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OPA'S SUIT

MEMORIES IN PERSPECTIVE

A written component presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Design in Fashion Design at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

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ABSTRACT

The ability of clothing to retain a sense of person enables memories to be reinterpreted and a person brought 'back to life'. *Opa's Suit, Memories in Perspective* is an investigation into the memories attached to clothing of lost loved ones, looking to the presence of absence for its ability to transport us through time. A multi-dimensional examination of the jacket has provided a new understanding of the importance of absence and space in the interpretation of memories inspired through clothing. This study of memories in clothing proposes that what is lost is as relevant to design as what is left behind.

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CLOTHES HAVE NO MEMORY BEVERLY PAGRAM

Pagram, Beverly. "Clothes Have No Memory." *A Second Skin. Women Write About Clothes*. Ed. Kirsty Dunseath. London: The Women's Press, 1998. 79-83.

We fought over it, the lace dress. I'd seen it first, you see, in the window of the charity shop. Looking for all the world like black ice ferns sewn together, it trailed forlornly over an old-fashioned dressmaker's dummy in between a basket of corsets and a mound of sad handbags. 'I'm having that,' I announced briskly as we went into the fug of the shop from the sletty street.

Fluorescent lighting and walls covered in aluminium baking-foil certainly didn't do the clientele or the clothes any favours at the used goods emporium belonging to the Little Sisters of Perpetual Redemption. The scruffy, shuffling masses seemed pale and luminous as if they had just arrived from a distant, depressed planet. The donated clothes and accessories – the usual mix of dodgy nylon wigs, vast nylon housecoats and Polynesian-themed shirts, lay about unappealingly in the irradiating dazzle. Over this alien scene presided Mrs Zolinda, a minute Armenian lady who wore a towering bun and many religious armlets. She fancied herself as a sort of nun-by-proxy, and on many of our previous visits searching for elusive sumptuous stuffs among the acrylic cardies, scuffed boots and plates of tangled beads like mournful eyeballs, she dropped to the ground in prayer without warning.

'Mrs Zolinda has fainted!' you cried the first time this happened, ferreting about for the varnished manageress in the swivelling islands of musty ex-nursing home daywear. Located by a barrage of Hail Marys issuing mysteriously from behind an ankle length chenille garment, Mrs Zolinda finished her orisons by petitioning

the Almighty that 'this nice two gels finds zomesing verry nice right now,' and making an extravagant sign of the cross with a rosaried claw-hand.

Strangely enough we almost always did. Assorted acts of grace allowed us to find a crystalline diamante necklace in the pocket of a plastic mac; a 1940s crepe blouse with tiny shimmering buttons; a wonderfully sleazy tit revealing jumper in mauve mohair; a flared skirt emboldened with cobalt-blue tulips; a shellwork brooch in the shape of a ship. Usually we shared these finds out equally and affably, taking it in turns when we both spotted the same treasure at the same time. Not on this occasion, however.

I went to Mrs Zolinda's counter, with its stern sign "IN THE INTERESTING OF HYGENICS PLEASE KEEP ON YOUR PANTS! IN THE CHANGE ROOM" to ask her to take the black lace dress out of the window. Unfortunately she was irritably busy, wrapping some beige acrylic trews and a copy of 'Karmic Kooking' for a leather-skinned gent wearing a flight bag from a long defunct airline across his chest-exposing shirt. It was then that you appeared breathlessly behind me, with the gossamer black dress over your arm, if you please.

'I climbed in the window to get it. I'm having it. I know it's your turn. I'm sorry. I've got to have it!' you whispered stridently, fixing me with a baleful glare.

'Pardon me?'

'I said I'm having it!' Your eyes glittered dangerously, your skin was damp and pale. 'I *need* it!'

Mrs Zolinda attempted to lighten the ensuing insufferable silence by calling on us to remember the unbeatable generosity of Our Lord and offering me *gratis*, by way of compensation, a mother-of-pearl and cork diorama of the shrine at Lourdes, bearing

the entreaty: MARY SAVE US. I regret to say it was refused ungraciously.

When we got outside the shop the weather had cleared, the sky a pellucid pale grey. I continued my sulk as we waited for the bus, and you unwisely prattled on about your new purchase. It was in a dream last week, you related, that you'd seen this actual papery dress, so when you saw it in the charity shop you just had to have it.

'You said yourself that the reason we go to charity shops is not just for reasons of economy, but because the older things have unknown past lives, secret histories...'

'Bullshit', I said. 'They're just dead ladies draperies. Clothes have no memory. You just wanted that atticky old frock because you thought it looked rather special and it gives you exquisite pleasure not to let me have it.'

I told her the dress almost certainly wouldn't fit over her big bum cheeks. That it looked like a pile of flies in a coma.

'Anyway. Who was wearing it in your dream? The Princess of Darkness?'

'Just a woman,' you muttered. 'I couldn't see her face. Only her back.'

Dream schmeam, I thought later that night when just to annoy me you wore the dress to the pub. Even teamed incongruously with a denim jacket there was no denying that it looked fabulous. The voluminous shadowy lace skirt swirled and eddied about, momentarily shrouding seated imbibers in a nocturnal fog. The sleeves were long filigree tubes, the architecture of the bodice a poem of intricate web-like stitchery. Sly smiles of triumph were forthcoming from your direction.

For a while you wore it constantly, usually in congruous settings like parks, supermarkets and inconsequential midsummer parties, where its glamorous dark presence always drew confused and/or admiring glances. Then one day it got torn, the delicate veining of the lace shockingly wounded, its quiveringly surprised criss-cross edges smeared with dank green from the elder twigs that had rent them asunder.

'I can't wear it now. It's spoiled. The magic's gone.'

'Don't be daft. Take it to one of those Invisible Menders places,' I said. 'It'll be as good as new.'

Of course I knew that this wasn't true, and gradually I grew used to not seeing that frock at all. We went back to Mrs Zolinda's and bought a consolation skirt in rippling pleated ruby silk, with only the tiniest scorch mark near the waistband.

'To tell you the truth I was getting fed up with that dress,' you confided. 'I handwashed it carefully several times but I could never get rid of its strange odour.'

'Odour? Of what?'

'Oh, the usual charity shop pong... plus something else in the background.'

'What exactly?' I asked. In fact I knew exactly what she meant because I had occasionally caught a whiff of this near undetectable scent myself.

'Well... it's a bit musky like patchouli, a bit like cats, a bit like damp earth... a bit like the inside of a very, very old wardrobe. Really, it smells of HER. And that puts me off.'

I assumed that the dress had long since gone out with the rubbish, in fact had almost forgotten its existence, when your sudden death put me in the position of desolate archaeologist, conservator, and chucker-outer of some of your more ephemeral effects. Drifting between shadowy, sparsely furnished rooms I

felt drawn to a trunk in the corner. It was full of fabrics, mostly badly spotted with damp and hosting silverfish. Underneath the vivid violet-blue dragon silk, a gift from Beijing lay a black rag – the tight frenzied loops of its lace forced into droopy fish-scale shapes by the deprivations of countless moth children. It was really just an idea of a dress now... a neckband, waistband, hem and cuffs just joined by confused tightropes of cotton. There was just one strip undamaged, and with a snip of scissors I freed it for ever.

I wear it as a scarf occasionally. Sometimes it seems completely non-perfumatory. On other occasions the sweet-sour aromatics it exudes are overpowering. Remembering what you said about the Dress Woman, I wonder if it is her I am smelling, or you, or both. All I know is that bits of the scarf unravel when I'm out walking, and disappear into the clear, bright air.

INTRODUCTION

All stories have a beginning, and as with Beverly Pagram's story, the beginning of this one started long before I sit to write it. Investigating memories in clothing predetermined that I was looking at something with ingrained history, both concealing and giving clues to its own beginnings.

Pagram's lure of memories in clothing revealing past lives enticed me to search my wardrobe, I too wanted to be transported through time by a pre-loved garment, discovering past identities. I discovered my inspiration incidentally, as I rummaged through the back section of my closet, believing that what I was looking for must surely reside in the depths of the never ending row of hangers. I admit I have a passion for clothing, and my wardrobe is a testament to my desire to keep everything, and never throw away. Reaching to the back I haul out a plastic dry cleaning bag, the wire hanger straining under the weight of an overload of garments, in all ways looking decidedly different from the crammed up rows of mismatched hangers of dresses and shirts. It has been many years since this bag has seen anything other than the shaft of light through the door and it has a certain odor of something old and truly 'other' like.

Beneath the plastic bag I find a suit, and as I pull apart the pieces I realise I am holding my maternal grandfather's suit, which is over 40 years old. This is the first time I have seen it laid out in 18 years, since his death; I recall many times looking upon the bag when my mother gave it to me 10 years ago for safekeeping, but I never unwrapped it, just stored it away at the back of my wardrobe for another time (see Fig. 1. page 12). It only takes a moment for me to be overwhelmed by the sense of person retained in this suit, and in one sense, this project investigates



Fig. 1. Opa's Jacket.

the known truth that clothing collects stories. From the time it is woven to the time it is constructed and worn clothing amasses a story of its journey through its commonplace traces.

In Beverly Pagram's short story "Clothes Have No Memory", she writes of the feelings associated with garments and the original wearer¹. She writes of the traces and fragments of time that become etched into garments, revealing unknown past lives and histories. Her story inspires the reader to treasure clothes for their storytelling ability, signs, smells and secrets. She encourages us to accept the wear and tear of cloth for its ability to transport us through time, to a past event, or remembrance of a person no longer here.

I'm going to introduce my project from where I am now, close to the finish line, and what seems like milestones from the start. I look back at my original aims of investigating memories in clothing and tell the story of my search for new ways to understand my connection to my grandfather's jacket, how I came upon absence and the role it plays in memory formation and reinterpretation.

As with any good story, there is a build up of events towards a conclusion, and each chapter entices the reader to read on and find out what happens next. This is how this project evolved for me, like a story, with each step encouraging the next. I began by examining the jacket and decided this item of the suit would be my focus.

I begin with an introduction of myself and the inspiration behind this story. I then introduce my grandfather and begin to examine the jacket in detail, searching the traces of time that reveal themselves in the fabric, and the memories it inspired of my grandfather. Over a period of months I investigated the

1 Beverly Pagram. *Clothes Have No Memory* (London: The Women's Press, 1998) 79-83.

ways in which the suit jacket inspired memories and revealed the biography of my grandfather. This led to the exploration of current research in narrative and the journey of clothing, looking also at the wider aspects of design.

The ability fashion has of telling a story is evident in many designers' collections and after conducting a thorough literature review I discovered memory has been a creative design tool throughout history. Brought into the focus of the academic world at the 'Material Memories' conference held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1998, it introduced a subjective level to the study of history. The conference examined the contradiction between objects 'speaking' to us through memories, and how their silence restricts attempts to interpret through language.² After searching the design world for examples of how memories attribute to design I then look to a different way to investigate the importance of the memories attached to my grandfather's jacket. This came about when I disassembled the jacket, unpicking it to flat pieces as it had begun its journey in the tailor's room, 40 years ago.

