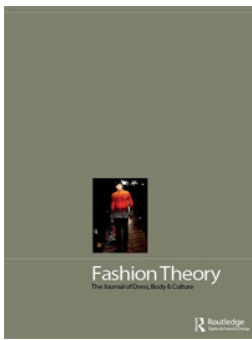


Fashion Theory

The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture



ISSN: 1362-704X (Print) 1751-7419 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfft20>

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To cite this article: Ellen Sampson (2017): The Cleaved Garment: The Maker, The Wearer and the “Me and Not Me” of Fashion Practice, Fashion Theory, DOI: [10.1080/1362704X.2017.1366187](https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2017.1366187)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2017.1366187>



Published online: 03 Sep 2017.



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The Cleaved Garment: The Maker, The Wearer and the “Me and Not Me” of Fashion Practice

Ellen Sampson

Ellen Sampson is an artist, curator and material culture researcher. Her research draws upon anthropological and psychoanalytic approaches to artefacts and the self to address the relationships between bodily experience, memory and clothing. Her PhD (RCA, 2016), “Worn: Footwear, Attachment and Affect,” examined shoes as records of psychic and bodily experience. She currently

Abstract

This article explores the ways that the self and the garment may become entwined—how through the acts of making and of wearing clothes, the garment and self become cleaved, both to and from one another. The article presents the processes of making and of using garments as both a negotiation with the garment’s materiality and the projection of the user’s fantasy onto their material form—processes through which the maker or user’s agency may become entangled with the material agency of the garment. Though the relationships between “the wearer and the garment” and between “the garment and the maker” have been addressed, these two sets of relationships are often viewed as bounded or mutually exclusive.

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The distance between maker and user in contemporary commodity cultures often renders the maker inert in the experience of the wearer; the maker's agency is viewed as bounded within the transaction of making. This article suggests a rethinking of this dynamic, examining the ways that the maker is present for the wearer in their experience of the garment.

KEYWORDS: clothing, attachment, touch, making, materiality

Research Context

This article draws upon research undertaken during a practice-based PhD at the Royal College of Art, London. The project sought to examine the embodied experiences of making and wearing clothes. It asked how the act of wearing might create attachment between the wearer and the worn? This research suggested that attachment to clothes derives not simply from acts of consumption as mediators of status or desire, but from a sustained tactile relationship that develops through wear. Drawing on anthropological and psychoanalytic perspectives on attachment, affect and the self, and utilizing an auto-ethnographic methodology of writing, object making and filmmaking, the research sought to highlight the experience of wearing and the materiality of wornness, presenting shoes as records of lived experience. In particular it sought to examine the material outcomes of wear, the ways that, over time, the marks upon our clothes might embody our relationship with them. The experimental practice-based methodology of this research utilized processes of wearing and performance to examine our attachments to and relationships with our clothes. As such this research positioned itself as auto-ethnographic research; research which embraced the entangled position of maker, as wearer and researcher.

The Cleaved Garment

Clearly things make people, and people, who are made by those things, make other things. The central question, however, is not whether this does or doesn't happen, but in what kind of way it happens. What is the modality of this relationship? (Pinney as quoted in Miller 2005, 256)

As makers and wearers of clothes, we understand that people and the garments they wear are entangled. The intimate nature of this relationship is highlighted in the way it is expressed through language: "It's just not me,"

somebody will say, or “it fits like a second skin.”¹ We think ourselves into the garments we wear and through this projection they become integral parts of our selves. Our garments are simultaneously signifiers of identity and participants in and witnesses to our embodied experience. Though our skin bounds our physical bodies, it does not bound our psychic and emotional selves—our capacity to integrate with the objects that surround us.² This article explores how the self and the garment might become entwined; how through the act of making and through wearing they become cleaved. The article addresses acts of wearing and making as the meetings of agents and the transmission of agencies, of interminglings of the self and the other. It examines the interplay between fantasy, desire and the material agency embodied in production and styling of our clothes. In doing so this article asks three interlinked questions:

- How might the embodied and psychic experience of making and wearing clothes be articulated by the verb to cleave?
- How does the materiality of the garment impact upon the wearer and maker’s ability to realize their fantasy/intention or desire?
- How is the agency of the maker(s) and previous users present for the wearer in their clothes?

This article locates itself within psychoanalytic and phenomenological approaches to material culture, utilizing psychoanalytic and anthropological concepts of the self and other to explore our relationship with clothes. Simultaneously it draws on theories of distributed agencies and personhoods as discussed by Strathern (1988), Wiener (1992) and Gell (1998); exploring the ways that agencies and experiences can be transmitted through and via things. In particular the article draws upon Freud’s (1910) conceptualization of the term to “cleave” as an antithetical word, one which can have two contrary meanings—a word that embodies the ambiguous relationship between wearer and worn. More broadly it is part of the new materialism³ which has dominated social science and humanities in recent years, seeking to present the garment as a powerful agent in making and wearing practices.

