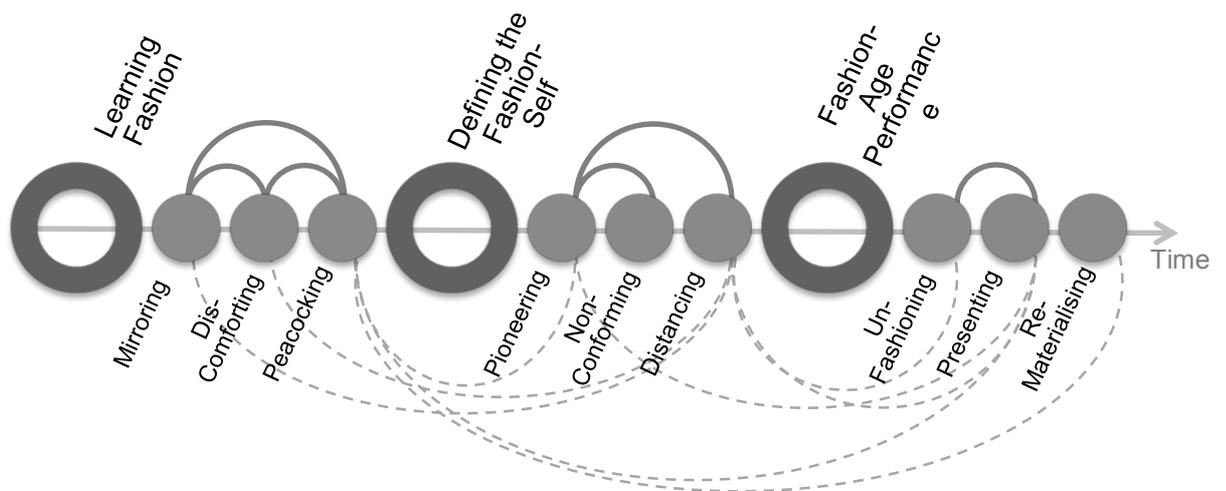


Figure. 6.1 Relations between superordinate and subordinate themes.

These connections were indicated throughout this chapter. Here, however, it is worth highlighting again the most pertinent ones. For example, in the participants' narratives, Non-conforming is often inscribed in pioneering practices such as rejection of old-fashioned clothing, which in turn initiate the creation of the new trends. In the same way, elements of Distancing are present in an act of rejecting un-pioneering practices as well as active avoidance of being recognised as attempting to look younger, as discussed in the Presenting

theme. An especially interesting link was formed between the themes of Dis-Comforting, Distancing and Re-Materialising, in the sense that some participants clearly distanced themselves from their past dis-comforting experiences, while at the same times traces of which were still visible in their wish to re-materialise some of their past objects, the same objects that perhaps caused them the bodily discomfort.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the interpretations presented in this chapter are challenging two stereotypical assumptions, namely that of men not being interested in fashion and that of fashion being mainly a domain of youth. Undoubtedly, the participants in this study exhibited the richness of older males' experiences of these mediums. Furthermore, each participant displayed unique ways of assimilating and internalising the changing social norms of what it means to be a man in relation to their appearance. While most of the participants related somewhat to the traits stereotypically associated with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005), they attempted to reinforce their masculine status within a space of *fashion and clothing*; a domain typically associated with femininity rather than masculinity (Kaiser, 2011). This was significant even though they often highlighted the heterosexual character of their (past) fashion practices, for instance, in its connection to bonding within a male dominated group or to attracting females' attention. This, I argue, has a wider social relevance and is telling in regards to the changing social norms surrounding contemporary mature men in the UK.

6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, I presented my in-depth interpretations of a set of nine subordinate themes, grouped into three superordinate themes; these themes describe the participants' experiences of fashion and clothing, as they grow older. In this thesis, I argue that these experiences, and my interpretations of them, are revealing when it comes to this sample of men's experiences of ageing. Below, I present the key insights stemming from this chapter.

Firstly, it is impossible to reflect on this chapter in separation from the previous two chapters, where I explained the practical application of the methodology, including the multi-layered and multi-modal processes of data analysis. The themes, and my interpretations of

them, presented in this chapter are the direct results of such data analysis. In this, my reflection is that the data analysis based on three interconnected stages, namely IPA analysis, outfit analysis and practical explorations, allowed me to develop a set of highly interpretative accounts which indeed offer fresh insights into older men's experiences. In this, I must also reflect on the significance of the final stage of this analysis, this is the practical explorations and corresponding fashion research exhibitions, as crucial in enhancing my interpretations presented above; I return to this in Chapter 7.

Secondly, while all the themes presented in this chapter are independent thematic entities, it is important to highlight once again that they in fact work as a complex network of mutually inter-dependant themes, which influence each other and often overlap conceptually. This was indicated in several instances throughout this chapter, but was perhaps most visible in the case of the close proximity between the themes of "Distancing" and "Presenting"; as explained in the previous chapter, such connections were often the subjects of my practical explorations. For these reasons, I argue that these themes should not be understood in separation, but always in conjunction to each other, allowing for a s deeper and more meaningful exploration.

Finally, this chapter concludes the empirical material gathered, analysed and interpreted as part of this PhD project. In the following, final, chapter of this thesis, I offer my reflections and conclusions on this research process and emerged findings, including a discussion of the quality and validity of this PhD project, as well as the recommendations stemming from this body of work

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This final chapter of this PhD thesis concludes the body of work in which my aim was to develop an in-depth understanding of a small sample of contemporary older British men's experiences of ageing through the lens of fashion and clothing, and to extend interpretative research processes by engaging with various creative practices. Consequently, this chapter has two aims: firstly, it is to allow me to articulate my reflections on the research process, and especially the developed research methodology of Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis; secondly, to reiterate and reflect on the findings that arose from this novel research process.

In order to fulfil these aims, this chapter is divided into sections in which I firstly offer my reflections on the methodology, including the role of practical explorations and the role(s) of the produced artefacts in the process of developing and disseminating my understandings of the participants' experiences; and, secondly, I revisit the aims and objectives of this project. This chapter continues by offering a discussion of the assessment of the quality/validity of this body of work and presenting the original contributions to knowledge stemming from it; in the final section of this chapter, I outline the potential future research directions and avenues, both in regards to my professional development as a creative fashion practitioner and the wider research community. First, however, I offer a condensed description of the main theoretical and conceptual foundations that this thesis is based on, together with the practical avenues of the research process in a brief thesis summary.

7.2 THESIS SUMMARY

In this section I present a short summary of this thesis focusing on its theoretical and conceptual foundations and the resultant methodological framework, as well as its practical implications for how this research was conducted and its key findings.

In Chapter 2, I presented the multi-disciplinary contextual review of the selected literature relevant to this thesis. The underlying aim of that chapter was to highlight ageing, and especially male ageing, as a phenomenon that is rather difficult to explore and to indicate

that, as a research topic, it remains relatively under-researched. This difficulty, and the corresponding extant gap in the literature, were presented as a result of many overlapping research contexts and factors. Firstly, I evidenced that ageing itself is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon, based on processes of biological, psychological and social becoming, which requires a considered and deliberate research approach that can accommodate the practitioner's skills and sensitivities; I identified phenomenology, with its focus on lived experiences and embodiment, as providing the foundations for such an approach. Secondly, it was determined that how individuals experience these processes is personal and unique and depends not only on the basic subject positions such as gender, class, ethnicity, class or generation, but is even further complicated by the various socio-cultural contexts surrounding it, such as the geographical place and historical time (Kaiser, 2012), contexts which I acknowledged throughout this thesis.

In the same chapter, I evidenced modern western feminist movements as an important factor that has influenced fresh social perceptions and corresponding research movements in topics related to men and masculinities (Edwards, 2011; Connell, 2005), which are significant to this study. Adopting the phenomenological approach, I highlighted that the research potential exists for the narratives provided by ordinary people, in this case older men, about their unique and individual experiences to facilitate gaining the insights necessary to develop an in-depth understanding of human phenomena (Kolb, 2014). Following from that, I subscribed to the idea that human biographies can be interpreted through the relationships between personal and structural factors, and individual and collective experiences (Powell and Gilbert, 2009). Consequently, I identified fashion and clothing as being one of the possible prisms allowing a fashion practitioner to develop an in-depth phenomenological understanding of certain individuals' embodied experiences of ageing.

Fashion in this thesis was presented as a complex of concepts encompassing many often elusive, interconnected and overlapping meanings. Stemming from the typology of definitions proposed by Crane (2012) based on how fashion can be manifested within contemporary western culture, I articulated that, irrespective of the definition, clothing is the prime way in which fashion is actively manifested and, therefore, it was adopted as a key analytical term and conceptual lens to my creative interpretations. At the same time, I argued

that, however abstract the term fashion is, it is by no means synonymous to clothing, and for that reason, the joint expression of “*fashion and clothing*” was highlighted as the most suitable for this body of work.

Beyond outlining these contexts and factors, in this thesis, I evidenced the existence of a particular gap in knowledge, namely on older men and fashion. This was presented as a reflection of a rather complicated social perception of older men in relation to their interest in appearance, including fashionable clothing. I argued that such positioning intersects two strong stereotypical assumptions that individuals’ interest in fashion ceases as they grow older (Twigg, 2013), and that men, except gay men, are not interested in their appearance (Edwards, 2008; Kaiser, 2012), and I contextualised this further in relation to the negative western phenomenon of ageism (Bytheway, 1995). Furthermore, I highlighted these factors to have significant impact on how under-explored the topic of mature heterosexual men’s experiences of fashion and clothing is within contemporary research on ageing, evidenced through comparison to the wide range of parallel scholarship where the focus is placed on mature women. Finally, I set out this research, approached and conducted from the perspective of a fashion designer, artist and researcher, to stand against the “*profound cultural silence*” (Twigg, 2000, p.115) accompanying older individuals’ experiences of ageing, which is closely tied to the aspirations of the emerging fields of critical and cultural gerontology.

In this thesis, I offered an extensive description of the methodology developed and utilised in this research; this description was spread over three subsequent chapters. Firstly, in Chapter 3, I explained the theoretical backgrounds to the novel hybrid methodology, Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. I explained my epistemological position as sitting between two stances, namely critical realism and contextual constructivism; I posited this study within the post-positivistic paradigm, and, furthermore, I established qualitative and arts-based approaches as the most suitable for this particular research and the researcher. Two methodological components, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Arts-Informed Research, were discussed and evaluated as a good fit for this study and sympathetic to my qualities, skills and sensitivities as a creative practitioner. In parallel to this, I introduced the two relevant interpretative concepts of the hermeneutic circle and the

double hermeneutic. Furthermore, in Chapter 3, I described how the fusion and integration of these two separate yet, complementary, sub-methodologies allowed me to propose the alternative hybrid methodology where the qualitative data analysis is based upon not only interpretative writing but also interpretative making. This chapter concluded with my explanation of the unique value of this process in relation to the concept of 'tacit knowledge' and my expertise as a fashion and textile designer and maker which allowed me to establish my own role as researcher-practitioner-interpreter for the purposes of this study.

In Chapter 4, I focused explicitly on the explanation of the practical application of the research methodology. Consequently, I began with the research model and description of how the methodological concept of the hermeneutic circle functioned within this research. Importantly, subjectivity in this research process was explained not as disadvantageous, but as an inherent element of my reflexivity allowing for a greater research transparency, coherence and openness by acknowledging my pre-conceptions, predispositions and potentials biases, as well as appreciation of my skills and experiences; this thesis evidenced a continuous negotiation between subjectivity and objectivity within the research process. I argued that reflexivity, including my personal reflexivity presented in that chapter, could stimulate, rather than hinder the formulation of the potentially alternative, often metaphorical, understandings and fresh insights into the phenomenon under study. On the other hand, it was noted that enabling such an openly subjective position has significant implications for the research processes and outcomes, including ruling out any potential generalisation of the research findings, yet not undermining the research status as plausible and trustworthy. This is strongly linked to my own position and role in this research as a creative practitioner and interpreter; I return to this idea later in this chapter.

In my description of the application of the research, I followed the fairly standard stages of a research process, from data gathering and data analysis to knowledge production and dissemination. Consequently, I explained how I gathered the large body of the empirical material via in-depth interviews and personal inventories and how I analysed these. My particular emphasis was placed upon a detailed explanation of the complexity of the multi-layered and multi-modal analysis of the textual and visual research material, including the stages of IPA and outfit analyses, and introducing the final stage of data analysis through

artful practical explorations. Likewise, Chapter 4 detailed the process of the creation a set of open-ended interpretations, in response to nine subordinate themes which emerged via the IPA analysis, and which were grouped into three sets of superordinate themes. The resulting subordinate themes were listed as: “Mirroring”, “Peacocking” and “Dis-Comforting” (clustered into the “Learning Fashion” superordinate theme); “Pioneering”, “Non-Conforming” and “Distancing” (clustered into the “Defining the Fashion-Self” superordinate theme); and “Presenting”, “(Un-)Fashioning” and “Re-Materialising” (clustered into the “Fashion-Age(ing) Performance” superordinate theme).

In Chapter 5, I provided detailed descriptions of how, as a creative practitioner, I re-approached and re-interpreted each of the nine subordinate themes using various artful creative explorations. That chapter accentuated significant dynamics occurring at the final stage of the data analysis process based on interlocking the activities of interpretative writing and metaphorical making. I explained how, by conducting the research in this way, I had a unique opportunity to engage with different fashion- and clothing-related practices and techniques in regards to each of the emerged theme. This was important because it reflected the richness and complexity of the participants’ experiences. In turn, the process resulted in a varied, yet unified, composition of the research findings, including a series of artefacts, namely men’s jackets and short fashion films, which were presented in that chapter.

In Chapter 5, I also discussed and presented a photo documentation of the self-curated fashion research exhibition entitled “Fashioning Age(ing): Mature men’s experiences of fashion and clothing” that took place at Nottingham Trent University on 16-18th December 2015. This exhibition, reflecting the research methodology, utilised visual elements, namely jackets and films, as well as textual components in the form of quotations from the interviews with the participants. The overall organisation and delivery of the research was discussed as a successful research exercise in terms of generating interest from the general public, as well as academics, yielding feedback on the exhibited artefacts, but most importantly stimulating conversations on the phenomenon under study more generally. This, in turn, informed my own developing perspectives on the potential and value of the artefacts and exhibition in this alternative research process. Furthermore, the event turned out to be the finishing touch allowing me to finalise the written interpretative accounts.

The resulting set of produced written interpretations was presented in this thesis in Chapter 6. These interpretations were enabled by the complex and multi-layered process of continuous and often metaphoric interpretation and re-interpretation and enhanced via my practical engagement with various creative and artful practices. These interpretations offer an original contribution to knowledge in regards to the topic of older men and their experiences of ageing, as explored via their life-long lived experiences of fashion and clothing. The prime contribution to knowledge is, however, claimed in the sphere of its methodological novelty and uniqueness; I return to this later in this chapter. Chapter 6 concluded with a discussion of the key insights stemming from my interpretations.