I then focus on new interpretations that are my final pieces, describing in-depth how absence provided an insightful way to reinterpret and reinvent my grandfather's suit for the next generation, to fit my father and to fit myself. Researching through design I discover the *space* that separates my grandfather from us both. I reinterpret my grandfather's jacket in a two-dimensional form, a new perspective gives way to findings relevant to fashion design and theory.

As to my conclusion, as with any good author, I shall keep that

² Judy Attfield, *Wider Than Words: The Material Culture in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), 212.

to myself for the while, and urge the reader to journey with me to discover how memories were inspired by the contents of a long thought lost dry-cleaning bag containing a much loved and worn wool jacket.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION

There has always been a close link between memory and the arts, including writing, painting and design. The Latin derivative *memoria* means both memory and memoir. “From the very beginning, that is, from the wax tablet onwards, human remembering and forgetting has been described in terms derived from prosthetic memories”.¹

I began with Pagram’s story, my grandfather’s jacket and a wealth of ideas. The jacket itself secreted and revealed stories of my grandfather that both confounded and moved me. Downton describes stories as existing since time began “in an effort to explain our world to ourselves”, and describes designing as a form of story-telling.² He suggests that although it may not be common to describe design in this way, other areas of research, such as science and education, can equally claim to be narrative and a part of a larger story than any one research project. Due in part to the subjective nature of memories and my passion for a good story I chose to frame this project as a narrative, to write otherwise seemed a contradiction to the very topic I set out to investigate. The research methodology that best suits this project is research *through* design. Peter Downton claims that “designing is a way of researching”, and I begin this project with the intent to produce a practical study and body of work as a way of researching my chosen ideas.³

I have identified my grandfather to those who did and did not know him, through an understanding of absence and space surrounding his much worn and remembered suit jacket. My

1 Douwe Draaisma, *Metaphors of Memory: A History of Ideas About the Mind* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 24

2 Peter Downton, *Design Research* (Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, 2003) 125

3 Downton 1-2

central proposition is that absence and space surrounding memories in clothing can also be considered as a social construct. In a society with a growing interest in individuality and exclusiveness, the space that surrounds the body and clothing is no longer a personal consideration, I propose it exists in a socially constructed environment and ultimately is in constant comparison to another person, time or place. To compare that which is absent or erased, and the space it contains is important in the future formulation of fashion design and understandings.

PART I MEMORIES

"What one is,
is nothing.
What one seems to be,
is everything."

Anonymous

MY STORY

CHAPTER ONE

I am the daughter of English parents, with a family tree that stretches around the world. My maternal grandmother ran from the devastation of the realities of war in her home country, Germany, marrying an English soldier, losing her country and her home to invasion. Residing in Chesterfield, in Northern England, my grandparents raised my mother an only child, post-war England meaning she was subjected to the cruel taunting of school ground bullies, as having a German mother categorised her as an 'alien' and isolated her from others her age. I have grown up with stories of my grandfather's life living in a mining village, and the stories of Germany at war from my grandmother. It would come as no surprise to discover my mother immigrated to New Zealand when it came time to start her own family, wanting to raise her children far from her childhood memories, in a land of opportunities. My grandparents soon followed, my grandmother moving her home to yet another unknown country to follow those she loved. In the years I remember my grandparents they did not tell stories of nostalgia and regret, rather made New Zealand their home, and never did make it back to the other side of the world.

A broken marriage and a working mother meant I was largely brought up by these grandparents and they have played a major role in my life, both in life and after their death. Their generation lost so much and lived through events I can only read about, and they have been a great source of inspiration to me.

In previous research I explored the concept of identity by exploring the role beauty plays within society, and I incorporated my grandmother's hand crocheting into my designs. I examined the theories of Immanuel Kant and his universal theory of

pleasure and beauty, and explored the issues of morality that they presented, asserting there is no totalising concept of beauty that encompasses all cultures and times, and that throughout history values and beliefs have shaped societies concepts of beauty.



Fig. 2. Oma and Opa. Portrait taken in 1974 in England. Photograph courtesy of Rosemarie Scott.

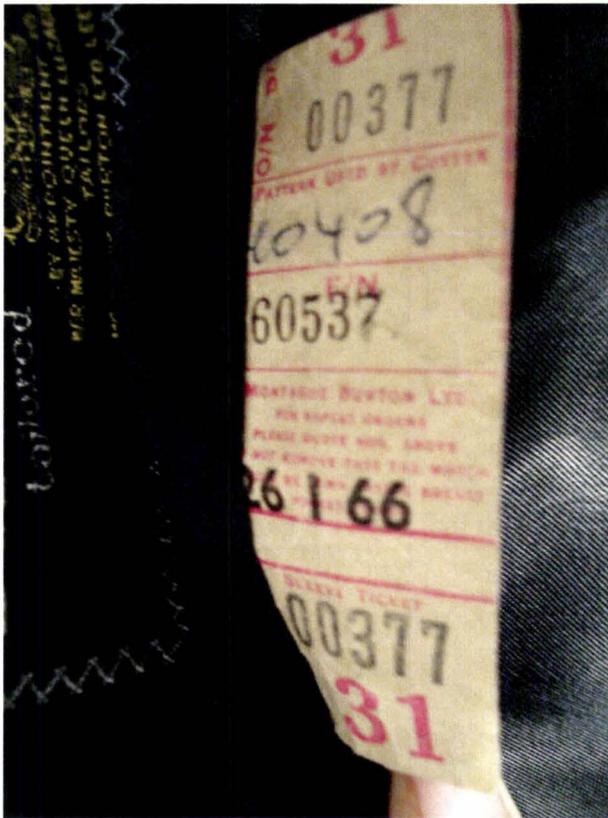
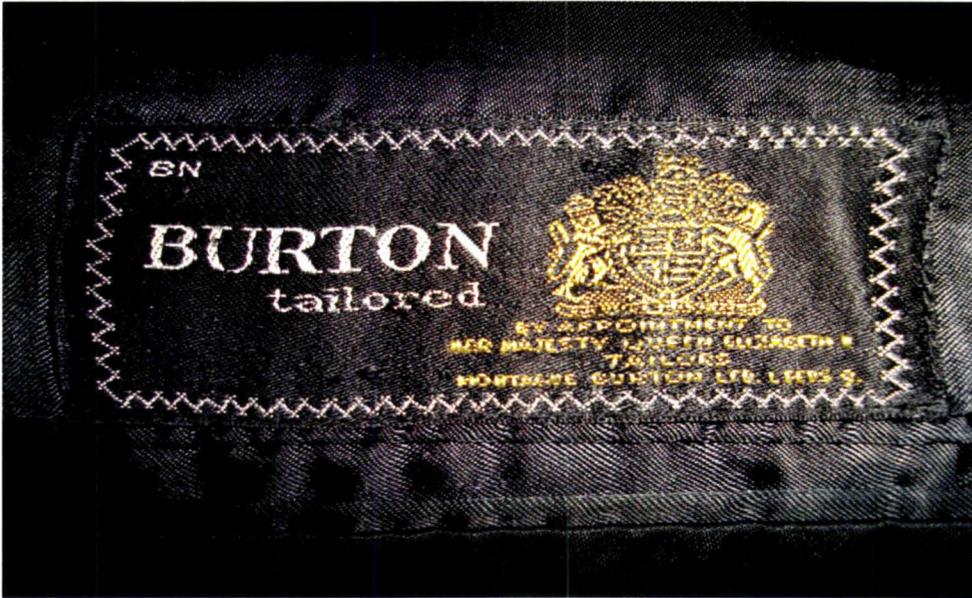
OPA'S JACKET

CHAPTER TWO

My grandparents were always known as '*Oma and Opa*'. This German translation for grandparents was a mark of respect, and even my parents were to call them that, as did all of our friends, regardless of their age. In Germany it is a sign of respect to call someone by their title, being a grandparent was seen to be an accomplishment that deserved recognition and respect. For me it will always be *Opa's Suit*, and this story reveals through his suit jacket an insight to who he was and my relationship to him.

I was 12 when he died. I remember a lot about that day and I remember a lot of him in my childhood, although the memories of him in the suit are faded now and have changed throughout this project. On reflection, to begin it was when prompted by seeing the suit, either hanging or in a photograph, that I remember him in it. Now, after such close scrutiny, I cannot imagine him in anything else. The study and recollection of my grandfather has certainly influenced my psychological and emotional attachment to the suit, as a tangible memory, something that makes me close to him again, a part of him. When I first removed it from the bag I had an overwhelming sense of sadness and loss, it inspired memories of his face and life to me.

A portrait of Oma and Opa hangs in my lounge and has done for many years (see Fig. 2). He wears the suit in this photo, and in every other photo I have found of him when the occasion for a suit was required. I remember it as 'his suit', the one he wore without question, and my albums tell me it was. I was surprised how often he wore the jacket when leafing through my albums; it was not something I had noticed before. The label in the suit describes its origin, the maker's mark, *Burton*, prominent in the



Clockwise from top: Fig. 3. Detail. Jacket label. Fig. 4. Detail. Inside jacket sleeve lining. Fig. 5. Detail. Jacket construction ticket.

front jacket lining (see Fig. 3. page 30). Packed with all their worldly possessions the suit made the trip from England to New Zealand, and was his best for over 20 years. The suit is dated from 1966, and the tailor, now long since closed, was surely a local company, making to measure for middleclass Englishmen. A close examination of the quality and condition of the jacket was my first task and I was eager to begin my investigation. Before researching the available literature on the journeying of clothing I first began my investigation into the memories attached to my grandfather's jacket, examining the physicality's of the jacket and noting its peculiarities and traces of time.

When examining the suit jacket my initial thoughts were that there are minimal traces of Opa retained in the garment. Encased in a dry-cleaning bag in the wardrobe for many years the jacket appears stiff and pressed and is in extremely good condition. This is perhaps due to the quality of the fabric, the nature of the fibre, being 100% wool and the interlinings and structure. A few tiny holes on the lower front facing and under collar are probably from storage after his death. The inside is where there are definite signs of wear and traces of time. The lining of the body is black and appears unstained, however the lighter coloured sleeve linings are hand sewn in separately and reveal stains and discolouration and pressed in creases (see Fig. 4). It is this inside out view of the jacket which was closest to his body that begins to reveal the traces of time; the jacket has obviously had considerable wear in its lifetime. The inside pockets of the suit jacket revealed clues of Opa wearing the jacket. Grains and dust and evidence of dry-cleaning fluff gather in the folds of the pocket insides, time has literally collected in the pockets. Tucked into the inside pocket a handwritten ticket stamped by the maker details the origins and date of construction (see Fig 5). A pattern number 'used by the cutter' is written along with details of the



Fig. 6. Photograph of my father wearing Opa's Jacket.

fashion house. It appears the suit, constructed in 1966, was cut and made to measure.