This article presents the processes of making and of using garments as both negotiations with the garment’s materiality and the projection of the user’s fantasy onto their material form—a process through which the maker or user’s agency may become entangled with the material agency of the garment. The knowledges presented in this research stem from my auto-ethnographic practice-based research, in which I was both maker and wearer of clothes. In using wearing as research I sought to critically examine the sensory experience of the clothed body; the multiple and varied ways that mind, body and garment meet. The output as auto-ethnographic research practice does not attempt to present a universal account of these processes but offers “versions of ethnographers’ experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context—the negotiations and inter-subjectivities

through which the knowledge was produced” (Pink 2015, 22). It is the intention of this article to focus on these types of knowledge and highlight them as important in understanding of our relationships with the things we wear. The article is structured in three parts: the first explores the garment as an object which is, to use Winnicott’s (1953) term, “both me and not me”; the second discusses the garment as a distributed aspect of the self; and the third looks at the garment as an agent who may facilitate or hinder the maker and user’s desires.

The relationship between the self and the garment, simultaneously bodily and not of the body, may be encapsulated in the verb “to cleave.” To cleave, one of Freud’s (1910) antithetical words, means both to join together and to split apart. We may refer to things cleaving together and also cleaving apart. Freud considered antithetical words, or anti-autonyms, to be one of the multiple trickeries played out by the unconscious mind, particularly in dreams; in the unconscious, a thing may be represented as both itself and its opposite. In their ambiguity these words represent, for Freud, a way into our unconscious desires and fears, a crack through which to peer. In “The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words,” Freud observed that:

The way in which dreams treat the category of contraries and contradictories is highly remarkable. It is simply disregarded. “No” seems not to exist so far as dreams are concerned. They show a particular preference for combining contraries into a unity or for representing them as one and the same thing. (Freud 1910, 353)

This article examines the intermingling of selves that constitutes the practices of making and of wearing clothes. Though the relationship between the wearer and the garment and also that between the garment and the maker⁴ have been addressed (cf. authors such as Chong Kwan 2016; De La Haye and Mendes 1999; Entwistle and Wilson 2001; Lee 2016; Woodward 2007, Woodward and Fisher 2014; Stallybrass 1993; Clarke and Miller 2002) these two sets of relationships are often viewed as bounded or mutually exclusive. The distance between maker and user in contemporary commodity cultures often renders the maker inert in the experience of the wearer; the maker’s agency is viewed as bounded within the transaction of making. This article suggests a rethinking of this dynamic, examining the ways that the maker is present for the wearer in their experience of the garment. In doing so it raises questions about what we as wearers and consumers in a dispersed comity culture chose to acknowledge and see.

The “Me and Not Me” Garment

Our relationships with clothing are often viewed in relation to labor, commerce and exchange—clothing as a commodity within a network of transactions, rather than a vessel of lived experience. Theories of commodity,

gifting and exchange underlie much of our thinking about clothes; the points of acquisition and of disposal are an important locus of research into fashion and dress. This research seeks to examine the tactile and psychic transactions that take place between artefact, maker and user, looking at the triangular nature of these relationships and exploring the capacity of garments to function as both mediator and transmitter of internal relations and relatedness. Dilnot writes of the artefact as a relational device:

But this means that to make and to design something is to create something whose end is not in itself but is rather “in” the subject for whom the object is made (whether that subject is individualized, or is ourselves, collectively, as a whole). On this argument, then, the object is never autonomous, never just “for itself.” It is, in fact—as Elaine Scarry puts it ... always “only a fulcrum or lever across which the force of creation moves back onto the human site and remakes its makers (Scarry 1985, 307).” (Dilnot 1993, 57)

That is to say, that the artefact and the maker are in a constant and re-iterative dialogue, and that in the act of making the maker is themselves remade.

This article starts from a position that people and the things they make and own are indivisible; that garment and person are cleaved. In his conceptualization of the relationships between people and the objects which surround them, phenomenologist Schilder suggested that “the bodily schema does not end with the human skin as a limiting boundary, it extends far beyond it ...” (1935, 56); that the bodily self extends beyond the skin surface of the body and into the artefacts that surround it, into the things that are habitually and intimately used. Merleau-Ponty (1962), in his development of this idea of a “bodily schema,” expressed this particularly well: “To get used to a hat, a car or a stick is to be transplanted into them or conversely to incorporate them into the bulk of our own body” (1962, 166). Artefacts that mediate our sensory experience, as garments do—keeping us warm and dry, helping us to run further or to see more clearly—are integrated into the bodily self. For Schilder, clothing is an integrated aspect of the wearer’s self: not simply as a form of expression, a mark of allegiance or a signifier of wealth, but as a part of a bodily schema. If for Schilder (1935) the bodily self may extend beyond the boundary of the skin, for Winnicott (1971) it is the psyche that is not limited by our bodily form. The garment, as part of the bodily schema, holds a curious position: both incorporated into the self and materially separate from it. The garment, to borrow Winnicott’s (1971) term, is an object that is both “me and not me.” Winnicott formulated the concept of the transitional object to explain the process through which a child may separate itself from its mother. A transitional object, a scrap of blanket or a soft toy, allows the child to gradually differentiate between what is “me” and “not me”; it is an intermediary object between internal and external worlds. For Winnicott