7.3 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In the previous section of this chapter, I presented the reader with a brief summary of the thesis as whole. This was to pinpoint the key theoretical, methodological and practical elements of this body of work. In the present section, I reflect on the research process; effectively, this is the first and primary layer where I outline the original contributions to knowledge claimed in this thesis.

As was stated throughout this thesis and re-articulated in the thesis summary above, in this body of work I have developed a hybrid research methodology, Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The novel character of this methodology is claimed on the ground of its fusion and integration of two complementary methodologies and its application in this particular investigation into a small sample of older British men's experiences of ageing through the lens of fashion and clothing. Furthermore, there are two main areas where this novelty was especially significant; this is utilising 'making' as a valid way of analysing data and, therefore, extending the standard IPA protocol for data analysis; and, secondly, by acknowledging the particular value(s) of the artefacts in this research process, including their role in the process of knowledge dissemination. Both these aspects of the methodological framework allowed me, as the creative practitioner, to develop fresh understandings triggered and stimulated by my metaphorical readings of the study

participants' experiences and their interpretations of these experiences; I discuss both these aspects of my study below.

7.3.1 MAKING AND WRITING; WRITING AND MAKING

As was explained in Chapter 4, the standard IPA protocol for data analysis is based on reflective and analytical writing; in this section, I reflect on the value of utilising the creative and artful practices of 'making' in order to enhance the researcher's interpretative potential. In this respect, various practical explorations were utilised as a supporting method in order to stimulate and enhance the interpretations of the themes emerging from the initial stages of the IPA and outfit analysis. 'Making' as a means of embodied, visual enquiry became a highly metaphorical analytical tool that afforded the advanced understandings and insights as compared to the standard text-based IPA analysis. Consequently, I argue that merging the practices of making and writing into one analytical mechanism allowed me to produce extended interpretations, both in form and depth, of the participants' interpretations of their experiences.

Firstly, it is imperative to reflect that this research process, including the role and form of the practical explorations, responded to the 'character' of the empirical material that I gathered from the sample of the study participants. I explained this in Chapter 4, where I indicated the differences between the empirical material gathered from the parallel samples of mature men and women. While in this thesis I focused explicitly on the data gathered from the sample of older men, I acknowledge that this research methodology and its processes were flexible and accommodating and allowed the researcher and practitioner to respond to the selected material in a creative, yet transparent, way. In this sense, the making processes were never dictated to or limited by fulfilling a design brief but were instead about facilitating and stimulating my understandings; the *practice* of making was about finding a metaphorical fit between the participants' experiences and my embodied sensitivities to, and readings of, these. And, although I have been aware of many technological and technical possibilities and advancements within the field of fashion and textiles design, my making practices were not determined, or even driven, by these. Instead, I chose to focus on the elements and aspects

of the participants' experiences that inspired me as a maker and, consequently, chose to engage with materials and techniques that I felt embodied and reflected the character of these experiences. Consequently, the various making processes, techniques and materials that I utilised, were meaningful only when understood through the context of the participants' experiences to which they corresponded.

Secondly, it is equally important to reflect that such a methodological mechanism required the researcher to have certain skills and sensitivities to human experiences; this particular research mechanism was created and implemented to suit my particular way of being in the world and conducting research as a creative practitioner. In this sense, this research mechanism has been about finding a balance between my research subjectivity and objectivity; this negotiation was documented via a set of sketchbooks and played a significant role in the unfolding interpretations, which was evidenced in Chapter 5. Furthermore, it is not a coincidence that this research uses fashion and clothing as a lens to access the participants' experiences, a field that I hold professional training and experience in. This once again required me to strive for a balance between my skills, expertise and sensitivities and the qualities and requirements of the research material. Various fashion- and clothing-oriented making practices were always partly about the empirical material and partly about the researcher and practitioner who was analysing it; there is no doubt that a different researcher with a different set of characteristics would select different ways of implementing such a mechanism. In turn, these dialectic research processes have been influential and have pushed my practices as a researcher, designer and artist into a more socio-cultural direction.

Finally, to build on the previous point, it is impossible for me not to reflect that, through this research, and especially the methodological mechanism based on writing and making as a fashion practitioner, I experienced a certain disciplinary shift. As I explained in the introduction to this thesis, at the commencement of this study, my professional practice would best be explained as a fashion designer, maker rather than writer. In this vein, as a new PhD student, I found myself in an academic environment where writing tends to be preferred to professional practice. On the other hand, most fashion university departments tend to stay in opposition to this, visibly dismissing the value of reflective academic writing. This is the tension that I experienced both as a practice-based PhD student and an academic

tutor. As such, my approach has been to challenge this, often artificial, disciplinary division by exploring new ways of integrating these activities within my practice of academic research. While, as I described in Chapter 3, other research exists that successfully infuses making and writing as research practices, this particular research mechanism allowed me to professionally progress from being a 'maker' or a 'researcher' to a 'maker and researcher', the creative practitioner who embraces both making and writing within her research practices. Below, I continue my reflections on the research process in regards to the role of the artefacts.

7.3.2 ROLE OF THE ARTEFACTS

In the previous section, I reflected on my research process in regards to the analytical practices of this novel and alternative research mechanism, namely interpretative writing and making. In this section, I focus upon reflecting on the role of the artefacts in this process, including the fashion research exhibition entitled "Fashioning Age(ing): Mature men's experiences of fashion and clothing", organised and curated by myself.

Firstly, building on the previous section, it is important to reflect on the role of the artefacts in regards to the threefold role of interpretation as was outlined in Chapter 4. These roles were: as a single act, as a process, and as a product. Artefacts were present and important for each of these aspects; however, their role and impact were significantly different for each of them. In a single act of my interpretation of the study participants' experiences, the artefacts were present in the form of the objects that these individuals brought to the interviews. These were different for each participant and included photos and garments. These were significant because they often worked as a stimulus for the conversation, but also because I had the chance to experience them in a haptic way, that is to touch and feel the quality and texture of the fabric, see the colours, and inspect the details; such an embodied engagement was significant to me as a designer and artist. This, in turn, stimulated each of these acts of interpretation; inevitably, some elements and details of these artefacts are represented within the artefacts I produced.

Artefacts were also relevant to my interpretation as a process. For this, throughout the different stages of the constant negotiation and re-negotiation of the participants' interpretations of their experiences, I engaged with different forms of the artefacts. Firstly, as was explained in Chapter 4, all of the artefacts that the participants brought in to their interviews, including the garments they wore, were documented via photographs. Consequently, I had a chance, whenever necessary, to re-engage with these objects by visual analysis of the photographs, which informed the processes of my analysis.

Secondly, during the processes of my interpretation, I engaged with various artefacts that did not belong to the participants: these were second-hand men's suit jackets. Just as the various elements of the experiences of the men in this study varied significantly, each of these artefacts was re-made using different techniques and materials. However, what was common for all the developed jackets was that I began my exploration with a second-hand men's suit jacket, approaching it as a "canvas" for my developing interpretations. As was explained in Chapter 4, such a common starting point was adopted because suit jackets were present in the narratives of all of the participants, and most of them referred to these jackets as either their favourite items of clothing or as an item that carried a significant meaning or memory. Furthermore, a suit, by many authors, is interpreted as a prime vehicle of masculinity (e.g. Hollander, 1994). For these reasons, I decided to use previously owned men's suit jackets to highlight the participants' past experiences; metaphorically, any second-hand garment is already invested with a life of its own.

Finally, the artefacts in this research mechanism are a specific type of product of the interpretations as both acts and processes. Therefore, it is not entirely unjustifiable to argue that these artefacts function as a peculiar form of side-product; indeed, the focus of this research was on the practices of making these artefacts, and their role in enhancing my written interpretations, rather than the artefacts themselves. However, at the same time, each of the produced artefacts, nine jackets and nine films, are independent aesthetic solutions; tangible and meaningful outcomes of the research process, and in many respects equal to the written interpretations. Here, it is worth returning to the words of Christopher Frayling, cited in Chapter 4, who described "*research for art and design*" as follows: "*where the thinking is, so to speak, embodied in the artefact, where the goal is not primarily communicable knowledge*

in the sense of verbal communication, but in the sense of visual or iconic or imagistic communication" (1993-94, p.5). This indeed accurately describes the status of the artefacts produced in this research as embodying certain knowledge (through enabling certain understandings to be developed) and as forms of metaphoric visual representations of this knowledge.

But, this provokes another interesting reflection as to how this *set* of visual outcomes can be described. Taking into account that these particular garments do not share any specific technique, or material, but what they share in common is the conceptual cohesion, it is not suitable to label them as a collection, a term typically used in fashion design. Instead, taking from the field of Fine Art, I consider this set of objects as *a series* of clothing artefacts. Interestingly, this mimics the character of the findings stemming from this research more generally in the sense that while the emerged thematic entities work independently, first and foremost, they create a network of mutual thematic dependencies. This is reflected not only in the case of the jackets or films, but also between the artefacts and the written texts.

My final reflection in this section touches upon the exposition of the produced artefacts: this is the fashion research exhibition that I organised and curated and which took place in December 2015 at Nottingham Trent University. It is important to reflect on this particular event here, because its main elements were the produced artefacts, jackets and corresponding films, as well as key quotations from the interviews with the participants. While, from the beginning of this study, one of the objectives of this research has been to organise such a dissemination event, it is the role of this event that has changed in parallel to the development of the project. First, it is worth noting that an exhibition is a research tool commonly chosen to present the practical element of practice-based PhD research, often alongside the written thesis (Gray and Malins, 2004). However, since the aim of this research has been to develop an in-depth understanding of the small sample of older men's experiences of ageing through the lens of fashion and clothing, the aim of the exhibition was to present and communicate these insights, that is my metaphorical readings of the group, rather than to exhibit the artefacts *per se*.

Consequently, curating such a research exhibition triggered important considerations about how textual, visual and verbal presences were to be utilised and linked in order to communicate these meanings to the viewers. Conceptually, similar to Swindells and Dutton's (2006) *text + work = work* exhibition, I also strived to facilitate a space where the visual and textual forms of knowledge could be utilised seamlessly as "*mutually supportive camps*" (ibid, 2006, p.7), reflecting the methodological integration of the practices of making and writing within this research process. Ultimately, mimicking the structure of table 4.10 (p.155), each one of the jackets was annotated separately, as well as each of the superordinate groupings, and the exhibition as a whole. Furthermore, as I have already indicated, an important element of the exhibition became the plaques with the key quotations from the participants' interviews. These became significant components of the exposition and, indeed, prompted many conversations regarding the findings of my study. Many of these conversations included visitors' personal reflections and observations regarding the phenomenon under study, which, in turn, from the methodological point of view, became the final element of this research mechanism, allowing me to finalise and conclude my written interpretations. It is, therefore, important that I reflect that, just as the feedback that I received on the academic publications and presentations disseminating my work in the course of my PhD was important, the feedback I received during the exhibition influenced the final form of this thesis and the findings presented in it. Furthermore, it afforded me an opportunity to validate my research and its conceptual form; I continue the consideration regarding the validity and quality of this research in the following section.

7.4 VALIDITY ASSESSMENT

To assess the quality of any research is not an easy task; however, such 'self-diagnosis' is a useful exercise, especially as a component of the final conclusions and recommendations, where it enables the research validation. As I explained in Chapter 3, this study was located within two approaches to research, namely, qualitative and practice-based.

Consequently, the quality assessment⁴⁶ for it must stem from the same traditions of research. Here, I refer to two useful frameworks; firstly, Yardley (2000), who proposed a set of criteria to validate qualitative research based on sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence and impact and importance; secondly, Cooper (1996; cited in Gray and Malins, 2004), who identified a similar set in regards to design research based on rigour, revelation, relevance and return. I relate to both these frameworks below.

Yardley's guideline is based on four rather broad aspects. For example, to assess one's research sensitivity to context, first the context needs to be defined. Throughout this thesis, on several occasions, I described the various historic and socio-cultural contexts surrounding this study, such as the historic presence of the youth subcultures, the development of the ageing populations, the recent academic interest in the topic of fashion and ageing or the functioning stereotypical assumptions in regards to older men and fashion. Referring to various previous studies using similar methods, or on a similar topic, further strengthened this contextual sensitivity. However, awareness of context, as Yardley notes, has further significance in relation to the balance of power between the researcher and participants; I referred to this particular issue in Chapter 4 of this thesis. But, in this study, the significance of the context of the researcher herself was greater than indicated by Yardley; indeed, as explained in Chapter 4 and throughout this thesis, in this research my aim was to acknowledge my subjective presence and its impact on the knowledge I co-constructed.

The second and third criteria proposed by Yardley are those of commitment and rigour, and transparency and coherence. In this thesis, the research transparency was achieved via the thoroughness of the descriptions of the stages of this research process. Such detailed descriptions documented aspects such as the skills and competences of the researcher evidencing her commitment to both the topic and processes of this research. Rigour, on the other hand, was achieved by the meticulous and careful processes of data collection and conscientious and attention to the details during the processes of the data analysis. Interestingly, rigour is one of the criteria identified also by Cooper, which could indicate its greater significance. However, following Wood's (2012) critique of it, I too find the

⁴⁶ Another aspect of the assessment of the quality of the work presented in this thesis is the feedback from the academics who commented on the associated publications, and presentations, as well as the input of my supervisors. The associated publications and presentations are listed in Chapter 1.

concept of rigour somewhat dated, too 'stiff', and in opposition to the principles of open-interpretation, artfulness, reflexivity, imagination and flexibility on which this study is based. Consequently, following Leavy (2011, p.78) I subscribe to the idea of moving away from research rigour, especially its connotations for quantitative, often positivistic research, and extending it to the more suitable term of research "vigour". Although this body of work fulfills the criteria of a rigorous study, I find it useful to assess its quality also in terms of the more progressive research vigour, which was achieved via the researcher's effort, energy and enthusiasm throughout all the different stages of this project.

Finally, the last criterion discussed by Yardley is that of impact and importance, which can also be related to the revelation, relevance and return identified by Cooper. For Yardley, having an impact on the wider society, in a rather direct sense of affecting and stimulating individuals' beliefs and/or behaviours, is the ultimate way of assessing the quality and value of any piece of research. Langdridge (2007) provided a balanced and justified critique of this, in relation to the commodification of knowledge and the resultant over-endorsement for the applied forms of research. He rather insightfully commented:

while there is no doubt that research findings should be important to someone other than the researcher – and should impact on their thinking – I remain unconvinced that they should also have practical impact, directly or indirectly, such that we might be able to judge the validity of the research in these terms.