My first considerate discovery was early in the documentation of Opa's jacket. After close scrutiny of the wear of the cloth I wanted to further inspect the jacket on a body. Although on a hanger in my wardrobe for many years, at this point my recollections were of Opa wearing the jacket. I had a feeling of wanting to recreate this image for myself and I sought someone to model it for me, so I could also further examine the jacket on a 3D form. I asked my father to model it for me, he quickly came to mind as a male of average height and size. As can be seen in the photo (see Fig. 6), my focus was to capture the jacket on a body, and I zoomed in on his torso, quickly and without a second thought cutting off his head in the picture. I was focused on documenting the jacket so I could analyse and discuss my relationship to it. Even though my father knew his father-in-law a greater length of time than I knew him before he passed away, I hadn't prepared myself for him having similar feelings about this suit jacket to myself. His response to my request was quite unexpected.

When I arrived with the jacket he was very interested and as I was telling him about my plans he disappeared to put on a shirt and tie to try it on with. He had misunderstood my request, at that time I didn't think it necessary to dress up for the photo, but I left him to get organised and arranged myself for the picture. As he put the jacket on we both realised it was far too small, and I was on the verge of abandoning the effort and finding a smaller subject. It was at this point he really forced it on, telling me he could squeeze into it. I realised he wanted to be part of the experience, he was proud to be wearing the jacket of a man he knew so well, and what I took as him wanting to help and assist me then, I understand now to be his genuine interest in

the jacket. To him it evoked memories of Opa and he felt the same sense of my grandfather's person in the jacket as I did. I had not expected him to share the same interest in the suit, I had secreted these feelings, believing them as exclusively mine, and I felt an ownership of the suit and Opa's presence in it. It wasn't until months later, when other male members of my family also modelled the jacket for me, that I saw the same interest and attachment to the jacket that reminded me of the incident with my father. I watched my older brother, who was extremely close to his grandfather, experience the same intrigue and discovery, and feelings of being close to someone he thought gone forever. Interestingly, when my younger brother tried it on he too showed similar signs of interest in wearing a jacket worn by someone long since passed away, and although he would not remember his step-grandfather, he understood the feeling of loss and remembrance attached to this jacket, and had the same look of pride and assurance while wearing the jacket as his elder brother and father did. They all puffed their chests out and were truly proud to be wearing this jacket. There was an instant connection between these three men and this jacket that has been hanging in my closet for over 10 years.

PART II LITERATURE REVIEW

Bastéa believes that all creation stems from the desire to memorialize what we've lived, "yet most of us in academia would never admit nostalgia's creative urgency".

[Euseo Bastéa, ed. *América Latina: 1970-1980: Antología*. University of New Mexico Press, 2014, 5.

In 1908 Henri Bergson said, “there is no perception which is not full of memories”.¹ Clothing is ingrained with history from the moment it is worn, creating possibilities and leaving traces of the wearer for a new generation to discover in time. Memory allows us to forget, relive and reinvent with each experience or encounter. The narrative in design allows endless possibilities for reinvention and recollection. Clothing in particular gives a closeness and personable interaction with someone no longer with us or an unknown donator. We live in a culture where we enjoy transformation and fashioning new identity, where it is fashionable to wear vintage clothing and mix designer with bargain labels. Clothing is given a second chance at life and new meaning when it is recycled, whether it is for sentimental, monetary, or personal reasons; it is a time now in the fashion trade where designers are reaching for inspiration from the streets, and turning to vintage clothing for stimulation. Before beginning to closely examine Opa’s suit I searched current literature on the subjective and personal experience of memory within clothing. After reading Beverly Pagram’s short story I was captivated by the storytelling ability of clothing and the traces and marks of time that inspire recollection and memories.

The concept of *loss* within memory was of considerable importance to me as I began my project, the comfort that can be achieved by wearing a loved ones garment was realized literally for me as I handled Opa’s jacket, and I understood completely how forming attachments to clothing brings someone ‘back to life’. Memories attached to wearing another person’s clothing is investigated, personal and irreplaceable family heirlooms are clearly cherished for their ability to transport and transform the wearer back through the generations. I then look at designers interest in the story telling abilities of old garments, looking at designers such as Larine Koyaté (XULY, Bêt label),

¹ Marius Kwart et al. *Memory Memories* (Oxford: Berg, 1999): 17

Rei Kawakubo and Martin Margiela. Finally, the reinvention of memory is examined, looking at how details fade over time and surroundings change interpretations.

ABSENCE AND LOSS

CHAPTER THREE

The concept of “layering history is found throughout art and design and often happens naturally”.¹ However, the focus is not normally about the covered or missing. Graphic designer John Sarsfield focused on photographic images of signs with missing letters and torn posters revealing previous signage. Gerber describes the photographer as “revealing the beauty of what is missing” and “the trace of something left always becomes as interesting or significant as that which has been erased and often more intriguing than what is clearly visible”.² This is an example of how that which is erased or missing can still inform design, and is relevant to clothing passed on to another. When examining Opa’s jacket, I searched for pieces missing, to give me clues to its journeys.

Jacques Derrida put forward a theoretical framework to erasure. Called *Sous rature* (under erasure) he crosses out a word if it is incorrect, rather than deleting or erasing it. He claims that although the word may be incorrect, it is necessary.³ Gerber relates Derrida’s theory to deconstructionist thought, and believes studying the traces and marks or track of something is apparent in all objects in all things, including art, design, text and even language. She describes this as, “something else (which) is forever absent - a notion that is at the crux of deconstructionist thought: that the negative concept always inhabits the positive one”.⁴ This theory can be related to all objects in design, from the erased text on the palimpsest to mended seams on a garment, and posters torn revealing past events. Each one is an example of the positive concept in which the negative is erased or absent.

1. Anna Gerber *What? no. 0 weight* (Print 5/ 4 2003), 2
2. Gerber, 2
3. Gerber, 2-3
4. Gerber, 4

Gerber states that:

erasure leaves its mark, the mark becomes a trace, and the trace erodes and helps us realize that the absence of something doesn't mean it isn't there. Traces, marks clues and ghosts are not only inherent and unavoidable, but they can also be thought of as a positive creative catalyst, a visual inspiration, a way to see not only what is there, but also what was and what isn't, and eventually a way to further and deepen our visual language.⁵

Reviving the work of designer Janie Graham, Judith Duffey Harding describes the memory processes that convey messages in her 'material memories' installation. Drawing inspiration from the memories of her mother Graham explores her relationship to textiles, sewing and family memories and investigates the shift in perspective of loss when critically analyzing the memories.⁶ Harding describes the implication of the design and Graham's process as "becoming metaphors for the relationships, meticulously working out ways in which memory can fill the hollowness of loss" and states that "mending makes whole again, as embellishment of absence (and) repair becomes reparation".⁷ This description of the mending of something precious and owned by a loved one is realized as a healing process and reminder of the loss.

Memories can be interpreted as a way of accepting and confronting death and loss, like a 'ritualised reminder'.⁸ The comforting nature of cloth, warmth, texture and fluidity, are features that

⁵ Gerber, 2.

⁶ Judith Duffey Harding, "Remembering and Mending: The Embellishment of Absence," *Textile Perspectives* 39, (2005): 2-3.

⁷ Harding, 3.

⁸ Judy Attfield, *Wild Things: The Material Culture in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg, 2009) 232-233.

enable us to accept them for comfort and as a way of interpreting and initializing remembrance. For example, a child's attachment to a blanket or sheet develops into an ability to accept clothing as personal reminders of loved ones.⁹ Atfield describes garments imbued with memory as the "kind of objects (that) can be termed a form of traditional object helping people come to terms with the passing of time - the separation of their own youth, or from the loss of a loved one, a parent, child or partner".¹⁰ Opa's jacket has become such an object for me, even at this early stage of the project. It has been a connector to memories I have of him, and also a comfort through the process of bringing feelings of loss to the present after such an extended time.

Memories also have a literal definition in relation to clothing and loss that dates back to the nineteenth century. Dressmakers and repairers named wrinkles in the elbows of sleeves 'memories'. Evans describes how a sleeve would record a memory of the wearer's body by leaving the imprinted wrinkles that defined the garment as 'worn or used'.¹¹ This was an interesting detail to uncover, and it led me to an understanding of how secondhand clothing had been valued in the past, and not to underestimate the importance of used clothing throughout fashion history. In particular this led to a closer examination of the physical memories that are collected in clothing, to be considered of equal importance to the psychological attachment and associated memories. Peter Stallybrass points out that the poor during the nineteenth century would be deemed only to purchase second-hand clothing, and would be wearing something already molded to another. He maintains that "memories were inscribed to the poor within subjects that were haunted by loss, for the objects

9 Atfield, 130

10 Atfield, 146

11 Caroline Evans, *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness* (London: Yale University Press, 2003)

were in a constant state of being-about-to-disappear".¹² Atfield agrees and asserts that each 'memory' in the sleeves that marked a personal history to the original owner was interpreted as devaluation in the garment. The garment is reduced to a mere 'commercial object' and all sentimentality is removed to ascertain the value.¹³ Clothing was effectively stripped of its memories and sentimentality when pawned. The concept of design filled with loss, described by Evans as 'cult of the past', is apparent in many designers work and is perhaps

a response to the rapid onslaught of change and of technical novelty that this carefully handcrafted type of fashion rejects. Thus the loss that is evoked is the loss of fixedness and stability in the recent past, qualities which are supposedly the enemies of fashion with its emphasis on perpetual renewal; and this to sets this type of fashion outside the mainstream.¹⁴

Anna Gerber describes some designers as becoming entrapped in the age of technology, perpetuating the cycle of new, and deleting the commonplace natural elements that she describes as beautiful.¹⁵ In response to this rise of technology Barbara Harvey and Nicola Perren collaborated on a project utilising technology advances. A series of textile screens used visual reference and motifs from photographic images and film stills from the film *Whistle Down the Wind* (1961). Southerland interprets the designs as displaying a layered sense of loss both showing an unexplained childhood and loss of traditional craft and textile techniques. She describes memories as being built and influenced by our surroundings, especially film and television.¹⁶

12 Evans, 1

13 Atfield, 135-136

14 Evans, 2

15 Gerber

16 Deborah Southerland "Techniques of Memory." *Solovdge Summer* (2005): 2

LAYERED BIOGRAPHIES CHAPTER FOUR

Research demonstrates that people keep clothing for reasons other than function and practicality. Although throughout history clothing has commonly been passed on for cost-saving values, clothing has often been kept for reasons of sentimentality and as souvenirs bearing memories of people, places and times so poignant that owners can't bear to part with them.¹ This is the very reason I was to discover the dry-cleaning bag at the back of my wardrobe, much sentimental value is attached to the suit for my family.