the transitional object is one that mediates psychic and external reality. It is the transitional object's capacity to remain me (of the self) and not me (external to the self) that give it this function: a bridging object between internal and external worlds, keeping inside and outside apart and yet interrelated. The infant uses an object (frequently a comforter or soft toy) to negotiate the separation of the self from the mother. Winnicott suggested that these objects and phenomena are neither subjective nor objective but partake of both. For Winnicott, infants use artefacts in order to negotiate and separate internal and external realities: to separate the self from the other. Similarly the garment, tactile and encompassing, mediates the relationship between the wearer's internal imagined self and the projected bodily reality presented to the world. The garment is transitional in the sense that it is the site on which a shift from internal desire to external performance is achieved and maintained.

If the garment functions as an extended and externalized aspect of the self, then this relationship presents a paradox; for artefacts that are incorporated into the self may disintegrate, be discarded or lost. How is it that, despite their incorporation, the disintegration or loss of the incorporated garment occurs without compromising the integrity of the wearer's bodily or psychic self—that the wearer's internal self is not destroyed or damaged with each laddered stocking or fraying hem? How is it that garments might act as internal objects for their user, without risking damage to the unity of that internal self, as the garment breaks down over time. Though we may keenly feel the loss of a beloved garment or comfortable shoe, that loss does not cause us any permanent harm. These lost garments may present a sadness or melancholia for the wearer, who may never retrieve the sensory experience of wearing them again. This tension—the incorporation of the garment into the bodily schema versus the garment's material frailty—suggests that incorporation is not total or permanent, and that the garment is capable of straddling bodily and non-bodily divides. It is simultaneously part of the self and materially not of the self; it holds a place of partial incorporation, never wholly of us or not us. The material frailty of the garment presents a continuous risk; garments, made of yielding fabric and leathers, do not last as long as we might psychically require. They are temporary repositories, parts of us for a short time only. Though with careful use and care a garment may last many years, it presents a risk; for the more it is worn the faster it will degrade. Just as we must care for the body in order that it might thrive, garments must be subject to grooming and ablutions. We tend to our clothes as an extension of our bodily selves.

In “The Art of Forgetting” (Forty and Küchler 1999), Forty presents monuments, edifices of stone, bronze and concrete, as sites of communal forgetting, the permanence of the material artefact freeing the viewers from the necessity of holding the event in their mind; monuments permit us to forget. Forty contrasts this idea with Riegl's conception of an “Aristotelian tradition [in which] if objects are made to stand in for memory, their decay, or destruction (as in iconoclasm) is taken to stand in for forgetting” (Forty

and Küchler 1999, 3). For Forty it is the very transience of a material thing—the fading of a Polaroid, the fraying of a hem, the crumbling of a wall—which forces us to remember. Similarly for the artist Boltanski, this material impermanence could be utilized to maintain memory:

If you make a monument in stone, everyone will soon forget what you have commemorated. The city will pay for the monument in order to forget it. What I wanted to do was to make a monument that would have to be remade each month, using very fragile materials, like the little prayer houses that observant Jews construct for Sukkoth. Of course, the monument would fall down and have to be continually reconstructed. If at any time it disappeared, it would mean that times had changed, and the reasons for its existence were forgotten. The only possible monuments are those that must be continually re-made, that require a continuous engagement, so that people will remember. (Boltanski 1993, 202)

Utilizing Winnicott (1989), it could be suggested that the damaged garment remains incorporated precisely because it has suffered damage and has survived; that in spite of the violence the body enacts toward it, it has the capacity to remain intact: “You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you” (1989, 90). It has survived the wearer’s testing—its ability to withstand aggression. Though one does not wear a garment in perpetuity—outfits are changed, styles come and go⁵—a bond between user and garment frequently remains. The capacity of the self to remain whole in spite of the loss of a garment suggests that the nature of the relationship between the self and the garment is one that is in a constant state of cleaving: intermingling both physically and through their incorporation into and separation from the psychic self. The ambiguity of the antithetical verb “to cleave” is apparent in our relationship with garments; they are both incorporated and yet other to us. As an artefact pulls away from the self through decay and wear, it is grasped by the mind and vice versa, a continuous backward and forward between selfhood and otherness. It is the psychic “work” of keeping a frail or decaying thing whole and complete within the mind that maintains it there; we cannot let the artefact go for fear it may disintegrate and crumble. The wearer or user must attend to, and be vigilant of, the fragile object for fear it may disappear.