(ibid, p.157)

I share Langdridge's concerns. While throughout this thesis, including in this chapter, I indicate the research fields and communities that this research might be relevant to, I am sceptical when it comes to how, in real terms, the impact on individuals' beliefs and behaviours can be assessed. Moreover, following Swindells and Powell (2014), I recognise that assessing or measuring an impact of research is even more complicated for art and design projects involving exhibitions. They rightly note that "[g]athering evidence of impact objectively is not only a resource-intensive undertaking, but one which poses numerous practical - and potentially, at times, ethical challenges" (ibid, p.67). Indeed, such difficulties include not only capturing the detailed and often personal information from the exhibition visitors, but also how visiting a particular event influenced them. I am sceptical towards the existence of such a measurement - I have no doubts that this body of work can trigger new

thinking and understandings about the topic discussed in it, and that using visual elements such as jackets and films can reach non-academic audiences, and even trigger more positive trans-generational dialogues. However, the aim of this study is only to outline such possibilities and it remains outside the scope of this research to provide such measurements or to propose mechanisms for it.

7.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES REVISITED

As was explained in Chapter 1 and re-articulated in Chapter 3, this thesis had four aims. Each of the aims had certain objectives; below, I reflect on how this thesis fulfilled each of these aims and objectives.

The first aim of this body of work was to investigate the relationships between fashion, clothing and ageing, with special reference to older men. Within this aim, I had two objectives; firstly, to identify the relevant theoretical approaches; and, secondly to critically review how researchers explore the topic in the context of postmodern culture. In Chapters 2 and 6, where I presented the contextual review of the selected literature, and presented the findings of this research, I fulfilled both these objectives and the aim.

The second aim of this study was to adopt an Arts-Informed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) in order to discover how fashion and clothing have been experienced by older men drawn from the UK baby boomer population, born between 1946 and 1964, who during their lives have actively engaged with fashion and clothing. Within this aim, I had two objectives; firstly, to conduct semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a small sample of older men about their experience of fashion and clothing; and, secondly, to collect a series of images of fashion artefacts (garments, textiles, accessories, photographs) that carried significance for the participants. This aim and corresponding objectives were fulfilled over Chapters 3, 4 and 6; while Chapter 3 explained the theoretical background of this hybrid methodology, in Chapter 4, I explained how I conducted the interviews, including collecting images of the participants' garments and attires. In Chapter 6, I presented my written interpretations of the phenomenon under study.

The third aim of this study was to develop an in-depth understanding of how the selected sample of men negotiate their ageing identities through the mediums of clothing and fashion. Within this aim, I had three objectives; firstly, to analyse the gathered information, and produce interpretative written accounts of it; secondly, to extend these interpretations through practical artful explorations and physical engagement with objects, materials and techniques; and, thirdly, to employ reflexivity as the key element for the unfolding interpretation and to capture this process in the form of sketchbooks/research diaries/films. These objectives and aim were fulfilled in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, where, respectively, I explained the stages of data analysis, introduced and discussed the produced artefacts, and presented the written accounts.

The final, fourth, aim of this research was to explore and expose new, alternative strategies for knowledge production and dissemination within the field of fashion and ageing research. Within this aim, I had two objectives; firstly, to produce a series of artefacts and films, in addition to a written thesis, which will translate the developed interpretations into forms of clothing; and, secondly, to organise an installation where the produced artefacts and films can be exhibited and disseminated. I fulfilled these objectives and aim in Chapters 4 and 5, and the present Chapter 7. The process of the production of the artefacts was introduced in Chapter 4, and described in detail in Chapter 5, where I also explained the organised and curated research exhibition. In Chapter 7, I reflected on these elements and aspects of my project.

Fulfilling these research aims and objectives is the foundation of formulating the original contributions to knowledge that I claim through this body of work and thesis, which I present in the following section.

7.6 CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE

This PhD research project culminated in a body of work, relevant to the fields of art and design, especially fashion theory and practice, as well as sociology and phenomenological psychology. Below, I list the key contributions to knowledge which are claimed in the areas of the topic of the investigation, the methodology and the findings.

The contribution to knowledge based on the novel topic of the investigation is threefold:

- Firstly, this investigation is novel in that it not only explored older men's experiences of ageing, but it has done so by adopting fashion and clothing as a conceptual lens to the richness and complexity of these embodied experiences.
- Secondly, responding to the established gap in the literature, this study's focus was placed upon a certain fraction of this population, namely, British heterosexual third age men who during their lives have actively and continuously engaged with fashion and clothing, including being part of various youth-oriented subcultures in the past.
- Thirdly, this study employed the life course perspective, which allowed it to focus on the participants' past as much as their present experiences; this is a relatively novel approach within ageing studies and draws upon the emerging fields of cultural and critical gerontology.

In regards to the research process, the contribution to knowledge is fivefold:

- Firstly, in respect to the topic of the investigation, the fusion of two sub-methodologies, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Arts-Informed Research, yielded a novel and original hybrid research methodology, pushing and blurring the boundaries between qualitative and art-based approaches within a post-positivist research paradigm and

allowing a creative practitioner to arrive at metaphorical understandings of the phenomenon under study.

- Secondly, a new possibility for fashion studies, integrating both theory and practice, has been outlined. Such a research methodology, by intertwining the two creative research activities of making and writing, acts as a challenge and alternative to the current division between fashion researchers and practitioners, and demonstrates that embracing both positions may be meaningful, transparent and trustworthy.
- Thirdly, a contribution has been made to the field of fashion studies by integrating and employing research methods from the fields of phenomenological psychology and art and design. The utilisation of the methods of in-depth interviews, personal inventories and practical explorations within one coordinated research mechanism expands the array of research procedures typically used in fashion studies. Such an integration of methods has further significance to the field of fashion design, and especially customised, bespoke services where the key is the in-depth understanding of customers' experiences, needs and expectations.
- Fourthly, the clothing artefacts emerged as important stimuli in the research process as a whole. This itself has a threefold meaning:
 - * They stimulated the participants' reflections during the interviews;
 - * They stimulated the researcher's creative processes of data analysis;
 - * The series of produced artefacts act as independent visual interpretations stimulated by the participants' experiences and their interpretations of them. Consequently, the series of objects, jackets and films, offers a conceptual alternative to a standard fashion collection, where typically the focus is placed upon

functionality and aesthetics, and shifts it instead towards processes of making and enabling new understandings.

- Fifthly, the fashion research exhibition has proved to be a useful research tool. Its significance was twofold:
 - * The exhibition in this research was utilised for the purposes of the dissemination of the study findings. This enabled gaining a particular form of verbal feedback provided by the exhibition viewers, and comparable in its impact to the feedback gained from more traditional academic publications and presentations.
 - * The exhibition facilitated specific conditions for creative questioning, analysis, interpretation and reflection, and, in turn, influenced the final written interpretations.

Key novel insights were made arising from my interpretations of the narratives given by the participants. Here, the contribution to knowledge is fourfold:

- Firstly, the richness and complexity of the sample's experiences surfaced through the various, often multiple, links and connections between the emergent themes. Although each of the nine thematic entities works independently, they also provide filters to each other, enhancing and accentuating their original and novel meanings.
- Secondly, a strong connection between the participants' past and present emerged. The "Dis-Comforting" theme is a prime example of this. My interpretation of this theme indicates that the participants' past bodily practices may have not only psychological, but also physical, implications for how at present they experience their ageing bodies and connected clothing limitations.
- Thirdly, a contradictory shift in the participants' fashion identification, from being strongly bound and defined by the shared group identity, towards being independent decision makers or even trend-setters came to the fore,

for example, as discussed in the “Distancing” theme. This theme highlighted that the self-perceived and accentuated differences between the participants and others was a common way of defining themselves, yet at the same time the strong generational links were also visible.

- Fourthly, this study indicates the existence of a certain fraction of older men who do escape the stereotypical assumption of older men’s disengagement with fashion. The participants in this study unequivocally exhibited a strong connection with fashion, as exercised by their active engagement with clothing, from early childhood into their later years.

7.7 STUDY LIMITATIONS

Every study has limitations. Here, in order to add to the transparency and credibility of the presented body of work, I acknowledge and reflect on the limitations of this research and its mechanism. In this, I build on the study limitations already indicated in Chapter 3.

Firstly, it can be argued that a potential limitation of this study is its small sample size. However, as was explained throughout this thesis, this study did not aim to draw any quantitative generalisations, but rather to explore the potential richness and depth of the phenomena under study and in relation to this particular sample, explored from the perspective of a particular creative practitioner. This possibly problematic approach has been addressed by Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez (2011) who, following Smith et al. (2009), recommend a sample size between three and six participants, stipulating, however, that this might decrease if participants are interviewed more than once. They describe the optimal IPA sample as consisting of enough cases to examine convergences and divergences within the group, but not causing the researcher to be overwhelmed with data. In this manner, they suggest that “*fewer participants examined at a greater depth is always preferable to a broader, shallow and simply descriptive analysis of many individuals*” (Hefferon and Gil-Rodriguez, 2011, p.756). This study used a sample of five participants; consequently, although such a small sample not only limits but eliminates any quantitative generalisations,

the amount of the data generated by this sample gave the researcher the opportunity to fully embrace a lengthy process of in-depth and multi-layered analysis, including practical explorations.

Another potential study limitation lies in the use of language, and particularly the ambiguous term 'fashion', with its imbued connotations and implications (e.g., fashion as a highly gendered concept, or multiple meanings of the term in relation to social change or appearance and identity). While all the participants in this study had a high level of appearance-consciousness, the majority of them did not possess a professional or academic knowledge of the field of fashion or clothing. Therefore, I acknowledge that, for many of them, fashion often was understood in a simplified way, as a concept synonymous with fashionable clothing (Kawamura, 2011). This is also compatible with the profile of this study, which adopts clothing as a common denominator for various forms of fashion manifestations (Crane, 2012), as explained in Chapter 2.

Finally, as explained in Chapter 3, the reflexive acknowledging of my own often-subjective presence in the study offered certain possibilities, as well as imposing certain limitations onto it. Firstly, throughout the process of interpretative data analysis, I did indeed draw on my expertise as a fashion designer, artist, and researcher and utilised it to stimulate and enhance the corresponding processes. Undoubtedly then, these skills and sensitivities, unique to me as an individual and creative practitioner, have influenced the research findings and outcomes. There are two important implications here; the produced artefacts are aesthetic solutions that were proposed and created by myself and are consistent with my aesthetic preferences and technical skills; and, consequently, the written accounts represent my own subjective perspectives and metaphorical readings in regards to the phenomenon under study. This once again eliminates the possibility of any quantitative generalisations as an outcome of this study; it does not, however, subtract from its value when it comes to the transparency and coherence of the research processes, and, ultimately, it enhances rather than diminishes the study's persuasiveness, authenticity and plausibility.

7.8 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this study, I explored the experiences of a small sample of older men's experiences of ageing through the lens of fashion and clothing. Subsequently, recommendations for potential future research directions can be made in regards to various aspects of the present study. In this final section of this thesis, I present my recommendations that emerged from this body of work for future studies as well as outline the potential future directions for it; this has relevance to both my professional development, as well as to the wider research community.

My first recommendation for future studies is that further contexts through which individuals' experiences of ageing can emerge should be examined. While this study focused on the context of fashion and clothing, there are many other potentially fruitful avenues for qualitative studies. For example, the breadth of this project did not allow me to investigate in detail the other relevant aspects of fashion, such as textiles, accessories or shoes, that emerged in the course of this study, and which offer potential future areas of investigation. This would also create an exciting possibility for creative, practice-based analyses conducted by relevant practitioners and offer a possibility for creative responses via corresponding mediums. Similarly, within this study, very limited attention was given to various retail communities relevant to mature male customers, and older men's shopping behaviours and preferences; these are currently under-researched areas that should be addressed in further studies.

My second set of recommendations is in regards to the sample. To explore the richness of the participants' experiences, this study's participants were all men who displayed a high level of interest and engagement with fashion and clothing. This ensured the personal meaningfulness of the analysed experiences and homogeneity across the sample. Likewise, it would be insightful to investigate the experiences of men who represent different attitudes towards fashion and who are linked to different cultures and/or generations. Such studies could, for example, include men who are openly uninterested in fashion or men who, although are interested in it, face economic limitations in purchasing desired clothing, as well as men who were associated with a particular clothing style such as the dandy. Moreover, the men in

this study were all white, middle class, heterosexual still-professionally active individuals who did not have any obvious age-related health problems and who all were concentrated around one geographical location in the United Kingdom (Nottinghamshire). It would be desirable to replicate the study in different settings, for example, different geographic locations, including more rural settings, and men representing different subject positions, such as black men, men who are retired from professional occupation or disabled men. There is also a great scope for various studies where the experiences of these different groups of men could be contrasted and compared, as well as for the comparative study between particular groups of men and women.

Thirdly, I highly recommend and encourage different studies on older men and mature masculinities stimulated by the “*somatic turn, (...) where [e]mbodiment, or embodied habitus, is realized through embodied identities and the embodied practices associated with past and present identities*” (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016) and set within the growing field of critical gerontology. Furthermore, I also stress the still-present imbalance in the amount of academic studies on older women and older men, which should be addressed, not only through various publications but also through the proliferation of relevant academic events, conferences, and workshops, as well as artistic initiatives, such as exhibitions and performances.

Finally, I recognise certain implications that this study, and its procedural processes, had for my own development as a researcher. As I have already indicated, this project has been influential and has pushed my practices as a researcher, designer and artist into more socio-cultural directions, where theory and practice can and should be merged, and where the practices of making and writing are used to enhance, not undermine, each other. I, therefore, conclude this thesis with a recommendation towards my own future research avenues; I do this by returning to the poem “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost (1916) presented at the beginning of this thesis and recommending (to myself) to more often take the “*less travelled by*” path.

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Appendices

**WERE YOU BORN BETWEEN 1946 AND 1964?
AND DURING COURSE OF YOUR LIFE YOU HAVE BEEN
INVOLVED WITHIN THE FASHION INDUSTRY?
OR, YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN FASHION
AND CLOTHING?**

For example, **YOU WORKED WITHIN THE FASHION AND
CLOTHING INDUSTRY?**
or, **MAYBE YOU HAVE AN AMAZING COLLECTION OF
CLOTHES AND SOME GREAT MEMORIES CONNECTED WITH
THEM?**
or, **YOU SIMPLY CONSIDER CLOTHING AS IMPORTANT TO
YOU AND YOUR IDENTITY?**

Would you be interested in participating in research?

I am a female fashion designer and a PhD student of Nottingham Trent University doing research about adults born between 1946 and 1964 who during their lives have actively engaged with fashion and/or the fashion industry.

I am seeking for both men and women who are willing to volunteer for confidential, informal interviews/chats about their experiences of fashion and clothing.

The interviews will take between 45 minutes and 2 hours and will take place at a time and place to suit you.