Alongside this warm feeling is an inescapable feeling of longing for a loved one, and together they form a bond with the garment. I have experienced more than once in my lifetime the unbearable sadness associated with clearing the wardrobe of someone that has passed away and it is a feeling not easily forgotten. There is closeness to that person when sorting their clothes that evokes memories and brings the person 'to life', if only for a moment, and while it is a time of loss there is an irresistible feeling of closeness. Juliet Ash, dress historian, describes garments as "becoming imbued with the essence of the person".²

Designers today are reaching to the past for inspiration and in some cases are bringing used clothing back to life. This has created a surge in the vintage clothing market, with consumers searching for individuality in pre-owned vintage pieces that challenge the stereo-types of new and mass produced clothing. Designers, such as Martin Margiela, have used vintage clothing in his collections, with the used nature of the garments not hidden or even repaired. They are often used to enhance the reconstructed

1 Judy Atfield, *Wild Things: The Material Culture in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg, 2000) 145-146
2 Atfield: 146



Above. Fig. 7. Martin Margiela *Vintage Gloves*. Spring-Summer 2001. Evars. 251. Below. Fig. 8. Martin Margiela *Hand sewn sweater made from military socks*. Autumn-Winter 1991-2. Evars. 251

design and also serve as a genuine portrayal of another time or place, as can be seen in his recreations of vintage gloves (see fig. 7), and army socks (see fig. 8). Margiela often leaves the original label of the garment in the new reconstructed piece, rather than replacing with his own branding, further enhancing the part the vintage piece has played in the new design. He depersonalizes and challenges the fashion world's system and creates historical layers with his creative labeling. Rovine best describes recycled clothing as expressions of the edges where categories blur and where identities may shift between past and present. She suggests "the power of an objects biography may adhere even as it changes hands via the anonymity of a garage sale or a thrift shop".³

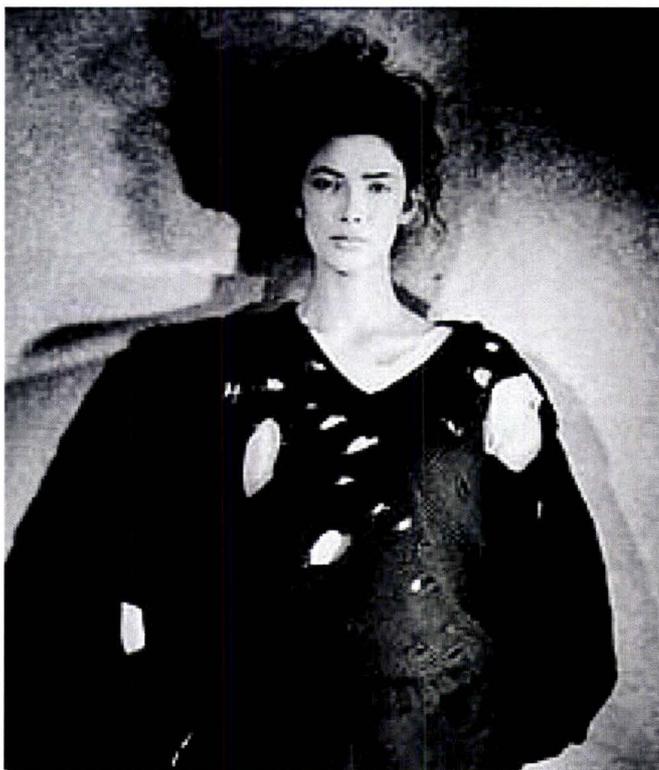
Paris-based Larine Koyaté (XULY, Bêt label) also utilize second hand clothing into new designs, challenging the stereotypes of 'new' and symbolizing a strike against mass production. Designs are hand worked and obviously time-laboring showing "signs of the original wearer and physical labor of reworking the garment on his 'mutated' clothes that challenge traditional ideas of the craft of traveling".⁴ Rovine describes Koyaté's recycled designs as bringing together "diverse influences to create garments that retain the histories of their previous lives even as they suit the tastes of the movement".⁵ Memory takes center stage in his 1993 runway show, where models displayed traces of their past wearing band aids on their faces and bodies. Koyaté's designs display a connection to the past, revealed mended seams resemble healed wounds, and "the garments offer extraordinarily vivid allusions to the stresses they aid; by implication, their owners endured in previous lives".⁶

3 Alexandra Palmer, and Hazel Clark, eds. *Old Clothes: New Looks: Second Hand Fashion* (New York: Berg, 2005) 7.

4 Palmer and Clark, 2

5 Palmer and Clark, 2

6 Palmer and Clark, 5



Above: Fig. 8. Jessica Ogden *A Dozen Dresses* 1999. Evans, 253. Below: Fig. 9. Comme des Garçons Rei Kawakubo *Lace Sweater* 1982.

Rather than an alternative style to new or vintage, designers such as Koyaté integrate and reconstruct the old. The used and degenerated nature of the clothing is not unconcealed or necessarily repaired, yet enhances the reconstructed design and addresses the complexities of nostalgia and serves as an “authentic representation of another time or place”.⁷ Caroline Evans discusses this position in relation to anti-capitalism, where designers reject the age of mass production and favor craft techniques revived with one-off designs working to private commissions, such as fashion graduate Jessica Ogden⁸.

Ogden describes her designs “as if they were sentient, capable of bearing memory traces”, her garments although made with second-hand fabrics bearing stains and mending were further embellished with tea stains for added effect. Evans describes Ogden’s installation entitled ‘A Dozen Dresses’ (see Fig. 8), as “suggesting histories that were either yet to be written or irretrievably lost”.⁹

Rei Kawakubo for Commes des Garçons reveals similar philosophies in her designs, stating she likes it when something about a design is ‘off’, and not quite perfect. This is displayed in designs such as the ripped sweater (labeled Lace Sweater) that is now housed in the Victoria and Albert museum (see Fig. 9). The garment, although new, displays “characteristics of a worn or used garment. Rips or tears can be interpreted as imperfect, which along with irregularity are important elements in traditional aesthetic philosophy”.¹⁰

7 Palmer and Clark, 2

8 Evans, 3

9 Evans, 1

10 Valerie Steele, *50 Years of Fashion: New Look to Now* (London: Yale University Press, 1997), 127-128.

These designers have placed narrative into their designs focusing on the story telling abilities of old garments. Garments are given new meaning or a second chance at life by reworking traces of time. In some cases the history is real, and often personal in the cases of a family member or family heirloom. In other instances it may be unknown history from a vintage or second hand clothing shop, or it may be purely fictional, a “simulated mark or trace of the past, a space of fiction to create new stories or embroider on new ones”.¹¹

According to Peri Dalton, memory “isn’t residing somewhere in the recess of the mind waiting to be recovered, but is always being reproduced, differently, performatively, in the present”.¹² Tolia-Kelly’s interpretation of memory reminds readers that in the recollection process ‘facts’ become faded. Time renders memories differently and “the temporal and spatial distance from the movement of the creation of artifacts allows a shift in the meaning and context through which they made sense”.¹³ Atfield agrees and says that there is no single accurate version of a memory. She believes the very purpose of recollecting and reconstructing a memory lends itself to contradict the possibility of reaching a single version¹⁴. The nature and disposition of fabric lead to an ease of hiding and forgetting, once folded and put away a garment can easily be out of sight and forgotten for lengths of time. The mind can forget, relive and reinvent the memory with each experience of resurfacing. She believes that “objects change meaning with the passing of time as a result of being incorporated into the life of an individual world together with all the changes that take place in the life cycle”.¹⁵

11 Evans. 3

12 Southerland. 2

13 Southerland. 812

14 Atfield. 238

15 Atfield. 145

Memory's tendency to reconstruct and interpret makes it vulnerable to constructing or inventing the past and confusing history. Atfield warns of the confusion between 'historical reference' and 'personal subjectivity'.¹⁶ She argues that the concept of all history being constructed is a pre-millennium doubt that is debatable, and that "time past is unreachable in any 'authentic' experiential form, while the longing for it – nostalgia – can only produce an inauthentic reconstruction".¹⁷ Esther Leslie agrees that memory is subjective and states that:

remembering occurs in the present and the present accommodates the recollector. The process of excavation sifts through the layers that are the spatialization of the passage of time – the meaning of the object hinges on the layers of time that have smothered it, until now, the moment and place of discovery¹⁸.

Sitting at my desk, wearing Opa's jacket, I cannot help but agree with Leslie. Over a period of 18 years the jacket has changed in my perceptions, I have perceived it differently with each step of this project, from a hand-me-down, to my inspiration, to bringing back feelings of loss and grief, to what has led me to new discoveries.

16 Atfield, 234

17 Atfield, 224

18 Kwint, 108

PART III NATURAL JOURNEY OF CLOTHING

"Going back to a place of the past may be the best way we have to take ourselves back in time".

Eleni Bastea, ed., *Memory and Architecture* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004)112

Throughout history clothing has provided an insight to the class, culture and social status of men and women alike. While clothing collects stories of the individual, with traces and marks of times and events, clothing also tells the stories of the wider social picture, indicating class, wealth and an insight to the society of the time. There has been less focus on the second hand clothing industry through history, although it is of no less consequence as it acted as a form of currency, as a means of exchange, as I discussed in my review. Western society through history relied on the concept of 'use and reuse' until gradually society was impacted during the late 1600s by increased opportunities for faster and more efficient production of goods leading to greater abundance and more affordability.¹

During these times in history clothing goods were produced and defined for the sole function of consumption. There was always only a selected few in society that could purchase clothing beyond the necessary requirement. Although, it can be argued that the purchase of clothing was, during those times, an investment, holding exchange value that was included in a family's inventory of assets that could be liquefied in times of financial struggle through the second hand trade. But for second hand clothing trade to survive people would have to have had more than one outfit, there needed to be some surplus. Occasions, weddings, and birth celebrations provided opportunities for people to invest in extra clothing for reasons other than solely function. Even for the lower socioeconomic groups the fact that the clothing could be realised through the second hand dealers perhaps encouraged the practice of purchasing excess.²

The cost was considered when refashioning a garment, and

1 Beverly Lemire, *Dress, culture and commerce: the english clothing trade before the factory 1550-1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997)

2 Lemire

garments that have been kept over the last few centuries are difficult to accurately date, due to the fabric often being much older than the style cut. Refashioning second-hand clothing was necessary due predominantly to its cost effectiveness. The concept of reuse and refashioning has become increasingly popular in current fashions also. Designers have given renewed life to old garments which I discuss in reference to vintage and refashioning clothing later in this section. It was a consideration in the early stages of this project to give new life to Opa's jacket and 'refashion', however I was still searching for new ways to demonstrate this. For many weeks the jacket hung on its steel hanger, as I was tempted to unpick and remodel.

After examining historical implications of dress it is difficult to deny that fashion has no intent or functional purpose, and here it takes leave from others in the field of art and artefacts, such as painting and sculpture.³ Whilst I explore fashion created for purpose other than to be worn, to begin I focus on clothing as it is commonly perceived, fashion as changing cycles and a form of communication of identity. Fashion as a form of communication has helped continue and document the process of human development. The ways in which a society functions, their beliefs, values and ideas can be deduced from their surroundings and objects and artefacts are most commonly the survivors. Fashion can communicate the cultures of a society by its system of hierarchy and exclusion, providing insight into class systems.⁴ I do not attempt to go in depth in examining the social constructs of clothing, only provide an introduction to fashions ability to communicate over time.

Creative surfaces, dress in particular, can be defined by use,

3 Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion as Communication* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 32

4 Barnard, 34-36

the wearer journeys with the garment, leaving impressions and memories that may not be seen or noticed by anyone else. Defined by use refers to the consideration of form as well as function, and it can be argued that this is what sets design apart from other arts. Unlike other artefacts clothing travels with its owner, having opportunity to gain impressions and hold experiences. Emphasis in this project is placed on the physical changes in the clothes that are worn by an individual, and the memories the clothes themselves inspire in the wearer. In other words, the function and purpose of the clothing is what has given it the memories, its 'usage'. A single stain or trace, or a missing button or worn sleeve, is a small part of an experience, of a moment in time, and acts as a reminder. The question can then be asked, if memories are absorbed into clothing, what then of the future of a garment? Does this natural journey inherent in any functional object have a destiny? By exploring the natural journey that clothing takes, and the narrative embedded in used clothing in particular, it is possible to begin to understand the prospects for a design and its journey.