An artefact that can simultaneously be part of the self and separate from it presents the potential for the self to be distributed outside the confines of the body. If the garment becomes an aspect of the self, then may we also become an aspect of the garment? Do we inhabit the clothes we wear even when they are not on the body—even when we are gone from them? The idea of a self distributed into clothing recalls Stallybrass’ “Worn Worlds” (1993) in which he relates how his dead friend Allon is suddenly present for him when he wears his jacket. Allon is intermingled with his clothes and remains in them even after his death:

... I was inhabited by his presence taken over. If I wore the Jacket then Allon wore me. He was there in the wrinkles of the elbows, the wrinkles which in the technical jargon of sewing are called “memory”: He was there in the stains at the very bottom of the Jacket, he was there in the smell of the armpits. (Stallybrass 1993, 35)

Stepping back from the hypothesis that garments and the body are cleaved, continuously integrating and separating from one another, in what ways do garments act upon their wearers? Clothes, like all artefacts, are an amalgamation of multiple processes, experiences, materials and agencies. They carry both symbolic (representational) and indexical (bearing trace of) meaning. A garment is a point in space, in time, in culture, where a range of meanings converge and from which they will, in time, diverge again. Garments are an accumulation of agencies. Weiner (1992), in *Inalienable Possessions*, explores the ways in which, through the exchanges of artefacts, agencies and personhoods are distributed. She argues that the artefact and the self are not separated when the artefact is given away or gifted; that an artefact may retain the agency of its owner (“mana” or “spirit” in Weiner’s discussion) even when passed on to another. Weiner writes of artefacts that may not be exchanged or gifted but which remain within families or groups and in turn become inseparable from them, of how through years of ownership the garment develops a cumulative identity. It is not simply representative of its current owner but of those who have owned and worn it before. Of the wearer of a Maori ceremonial cloak, she comments that, in wearing the precious garment, “she is more than herself—that she is her ancestors” (1992, 6). The artefact thus becomes a synecdoche of those who have owned it; it stands in for them and is invested with their agency: “These possessions then are the most potent force in the effort to subvert change, while at the same time they stand as the corpus of change” (1992, 11).

Such artefacts accrue agencies just as they accrue the patina of use or wear. Similarly, Strathern writes of the initial owner retaining an aspect of the gift after it has been distributed: “when we give something maybe we don’t keep it, but we don’t lose it either” (1988, 98). Expanding upon Mauss’ (1990) supposition that the gift is central to forming cohesive social relations in Melanesia, Strathern argues: “objects are created not in contradistinction to persons but out of persons” (1988, 171). Objects and selves are merged in their creation and in the exchange of artefacts aspects of the self are distributed into the other. Gifts are not simply representations of the giver but a non-divisible aspect of their selves. The act of distribution separates neither the artefact from the person nor the person from the artefact; instead they are “extracted from one and absorbed by another” (1988, 178).

These accrued agencies or incorporations do not have to sit comfortably with one another. An artefact may be the site of several conflicting discourses or experiences. In any contested artefact or space one will see

multiple agencies at play. Even a non-contested artefact may be the site of multiple agencies. As Hoskins suggests:

Even those objects which seem to be without a directly identifiable function—that is, objects which have previously been theorized as simple objects of aesthetic contemplation—are in fact made in order to act upon the world and to act upon other persons. (Hoskins 2006, 76)

Material objects thus embody complex intentionalities and mediate social agency. When you sit on a chair, the maker or designer, the person who placed it by the desk and the other bodies who caused its seat to sag through use are all present and acting upon you through its material form. No artefact contains just one agency; they are always an accumulation and, in the layering of these agencies, new ones may be produced. In his call for an anthropology of art, Gell (1998) examines the agent–patient relationships embodied within the art object. Gell understands viewing an artwork as a “transmission of power” in which recipients abduct information and experience from the artwork. According to Gell, art comprises “social relations in the vicinity of objects mediating social agency” (1998, 7); that is to say, anything may be an art object if it is mediating agency. For Gell, these social relations are not only human to human but may also be between the person and the “Thing”:

The immediate “other” in a social relationship does not have to be another “human being”, my whole argument depends on this not being the case. Social agency can be exercised relative to “things” and social agency can be exercised by “things” (and also animals). The concept of social agency has to be formulated in this very permissive manner for empirical as well as theoretical reasons. It just happens to be patently the case that persons form what are evidently social relations with “things.” (Gell 1998, 17)

Gell mapped the multiple agencies which come together in the production of the work of art and looked at how these may act upon the viewer as “patient.” Through the drawing up of an “Art Nexus,” Gell presents numerous agents whose intentionality or agencies are at work within the art object (the index). The artist, the patron, the material, the viewers, and the objects which inspired it, may all be agents in the production of the art object—their agency is bounded within its material form. These agents may be human, as in the case of a patron or gallerist, or non-human, as in the landscape which inspired Constable or the urinal co-opted by Duchamp. The art object is both the outcome and the “index” of these agencies; it bears indexical trace of their agency. Thus the viewing of a work of art becomes a transmission of power or agency. The interaction with any artefact is in fact similarly transactional; agency is exchanged, through looking, touch and use. The abduction⁶ of this agency—in Gell’s case, the art object’s affect—is not predetermined and will vary depending on the

recipient and the physical, geographical and social relationship they have to the artefact. The intentionality of different agents may be at odds with one another, whilst simultaneously being bounded within the artefact's material form.