If you would like to know more (without any obligation to participate) please phone/text/e-mail me:

Ania: 07951752769 (mobile) or 01858463662 (landline) or

annasadkowska@yahoo.co.uk

INTRODUCTION TO INTERVIEW

My name is Anna Sadkowska and I am a PhD student of Nottingham Trent University. As part of my programme of study am undertaking research into adults born between 1946 and 1964 who during their lives have actively engaged with fashion and/or the fashion industry.

To enable me to answer my research questions I wish to talk to you about your experience of fashion.

The interview will be a focused discussion and will take between 45 minutes and 2 hours. We will concentrate on the following:

- Your current relationship with fashion
- The way that your relationship with fashion have changed over time
- Fashion artefacts which have a special meaning for you.

Please feel free to ask me any questions about the research

The interview will be taped and transcribed, and should you want a copy of the transcription then please ask me and I will arrange for one to be sent to you.

The information you give me will be used in support of my design work and will be written up in my PhD thesis. Anything you say will be treated with the strictest confidence and your contribution to the discussion will not be attributed to you as an individual, what you said will be used for illustration only; to reinforce a point that I am making.

The tapes will be kept in a locked room and the transcripts on a password protected computer. Both will be destroyed once I have completed my degree and graduated.

Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any implications for your legal rights

PARTICIPANT DETAILS

Name:

Address:

Age:

E-mails address:

Telephone number:

Pseudonym:

Date of interview:

Are you willing to be telephoned, or contacted via e-mail, if necessary, at a later date to answer any more questions that might arise? This could take the form of a second interview or a telephone call.

YES*/NO

*Your participation in additional interview or a telephone call is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any implications for your legal right

Would you be willing to take part in a creative workshop, with perhaps 4-5 other participant? It would take approximately 1-3 hours and would be to present and receive the feedback on my design interpretations of the data generated during the interviews (this would be done through creative interactions with participants and their comments on created by me models and prototypes).

YES*/NO

*Your participation in a creative workshop is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any implications for your legal rights

Name of respondent

Date

Signature

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: **Fashioning Age: A phenomenological exploration of ageing, fashion, gender and identity.**

Please read and confirm your consent to being interviewed for this project by ticking the appropriate boxes and signing and dating this form

1. I confirm that the purpose of the project has been explained to me, that I have been given information about it in writing, and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any implications for my legal rights

3. I give permission for the interview to be recorded by research staff, on the understanding that the tape will be destroyed at the end of the project

4. I agree to take part in this project

Name of respondent

Date

Signature

For office use only

Name of researcher taking consent

Date

Signature

PERSONAL ARTEFACTS

Photographic shoot: _____

For good and valuable consideration of:

I, the artefacts' owner grant the photographer, and any licensees or assignees, the absolute right to use the photograph(s) and any other reproductions or adaptations, from the above mentioned photographic shoot

I give my consent to the photographer to publish, republish, or otherwise transmit the images in any medium for all purposes throughout the world.

I understand that the images may be altered or modified in any manner

I hereby waive any right that I have to inspect or approve a finished product or copy

I understand that the image shall be deemed to represent an imaginary person unless agreed otherwise, in writing, by myself.

I understand that I have no interest in the copyright, nor any moral rights, in the photograph

I am over 18 years of age

Name of owner

Date

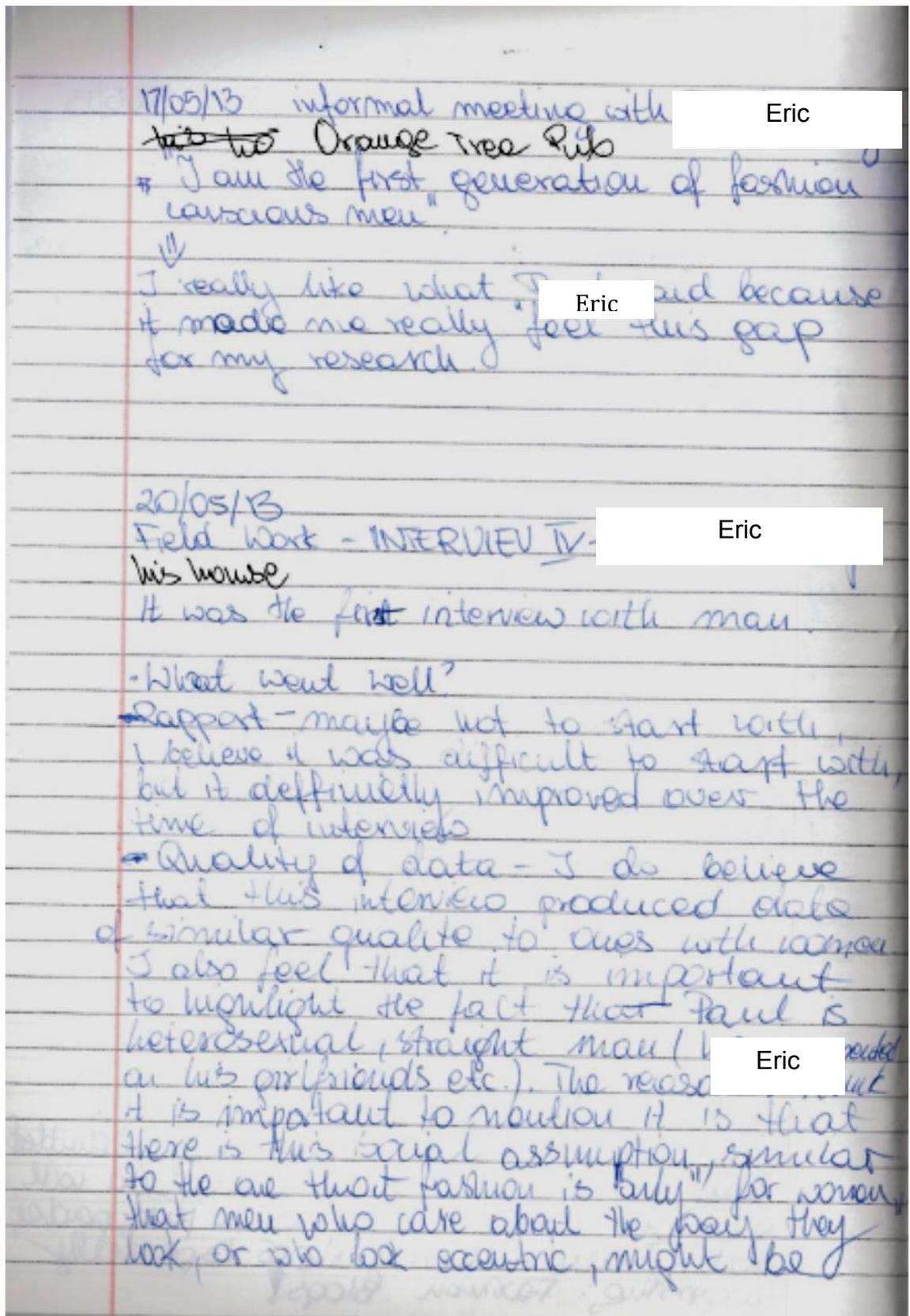
Signature

APPENDIX 3: Interview protocol

1. Please could you tell me about yourself?
2. What fashion means to you?
 - What do you think is fashion?
 - How would you define it?
 - Can you explain the reasons behind your interest in fashion?
 - Do you remember when did you become interested in fashion
3. How would you describe your current relationship with fashion?
 - How important is appearance in your life?
 - What is your fashion style? What kind of clothing do you usually wear?
 - How would you describe your fashion practices? (How do you get your clothes? Where from?)
 - How do you find out about fashion?
 - What is your favourite outfit at the moment?
 - How the clothing you wear influences the way that you feel about yourself?
Can you give an example of this?
4. I asked you to prepare 3-4 fashion artefacts that have a special meaning to you, can you tell me about them?
 - How did you select them?
 - Can you explain what they mean to you?
 - How do they make you feel? (How did they make you feel when you wore them? What do you feel now when you look at them?)
 - How do you see the future of these items?
5. How has your relationship with fashion changed over time?
 - Could you describe how in your opinion fashion has changed?
 - What do you think about the past fashion trends? How do you feel about them?
 - What do you think about the contemporary fashion trends? How they make you feel?

6. Can you tell me about the time when you felt really good about the way you looked?
 - What is your best fashion experience?
 - How did it make you feel?
 - Did anyone comment on the way you looked on that occasion (e.g. friends, family)? How did it make you feel?
7. Can you tell me about the time when you felt really bad about the way you looked?
 - What is your worst fashion experience?
 - What went wrong?
 - How did it make you feel?
8. If time and money were not an issue what would be your perfect/ideal fashion item?
 - Can you describe how it would look?
 - How would you get it? (Would you make it/buy it?)
 - What occasion would you wear it for?
 - What would you wear with it?
 - How would you like it to make you feel?

* Is there anything you would like to add?



homosexuals. Therefore Eric's interest in fashion and clothing / fashion practices should be associated with his ^{cultural} background / time + period he grew up in, rather than his sexual orientation. The same time I think that gender is an important aspect of his clothes choices and often its function is to highlight / express the masculinity. *~~Paul~~ his legs photo, Paul Smith fashion (his photo).

Eric's body shape is not really typical as for older gentleman so I don't think he might have similar "problems" to other older men. But I don't think this is something that was particularly wrong, but it's something that will be important to remember when analysing Paul's interview.

Eric's have gone better? Although I did get to see a lot of his clothes as he modelled them for me, I didn't get to see his wardrobe, the way he store his clothes neither the inside details of the garments.

- anything particularly interesting / surprising?

The vast of fashion-related materials for example vintage fashion magazines.

A: Can you tell me about yourself and your relationship with fashion please?

G: Ok...Uhm, I never think about it really. Because uhm, right from being a teenager I have always been, you know, I have always been interested in fashion and clothes and... Not to an extent that uhm... It was everything to me. It's just, you know, the guys I grew up with teenagers, you know, we were all sort of into mod culture, you know. We were all sort of mods. And we always, sort of, even when we didn't have much money as teenagers, we would spend, you know, half of our wages on nice clothes. As soon as Levi's started to come over here in the mid 60's. A pair of Levi's was like half of your wages. So it's not changed any, it's no different than what it is now really. Uhm, so you would pay £3.50 for a pair of Levi's but you were only earning, sort of, 7 quid a week. But, you know, if you wanted any street cred that, you know, that was sort of, you know, it was how you got the girls really. That's, you know, what I think that is what a lot of fashion is about, you know. That it's, you know, we are all peacocks at the end of the day. And we all liked to strut our feathers. So I think a lot of it is to do with that. Uhm And I think... but I also think it's.... I don't think then you think about it. It's just natural to you. It's strange, really. It's like music, or books, or film, or anything. But if you're into, sort of, like art, and I would class fashion as being part of that, that you never really think about it. It's just like breathing really. It's there. It's just there, you know, and you don't really need to be told that something's in fashion. You just spot it, early, that you might just see one person and you think "wow! That's cool". And, you know, that is just the way it is really. So when Jane asked me to do this [being interviewed], uhm you know, I wouldn't have put myself down as somebody who was, sort of, like "into" fashion. Because it has always been there - it's just me. Did that make any sense?

A: It did, yeah...

G: It's just me, whether it's, whether it's listening to a song thinking "oh God that is a really good sound and I've not heard anybody do that that way before", you know. That's the same with fashion, you know, you will see it. I don't know. It's just like it is inside you. And you don't think about it. You know, I have never really had to think about what I wear. It just happens,

you know. Uhm And I don't think it... uhm, I don't think it matters how old you get. You never think, well, I don't. And ...uhm, and people that I know, I don't think that they do either. You don't think" I should uhm... I should buy one of those because they are in fashion now". It doesn't work like that. It just evolves in you. That's what you do, you know. And so it has never been really any... I have never... What I am trying to say is that I have never felt I have needed to keep "in" fashion. It just happens. Because that's the way you are. It's, you know, you just see something on one person, either in Nottingham or in London or.... wherever you just look. And think "wow, they are cool". And that's it. That's all you need to see. And so then that's it really. Does that make any sense?

A: Yes, yes, of course it makes sense. So how important is appearance in your life?

G: Um I think it is important really. Yeah, I think it's important. Yeah to me, yeah. Yeah, in a way that, I think, it is part of what gives my life structure. It gives it a bit of structure, you know. I never ... I never, say, come home from work in my work clothes, and then I would just sit all night in my work clothes. I have never done that. I think that maybe I've picked that up from my father. He never did that. He would always change and I do that. And it is almost like you are setting.... it's like setting the next mood of the day, you know. It is, sort of, me changing my work clothes is me saying "end of work", you know. When I come home and shower and put something else on that's the end of work. And it's the start of uhm... pleasure or leisure, you know. So it, you know, for me it personally gives my life structure you know. Umand even in winter if I am staying in to watch TV, and I am not going anywhere, you know, I would still sort of change out of my work clothes. And I have got like 2 or 3 sorts of, you know, comfy baggie things. But they are still things that I like to wear. You know I would very rarely just through anything on. It would be something that I like wearing it. Even if it is sort of my baggie sort of jogger bottom type things and, you know, a sort of top and, you know, my slipper type things. You know what I mean but they're ... even those things I enjoy wearing them. Because they look cool and they're comfortable, you know. So rarely would I just, sort of, come home and slob out. I would never, sort of, slob out on the sofa in what I have been to work in, you know. Never, unless I was ill, you know, that would be the only time. You know um That's it really and Yeah but you do it without thinking about it

really. It never crosses my mind that that's not what people do, because that is what I have always done, you know. And I know other people don't do that. I mean lots of guys would just, sort of, uhm ... just come home and just ... but I think that ties in to say where you live, you know. What I mean is like a lot of guys that live on their own, say, would be quite happy to live in a, say, a house with not many beautiful things around them. I... you know, that's just not me. I like to have nice things. And I like to have nice things around me. It makes me feel, you know, this is sort of, you know, my home. This is, sort of like, my cave. And it is where I like to have nice things around me. And it's no different to how I feel about clothes. They are nice things, you know. The fabrics are nice, you know. They are tactile, you know. They are just ... am I making any sense? That's just the natural way. I can't think, you know, I think that when you get to my age, you don't ... There is no point in just going out and thinking "I need I need to sort of have ... have I need to get a bit more ... whatever". For me it doesn't work like that. It's just you, you know. You just move the times. As things move on, you move on. You just naturally move with it, you know. I mean, there are lots of things, obviously, because of my age. There are loads of things that I see in the shop and I think "oh! That's lovely!" But I know instantly, that it is too young for me. So, you know, even if I might like it but there is no need for me trying it on, because it would look silly. So you, just sort of, you know, when you get to a certain age, you know what you can get away with and what you can't get away with. So you don't go anywhere near that, you know. It's you just sort of, yeah... But clothes, I think that clothes are beautiful. I am not sure if I am a fan of the fashion industry, you know, in general. But looking back at, sort of, you know 15th, 16th and 17th century is that clothes have always been important to people, if you had the money. You know, sort of going back 100 years, when sort of, working families, they wouldn't had the money to indulge in fashion. They would had a suit to wear on Sundays to go to church or chapel. Uhm And that would have been it really. So the hardship of the working classes I think, you know, came across in that way, you know. It has only been the last half of, sort of, the 19th century that working class people had money to indulge themselves in nice things. You know, sort of, my mother's generation, you know, they would have made all of their own clothes. Because they certainly could not have afforded to have gone out splashing lots of money on clothes. But yeah... any good?