NARRATIVE CHAPTER FIVE

Narrative in clothing refers to stories amassed as the clothing is worn, separate from the original design, but can also be imbued in design prior to construction, creating fictional stories by purposefully ageing fabrics and garments to give a sense of time and experience. Barnard describes this when he states that clothing, “especially if they are old or discarded, seem to hint at the movements of the body or bodies that once moved them around; they inhibit some limbo between the animate and the inanimate”.¹ Barnard creates a vivid picture, further confirming clothing’s ability to ‘bring back to life’. I begin to address different ways of looking at narrative in clothing, which leads to further discussion of second hand, vintage and refashioned clothing. This project focuses on the *personal* memories attached to used clothing and it is useful to discuss other ways in which narrative in clothing can be viewed. Memories are collected in a garment as it is worn, although they can also be imbued at the design stage, whether they are fictional or recycled from the past.

The stains and traces of ‘usage’ tell the story of the wearer and their journeys and memories in this form can serve as personal histories. As described in Pagram’s short story there are stories held in garments, even a smell or tear in the cloth. These stories trigger feelings and memories and when these garments are carefully examined they reveal intimacies that the wearer perhaps did not intend. An occasion may be marked and forever remembered by the wine stain or the dirty hem or receipt tucked into the jacket pocket. These memories are created after the design of the garment, and ultimately only after being worn. They play no part in the original design process, other than to

1 Barnard. 189

be expected, but ultimately give the garment originality and character. Although the journey of clothing is not generally part of the design process it is a necessary consideration. Clothing with purposeful function in mind will surely consider how the garment will wear and be worn, for practicality and cost effectiveness in the consumer marketplace. Japanese designer Issey Miyake says of his work, "Without the wearer's ingenuity, my clothing isn't clothing. These are clothes where room is left for wearers to make things their own".² Miyake's designs are conceptual; however he considers his clothing incomplete until worn and amassing experience, and understands the importance and contribution of the wearer in the life of a garment.

Narrative can also be found in the design process of designer clothing. This approach to viewing memory in clothing can be separated into two categories. Firstly, fabric and garments that are deliberately stained or aged with fictional memories to imbue with narrative (refer to Kawakubo's Lace Sweater, Fig. 10, pages 54-55). Caroline Evans describes these garments as having "no real history, just a simulated mark or trace of the past" and "a space of fiction to create new stories or embroider on new ones".³ This fictional creation of memory and narrative in clothing has moved beyond only being found in conceptual designer clothing. Street wear available at cut price to the masses has long since been producing 'worn' look denim and canvas jeans, designed to look as though they are at the end of their life, when they are still yet to be worn. The concept of wearing 'old, worn, even threadbare' clothing has enjoyed much commercial success, with companies like Levis redefining their look on the basis of the concept. There are many reasons why consumers are attracted to this 'lived in' style. It would seem the fictional memories imbued in these garments portray a romantic notion of days past,

2 Steele: 127

3 Evans: 3

a feeling of memories, as these memories are fictional it is best described as the 'unknown'. Evans discusses this concept as a type of fashion design outside the mainstream, where the sense is fragile, in response to the perpetual renewal of the technology age we live in. It seems that consumers are attracted to 'worn' regardless of personal attachment and memory.⁴ Although clothes handed down through family and friends hold value as a symbol of remembrance, produced fashion in this style has fictional memory only. This indicates that it is the 'idea' of the memories and the journey that are important, rather than the specifics of the origin or personal attachment. Purchasing a used garment does not necessarily mean the new owner will understand and relate to the memories ingrained. This is where the connection to the original wearer is important in understanding the memories. Although the traces of time are visible on the clothes there must be a psychological connection to engage the memories.

Designers have answered this by using real stories to create new fashion. Larine Koyate, Margiela, and Jessica Ogden challenged the stereotypes of new and utilised vintage and used clothing in new designs. Combining with new to revitalise and redesign old garments, they considered memories by imbuing their designs with narrative, using old clothes cut up and reassembled. Palmer and Clark describe this theme as "traversing time in an attempt to create new and unique identities".⁵ Evans described Margiela as giving his garments "a history and life of their own through the very process of production".⁶ This is fashion reassembled from existing fashion, the layering of history. It can be considered as fashion literally looking back to itself for inspiration.

Whilst Margiela's and Ogden's memories are not fictional, as

4 Evans, 4

5 Palmer and Clark, 65

6 Evans, 255

garments are recycled and have experienced real journeys, the histories are not personally known to the new owner. The narrative inherent in my grandfather's suit and clothing passed down to family members or friends have personal attachment and sentimentality. The storytelling I refer to in connection to this project focuses on remembrance of a person with psychological attachment. Simply knowing who the owner was opens the door to interpretations and remembrance that have personal relevance. Bastéa claims that "going back to a place of the past may be the best way we have to take ourselves back in time".⁷ In clothing from a loved one we are looking for a tangible, permanent reminder of that person.

⁷ Bastéa 12

REFASHIONING CHAPTER SIX

Vintage clothing has seen a rise in popularity over the last ten years. Celebrities are often seen wearing vintage and this inspired many to go out in search of something exclusive and original, a garment that they wouldn't see in a shop window or worn by someone else. Finding and wearing vintage also gives the opportunity to turn away from fashionable trends and fashion following, and find individuality in style, and has grown in popularity considerably, with websites and stores dedicated to finding and selling the *right* vintage pieces. The term vintage covers a range of designs that are not new and are described by Palmer and Clark as "trophies with complex cultural and economic histories and are signifiers today of unique fashion".¹ Vintage or second hand clothing also "blurs identities of origin and time, creating both a historical past and a historicized future in the search for suitable fashions for the present".²

Part of the attraction of clothing as a 'memory album' is its fragile quality.³ Fashion has a definite life span, and needs care and attention to preserve memories engrained and collected. Similar to photographs and art works while the image or object seems permanent and tangible, it also portrays a sense of fleeting time and fragility. Kept housed or closeted clothing may well last a persons lifetime and beyond, yet clothing is made to be worn, and it is its use that inevitably is its downfall to preserve.

One of the reasons fashion has turned to making new of old is a response evident in the wider area of design. The technology age of the twentieth century that focused on glossy, new and industry savvy has pushed boundaries. New design in

1 Palmer and Clark, 174
2 Palmer and Clark, 176
3 Palmer and Clark, 170-171

architecture, interior, industrial, environmental and fashion are all looking to a more personal interpretation. “It seems as though some designers – enslaved to and robotized by technology – have become preoccupied with perfect, polished surface work and have turned to the imperfect and ultimately natural, beauty of commonplace traces and layers”.⁴ The second-hand, lived in look, through its storytelling nature portrays individuality and ultimately exclusiveness. Exclusive means sought after, original and generally expensive, and the interest in vintage clothing certainly encompasses this reasoning. It is this exclusivity and uniqueness that attracts consumers, as they search for “individuality that defies exact reproduction... and an alternative style to the latest designer look that is produced in multiples and available internationally”.⁵ Designers that have utilised ‘real’ used or vintage clothing, refashioning to new design, are providing an ultimate exclusivity, clothing that is individual, with a designer label.

4 Gerber, 1

5 Palmer and Clark, 3

WIDER ASPECTS OF DESIGN

CHAPTER SEVEN

I turn here to the wider aspect of art and design in order to further demonstrate our desire through history to create and safe keep items that store memories. The idea of capturing a moment or a sense of a person is something evident in all creative practices and the following examination is not merely a metaphor, but a wider appreciation of history's attempts at permanence, the metaphorical aspect, never the less, aids in the understanding of my argument.

The idea of 'permanence' in memory, and the need to capture a memory outside of the mind's storage capacity is found throughout history, with drawings on walls and tombs that have lasted thousands of years to tell the stories of kings and cultures, to portrait and landscape paintings of the last thousand years, that have provided countless biographies and histories. Clothing, alike to the visual arts, can be considered a prosthetic memory, a tangible reminder, telling a story of a person or time and place. Vintage or used and designer clothing imbued with memory as described all commonly aspire to be a tangible memory, a representation, keeping a part or sense of a person alive after they have gone.

Memory and narrative in clothing reaches further than the original design and wearer. Vintage and second hand clothing, either purchased or handed down through family and friends amasses layers of stories or biographies, new stories begin to be layered over the old. This may be in the alterations that are done for fit, or the layers of commonplace traces that garments naturally collect when journeying with the wearer. This concept of layered biographies is supported by many areas of art and design. "The concept of layering history is found throughout art

and design and often happens naturally”.¹ The palimpsest and Mystic writing Pad of earlier centuries, before the age of industry and computers also collect stories. Metaphors of memory such as the palimpsest can be compared to the memories attached to clothing, architecture, and other artefacts all designed to be used and to bear the test of time and many participants with their footprints.

Gerber describes a palimpsest as a literal and metaphorical way that objects experience loss, absence and collect memories. Used in medieval times, a manuscript was written onto a palimpsest and then erased to allow room for new text. Gerber identifies the palimpsest as a carrier of history, and containing a memory. She reasons that although text is erased, “it doesn’t mean it is gone forever, instead, the erased text stays somewhere in the palimpsest”.² The ‘artistic progression’ of the palimpsest is Robert Rauschenberg’s erased de Kooning drawing (1953), in which the artist asks a friend for a drawing with the intent to erase it. He describes of his work, “that which is erased, absent or empty becomes something more than just another negative (non)-attribute. This is similar to the palimpsest as the focus is less on the drawing (or the new layer of text) and more on the erasures”.³

There are many progressions of the palimpsest, from the wax tablet used by Plato to the Mystic Writing Pad of the sixteenth century. The term ‘impressionability’ derived from the wax tablet can be used to describe a person and their memory capacity. The wax tablet is discussed in Aristotle’s Theory of Memories, as a metaphor for describing the consistency of a person’s memory as alike to a wax tablet. Too soft and the impression is

1 Gerber, 2
2 Gerber, 2
3 Gerber, 2-3

unclear and no use, to hard and the impressions will not be deep enough.⁴

This examination of metaphors of memory led me to examine the suit jacket from the perspective of what was absent or erased. This gave me a new perspective on how my grandfather's suit jacket inspired memories and revealed aspects that I had not previously considered.

4. *Dranisma*

PART IV DRESS AND BODY

Clothing represents “something like a border or a margin between a public, exterior persona and a private, interior identity”.

Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion as Communication* (London: Routledge, 1996) 189

Changing my focus from what I could see to what was absent changed my perceptions of the jacket and how it has attributed memories of my grandfather. After researching the available literature on how clothing in its presence enhanced and created tangible memories, I was eager to search for a new way to look at my relationship to Opa's Jacket. Thinking back to the photo of my father wearing the jacket (see Fig. 6), it was early on in my search that I was intrigued by the concept of absence in design. Gerber focused on how negative aspects can enhance design, as I discussed in my literature review, the missing pieces or erosion and wear that in their absence affect how a garment is viewed. Although Gerber describes this in relation to time wearing away pieces of cloth, which is also realised in Beverley Pagram's short story, I was interested in the photo of my father from a different perspective. The size of the jacket, the absence of sleeve length for it to fit my father, made me realise the importance of what isn't there to enforcing connections and memories. Gerber reasons that "the absence of something doesn't mean it isn't there", and describes absence as a way "to see not only what is there, but also what was and what isn't, and eventually a way to deepen our visual language".¹

This absence is also in relation to the body, which has become an increasingly important factor when considering clothing, and at this point it becomes difficult to discuss clothing without reference to the body. However, clothing can be viewed as a subject in its own right, the absence of body being unexpected by the viewer. Social constructs, trends, people and personalities are associated with the structure of fashion, although clothing can be made for reasons other than to be worn. For example clothing can be designed purely for installation and display and with no intent to be worn at the design stage. Juliet Ash describes this in her discussion of 'Clothes without People in Paintings' as

¹ Gerber, 3

“a legitimate aesthetic subject in their own right, and absolutely not for consumption”.² This is one way in which to view absence of body in clothing, where the intention was to develop a three dimensional object and was not intended to be worn. This was how I saw my designs progressing at this point, halfway through my project and this journey, as possibly designs for installation only. It was the next month of research that turned my focus back to the part I play in the relationship I have with the jacket, and in turn my grandfather. Opa’s suit jacket is a portrait or mould of his absent body. While researching absence and dress and body relationships I could confirm for myself that his absence of body was what had originally inspired my chosen topic, yet there were many other definitions of absence that were unexpected and relevant to Opa’s jacket.

ABSENCE AND BODY

CHAPTER EIGHT

When looking at the erasure, removal or alteration of parts of a garment in relation to forming and interpreting memories the questions can be asked, 'Does the original garment have to be connected with someone and the memories associated with that person?' Similar to Rauschenberg's erased drawing, the palimpsests and Mystic Writing Pads ability to be erased, there needs to be 'something' to begin the process, whether it is a manuscript, a work of art, or a piece of cloth or garment. This question has returned to me time and again since my literature review and led to my further examination of absence. Opa's suit has many connections to the term absence, from bodily absence, loss of a loved one, the ravage of time, and the changing of its original cloth form. Although, as I have discussed, memories imbued in clothing can be fictional, I believe there is always a beginning, whether it be a person or inspired thought, all are relevant and surely this must be true if my definition of absence is correct, and to erase there must be something to begin.

In order to define absence I must first address presence, which I determine to be *something that was* as much as *something that exists now*. Leder defines absence as derived from the Latin *esse* for 'being', and *ab* for away, and he relates this to the body suggesting that, "the lived body, as ecstatic in nature, is that which is away from itself".¹ Investigating bodily absence is a way to understanding self and awareness, and ultimately the body's relationship to objects and surroundings. When I first began investigating Opa's jacket I considered that the many times I can recall the jacket are of Opa wearing it. At this stage his bodily absence from the jacket was extremely noticeable

¹ Drew Leder. *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 22

and prominent for me. This physical absence is concerned with something 'being away', something that was present and is no longer there. This relates to the body's connection to clothing and passing a garment to another. The memorial attraction of a used and passed down garment is the idea that it has been personalised, what was there is no longer, and the garment inherits a frail quality to be treasured for its loss.

Leder describes absence as a challenge to traditional thought and its study begins to unravel the structure of embodiment. No less important is its cultural significance. He addresses the issues of current western lifestyles which he describes as disembodied.² This relates to how we have created cities that remove us from experience directly from the outside climate, machines, technologies, transport and communication, all ways of speeding up experience and taking time away from time to appreciate the physical world. Yet in contrast the current trend is to spend time 'returning to the body' and looking for internal connections with yoga and natural therapies.³ The subject of absence of body is relevant to all facets of society today.

The body can in its presence and absence effect clothing and there has been growing interest in the presence of the body in art and design, although there has been little published on the effects of absence in clothing. As I discussed in my literature review designers such as Jessica Ogden, Martin Margiela and Rei Kawakubo have addressed issues such as memory and nostalgia of preloved garments, and their presence, however have not made the connections between absence of body and self to clothing. Leder explored the body's relationship with its internal and external physicality's, which is not in the scope of this project, however I have drawn from Leders investigations the

2. Leder 3
3. Leder 2-3



Clockwise from top left Fig. 12 Younger sister wearing Opa's Jacket Fig. 13 Younger brother wearing Opa's Jacket Fig. 14 Older brother wearing Opa's Jacket Fig. 15 Wearing Opa's Jacket myself Fig. 11 Detail Sleeve of jacket when worn by my father.

importance and inescapability's of absence of body.

I have memories associated with the suit and it being a tangible memory of Opa after his death, and when I viewed the garment in another context, another person wearing it, I could see the absence of parts of the suit, the implication being something had been erased. Opa's suit was made to measure and the pattern would have been adjusted to the correct length and size, fabric would have been cut away, or erased, to reveal the final design, altered in some way from its original form, the cloth. In Opa's jacket the cloth was the first creative output, similar to the paper of a palimpsests manuscript or de Kooning's drawing.

The negative space in my grandfather's suit began to gather importance at this stage of my investigations. The negative space can be defined as what is missing or absent from its original form as cloth, and also the space around the jacket that made it fit his unique person. When my father wore the jacket it was the *absence* of jacket that identified it as Opa's, rather than the jacket itself. The image taken of the suit jacket on my father gave me an immediate understanding of the negative space; however I was aware this was only in relation to my father's size and shape. This leaves the question of would the negative space be as obvious if worn by a different size, a smaller, shorter person? Would it disappear altogether? I investigated this question by looking at the suit worn by other members of my family, my sister, myself and both of my brothers, to further examine the negative space related directly to the garment (fig. 11-14). When seeing the suit jacket on other body shapes and sizes, the negative absence and space was still apparent. It's mould-like shape was retained regardless of who was wearing it. Interestingly, it was least obvious when I wore the jacket myself; I seem to be the closest in size to him.

BOUNDARIES AND LOSS

CHAPTER NINE

Loss is relevant in all art and design, from the cutting up and recreating of designs to the gradual erosion due to time. Evans describes the loss engrained in the fashion industry as, “in all fashionable consumption, the new is overlaid on the ruin of the unfashionable”.¹ Absence is important within the concept of loss in design, along with the loss of an object, whether it is the removal, erasure or eroding, the absence of what was once there is a critical part of the progressed design. The predominance of absence and loss in Opa’s jacket led me to the next step of my journey. I wanted to investigate the space that resides between Opa, my father and me. The three generations involved that I have looked at through literature, designers, and metaphor. I felt it was the next step to look at what was physically between us, what absence and space and loss could be attributed as the differences, but also as the connections.

Cavallaro and Warwick say that “dress acts as a daily reminder of our dependence on margins and boundaries for the purpose of self destruction”.² They ask where the body ends and dress begins. Their answer is boundaries that divide and frame, wrapping the body up, separating self from other. Warwick and Cavallaro investigate the relationship between dress and body, and employ the terms ‘boundaries’ and ‘frames’ to discuss the complex relationship. Their central argument is that the body is both ‘a boundary’ and ‘not a boundary’. They state that “dress as boundary is meant to trace a neat line between self and other... linking the biological entity to the social ensemble and the private to the public”.³ The subject of the body’s relationship to dress

- 1 Evans. 55
- 2 Dani Cavallaro and Alexandra Warwick. *Fashioning the frame: Boundaries, Dress and Body*. (New York: Berg, 1998) 2
- 3 Cavallaro. xv

has increased in popularity recently, although study of the space between is yet to be explored.

My aims had shifted when I began looking at absence in clothing in relation to memories; I was now keen to look at how I fit into the equation. Looking at my father, then myself wearing the jacket, I contemplated the difference between the original owner and the new. I asked myself, 'Where did Opa end and his jacket begin?' Warwick and Cavallaro's premise of borders and boundaries led me to look at the *space* between. As the jacket was a mould to his body the space between my body and Opa's jacket was a physical space between him and me. What separates my grandfather from me is not just time and memories, but also a physical space that I could see and feel when I tried the jacket on.

PART V
A NEW PERSPECTIVE

"The negative concept always inhabits the positive one".

Anna Gerber, "What Lies Beneath," *Poetry* 57.4 (2003): 52.