Artefacts are active agents within both human-to-human and human-to-artefact interactions. Ingold (2013) writes of the convergences within or between artefacts and forces; the points at which materials and people meet. He terms the objects that facilitate such convergences “transducers”—artefacts that act as links between materials, forces and intentions. It is interesting here to think about intention—both the making and wearing of clothes are often typified as unconscious or unthinking acts. The conceptualization of wearing and making as not only tacit, but also separate from thinking, tends to negate the role of fantasy and imagination in the production of both the garment and the outfit. Craft has often been presented as a process outside of the imaginative, the maker as custodian of tradition and continuity rather than experimentation. However, the imaginative leap is vital to the process through which we “think” garments in both making and dressing. If we apply the idea of the transducer to clothing, does the garment act as a facilitator or link between fashion intention and action or performance; the garment allowing internal experience to emerge in material form? These confluences between intention, agency and materiality are not fixed or permanent but are always in a state of flux or cleavage. Once fantasy has been transformed into a material thing or performed act via the making or wearing of clothes, that garment will continue to alter through entropy and use. Artefacts are amalgamations of agencies brought together in material form, inseparable from their environments and users. Artefacts, environment and users are in a constant state of flux.

The Maker and the Garment

If a garment may act as a distributed personhood in a chain of affordances, and as both mediators and facilitators of intentionality, we are presented with personhoods that may spread out from the body via artefacts and artefacts that can facilitate or hinder a user's intentions. How is it that the garment may come to embody agency and how is this agency distributed through use and wear? This question might be explored by looking at the points when a garment and person cleave, where they both join or pull apart. If the garment's capacity to integrate and separate from the self allows it to become both “me” and “not me,” does this process extend to the relationship between the garment and its maker, through the touch and counter-touch of cutting, sewing and pressing? Is the first instance of cleaving between the garment and the maker? For Schilder (1935) and Merleau-Ponty (1962), an artefact that was in habitual tactile contact

with its user was incorporated into their bodily self. Thus makers as well as users mingle with the artefacts they produce. Hand-makers,⁷ such as crafts-persons, seamstresses or shoemakers, who have repetitive tactile engagement with the object’s materiality through its production, incorporate some aspect of that artefact into themselves. Simultaneously, the maker is incorporated into the garment, the two becoming entangled or enmeshed. Though the means through which a garment is produced may be complex, multifaceted and frequently include many agents and processes, in this instance I wish to focus on the relationship between a hand maker and the garment. Without straying too far into the politics of garment production,⁸ it is worth acknowledging that even in the simplest acts of making there are multiple agents at play. Each material and its producers, as well as designers, inspirations and clients, are present for the maker in the making of an artefact. One could easily apply Gell’s (1998) “art nexus,”⁹ in which he outlines the multiple agencies at play within the art object, to the agents/patient relations embodied in a garment.

Before the garment exists as a material form, it exists as an idea, image or intention. It is a fantasy or desire held in the mind of the maker. It is through the projection of this intention onto material, and through negotiation with agency of materials themselves, that the realization of the garment takes place. Ingold, writing of hand making, suggests that the maker’s:

every ... gesture is a question, to which the material responds according to its bent. In following their materials, practitioners do not so much interact as correspond with them. Making, then, is a process of correspondence: not the imposition of preconceived form on raw material substance, but the drawing out or bringing forth of potentials immanent in a world of becoming. In the phenomenal world, every material is such a becoming, one path or trajectory through a maze of trajectories. (2013, 31)

It is important to acknowledge the role of fantasy and the imaginary in the creative process, the ways that in order for intention to cross into action a fantasy must be developed, tested and approved. Fantasy is the trying-out ground for experience, a space where an idea may be examined and amended before it becomes fixed. The object as fantasy is malleable, and at times ambiguous; it is made solid only through its examination and testing out within the mind. Just as one might grasp a new artefact and turn it in one’s hand in order to comprehend its weight and form, so the maker must turn the imaginary artefact over in their mind until it becomes clear to them. However, unlike a material artefact, the imaginary artefact is never truly graspable and thus never truly complete. It is ephemeral and transitory; its essence eludes capture.

Frequently, it is the maker’s or user’s capacity to accurately translate this fantasy object into material form which is interpreted as the essence

of makerly skill. This capacity to successfully transition inside to outside, internal desire to external product, is viewed as the goal of the creative process. Though the notion of the craftsperson's skill as solely located in the accuracy of this transmission may be outdated, the ability to manipulate and tame the agency of the materials one uses is central to the maker's work. The material of the garment may facilitate realization or it may not, fighting back and resisting transformation. Thus, the process of materialization is always one of negotiation: a to-ing and fro-ing between the fantasy of the object and the means through which it can be produced. The garment becomes an actualization, not just of the maker's desires¹⁰ but also of the processes of materialization, and of the accidents and affordances that occur during its making.