A: Yeah, it's great urgh... So when you talk about the objects around you and clothing... so is it the way to show your individuality, express yourself?

G: Yes, I think so. I think it is, yeah. I think that ... certainly to do with interior design, the way that you have your house, for me personally. I like the fact that people can walk in this house and they know it's mine. They can see me, sort of, you know. They can see me around the walls, really, through music, through books, through photos, through things that I am interested in, you know. And nice pictures, you know, just nice things really. For me that's important, you know, that shows your character. I know there is a leaning at the minute to go right back to minimalism, where you know, say, with music people don't need to own CDs any more. They can have everything on their computer, or on their I-player, or whatever. But I think my generation, you know, we like to collect. Well, I do. I like to see. Seeing my things around me gives me comfort, in the same way that the clothes that I like, you know. They are part of me really, you know. Yeah, you know, I don't think that I have ever made them like ... I have never made them like, you know, a God or anything. It has never been like that. I have never been fanatical about it. And I am not now but I you know I now if I go down to London to see my daughters, you know, they might be at work and I would just go off wondering around London. If I see something nice I will think "oh yes! That's good". You know, and I will buy it. I like bargains as well. I like retro shops. I like them because I like that feeling of going into a retro shop. You usually go into a retro shop like a blank canvas, you don't really know what you are going for. You know, that you will enjoy being in there, because there's things that will give you memories of things that, you know, of things that have come back into fashion. And you remember having one of those in the 60s or 70s, you know. Uhm So I like retro shops because, I like retro shops very similar to why I would like charity shops, because you go in with like an open ... you don't know what you are going to come out with. And I like that. I like retro shops for that. Um my favourite clothes shops are shops that do nice things, but do them very simply. So uhm, I like Muji, I like Muji because they because they always have nice things and nice cuts but very simple. You know the shop, yeah? And there is another shop in London. It has only been open about 2 years called... umh. What's it called? UniQlo on uhm, I think they are Japanese store. They do really lovely clothes. And they are not too expensive. But they are very simple, you know. There is like simplicity to

them. Yeah, so, I think, I go for ... I don't really go for particular garish clothes, you know. Things that are really loud. I don't like things that are vulgar. I like things to be, you know, classy but not vulgar. And I can do scruffy really well, if I am at festivals or anything like that, yeah. I can, yeah I suppose, even if I am at a festival, there are certain things that I like to wear. Because that they make me feel comfortable when I am there. And that you know I have just had a kilt come and it's fantastic! It's this black kilt, like a cotton. And I saw a guy in it, in this kilt at a festival last year, and I thought "that is bloody cool I am having that! I am! I will get a kilt!" So I asked him where he got it from, and he got it from this place in Wales. So I looked on the internet and found the place called Union Kilts. It is just this jet black kilt and it's just bloody awesome! I mean I bought that purely for festivals, I wouldn't go out in town in it because, uhm, they would just get the rise out, I think. But I will wear it for a few years at festivals. So it is just things like that really if something turns my head, yeah, you know, I will go for it.

A: So do use clothes to highlight your individuality but not to stand out? Is that what you mean?

G: I'm not sure really. I don't think I buy clothes to stand out. I just like them. I just see something and I like it. And I think because of the fact, maybe because, that I am tall and, you know, quite slim, I am still quite confident wearing things. So if I see something that I like and I think "that looks cool", you know, I am quite happy to wear it. You know if I was to go to my local pub or whatever if somebody said "oh God! Where did you get that from? It's rubbish!" you know, that wouldn't bother me, you know, because I like it. So I am comfortable with that. And maybe I wouldn't want to wear what they are wearing, anyway. It's just it. Urgh and I think it has helped as well that I have got 2 daughters my daughters are 34 and 30 and they are both sort of, you know, clothes conscious. They both like clothes. So if I buy things they will, you know, they will say "that looks really cool dad" or "you should buy that, you look really cool in it" or whatever. But they will also be honest with me. And will say if that is too young for her, you know, or whatever. But yeah, I don't think that I buy things to stand out individually, no. They're just things that I like. I just like them. And I must like the look, you know. Yeah, that's, you know, sort of like when I when I was growing up in the 60's, sort of,

Elvis was really popular. And there would be lots of men in their 50's that, even though Elvis was like maybe gone out of fashion sort of 10 years, 15 years, maybe 20 years, they were teenagers when Elvis was at his height. So they wanted to look like Elvis. And 20 years later they still wanted to look like Elvis! And I have never got that. And I never got that sort of concept, because for me, you just move with it. As music is changing, as fashion, or interior design, or whatever, as it is changing, you just move with it. You know it takes your eye. You must find it attractive. And you just go with it. You move with it. So it is, almost like it is, organic. It just, it just sort of, it has its own life. And that's why I could never, sort of, stick in one decade. I couldn't be, sort of, an Elvis or I couldn't be a 70s hippie. Although uhm, I was then. Well, for me personally, you can't stop in that. Otherwise you become stagnant and sort of quite ... You know I work with men, I work with a few men my age, who say they will never listen to hip hop or, uhh, you know, they're stuck in the period where they was a young man, sort of between the age of 15 and 25. They're stuck in that period and that is the only music they like. Where that's ... never I have never had to purposely change. It's just always been, just like breathing it's just natural. You just go. You move, you know. You yourself are organic. You just change and develop into something, you know, new. So that is what happens in life and that is what I feel, anyway, you know.

A: So do you think you are dressing for your age?

G: No, no my age never really comes into it. The only time age comes into it, is if I was to put something on that was too young for me. Then I would know instantly and I would think "oh God! No, that is not it. It might look nice hanging up, but that is not right for you". But no I never ... I don't dress for my age. I virtually dress in the same way that I have always dressed, but it has moved slightly, you know. It is just like a rolling thing. You just go with it. You slowly move with it. You know, I mean some people don't. Some people love it. Like you will get some people really in to retro festivals and they will all go dressed as Rockabilly, or 1950's, you know. They do really enjoy that, and there is nothing wrong in that. I mean that's fine. Uhm, but I have never really, you know, it's not me. I've always just sort of moved, you know. And... uhm... yeah but not just with fashion. It's like you just move, there is just something in you that, you know, that's what you do. You just got to, sort of, move along. And

something comes along and you think “oh yeah! That’s really nice. I’ll try one of those. I will have one of those”. You know, and it doesn’t matter whether it is a coffee making machine or whether it’s a new suit or, you know, just things. It’s a change. And you go with it. And enjoy it. You enjoy the new things that come along. Really. That is all I have ever done, anyway. You know when I text you and said that because, you know, it was Jane. Jane said to me she was going to tell you to interview me, because Jane said to me “you always look really nice, you can tell you like clothes”. And for me uhm, I’ve always been like this, you know.

I’ve always liked nice shoes or whatever, nice jeans. But when you were a Mod, as a teenager, you know, fashion was everything. It was quite, you know, it was your identity. Because you had sort of the gangs of mods and the gangs of you, know motorbike guys. But the mods where always into core suits and, you know. And that is what it was like. It was clothes gave you like... at the time clothes gave you your identity. And I liked that. It was cool. And it got you the girls, you know. And I think, you know, I am pretty sure that there is, you know, a big connection between fashion and being a peacock. It’s what attracts the girls when you’re a teenager, or when you get older, or whatever. It’s all part of that. It’s all part of sexuality and, you know, uhm, yeah, pruning your feathers, you know. Well it has been for me, anyway. And I can only speak for myself and I have never questioned it. (Laughing)

A: So you said that sometimes you pick up clothes but you think “oh no, that’s too young for me”...

G: Yeah.

A: Can you think about any example when that happened?

G: Well, I don’t like thing, you know, the fashion to do with, uhm... wearing really tight tops and skinny jeans. Because you do know that you wold look ridiculous in those. You don’t have to try them on to know that this really young fashion. Ut like with all fashion, there is you. You moderate ithm, bu. You know. During the 80’s everybody seemed to wear everything big, you know, the jumpers were big and you know the shirts. You always ways had ... everything was loose. Uhm... whereas the fashion now is that everything is tight on the body. And, you know, now, when you’re 60 you can’t get away with that in the way that a 20 year old guy

would. But, you know, you can have part of that. There is a bit of that which can fit you. So, what I mean is just, I think that is the same... isn't that just the same with catwalk fashion? Catwalk fashion is the extremity. And then, by the time it gets into the shop, it is, sort of, it's filtered. And it's sort of changed. And it became more "user friendly", you know, than what you have got on the catwalk. And I think that is the same when you are buying clothes when you are sort of 60. You can get the inspiration if something looks ok from something that a 20 year old will wear. And you want to find, sort of, equivalent to that, you know. Yeah, does this make any sense?

A: So I was just wondering, is this because your body has changed?

G: I think it is, yeah, I think it has a lot to do with the body change. You know a lot of people. As they get older, put on weight. Men's shape changes and women's shape changes. Men will end up with a pot belly. And women might end up with a bigger backside than they would like. So your body changes as you get older. And I think that I have been lucky. You know, the fact that I am 6 feet tall and that I have not found it particular difficult to keep slim. I have never really put much weight on. And I also think that a bit of vanity doesn't do you any harm anyway. That even now, at 60, if I was to start to put a bit of weight on, I would cut down either my food or, you know, alcohol. Beer or whatever. Because I don't think a moderate amount of vanity does anybody any harm. I think that, for me personally, I like to look after myself, really. I eat healthy and exercise, you know, what I mean. I suppose, that's going back to what I was saying earlier, it's a holistic thing you know. Fashion, where you live, both inside your house and what's outside. Uhm, the way you look after your body. The way you eat. It's all a big holistic thing. It's about either liking to look nice or looking at nice things; looking out of your window and seeing a nice hill side, the trees. Personally, I think that they are all connected, you know. In the same way that I never needed anybody to tell me that a new band's in fashion, you know, music. Because I am already there. I know it's in fashion because I bought it last week. Do you know what I mean? I suppose what I am trying to say is, for me personally, I have never had to like.... I have never had to try. It's just been natural to me. It's just been natural. You know. I can't explain it any better than that. You know

whether it is books, film, music, fashion. It's just been as natural to me as, you know, going to work or eating or breathing. It's just the way it has been.

A: So what type of clothing do you usually wear?

G: Casual. This [showing at his top]. Casual, uhm. Jeans; tops more than shirts, with a jacket, or you know, jean jacket or whatever. Uhm, a suede jacket or something like that. My shoes! There are certain shoes that I like. Makes. Camper. Things like that - I have always liked them. Clarks Originals. You know, sort of, going back casual now. Casual stuff. Casual things. Uhm, but cool. Casual things but cool. Things sort of, yeah, you know that they're cool. I don't know how to explain it you. They're just cool. But I will always, I will always have a nice suit. I might only wear it... I never get my money's worth out of suits, because there might only be 2 or 3 things a year that I will need to wear a suit for. Uhm, so I never get my money's worth out of them. Because 3 years later that cut of suit has sort of changed. It's gone out of fashion. And I have probably only wore it about 10 times. Uhm, but I would change, you know. If I went down in to the city, uhm... I think the last couple of suits that I bought have been from Zara. I like their suits. Uhm. So I always like to have a nice suit. Usually either black, blue or grey. To wear with a, you know, maybe a plain white shirt or a plain blue shirt. So I like to have, I like to have quite formal things. But I will only wear them rarely. But when I do wear them I feel, you know, I feel really nice. I've got something on that is a bit classy or, you know. Yeah but I never get my money's worth out of them, you know.

A: So what do you do with the old ones? Do you get rid of them or do you keep them?

G: Uhm, yes, I would probably take them to a charity shop, or whatever. Yeah, I would get rid of them. But I am always a bit I hang on to things until I think "no. Get rid of that, you are never going to wear that again". But then I would take them, I would probably do 2 or 3 bags. I would maybe have a clear out every, I don't know, maybe every 4 years. With about 4 bin liners of things that I know that I am never going to wear again. Uhm yeah, I take them to a charity shop.

A: So do you have any garments that you have kept purely out of sentiment?

G: No, I don't think so. No, I don't think so. I don't think I have kept anything for sentiment, no.

A: Did you ever kept anything, kind of, hoping that it will become fashionable again?

G: No, I have never really lived in the same place long enough to, sort of... Uhm, there have been maybe the odd things. I can't actually think of anything. But I am sure that there have been things I have, sort of, thought "oh yeah I have got one of those somewhere". Uhm, yeah. But not many, no, not many. Uhm, but, like I am getting back to some of the younger fashions. Some of them, like to some of the younger fashions on guys, is like, you know, sort of the Norwegian type cardigans. You know, the chunky cardigans. If I put 1 of those on, I would just look like a man who should be sitting with a pipe. You know, it just makes me look older. It makes them look great. They look great in them, you know, but that would not be right for me to wear. You know. And you just know that. You don't need to be told that. You put it on and just look in the mirror and you just think "no". (Laugh)

A: Do you have any favourite outfits at the moment?

G: Uhm not really. Just this there will be... uhm. It will be a combination of, sort of, uhm flip flops, shorts or jeans, in the summer, with 2 or 3 different types of tops. The odd shirt thrown in, uhm, I have always liked buying shoes. I have far more shoes than most men would have. So I must be, I must have a thing about liking shoes. I think value for money from clothes. I get maybe.... only a third of the clothes that I but I really get my money's worth out of. Some things I will see in the shop and I will think "oh that's nice". I will bring it home and I will wear it 2 or 3 times only and then, somehow, it will get pushed to the back and then and then I don't bother with it. But if I like something, and I feel really comfortable in it, there is a jacket round there that I bought for 4 quid from a retro shop, about 5 years ago. It only cost me a fiver. But I have worn it every winter and I still wear it now. I feel that, you know, it's a cool jacket. So I just feel ok in it and I think that cost me only about £5. Uhm, this shirt I wear it to death. I bought this from Australia about 4 years ago. And it was about 4 quid out of a retro shop. But it just fits just me right. And I am very particular - I don't like shirts that are too long. And this is exactly the right length. I like clothes to be flexible, not sort of, you know, stiff. And this is exactly, you know, the right fabric for being comfortable. Uhm, and I like it. I like the colour

and I have worn it to death. To say, it cost me 5 Australian dollars, uhm, you know. But the opposite to that I, could buy another shirt, I don't know, that could cost me 40 quid, 50 quid, that I could wear a couple of times. And then not wear it never again, so you know.

A: So where do you usually get your clothes from?

G: Nottingham or London.