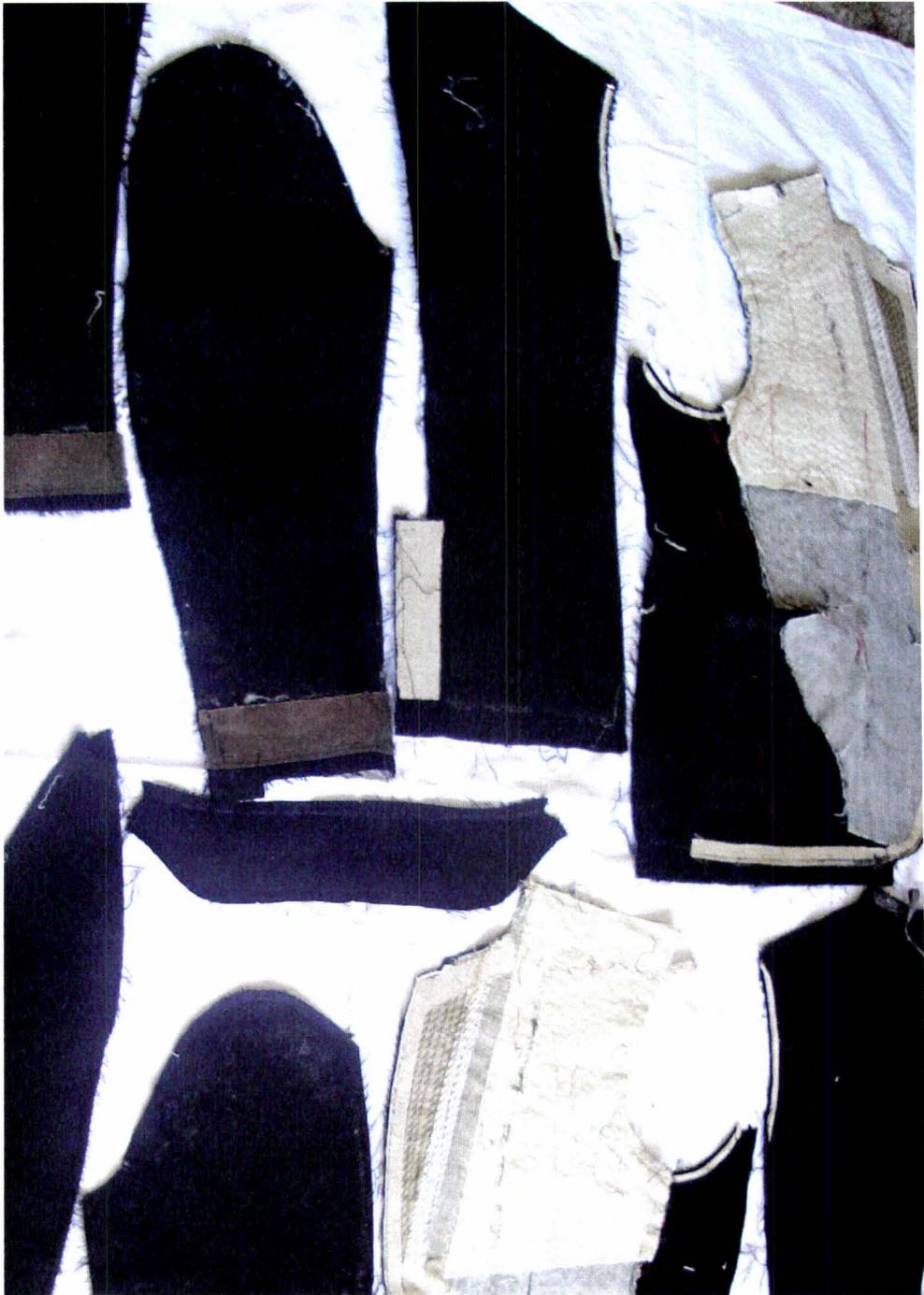


Fig. 16. Arrangement of two-dimensional jacket

A NEW DIMENSION

CHAPTER TEN

It is widely understood that objects are not perceived in isolation, but are perceived in their environment in relation to what is around them.¹ Clothing is not to be excluded from this argument. Often the absence of surroundings is a key to its concept and meaning. Although often part of a larger scale collection or range with its own set of design values, a garment has individual meaning once worn and integrated into the wearer's life and space. The surroundings in which the garment is perceived now becomes a vital component of the garment as an experience, for example, my father or I wearing Opa's jacket. The jacket spent much of its life worn by my grandfather, his body being its natural surroundings. Seeing it worn by my father, I began to look at the relationship between the jacket and the new wearer. The jacket became a connector between a set of people, Opa and my father, and also Opa and myself. I began to see my father and I as the new surroundings for Opa's jacket, the jacket acting as a mediator to understanding the relationship between the original wearer and the here and now. Opa's jacket has not only been a nostalgic connection, but also aided in uncovering truths about relationships, and playing the connector piece to the puzzle of my family.

I unpicked the jacket and laid all the pieces flat to make a two-dimensional form (see fig. 16). It was an emotionally difficult task to unpick the jacket, I was anxious about disassembling something that held memories of my grandfather that were important to myself and my family. Looking back I can see I knew the jacket would not be the same again, and I was worried I would regret the change. I decided to go ahead with the unpicking as I really wanted to move on to the next step of discovery of

¹ Carner, 61



Above: Fig. 17 Detail. Unpicking jacket. Below Left: Fig. 18 Detail. Interlining and padding. Below Right: Fig. 19. Detail. Machine pad stitching

the jacket, I wanted to see the construction, as well as see the jacket from a different perspective. Although when I made the decision to unpick, I found it enjoyable and discovered things about the jacket that I thought I may never find out. Although the fabric is good quality wool and appears in very good condition, when I started to unpick it was clear that it was fragile and was showing its age. By handling the fabric I could *feel* the wear and age that I had been describing from a distance. Waiting to do this until after much of my reviews of current literature also gave me a better understanding and I felt I could appreciate the significance of the jacket as a pre-loved garment. The wool has worn well, but the seams of the lining were difficult to unpick as they were very thin and ripped very easily. It was interesting to see the construction of the jacket, and the thread colours clearly indicated the order of the pieced construction, which reminded me of how I construct a tailored jacket now. The vents and hems were sewn differently to what I have seen before so I made sure to take note to remind myself how they would go back together. The surprising thing was the interlinings and padding (see figs. 17-19). There was little hand sewing, with the majority done on an industrial machine. I had thought a small tailor would have pad stitched by hand at that time, but a machined blind hem stitch was used. This indicates to me that it was not as small an establishment as I had thought.

Once I unpicked the whole jacket, including collar and jet pockets, I laid it out flat like a paper pattern to examine it from a different perspective. Particular parts of the jacket had bigger seams to allow for letting out if necessary, like the back of the arms and through the body. The most noticeable traces of a person are on the sleeve linings, with similar findings to my examination of the lining from the *right* side at the start of this project. The top of the arms to the shoulder have a lot of sweat stains that dry-cleaning

has not removed over the years. Also around the bagging out of the hem there are a lot of dirt marks, that when put back together would be visible unless I reseed on the sewing lines exactly. From unpicking I could also see more clearly the wear marks on the jacket. There are tiny holes on the collar and sleeve that are surely moth holes from storage.

I spent a lot of time arranging and placing the pieces in different sequences, searching for different ways to approach the absence of body, of Opa and the space between him and my father and myself. The space between the pattern pieces and the backing cloth, shown in white in the photo, reminded me of the negative space I had been referring to in previous searches earlier in the project. Once the garment had been reduced to pattern pieces the negative space and absence I had seen in the jacket was not lost. It was now apparent in the layout of the pieces, each fitting together but leaving space around it that revealed its destined shape. It was interesting to view the jacket from a two dimensional perspective and I saw this 'space' as a new way to examine absence and memories in clothing. I could see there were many definitions of negative space or absence relating to the jacket. With the garment reduced to a flat two dimensional perspective the absence of body was not as prominent as before. The loss of garment, as I had always known it, was the first thing that struck me, however I was intrigued by the return to its original form. Laying pieces flat gave an insight to how it would have looked on the cutters table, before measurements were applied for my grandfather.



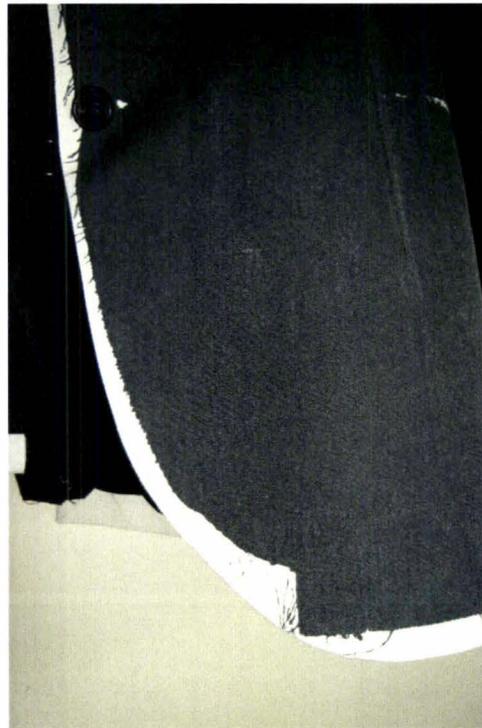
Fig. 20. Dad's Jacket

DAD'S JACKET

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Even with another body filling the space Opa was absent from did not preclude the sense of him. This is due in part to the psychological attachment and memories I have connected with the suit, but also due to the physical size and space of the jacket itself. The jacket is alike to a mould, a three dimensional portrait of his body. I have returned to the photograph of my father wearing the jacket many times throughout this project and I began to look at the space between Opa and my father using the flat pattern. I photographed the pieces laid flat on a white background, moving them close together as when laying out a pattern on fabric. Using these photographs I created negative films on the computer to experiment with screen-printing (refer appendix d-g).

By printing Opa's jacket directly onto fabric and fitting to my father the space between the two men could be seen. The white space around each piece shows exactly the measurement of difference between their physical sizes. I fitted the new printed jacket to my father and went through the process of a made to measure suit, fitting and taking in where necessary. In particular, the body of the jacket needed to be larger and the white space where I have made the pattern bigger to fit can be seen clearly on the back, side seams and hem. The sleeve width did not need to be any larger, although the sleeve length was altered and this can be seen with the white 'space' around each cuff (see Figs. 24-25, page 112). The shoulder also needed to be sized up, making the armhole bigger. There was enough extra in the original jacket pattern to allow for letting out to ensure the sleeves fit nicely into the armhole after I had altered it to fit my father. The new jacket is now a three dimensional mould of my father, demonstrating the difference in size between the two men (see Figs. 20-23).



Above Left to Right: Fig. 21-23 Dad's Jacket. Below Left: Fig. 24 Detail, Dad's Jacket sleeve. Below Right: Fig. 25. Detail, Dad's Jacket Front Hem.

There are 16 pieces to the jacket (main fabric), the quantity due in part to there being a mirror image for each piece, for the right and left of the jacket. The largest screens possible to make are 1000 x 850 and I needed to divide the pieces up into three screens. These three screens then needed to be reversed to become a mirror image, for the opposite side of the body, making a pair to each piece, resulting in six screens. The size of the screens predicted them too large for anything I could do at home, and a local screen-printing company generously took on the task of producing the large images. The fabric printed is 100% wool, and is a natural ecru colour. The fibre has a small amount of slub, indicating its natural content and I chose the colour to indicate the space as a neutral component of the jacket.



Fig. 26. My Jacket.

MY JACKET

CHAPTER TWELVE

The next step of the process was to construct a jacket for myself, also using Opa's jacket pattern (see Fig. 26). This progression from my father's jacket was to look at the space between Opa and myself. I have always felt *time* has been the divider between us, since his death I have thought my time to be close to him had past, and being young when he was alive I perhaps didn't appreciate it. This process of differentiation and examination of the *space* between his mould and mine was an emotional journey, and I felt closer to him through this process than I have since his death.

I fused a layer of black wool to a layer of ivory silk, to create a double sided fabric. I chose silk for the inside as it was light weight natural fibre. As they were fused together they needed to have the same care instructions to retain shape after laundering. I laid out the pattern as I did for my father's jacket and cut the pieces exactly, sewing together to fit my own body, this time with the seams to the outside. My father's jacket needed to be upsized, whereas mine needed to be made considerably smaller. By sewing with the seams to the outside and pressing open, the ivory silk is revealed and demonstrates the size difference between the original pattern and my size. As with my father's the main alterations were in the body and shoulders, with back and side seams showing the most difference (see Figs. 27-28, page 116). I had to try the jacket on in its many stages, as it was difficult to fit to myself; I used a mirror and was constantly taking it off and on and repining. I realised quickly into the process that this felt like Opa's jacket to me. I had an instant connection, knowing it had been cut from his pattern, and I can see myself wearing it in the future and feeling as close to him as I do when I would try on his original jacket. The line has certainly blurred as



Fig. 27-28. My Jacket.

to what was Opa's jacket and mine, and my fathers. Although not bearing any physical traces of the original, the two new jackets are still *Opa's Jacket*, deconstructed and then repaired from a different perspective.



Fig. 29. Inside "Family Tree" of Dad's Jacket.

INSIDE SECRETS CHAPTER THIRTEEN

When researching the concepts surrounding memory in clothing, whether it is fictional or personal memory, the questions must be asked ‘What lies beneath?’ ‘What is revealed when the layers are exposed?’ Looking beyond and beneath the surface of design reveals the biography of the garment, and much can be ascertained by looking beneath the surface, both physically and metaphorically. Covering up layers reveals or implies there is something underneath. Even the seams of a garment, mistakes and errors that are unpicked, alterations made for body shape and size, are evidence that there has been changes as I have seen. The traces are still there, even if absent, and the new part or replacement draws attention to its (negative) absence. By wearing a garment attention is brought to what is beneath the surface, both physically and in relation to time, the memories that are washed or wiped away, mended or replaced.