The process of materialization is conflicted. Just as our outfits rarely look quite the way we imagined them, the garment is not a direct transposition of the maker's ideal but a culmination of a series of divergent and at times conflicting agencies. The fabric may pucker, stitching come undone, pattern pieces not fit together.¹¹ Though the maker's skill and experience may mediate and lessen the material's agency and resistance to change, the process is rarely simple or without problems. All this time the maker is, through repeated tactile engagement, incorporating the garment; the garment becomes an extension of the self. Other incorporated or cleaved objects may mediate these incorporations, such as the familiar tools a maker uses, the chair they sit in or the garments they themselves wear. Utilizing Gibson's (1979) "affordances," it is not merely the skill of the maker that affords the transition of the object from fantasy to material form. The objects that surround the maker—their tools, their landscape and the materials available to them—are all active agents in the actualization. The maker must negotiate with these agencies as well as with the agency of the materials used to make the object.

The negotiated material garment is not an ideal but an ambiguous object, embodying both the maker's fantasy and the maker's failure. The ideal or fantasy object held in the maker's mind may never be fully achieved. The reasons for this are multiple; the ideal object is rarely unified and static (it is malleable and transitory in the mind) and simultaneously the process of materialization must be negotiated with the agencies of the materials with which the maker interacts. The garment cannot be fully and permanently incorporated into the self because it represents a chink in the armor of the ego. It is "of the maker" but never fully part of them. Through extended tactile engagement, the maker and the garment become entangled; the maker internalizing the garment's failures or flaws, the garment existing as a material projection/extension of an internalized ideal (Lee 2015). Despite the intimacy of the making relationship and the intermingling that occurs, garments rarely remain with their maker but are distributed onward to wearers. The distributed garment retains elements of this ambiguity; it retains the "me and not me" of the maker. To return to Dilnot:

The basis of this re-description is a transformation of how things are thought: not as “dead” possessions or signs or markers but as “live gifts” working, at base, “for” us, and working in their “circulation” between and among us to establish a circle of making and self-making. (Dilnot 1993, 59)

The Wearer and the Garment

Just as a process of projection, negotiation and incorporation typifies the relationship between the maker and the garment, the relationship between garment and wearer is one in which material agency and the body are in constant dialogue. The process of dressing like the experience of making starts with a fantasy of confluence, the outfit and the body uniting to form an ideal. Unlike the maker’s ideal, the garments that will constitute the wearer’s fantasy already exist. Fashion is dependent upon the wearer’s agency as a maker of meaning: mass-produced garments are made original and idiomatic through appropriation and use. Both the ideal and its material manifestation require the utilization of pre-constructed objects and imagery. The ideal or imaginary dressed body is constructed in reference to both external artefacts and imagery and the wearer’s conceptualization of their own bodily self. Many different agencies collaborate to produce the fantasy of the dressed self: fashion, culture and politics. We are perpetually surrounded by imagery of the dressed body and cannot help but incorporate elements of this imagery into our ideal and imagined selves. Conversely, the manifestation of the ideal, in material form, requires negotiation not with imagery and symbolism but with the materials or garments available to the wearer. In order to create a “look,” the wearer must work with what is available to them. Location, trends, financial means, social rules and prohibitions and, in particular, the wearer’s own pre-existing wardrobe impact on the wearer’s ability to successfully manifest their ideal.¹² Simultaneously, once a garment or garments have been selected, the wearer must negotiate with the agencies already embodied within the garment and those of the other garments worn with them. The maker and attendant agencies are present for the wearer in the act of dressing. The wearer must negotiate the actualization of their fantasy with pre-constructed material forms rather than with raw materials, and their ability to realize their ideal is limited by this.

Fashion fantasy is turned into embodied performance via the collation and modification of garments: their styling. This confluence retains the fractious and conversational nature of all our relationships with material things; the agency of the wearer is in a constant negotiation with the agency of the garment itself. Woodward’s (2007) research highlights the material agency of the garment: its capacity through form, rather than significance, to impact on bodily and embodied experience. Woodward observes:

The clothes in a successful outfit that a woman wears and feels comfortable wearing effectively externalize that person's intentions through their materiality. Conversely when outfits go wrong, the materiality of clothing can thwart women's intentionality—the leather skirt that they hoped would make them look sexy can make them look hot and sweaty instead. (Woodward and Fisher 2014, 4–5)

The realization of a fashion fantasy cannot help but be, to some extent, a failure, for fantasy cannot comfortably accommodate agency outside the ego. The garment is never truly separated from the previous bodies with which it has been entangled. To return to Strathern (1988) and Weiner (1992) it is not simply a confluence of agencies, but also a confluence of selves, and those selves compete with the material agency of the garment. Though this research does not deal directly with second-hand clothing it is worth noting that second-hand clothing is particularly interesting as a site of intermingling or cleaving. Second-hand garments often contain physical traces of their previous users, whether that is bodily trace, such as sweat stains or stretched elbows, or modifications of the garment's form, such as shortening a hem or letting out a seam. In these modifications, the new wearer is brought into direct bodily relationship with the traces of the previous wearer's agencies. One must either seek to overcome these interminglings (washing the garment, taking out seams, letting down the hem) or feel the previous user's agencies upon one's body in the form of slightly too short sleeves, or a perfume you would not yourself have chosen. DeLong et al. write that vintage clothes shopping "... is about fitting the body from clothing that fitted a person of another era ... reconfiguring the current body proportions with different foundational structures" (DeLong, Heine-mann, and Reiley 2005, 34).