A: Do you have any favourite shops?

G: Yeah, I like Muji. I like this new shop in London I found, called Uniqlo. I don't know if it is a coincidence that they are both Japanese. Uhm and I like them because, like I said, they do things quite simple. But cut well and fit well. Uhm I will go retro shops. I will always go in.... There is a shop. Is it Urban Outfitters? I will sometimes go in there. But there is some shops I keep away from, that I don't particularly like. They are all just "a much of a muchness" really, you know. Shops like River Island and GAP. And shops like that. I don't find them very interesting, you know. I might get the odd thing from there, you know. It probably would not stop me from going in, but I rarely buy anything from that type of shop. And Next. I don't think I have bought anything from Next in my life. Because I don't find their clothes interesting for some reason. They are just a bit 'middle of the road' really. Yeah.

A: So you talked about changes in fashion, but how do you follow these?

G: I have always ... it's always been there. Right from being a teenager. If I went down to Nottingham, at the weekend, as a teenager, when I was 15, 16 and a crowd of us went down... You just have to see one person in something. And you would just look and think "that's cool". And you would just know instantly and know that this was coming. Uhm... and you know I can be like that now. Um I could go down London and see a guy in his 40s or 50s wearing something and I would think "you look really good in that and that's cool". And that would be it. That would be enough. I think that if you are interested in something, you just notice it more. It is like you have got a radar. You just notice it. You know, you could be just sat in the pub and somebody... a woman could walk in in something. It doesn't have to be male. A woman could walk in in a nice, you know, whatever and I would look and think "that's

really lovely. She looks really nice in that". You know, that has nothing to do with fancying the woman. I just think she is wearing something that looks really nice. I am sure lots of men would say they wouldn't. They wouldn't notice that because they are not interested in it. Or you know, if my daughter, my daughter will phone up on the phone she will say "oh dad, I bought these really hot boots of Camden market. You will love them". You know, and she will say she will tell me about them. Because knows that I will like them, you know. I would like to see them. Or I would like to see Jenny in them. And when I get down there, when I go to London to see them, they live together in London. My 2 daughters live together just outside Brixton. You know, they will show me like they show me things and what they have bought. Because they know that I am interested, you know, they know I am interested, uhm, yeah, you know. I've always just been like this. That's why it's a bit of a mystery to me, really. You know, I do notice, I suppose, I notice lots and lots and lots of men of my age who just look disgusting. You know, they have no fashion awareness or even body, you know. They've got no body awareness. They're just men ... but just it's better nowadays. It's getting a bit better. It's getting a bit better. But in general men are just bloody... they're just slob, you know. They are not that interested, you know. I am sure there is still thousands and thousands of men whose partners or wives, who still buy their clothes for them. I know men that, you know, that their partner will go shopping and come back with half a dozen items for their men. Because they are fed up in seeing them in the same things or whatever. And I just don't get that. Because I've never been like that. And nobody can buy me, nobody can buy me clothes. It must be quite frustrating for, uhm, my past, sort of, partners. You know, girlfriends, because none of them have been able to buy me clothes. Because I am so fussy, you know. I know exactly what I like. Even before I have seen it, I will, you know, uhm, I will have an idea in my head. Uhm, so it is really frustrating for them. They will say "well, I will buy you a new suit" and I will "say no don't. Please don't buy me any clothes". Because I am so fussy, you know. And there might be just one thing on it I might see... it's crazy, isn't it? It's like autism. I might see a shirt or a top from a distance. And I might think "oh! That's really nice". And I get to it and it might just have a like a badge thing on it or, I don't know, but it could just have something and it would straight away... I would just think "no". And it it would spoil it for me.

That little bit of, sort of extra, would spoil it for me. And I think that is why I have shopped in Muji for years. Because they tend not to do that. They leave things simple, you know

A: So where do you think this kind of awareness came from?

G: I don't know, seriously, I have no idea. No idea.

A: Do you think that it could be connected with the time you were a teenager?

G: Maybe, because I was a teenager in the 60's. Just when, sort of... it was the first period when working class people had got money, you know, spare money. Uhm, to indulge themselves. Uhm, with the clothes, really. And also there was this thing to do with ... I can remember Nottingham's first boutique. It was a shop called birdcage. Its its almost across from where Zara is now. Do you know Nottingham? It's almost across from where Zara is now as you walk along by you walk along Waterstones book shop and the very first building on the right was Nottingham's first boutique this was about 1964 and it was called the Birdcage and they guy who owned it. We used to shop in there. All of their stuff would come up either from London or... But they were the first shop that started to have suits that were, like you could buy a suit or a jacket of them of the peg, and it would be a French cut. It would be sort of quite tight. And it would have a waist and things like that. And up until that time, if you wanted a suit making, there would be all of these old fashioned sort of places that sold suits but they were for men, you know sort of in their 40's and 50's. So if you wanted a bespoke suit making, and that was very much part to the mod culture. You know, suit was a big thing in mod culture. So you would have a bespoke suit made, you know, you would go to a tailors and you would pick the cloth. And you would tell him what you wanted, you know, you would tell him exactly what you wanted and they will make it for you. And you know the detail was really important. Suits fashion was really big. You know the flap on the pockets - the bigger the flap the more cool the suit was. You would have a 3 or a 4 inch and the vents, you know, in your jacket. The longer they were, you know. It was all part of it, even down to detail. Uhm, even 3 buttons. You never, sort of, you know, you didn't have covered buttons, which was the fashion in the, sort of, late 50's. Although it was just a suit, it was more than a suit. It was, you know, it was a statement. The detail was really important, you know. But I would say that this is still really

important. That's been there with me, from knocking around with all of the guys and it has never left, really, I don't think.

A: Could you tell me about your best clothing experience? I am talking about the time when you were wearing something and it made you feel really good about yourself?

G: Um Well I can think of one instant. It's a bit egotistical. I went to a friend's wedding. About 15 years ago. And I had been to Nottingham and there had been a, think it was Kenzo. It was a Kenzo suit. And it should have been something, I don't know, £600 to £700. And it was in a blue. And it had a nice sheen to it. And it was something like £400. And I had never paid anything like that for a suit. You know, it was... The most I would pay for a suit in somewhere like Zara would be £100 to £150. But this suit, I think it was 450 quid. But I just loved it. And the lining and everything about it was just quality. And I tried it on and it had lined trousers. Silk, line trousers. So I tried it on and it fit really well. So I bought it. And I went to the wedding. Uhm, and just lots of people, just kept making comments, about, uhm, you know, "where did you get that suit", like you know. It's like really cool, like you know, and like, yeah, things like that really. Sometimes you just nail it. Sometimes you just get it right. Sometimes you don't. Sometimes people don't share your enthusiasm. But when they do, it is a nice feeling, you know, yeah.

A: So was it nice because of the people who noticed you?

G: I think so, yeah. I think so. Maybe that. I don't know, really. Maybe it is just a bit of showmanship or maybe wanting to be noticed in a subtle way. You know, not in a way that you want to go in shouting that you are there. You just do it. You let people know that you are there. But in another way. And clothes can do that, I suppose, clothes can do that, yeah, yeah. Clothes can do that. Let them know that you are there. And people will notice you without it being in their face, or offensive. They will just notice that you're there. I don't know. What do I know?

A: I've got one more, last question to you today. If time and money would not be any limitation, what would your perfect piece of clothing be?

G: Uhm, to say that I dress down a lot. I spend 90% of my time in tops and jeans. Uhm, it would probably be a really nice suit. Yeah.

A: Do you have any preferences about the colour, shape, fabric?

G: Um it would be dark. It would be dark. It would either be a really dark or black suit. One that costs £1000 or something like that. With a really nice, expensive shirt and shoes.

A: Bespoke?

G: Yeah, yeah, yeah, probably. It probably would be a nice suit. Because yeah, if I had, yeah... I mean that is what... I suppose I end up paying for suits and I am only wearing them half a dozen times. If I am going to go for a wedding or out for a meal or whatever. I like to look the business, you know, I like to look nice yeah. I have friends that are total opposite to me. And they are great. I love them. But they are comfortable in being in, sort of, walking, you know, fleece, tops. And if they were going to a wedding, they would probably, you see, they would probably see buying a suit as being a chore. You know, they would be like "bloody hell. I have got to go and buy a suit for this wedding". As for me it is like a celebration. It is like I am going to a wedding I will go and get a new suit, you know.

A: Grahame, would you like to add anything?

G: Not, not at all.

Emergent themes	Transcript KEVIN	Exploratory coding
<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p>	<p>A: Can you tell me about yourself first and what connection you have to fashion? What does fashion mean to me?</p> <p>K: Phew... That's a huge question. What does fashion mean to me? Err... It's probably always meant the same to me. Er... I think one's personal appearance is obviously what you show to the world and... I think ever since I had a choice of what I can wear, probably from about the age of 13, I've chosen to wear clothes that perhaps are a little unconventional. Although quite often wearing unconventional clothes means being part of a group that always wears the same kind of clothes. So, on the one hand you're kind of being unconventional, whilst being conventional within a group. Um... and I think that's another part of why people wear particular kinds of clothes to be part of a group, to be seen to be part of a group and having the values, if you like, of that group. But that changes, as you get older. I don't feel part of a group anymore um... but I think I still consciously um... decide to wear clothes that people my age and occupation and class, etc. don't wear. Um... and I guess that's still, that same motivation not wanting to be er... the same as everybody else. I think that's easier to do the older you get with fashion because as you get</p>	<p>trying to define fashion, realising how big the concept is fashion - fashion identity first conscious choices - agency choosing unconventional, a bit different clothes being individual vs being part of a group of individuals.</p> <p>being in opposition to others outside the group, but identification with the group - being part of the group - feeling safe and secure, not being judged as individual</p> <p>not feeling as a part of any group anymore, rejection of subscribing to any group, but choosing to be individual and original. Trying to be different than everybody else</p>

early 1980s
choice of
unconventional
clothes
choosing clothes that
could make
him a part
of an unconv
tional group
rejection to
be part of
any group
as he gets
older - wanting
to be different

30 older fewer... I think, as people get older fewer people can either be bothered. Or maybe they want to be seen to be conforming more the older they get. Perhaps. But I think the role of clothes is almost identical to branding. I, I teach branding and one of the easiest way to getting students to understand brand values is talk about the way they brand themselves. And they're usually quite surprised to hear somebody talking about them as individual brands. But they very quickly pick up that that is the case. That they do consider their own values and they express those values through what they wear. As well as other things: what they drink, what they buy, where they live, how they talk, everything adds up to a brand.

31 A: You said growing up was like being part of a group. Can you give me any examples of that from your past?

32 K: Er... yes. Um... I, like most kids of my age... um... I was born in 1950 and in 1962 The Beatles came on and I wanted to be a Beatle, just like most of the boys. And, at that time, everybody used to dress like their parents. Um... it started changing in the 50s with a lot of influence from America. Um... the invention of the teenager. In the 50s um... and some of that was already on the streets in the UK in the very early 60s but with that sort of um... Pop Revolution, English Pop

nothing that more people noticed their appearances as they get older. Not being different but - loves - branding oneself

→ someone recognize them as brands

fashion only partially creates that "brand"!

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Born in 1950 (12 years old in 1962) viewing Beatles as idols, wanting to be one of them, part of the Beatles group breaking up the with their parents image

→ knowing the history of 50's fads and reflecting on it.

the people get older they reflect their appearance

people seem to be different as they get older

fashion - way of branding ourselves

Americans with Beatles culture - rebellion towards "parents" look.

60 Revolution I think um... everybody wanted to be different from that
 41 point on er... and I think far more than now, children wanted to
 42 rebel against convention and particularly their parents. So it was
 43 almost like um... compulsory that you did not dress like your father.
 44 You found another role model um... I think The Beatles were it for me
 45 to begin with. Urm... and though that we all became aware of other
 46 movements, such as: Mod. Ah... Mod was huge in er... '64-5-6...
 47 Maybe a bit later here in Nottingham. And I was really interested in
 48 that look and also in the music and everything that went with it. It was
 49 a lifestyle um... it was a very cool er... persona. Um... everything
 50 about it was designed to be sophisticated in comparison to what else
 51 was going on er... so yeah. That was, that was another good thing for
 52 me and there were key things you had to wear to be a part of that. Er...
 53 you had to have the right hair style the right kind of shoes. Um... there
 54 were long debates between men for the first time about was 'in' and
 55 what wasn't. Men started to talk about clothes it was ... quite a
 56 phenomena I think er... and old people I think probably found that
 57 really quite weird. Because you know you just wore sports jacket
 58 and trousers, sensible shoes and shirt and tie. What's to discuss? But
 59 then people started discussing labels and er, fabrics and the cut of
 60

it became fashionable and desirable to be different (than parents). Being rebellious, being different → finding role models so it wasn't really individual just different than eldest (generations) MODs - subsiding to fashion in connection with music etc. Literature movement recognized movement of being proud to be part of senses of melancholy to be a part of this certain gray limited individuality reality. → change in cultural view on men's fashion + clothing old people than previous generations something rather than fashion + trousers - extending the role of fashion

rebellious towards "parents" look - reflecting it

Mods - not only clothes but the whole lifestyle was interesting - enjoyed it

lack of identity with "old" people - didn't fit in with youthfully fashion of 1960s

→ pioneering

developments of quick changing fashions - trends - memory of need to be admired - to be recognized as party of the group id. does the job well.

things, tailors and it became extremely important to have erm... the very latest detail in what you wore. And that could change quite quickly. Simply by having one person as a trendsetter. Somebody turning up with a Prince of Wales checked suit, for example. Nobody had ever seen that before on a young person and 2 weeks later the same place as you'd see 7 or 8 people with a Prince of Wales checked suit on but each char- looking. So it was quite competitive. And there was a lot of standing about being admired, you know, and wanting to be admired. "I have the latest kit". And, you know, adopting the right poses and being seen in the right places. So um... again, I think, I think that was all quite new that sort of Dandy.. thing for blokes. Um... hadn't been... hadn't been seen for a very long time um... particularly after the years of austerity after, after the war and then prior to the Second World War and the First World War everybody wore very sober... clothing. So it was, it must have been quite strange for people to see these sort of um...er... new colours and new kinds of tailoring and a lot of very casual clothes. There was a lot of influence from Italian sportswear in the early Mod movement. Cycling shirts and er... there was a lot of new wave films on at the cinema um... that would show, sort of, you know, continental styles. People were going from.

The birth of fashion system as it is today - Creation of men's fashion trends. Trendsetters - individuals who set the trends for others. Following trends. Wanting to be admired, wanting to be recognized and identified with certain group. new looking after themselves - paying attention to their appearance. Bandwidth War-time. indulging fashion source of pleasure. influence from Europe movies.