The maker's agency is present for the wearer in the garment. This presence, however, is not always consciously or unconsciously acknowledged: few of us think on a regular basis of the hands and bodies that made our clothes. Just as the body modifies the worn garment, stretching, straining and creasing its surface, the garment imprints itself on the body, rubbing, marking and, in the case of structured and resistant garments, altering the form of the body. Through this tactile engagement, the garment is incorporated into the bodily schemas of the bodily self, carrying the traces of our embodied relationships within and upon it. Though wearing creates and deepens attachment with the garment, it also hastens its disintegration. To return to the question posed earlier, if this disintegration presents a risk, how may it be accommodated? Not only is the manifested artefact already a lost object, a poor rendition of the original ideal, but with each use and wear it moves farther from that ideal state.¹³ As the garment is worn, it becomes both more integrated and less ideal. Thus the paradox is present for us again: the more we use, the greater the incorporation and the greater the decay. In the negotiation between the body and the garment, it is the agency of the body that often wins. As attachment deepens, through reciprocal

touch, garments start to fray, sag and tear. As the fashion is performed, the garment is sacrificed.

Like transitional phenomena, garments have the capacity to be both of the self and other to it. At the same time, the garment is a “transformational” object—one onto which transformational desire is projected and contained. For Bollas,¹⁴ transformational objects are “identified with the metamorphosis of the self” (1989, 27), they are understood as facilitators of potential transformations, objects through which a new self may emerge. I suggest that garment is transformational in two senses: firstly, that it allows for the transformation of the wearer/maker’s fantasy into an enacted material reality, a shift from internal to external desire. This shift gives the maker or user a glimpse of the omnipotence the ego craves; secondly, that like all material things the garment is in a constant state of change. A garment’s form is not stable and it is this absence of fixity that prevents permanent and total incorporation. The garment pulls away from the wearer in this transformation, never fully allowing its agency to be subsumed by that of the wearer. For the maker this tactile entanglement results in the production of the garment, the drive forward resulting in a shift of form. Conversely, for the wearer the pressure of the body upon the garment leads to its destruction, its wearing away. The shift in form leads eventually to the degradation of the garment. The two processes of incorporation mirror one another, one a process of conscious construction and the other of unconscious destruction.

Cleaving and the Failed Garment

For both the maker and the wearer the garment is always, to some extent, a failure. It cannot appease the desire for an ideal object, and is condemned to fall short. Despite this inability to live up to the maker’s and wearer’s ideal, the garment is still incorporated through making and use into the self. However, on failing to live up to their fantasy or ideal, and simultaneously presenting the risk that it will disintegrate and be lost to them, the garment may be rejected. Despite this initial rejection, through continued use and tactile engagement re-incorporation of the garment occurs—only for it to risk rejection once more as it again fails to live up to the ideal. Thus the relationship with the incorporated garment (the garment located within the wearer’s bodily schema) is not continuous, but one of repeated rejection and incorporation, a constant to-ing and fro-ing between fantasy, desire and loss. This cycle of re-incorporation and rejection is resonant of Freud’s (1909) “compulsion to repeat”: the attempt, through an act of unconscious compulsive repetition, to master an earlier troubling experience. Freud wrote of this process of returning to the site of trauma or loss over and over again in the hope of overcoming the source of anxiety as “like an un-laid ghost, it cannot rest until the mystery has been solved and the spell broken” (1909, 123). The repetitive incorporation and rejection of the

garment into the psyche, the continuous cleaving, echoes the process that Freud describes.

In conclusion, this article posits that through use makers and wearers are incorporated into the garments they touch and use. That sustained material contact between garment and person creates an enduring bond and that this bond, the incorporation into the bodily schema, constitutes a transmission of agencies; that is to say, in making and in wearing the agencies of the material (or finished artefact) and the maker or wearer meet and are transposed. These meetings of agencies are not temporary or fleeting, so that even when they are separated, aspects of the other's agency remains. Thus garments accrue agencies as the pass between the hands of those who have made them (and the materials they are constructed from) and those who have held them or worn them before. These transmitted agencies are apparent in the material of the garment, the mended cuff or the too tight sleeve. It is through their material presence that these agencies may act upon the maker and wearer (or equally the recycler, mender or launderer of the clothes). Thus the garment is never fully compliant to desires and needs of the user; it is always exerting the other's agency back onto them, through a cycle of imprint. The garment is both "me and not me" and simultaneously "them and not them." There is always a dissonance between "thinking," as the creation of an ideal object within the psyche, and "being," as the materialization of that fantasy object through negotiation with the material world. The performance of fashion thinking can never be entirely successful because it requires the convergence of multiple external agencies. This inherent failure is at the heart of fashion: the compulsion to try and try again. In part, this imperfect realization of the fantasy occurs because the garment retains traces of the maker and previous users. The garment is imbued with the agencies of others that threaten to override the agency of the new user. Despite physical separation, others are still entangled with and acting through the garment. Just as Gell writes of the index as "a detached part of the prototype" (1998, 103) or Weiner (1992) describes spirits transmitted via the Kula, the used garment is a detached part of the maker and wearer. The word "cleave," called upon earlier to encompass the me and not me qualities of the garment, its capacity to be both the self and other to it, can be called upon again to describe the garment as an object in flux, split between and incorporated into two or more bodies and selves.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

This research was funded by Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK [AHRC doctoral studentship].

Notes

1. In “Fashion and Anxiety,” Clarke and Miller (2002) present an interesting discussion of the way clothes are understood and articulated as correct or appropriate.
2. Lemma (2010) suggests that one function of marking the skin’s surface (through tattooing, scarification and self harm) might be to strengthen it, while also to allow one to break through to the unconscious below. The skin integrates inks and makes signs to society about our emotional self. The skin, a receptive surface, is altered as it protects our interior space. Similarly the garment, as a protective surface, both mediates our bodily experience and protects our bodies from harm.
3. Over the past two decades there has been a resurgence in academic interrogations of materiality and the material, a turning away from post-modernism’s preoccupation with the textual to look again at the world that surrounds us. Hicks (2010), in discussing the advent of the “material turn” and the need for a focus upon the materiality of cultures, states: “Material culture, objects, materiality, materials, things, stuff: a rock-solid, firmly grounded field for interdisciplinary enquiry is provided; it appears, by research that considers (to use the obligatory pun) what ‘matters’.”
4. This article uses the terms “Maker” and “Wearer” as catchalls—without referencing to a specific individual or group. It does not suggest, however, that these processes are universal, only that they are present in the embodied experience of our clothes. “Makers” in the context of this article refers to designer makers who craft and garment in its entirety. Whilst acknowledging that this relationship is unusual in contemporary western culture, I believe that aspects of this research could be useful in looking at more disparate or dispersed cultures of making clothes.
5. In fact, often clothes are no longer wanted, a rejection, which is at the heart of the fashion cycle. The reasons why they are no longer wanted, despite their material durability, are interesting. Like Winnicott’s transitional object, the unwanted garment appears to “lose its meaning” and become dispersed.
6. Layton writes of the term abduction: “In order to avoid treating art as a medium of communication, Gell introduces the term abduction. ‘Art-like situations’ can be discriminated as those in which the material ‘index’ (the visible, physical, ‘thing’) permits a particular cognitive operation which I identify as the abduction of agency (Gell 1998,

- 13). Abductions are inferential schemes, and we infer the same type of agency in a real and a depicted person's smile" (Layton 2003, 454).
7. Ingold in *Making* writes: "Once, to have said that an article is 'made by hand' would have been a statement of the obvious. How else would you have made it? By foot? In today's world, however, 'handmade' is a mark of distinction. It connotes a kind of authenticity and devotion that people, increasingly cast as passive consumers rather than active citizens, feel is otherwise missing from their lives. With citizenship comes moral responsibility, yet how can we be responsible for a world that comes to us ready-made? At the very same moment when the whole world is at our fingertips, it also seems completely out of our hands" (2013, 122).
 8. For a longer discussion of the politics of garment production, see the fashionrevolution.org White Paper on the subject. Accessed September 14, 2016. https://fashionrevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/FashRev_Whitepaper_Dec2015_screen.pdf
 9. The art nexus for Gell was a means of mapping the ways that artworks act upon us (their affect or aura), and the agencies which those art works embodied. He examines the magical or auratic qualities that allow artworks to function. Taking the viewer as the "patient" upon which the artwork's agency is enacted, Gell maps the relationships between the different agents and agencies that went into the artefact's production.
 10. Sometimes making is not an actualization of idea or fantasy but a giving into the agency of the materials one works with: letting the material agency, the body, the rhythm of process take over. Making like this may become a surprise; unexpected outcomes may lead the maker to somewhere quite other than their initial idea. Rosenberg, writing about action painting and the "chance" mark upon the canvas, writes: "With regard to the tensions it is capable of setting up in our bodies the medium of any art is an extension of the physical world; a stroke of pigment, for example, works within us in the same way as a bridge across the Hudson. For the unseen universe that inhabits us an accidental blot or splash of paint may thus assume an equivalence to the profoundest happening ..." (1952, 22).
 11. It is often considered important that marks of making are not visible to the user, that the means of production is occluded through skill. Though contemporary craft may embrace and even fetishize the marks of making, smoothness and seamlessness are still highly valued. It is as though Gell's (1998) "mind traps" are perceived as most effective, when the means of production is not just complex but completely hidden from the viewer.
 12. As Entwistle writes: "Understanding the body in culture requires understanding both how the textual body (the body articulated in discourses produced by texts, such as the fashion magazine) relates to the experience of embodiment (the body articulated in everyday life

through experiences and practices of dress)" (Entwistle and Wilson 2001).

13. With certain garments, such as jeans or leather jackets, it may be the integration of the material and the body's gradual imprint on it, which makes the garment ideal.
14. For Bollas (1989) this identification is pathological, the transformation needing to occur within the patient's psyche rather than via a material object or external experience.

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