Pioneering

soon holiday to Europe for the first time, coming back with new ideas about fashion. So it was all very exciting. Er, so yeah... Mod to begin with and then at the sort of... so called 'summer of love' in '68 and a lot of people who were Mods gravitated towards that more sort of um... psychedelic look: people growing their hair a bit longer um... still being very considered about what you were wearing um... And again you had, you had to have the right insight into what constituted the look. Otherwise you know you'd look silly. Um... so yeah it was very interesting because this so called 'freedom' of the times and "do what you like, wear what you like" but you still had to think very carefully about what you wore if you wanted to be accepted in those circles. Um... and I think that's where I started to probably not want to be a member of a group anymore because I still like to wear what I like to wear (laughs). And I've almost always worn the same kind of clothes, ever since the Mod days. I mean what I'm wearing now would have been completely acceptable. Um, I probably would have started a few new trends but um... I used to wear suits which hanging around with people who, you know, would have big baggy jeans with tears in and ~~tripped~~ balloon pants and all the rest of it um... because I didn't... I didn't... want...to... I like to be different. So we have a whole room full

new, exciting times to witness and be part of development / progress of Mod culture to remain a part of the group
 Not much room for individual interpretation - fitting loose freedom vs. certain look easy to be rejected if not followed carefully.
 → That's where change started for many, seeking to be part of a group, but staying within the Mod aesthetics - despite the group not the aesthetics
 → highlighting individuality, marking out into individuality,

part - getting excited about fashion from fashion
 part - being part of a group to be free and rebellious
 want to be wearing by the group and address.
 desperate to highlight individuality
 expressing individuality while being part of the group

being different
 looking a group

<p>100 the uniqueness 101 of 102 uniqueness 103 in everyday 104 life activities</p>	<p>100 of hippies lying on the floor smoking dope and I'd sit on a chair and smoke dope "cause I was wearing a suit" (laughs). Granted it wouldn't be a formal business suit it would be some er... you know er... black velvet suit or something like that. But it was still not the same as everybody else's. 105 A: Tell me more about your current relationship with fashion, and how you are not part of the group any more. 106 K: What do you mean 'relationship'?</p>	<p>not only in fashion but behavior in general. → liking being different, being individual. → badly worded question</p>
<p>107 A: I mean how do you feel about fashion now? How do you choose your clothes? 108 K: Um, I don't tend to wear fashionable clothes. Um, I tend to wear... 109 I guess what some people would call 'timeless' or more classic. 110 Um...my taste has always been very similar. Um, since... I suppose since I graduated from college so... so probably since 1978. Um, before that when I was at art college I did use, I did use to wear some quite outrageous stuff. Um and I did look like an art student, you know, the current trend at that time was very particular but um... I had all the contacts in the fashion industry and I used to work in little boutiques and some were owned by friends er... just casually and I did a little bit of buying er... fashion buying, menswear with a couple</p>	<p>not following fashion trends missing "timeless", classic solutions redefinition of fashion taste outrageous part → following fashion trends in past working in fashion industry in the past - fashion buying</p>	<p>not following fashion trends missing "timeless", classic solutions redefinition of fashion taste outrageous part → following fashion trends in past working in fashion industry in the past - fashion buying</p>

120 of.... Er those people who own the retail and wholesale um...
 considered major outlets...so for quite a few years in the 70s I was um part of the
 fashion scene in Nottingham and I used to really like finding samples
 for you know signature pieces that nobody else got and I'd wear that.
 Um... again because it was different and nobody else was wearing that
 kind of stuff but yeah... since then I've gone back a little bit to where it
 all started with the Mod thing and I've almost always worn well ...
 tailored erm... suits I particularly like um... longer coats. I've had a thing
 about ¾ length coats ever since the 60s when I came into possession
 of a ¾ length green leather coat, which was just the bee's knees. You
 know... and I never wore anything else. I wore that as a coat for about
 2 years until I lost it and I really wish I'd still got it. I'd probably have it
 framed. Um... but my relationship with fashion now is er, yeah again I,
 think it's, it's about being distinctive. Erm... I think everybody
 secretly wants to be distinctive but it's increasingly difficult to be that,
 particularly as you get older. I think there's a lot of pressure to
 conform. Erm... and I certainly don't subscribe to the idea of looking
 ridiculous for the sake of fashion um... but I think you can look
 distinctive simply through having good taste and bringing the right
 clothes together. Um... it is important to me defiantly to er... to... it, it,
 having good fashioned taste

aesthetic

fashion authority —
 fashion knowledge
 → having access to unique
 fashion pieces, being original
 going back to where it first
 started — Mods culture
 influence of his first very
 successful garment — ¾ coat
 → it's nearly as having feelings
 for this coat, personal, emotional
 memories of ~~it~~
 idealisation (# he was a different
 body snipe then)
 it's being more difficult to be
 individual as we get older —
 what pressure is there to
 conform, social pressure to
 stop being different, not to
 stand out, good taste —
 skill and ability.

<p>clothes - 140 it gives you er, ... it makes me feel more confident. It makes me feel confident about myself. Um... makes... and it's fun. it's still fun. I still like enablers 142 shopping for clothes and finding something a little bit different. Um... enjoying fashion? 143 what I don't actually like to much is people commenting on my and level 144 appearance and in a place like this full of um... free-thinking creative of getting 145 people you would imagine that other people's appearance wouldn't attract it 146 be a cause of... how can I put it? Um... cause for comment but I get attention 147 comments almost every day from people I don't even really know one he 148 about how I look (laughs), which I really don't think is very cool at all doesn't 149 and um... I do sometimes react when... I mean there are one or two like 150 people who seem to find my appearance fascinating um... it, it attraction 151 astonishes me that they have got nothing else to think about l, l, l, l not appe 152 don't know why they... For example I was walking along the road (not all). 153 today and somebody said; 154 "Oh you look as if you're ready for the French boulevards" 155 Or something like that: 156 "Oh right... ok". (Laughs) 157 Er... and this happens quite a lot. Somebody said to me a few weeks 158 ago... I had a nice 3/4 length coat with a velvet collar and I was 159 wearing a tie that day. He said:</p>	<p>clothes influencing confidence clothes - mood enhancers importance of having fun, playing with fabrics not liking people commenting on his appearance - wanting to be appreciated but not attracting attention. not wanting receiving "false" attention</p>
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<p>160 "You look like you are somebody"</p> <p>161 (Laughs) I said;</p> <p>162 "I am somebody" (Laughs)</p> <p>163 It's... you know even in art colleges you get very small minded people.</p> <p>164 Strange. Is that making any sense?</p> <p>165 A: Yeah, it does. So how important is appearance in your life? I mean, you did say it's very important and you try to look distinctive.</p> <p>166 Can you expand on this or give me any examples?</p> <p>168 K: Well until 2 years ago, I used to wear a suit, a shirt and tie to work every day and um... there's part of feeling... it's like getting into character and I, I think that's what clothes do for people. Um... you put on certain kinds of clothes, you put on a character and people respond to you in a different way depending on what you're wearing.</p> <p>169 And... Wearing a suit you get a quite different response to... if you walk round dressed like a student and I think for a long time here... while I was working here, I liked the response I got from people because I was wearing the suit. I found it really amusing they, they viewed me differently. They, they thought of me more as a figure of authority than if I'd been wearing jeans and a t-shirt. So that was for a while um... but then I didn't like the look of myself because</p>	<p>criticizing this kind of people.</p> <p>putting clothes on - getting into characters / different identity</p> <p>getting different reactions depending on different character he is</p> <p>using wearing suit as an example how we certain level of authority due to wearing this sort of clothes.</p>
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putting on clothes - getting into a character (creation of a certain identity / character)

importance of the response we gets about his clothes.

181 was getting older er... I started thinking... catching sight of myself in a mirror;
 182 importance of his casual response to his father's comment "You like... you look like a bank manager"
 183 didn't like that so I stopped wearing... I had some very nice suits. I gave them all away. Um... and the clothes that I wear now still, they're completely casual. I've got a lot of tailored jackets and coats but they are not the kind of thing that a bank manager would wear. So... it's important to me... I suppose, you know that's an example of why it's important to me. It's about your own self-image as well as how other people er... see you and um... I, I just feel happier wearing clothes that I, I even enjoy looking at while I'm wearing them. You know? I like... as a designer, I like things that look designed. I don't like um... er, I don't like crooked pictures. I have to go and straighten them. So everything has to um, look like it's supposed to look and I guess that's, again that's part of sort of a regime or work of clothes from um... colours and textures and so on that, that match. I wouldn't, I wouldn't... I, I never wear blue and black, for example. I don't like a design that wouldn't... I, I never wear blue and black, for example. I don't like that combination and I don't wear... pastel colours and I don't wear... loud checked shirts... they, you know... they say something very different from... it sounds a bit paranoid but I don't believe that

So he like the reaction but not actually the way he looked - bank manager - authority - but some one that he doesn't want to be
 it's not only important how people see you but also how you see yourself
 how you perceive your identity
 clothes mood enhancers
 being designer himself
 appreciating design thinking
 colours, texture
 certain colour combinations
 having certain fashion identity

self-image
 vs. image
 we are present
 considering clothes from a designer's point of view.
 very different fashion or taste.

200 people don't, don't consider what they wear. I've met lots of people
 201 in the past who say:
 "Oh, I don't know how you can be bothered... you know,
 202 ironing a shirt and er... thinking about what you're going to wear. I
 203 people who don't bother with their appearance. A: So how do you choose your clothes? Do you have any favourite
 204 shops? Do you go to them knowing what you are looking for?
 205 K: I know what I'm looking for, yeah but shopping is alsoum...
 206 you're always hoping for a surprise. I think when you're looking for
 207 clothes and I don't buy clothes because I need them um... it's part of
 208 the hobby... if it is a hobby. Yeah, hobby's maybe too er... not the right
 209 word. It's a serious interest it's not a hobby. So er... yeah, if you find
 210 something new, I mean for example, I found a label called All Saints,
 211 which I'd heard of but I'd always assumed was... young fashion. But
 212 they do have some very good um... not tailored as such but um... fairly
 213 casual clothes but based on a formal idea but they're not quite...
 214 they're a little bit un-constructed. Er... and I can... I feel comfortable
 215 wearing clothes like that. I wouldn't want to try and wear the same
 216 clothes as the young people wear. I think that just makes you look a

not believing people who
 say they don't care what
 they wear - not being able
 to understand this -
 considering his attitude
 as common and obvious

knowing what he's looking
 for - what characteristics
 he's looking for - but allowing
 for a degree of surprise
 fashion important part
 of his life

assuming it's for young
 people and avoiding
 false pre-conception
 un-constructed aesthetics
 mental comfort
 rejecting clothes for

250 bit ...silly whether you're a man or a woman. So...so what, what I'm
 not trying 251 looking for is... I guess truthfully it's something I can get away with
 to look 252 that looks fashionable but doesn't make me look as if I'm trying to...
 younger 253 look young. That would be very embarrassing ... if people thought
 for trying 254 that. What people quite often do think is that I'm gay because I pay
 not to show 255 attention to my appearance and always look smart I have, I have been
 that he's 256 confused (laughs) for a gay person on many occasions, which I'm not
 trying) - 257 A: What do you think is the distinction between young fashion and
 style to 258 older' fashion/'mature' fashion?
 be judged 259 k: Well again, I think 'fashion' is the key word. Er... I think fashion is
 as be 260 something ephemeral that... comes and goes so I wouldn't use that
 to look 261 word. If I could think of a better one... you know I could say 'style',
 younger 262 personal style, which is something that doesn't change that much and
 development 263 I would say that what I'm interested in is having a personal style. The
 of his 264 ...that isn't based on trends but it's based on a...sort of general
 style 265 appreciation of... a certain kind of look. Er... and if you look back...
 266 over men's fashion over the last 50 odd years there's always been a
 267 sort of a... a look around which, around which fashion's generated and
 268 I think that's...that's the look that I'm interested in. You know I, I
 269 can, can look through fashion magazines or catalogues going back 50

people. Not wanting
 aware of ~~the~~ ~~look~~
 looking as if I'm trying to
 look younger than he is
 being confused with
 gay people - assumption
 that it's only gay men
 that care about how they
 look.
 recognizing fashion and
 its changes
 it's style rather than fashion
 personal style - something
 that develops but doesn't
 really change - appreciation
 of a certain aesthetics
 recognition understanding
 it's even style - it's this
 something he began to
 experimented / fexed
 in his part

application of period ^{style} ~~style~~ compromising both mental and physical comfort

<p>240 years and probably... think:</p> <p>241 "Yeah, I'd be comfortable wearing that today".</p> <p>242 You know, I mean... Brogues. This kind of thing... hasn't gone out of fashion. Khaki pant... never really gone out of fashion and like, you</p> <p>244 know (laughs) a white shirt is never gonna go out of fashion. This is a slightly different take on a white shirt because it's got a small collar.</p> <p>246 Um... and it's got little details like... like that... that I like. That's what I'm looking for in anything that I buy. It's just slightly... it, it's an interesting adaptation of a very standard piece of menswear.</p> <p>249 A: You mentioned looking through older issues of fashion magazines. Do you keep any garments from the past?</p> <p>251 K: Yeah, I... I've travelled around quite a bit in terms of places that I've lived and so I've, I've never really been able to take stuff with me. You know, I've always travelled... pretty light. Um... and I've, I've given a lot of the stuff away and I've sold stuff... sometimes for charity. But I've been settled in Nottingham for about 20 years and so sadly that stuff from the past is gone, including my favourite green leather coat and um... I, I've actually found it quite difficult to find space in places that I've lived to keep all my clothes and so I started giving things away to charity er... and I've paired my</p>	<p>→ mental comfort</p> <p>recognizing timeless elements but with a bit of twist</p> <p>versions of things that are a bit different</p> <p>changing places he lived often - unable to take his clothes with</p> <p>→ missing this one special garment - sentimental towards it</p>
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often sentimental relationship.

<p>26 wardrobe down quite a lot over the last 3 or 4 years since I moved in with my partner who has an even bigger collection of clothes than I do... probably 4 times as many. Er... she's for was. So erm...so she has an amazing collection of very beautiful clothes, mainly black obviously. Erm... but I do have a room of my own now erm... to put clothes in and so er... it stays pretty full but there's not a lot of room to keep back stuff. So when I do buy stuff every so often I get rid of things but I suppose I've got clothes going back probably about 12... 14 years? I've got some shoes that are older than that but um, yeah I'm really happy with the clothes that I've got on at the moment they... you know, they all go together (laughs).</p> <p>27 A: So do you still wear them or do you just keep them?</p> <p>28 K: Er... there's about a third that I don't wear mainly because I've got fat. I used to be very skinny erm... and I, I can't wear them but every time I do lose a little bit of weight um... I will and I can wear all of them. Even though some of them are quite old they're still... I'm still happy to wear them in terms of the style and I have some very interesting Paul Smith er... jackets and coats. Erm... probably about 12, 13 years old, something like that. If I could get into them I'd wear them (laughs).</p>	<p>new living arrangements</p> <p>partner who shares his interest in fashion - common understanding</p> <p>getting rid of some garments but keeping others</p> <p>having wardrobe which is happy with - carefully selected garments that all go together</p> <p>body changes during his wife course</p> <p>willingness to wear some of his older garments - still identification with timelessness</p>
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280 A: So you give away clothes to charity shops. Do you ever buy from
281 charity shops?

282 K: Um... I used to. I very rarely do now. Er, and I used to have very
283 great interest in, again, looking for classic clothes. Um...in the late 70s
284 I used to really like trying to find...old fashioned, what they used to
285 call 'demote suits' which were the suits they gave to people when
286 they left the army. The army would give you a hat, a suit and a
287 raincoat and some of them were incredibly well made and in
288 materials you don't see anymore. Um, so no, I don't... I don't bother
289 with that so much now.

visiting charity shops
in the past -> buying
exactly what we were
looking for.

290 A: Tell me about a time that you felt really good about the way you
291 look and the clothes you were wearing.

292 K: Uh... a couple of periods actually... in the Mod days it was not
293 unknown for people to have 10-12 suits um... and it was extremely
294 easy to get made to measure suits. Erm, much more accessible than
295 now because of all the men's tailoring shops did made-to-measure
296 and you could have exactly what you wanted exactly to your own
297 taste and little bits of detail that, that um... perhaps you'd seen
298 somewhere else and put that into a suit and erm, you could have a
299 suit made in ten day at a shop called Burtons, which has an amazing

really enjoying being
part of Mod's culture
easy accessibility of
bespoke tailoring with
personal elements
co-design.

visiting
charity
shops

visiting
bespoke
for Mod's
culture

was their often very vivid past influenced their

300 history in terms of made-to-measure. You kind of imagined there
 301 being a couple of guys in the back of the shop cutting it all out. But
 302 actually the measurements went to a huge factory somewhere up
 303 North and it was mainly automated and they sort of put most of it
 304 together. And when it would come you would have alterations, which
 305 they would do in the back of the shop. It was a massive industry this
 306 um... but people very rarely bought suits off the peg, it was... in those
 307 days made-to-measure. So having something that nobody else had
 308 got in um... a period where that was really important is... the
 309 competition was really great and also you'd be designing your own
 310 clothes, to some extent, and then having them made. It was great fun.
 311 I really enjoyed that and on the Friday night you'd stand outside Lyons
 312 tearooms on the market square and everybody would be walking up
 313 and down seeing what everybody was wearing. The biggest thrill
 314 would be if someone came up to you and said:
 315 "I like your suit mate, where'd you get that mate?", "Nice
 316 of attention clothes".
 317 And you'd get into a conversation. Just... incredible. I mean it would
 318 be incredible now but for then... in this, in this hugely conservative
 319 er... atmosphere in, in the 60s that was quite unusual. So that was fun

co-designing being part of the culture being recognized, being appreciated

→ this is very different kind of attention he discussed before.

→ being part of something new, exciting and groundbreaking.

co-designing clothes being part of the culture of attention of appreciation

→ would be if someone came up to you and said: "I like your suit mate, where'd you get that mate?", "Nice of attention clothes". And you'd get into a conversation. Just... incredible. I mean it would be incredible now but for then... in this, in this hugely conservative er... atmosphere in, in the 60s that was quite unusual. So that was fun

→ being part of new and exciting cultural changes

<p>320 and er... I say the happiest time... in terms of wearing clothes since</p> <p>321 then is now. I'm really er... I like the clothes that I've got and I like the</p> <p>322 way that I feel wearing them. Um... I like the idea that it, it is</p> <p>323 distinctive er and it's... it is at last possible to be unconventional in a</p> <p>324 highly conventional... at a time when most people are feeling that</p> <p>325 they have to be conventional. They don't have the confidence not to</p> <p>326 be because it would make them stand out from the crowd. And I think</p> <p>327 when you're over 60 people don't really want to do that.</p> <p>328 A: I have one last question. If the was no time or money limitations</p> <p>329 and besides what would be your perfect fashion item?</p> <p>330 K: (Deep inhale breath) Lordy! I don't know I haven't thought about</p> <p>331 that. It probably wouldn't be anything really expensive sorry... it</p> <p>332 the way 333 wouldn't need to be... a nice ¾ length green leather coat... just like</p> <p>334 335 I'd want 336 wise to have... that I lost.</p> <p>337 A: So would that be a replacement from your past?</p> <p>338 K: Yeah, I'd still wear it.</p> <p>339 A: So is there anything you would like to add?</p> <p>340 K: Well, there is this funny fashion story. I went to Greece in 1975 for</p> <p>341 a long break. I just wanted to go to Greece and have a wander about,</p> <p>342 um... and I rather foolishly bought a pair of boots, not the kind of</p>	<p>was - the happiest time of his life when it comes to clothing</p> <p>having clothes he wants to have - money stabilization - being able to be different - everyone else is.</p> <p>people over 60's are scared to stand out.</p> <p>replacing his green leather jacket - that influenced his current fashion taste.</p>
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masculinity

how they complemented ~~be~~

34C boots you would imagine for hiking around Greece but 3-inch Cuban
 34I heeled boots with pointy toes from Kensington market and they were
 willing to sacrifice ~~the~~ bright blue. I always wanted some boots like that and so I spent about
 to sacrifice ~~the~~ 6 weeks walking on craggy hills and mountains of Greece with these
 comfort ~~the~~ boots on and lost all sensation in my big toe. And it's never come
 in the ~~the~~ back. That's a tragedy. And that was all about, you know, wanting to
 past ~~the~~ look in a particular way. And I didn't even bother trying to buy a new
 the market ~~the~~ pair of shoes while I was over there. I just wanted to look like I did
 comfort ~~the~~ with these boots on.

34A: Are you still willing to sacrifice the comfort?
 35K: Not anymore, no.

35I A: So is that something that changed?
 35K: I don't see the need for doing that kind of thing but it shows you,
 35B you know, how you can have ideas about your image and how other
 people see you and you want. I obviously wanted to be seen as this
 fashion ~~the~~ Kensington market sort of image. I don't... do you know what
 had to ~~the~~ Kensington market was? That sort of look, and that's the kind of thing
 create ~~the~~ I wouldn't do anymore. Still got a numb toe.
 identity ~~the~~

in the past -
 willingness to sacrifice
 comfort in the pursuit
 of certain look/
 image creation.
 bodily loss-tragedy

not willing to do
 it anymore - why -
 because he already
 was a certain image
 or because comfort
 is more important now

still experiencing the effects of
 results/consequences of this
 fashion choices.

APPENDIX 7: Outfit analyses - examples

EXAMPLE 1: Outfit analysis, Eric



Eric on the day of the interview

1. General Contents: Name and describe each of the distinct element of outfit. How many elements have been used to create this outfit and what are their roles?

- Grey hat
- Blue jumper
- Chequered blue, brown and orange jacket
- Navy blue jeans
- Maroon brown leather shoes
- Gold and silver rings (two silver skull and U-shaped and gold one masonic type of ring)
- Silver cross necklace

2. Brands: Name all the brands/ designers garments present in the outfit

- George at Asda jumper
- Paul Smith jacket

3. Balance: Describe the interplay between different elements? Is there sense of harmony or disproportion between elements? Are there any elements that capture the attention above others?

There is a general sense of a balance within this outfit, yet the most visible part of it is the chequered jacket. This is both to its size, used colours and the pattern of it. Another element that catches the attention above the others is the jewellery, especially chunky rings.

4. Relationship to the body: What is the relationship between model's body and each garment? Do they cover or reveal the body? Do they follow the body shape? Do they draw attention to/ conceal any particular part of the body?

Eric's body is rather slim which makes the garments hang on his body in quite a concealing way (they do not cling to his body). His clothes are not tight but yet follow the body shape. Especially the jumper reveals a bit of the upper body shape (chest). Eric's

outfit covers his body nearly completely; the only visible part are his hands, neck and face.

- 5. Patterns: Describe the general characteristic of the patterns. Do they contain geometric or organic shapes? Is the composition symmetrical or asymmetrical? Are these in majority or minority to the whole outfit? Is there any pattern repetition or rhythm? How would you describe the interplay with other elements of the outfit?**

There is no pattern except the chequered pattern one in the jacket. The pattern is geometric and symmetric (sense of repetition and rhythm).

- 6. Materials: Name materials used for each element. Are these natural, synthetic or combination?**

- Wool hat
- Cotton jeans
- Knitted jumper
- Leather shoes
- Golden and silver jewellery

- 7. Texture: Describe the textural characteristics of each element.**

Especially the jumper gives the impression of being very soft and “body-friendly”.

- 8. Colour: How many different colours have been used? Name the colours and describe their saturation and value. Describe the relationship between different colours used within the outfit. Is this monochromatic/ polychromatic combination? How is the colour used? Is there any colour blocking?**

Colour seems to be especially important in Eric’s outfit. All garments are either from the blue or red colour palette (opposite on the colour wheel). The greyish blue hat, the pale blue jumper and navy blue jeans belong to the blue shades that are present also in the chequered jacket. The maroon brown leather shoes are echoed by the brown, orange and red stripes within the jacket pattern. This outfit is polychromatic and, although colours are used in opposition to each other, due to their muted shades, they do not

clash but complement each other. There is also an interesting “interplay” between all these colours and the shade of Eric’s skin.

- 9. Style: Can the outfit be classified as any particular fashion trend or style e.g. romantic, boyish, classic, country etc.? Does the outfit contain any elements/details that can be classified as belonging to certain fashion style or trend e.g. cowboy boots, studs, baseball cap etc.?**

This outfit can be described as smart-casual represented by the combination of casual jeans and smart jacket. This is enhanced by the other elements such as smart hat, casual jumper and leather smart shoes.

- 10. Signs/Symbolism: Are there any overt symbols or cultural references included e.g. cross or skulls that can be associated with certain group/ subculture?**

There are some clear cultural references visible in Eric’s jewellery such as cross and skulls. While they both could be interpreted as symbols connected with the Catholic faith, they can also be interpreted through their secondary meaning and connections with 1970s and 1980s punk culture.

- 11. Additional comments (interpretation)**

The most important observation of Eric’s outfit is about its diversity. Eric effectively combines not only multiple brands and colours but also various types of fabric and patterns. Although such a versatile approach could potentially create the sense of misbalance and disproportion, none of it is present within Eric’s outfit. There are some clear connections with both Mods and Punk cultures visible within the outfit. Those can be interpreted as the signs of the importance of those past arrangements on Eric’s current fashion taste. The fact that he holds on to those artefacts and still actively wears them might suggest the development of a somehow timed fashion sense by Eric. He also discusses this in his interview, when he comments on the age of the jacket he wears: “This is an old jacket. It’s a very, very good jacket. Paul Smith collection made in Italy. It’s very, very nice (...)”. It can be argued that the reason why this jacket is so valuable for Eric is because it stood the test of time. This strongly relates to the Re-materialising theme in my analysis.

EXAMPLE 2: Outfit analysis, Kevin



Kevin on the day of the interview

1. General Contents: Name and describe each of the distinct element of outfit. How many elements have been used to create this outfit and what are their roles?

- White shirt with small collar. Kevin describes his shirt as thus: “This is a slightly different take on a white shirt because it’s got a small collar. Um... and it’s got little details like... like that... that I like” (Kevin, p.13).
- Light grey jacket
- Khaki trousers
- Orange socks
- Cream shoes
- Black plastic glasses

2. Brands: Name all the brands/ designers garments present in the outfit

N/A

3. Balance: Describe the interplay between different elements? Is there sense of harmony or disproportion between elements? Are there any elements that capture the attention above others?

This composition is very vivid and colourful, yet still harmonious and balanced. The elements that catch my attention above others are the orange socks and cream shoes.

4. Relationship to the body: What is the relationship between model’s body and each garment? Do they cover or reveal the body? Do they follow the body shape? Do they draw attention to/ conceal any particular part of the body?

This outfit covers Kevin’s body nearly completely. None of the garments reveal the body shape.

5. Patterns: Describe the general characteristic of the patterns. Do they contain geometric or organic shapes? Is the composition symmetrical or asymmetrical? Are these in majority or minority to the whole outfit? Is there any pattern repetition

or rhythm? How would you describe the interplay with other elements of the outfit?

N/A

- 6. Materials: Name materials used for each element. Are these natural, synthetic or combination?**

N/A

- 7. Texture: Describe the textural characteristics of each element?**

N/A

- 8. Colour: How many different colours have been used? Name the colours and describe their saturation and value. Describe the relationship between different colours used within the outfit. Is this monochromatic/ polychromatic combination? How is the colour used? Is there any colour blocking?**

Colour is especially interesting in Kevin's outfit. The garments selected by him represent both warm (orange, khaki, cream and also in this case warm white) and cold colours (grey). All colours, except the bright orange socks, are muted and yet the composition altogether is quite lively and vivid.

- 9. Style: Can the outfit be classified as any particular fashion trend or style e.g. romantic, boyish, classic, country etc.? Does the outfit contain any elements/details that can be classified as belonging to certain fashion style or trend e.g. cowboy boots, studs, baseball cap etc.?**

This style can be described as smart casual.

- 10. Signs/Symbolism: Are there any overt symbols or cultural references included e.g. cross or skulls that can be associated with certain group/ subculture?**

At first glance there is no such element but I would argue that in this case Kevin's white shirt could be identified as a representation of a certain formal outfit. It is interesting that in his interview Kevin discusses the bank manager's look – typically associated with

“white collar”. In his interview Kevin also comments on him staying true to the Mod culture – the suit he is wearing.

11. Additional comments (interpretation)

Kevin’s white shirt is interesting in the light of his interview when he mentions the importance of the professional look but at the same time not wanting to be identified as “a bank manager”: “Wearing a suit you get a quite different response to... if you walk round dressed like a student and I think for a long time here... while I was working here, I liked the response I got from people because I was wearing the suit. I found it really amusing they, they viewed me differently. They, they thought of me more as a figure of authority than if I’d been wearing jeans and a t-shirt. So that was fine... for a while um... but then I didn’t like the look of myself because I was getting older er... I started thinking... catching sight of myself in a mirror: “You like... you look like a bank manager”. I didn’t like that so I stopped wearing...I had some very nice suits. I gave them all away. Um... and the clothes that I wear now still, they’re still not... um, completely casual. I’ve got a lot of tailored jackets and coats but they are not the kind of thing that a bank manager would wear.”(Kevin, pp.9-10)

This suggests that Kevin still negotiates his fashion identity, especially on the professional level. The role of ageing is also important in this process: those practices were suitable when he was younger, but now when his body shows signs of ageing, “too smart” clothes make him look older than he wishes. This relates to 3 themes in my analysis: peacocking, distancing and presenting.

APPENDIX 8: Research exhibition – additional images (Photo: Anna Maria Sadkowska)