The inside layers of Opa’s jacket revealed more than I expected. By examining the layers of linings, interlinings, padding and seaming I was able to participate with the garment and become part of its makeup. It was noticeable for me that I had looked upon the jacket for many months, yet what I was looking for was secreted within the layers. When piecing the two new jackets I wanted to apply that same concept within the inside. To truly understand the connections and implications of the pieces someone would have to look to the inside, as I did for the original. Quite by chance during this stage of my project I received a forwarded email from my first cousin, once removed, in England. He is my grandfather’s sister’s son. He had sent a partially completed family tree to my mother asking her to fill in any gaps. I was excited to help with this, and added the New

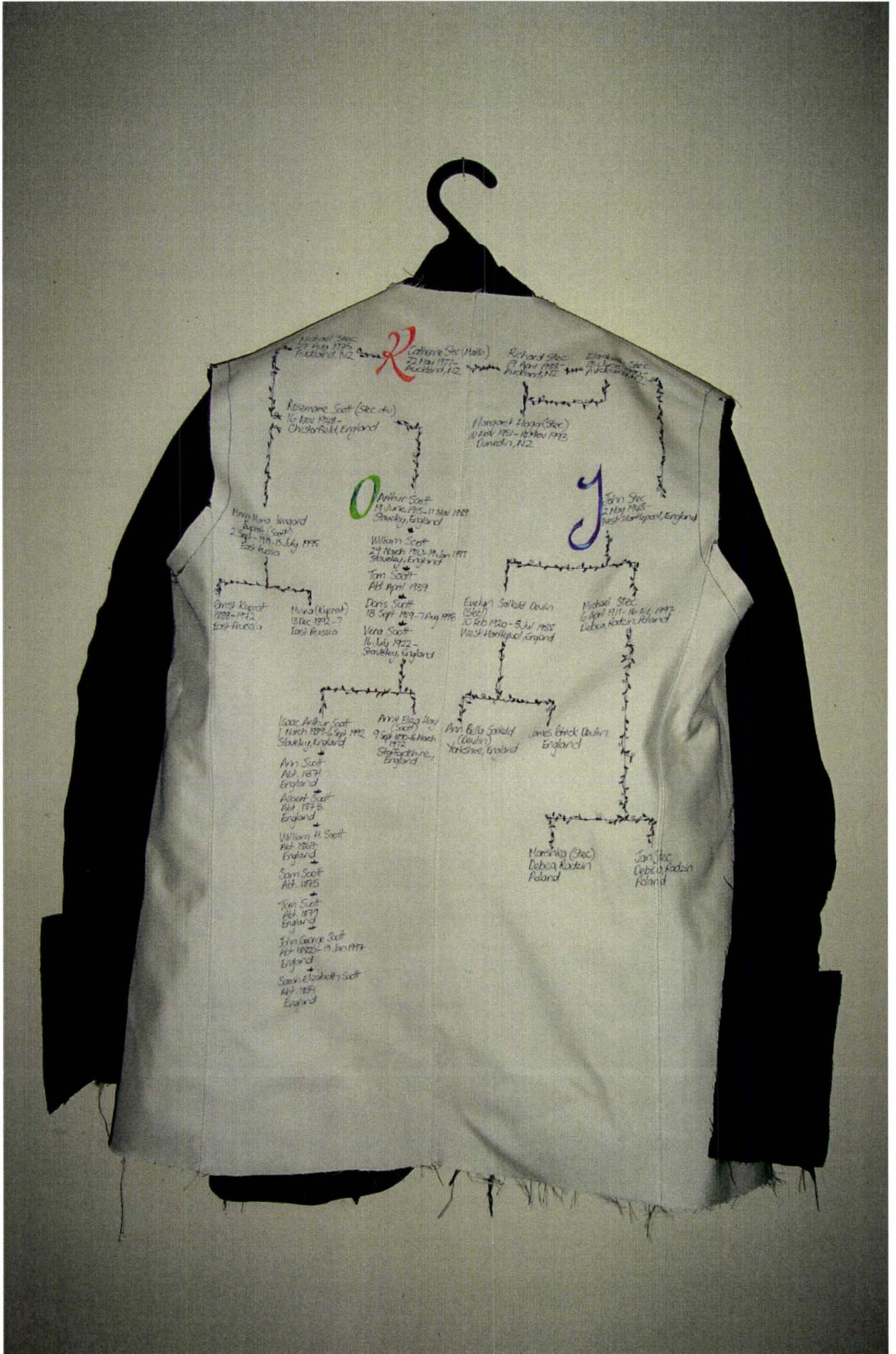


Fig. 30. Inside "Family Tree" of My Jacket.

Zealand strand to his work. His mother is the last surviving sibling of the Scott family, Opa and his other three brothers and sisters have since passed. I have drawn the Family Tree on the inside layer of my father's (see Fig. 29, page 118), and my jacket (see Fig. 30). There is no indication from the right side once it is sewn up that there would be anything secreted. As can be seen in Figs. 31-33, page 122, the coloured letters indicate the three characters of my story, K for myself, O for Opa (Arthur Scott), and J (John Stec) for my father. The family tree shows the connection between Opa, my father and myself, yet is hidden until someone seeks to find it.

Margaret Scott (Stec div)
 16 Nov 1948 -
 Chesterfield, England

Arthur Scott
 19 June 1915 - 11 Nov 1989
 Staveley, England

William Scott
 29 March 1910 - 19 Jan 1977
 Staveley, England

Tom Scott
 Abt April 1939

Doris Scott
 18 Sept 1919 - 7 Aug 1998

Vera Scott
 16 July 1922 -
 Staveley, England

Evelyn Salkeld Dentin
 (Stec)
 10 Feb 1920 - 8 Jul 1988
 West Hartlepool, England

Minna (Kuprat)
 18 Dec 1892 - ?
 East Prussia

Isaac Arthur Scott
 1 March 1989 - 6 Sept 1992
 Staveley, England

Annie Eliza Hay
 (Scott)
 9 Sept 1890 - 16 March
 1972
 Staffordshire,
 England

Ann Bella Salkeld
 (Dentin)
 Yorkshire, England

Ann Scott
 Abt. 1871
 England

Albert Scott
 Abt. 1873
 England

William H. Scott
 abt. 1867

Catherine Stec (Mallin)
 22 May 1977 -
 Auckland, NZ

Richard Stec
 19 April 1988
 Auckland, NZ

Margaret Hoop

14 Nov 1993
 NZ

John Stec
 2 May 1948 -
 West Hartlepool, Eng

Michael Stec
 6 April 1911 - 16 Feb 1999

Clockwise from top left: Fig. 31-33 Details. Inside "Family Tree" of My Jacket.

REPARATION

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

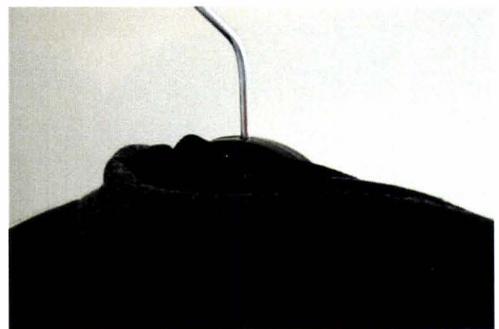
Reassembling the jacket was a lot harder than I had expected. The tailoring techniques from 40 years ago have differed only slightly from today. The sleeves were hand stitched onto the jacket at the sleeve head, which you see less and less frequently in tailored garments now, generally reserved for a much more expensive, even couture garment, although some home dressmakers still possibly employ this method.

Now that I have put the jacket back together, and have pressed it and resewn the buttons, I am able to look at the jacket to compare it to how it was before I unpicked it. I was expecting it to be slightly different, but it has definite distinctions, that are more obvious than I had expected. The most prominent for me now, as I sit in my study with the jacket back on its steel hanger, is my perception of it. Although it is still Opa's jacket, it has a different meaning for me now, as I have taken part in the sewing and construction of it, it feels closer to me than before. The design is the same, the fabric is the same, yet my participation in the physical makeup of the jacket has brought me closer to it. My relationship with Opa made the jacket important to me, reconstructing the seams has enabled me to relate to it as a garment, something I have made.

Another difference is the wear and traces of time are now more evident than before. The seams joining the lining to the wool, although I have gone as close to original lines as I could, are revealing the clean 'inside' that was not revealed before and that shows the dirt line. Where I haven't quite sewn on the line, even a millimetre out, you can see the clean 'inside' vs. the dirt line and mark from the original seam, revealing my search into the

jacket. This was important as although it is there to be seen by anyone who looks closely, stitching and concentrating on these areas brought them to my focus and I felt like I knew all the small details and marks and traces intimately.

I had always planned to show Opa's original jacket as part of this project, although now I see it as much a part of my efforts as any other garment. It is not only there to demonstrate my inspiration, but as an integral part of the design process. It is not only the inspiration for my father's jacket and mine, it is something I have remade to become my own. Opa's jacket will never quite be the same as it was, but it certainly has much more story to tell the next generation if they care to investigate.



Above Left: Fig. 34. Three Jackets Above Right: Fig. 35. Detail Three Jackets, Below Left: Fig. 36. Detail Three Jackets Below Right: Fig. 37. Detail Three Jackets

CONCLUSIVE FINDINGS

I have discovered that time can be traversed, and loved ones thought lost can be revived through their clothing. A much loved garment reveals, conceals, relents and encourages memories of the original wearer and with each recollection memories change and evolve, they are *how* we think of loved ones lost.

By unpicking Opa's jacket I found a new perspective of the jacket and the memories it inspired, and it became part of the new designs as much as being the original inspiration. The lines were blurred when naming the three jackets; they are as much a part of Opa as they are of me. Made from the same pattern each secrets within its layers the beginning of a new story for the next generation to continue. The three jackets fit together, as a family. Opa's Jacket is in the middle, with my father's jacket over the top and mine on the inside. All are absent of body as they hang together on a single steel hanger, although each has traces of the others. Opa's Jacket has had memories added to and changed, my father's and my jacket bear the traces of time from the original pattern (see Figs. 34-37). All are connected by the space that surrounds the other.

Bastéa states that "both identity and memory are political and social constructs and should be treated as such."¹ Identities and memories are not things we think *about* but things we think *with*". Investigating the memories I have of my grandfather that are inspired by his suit jacket led me to a greater understanding of how I reminisce. I began with the understanding that I would recall memories of my grandfather, however discovered the memories I have of him are 'how' I think of him, I cannot think of

1 Bastéa, 8

him without them. What I had not expected to be so prominent when initially researching this project is the connection an item of clothing has within a family. Not only is it important to look at the feelings of remembrance I have and feelings of sense of person and traces engrained in the suit, but also the ability this suit has to connect a family in remembrance, grief, and proud moments without words. What we all assumed to be our own isolated feelings and memories are shared by others.

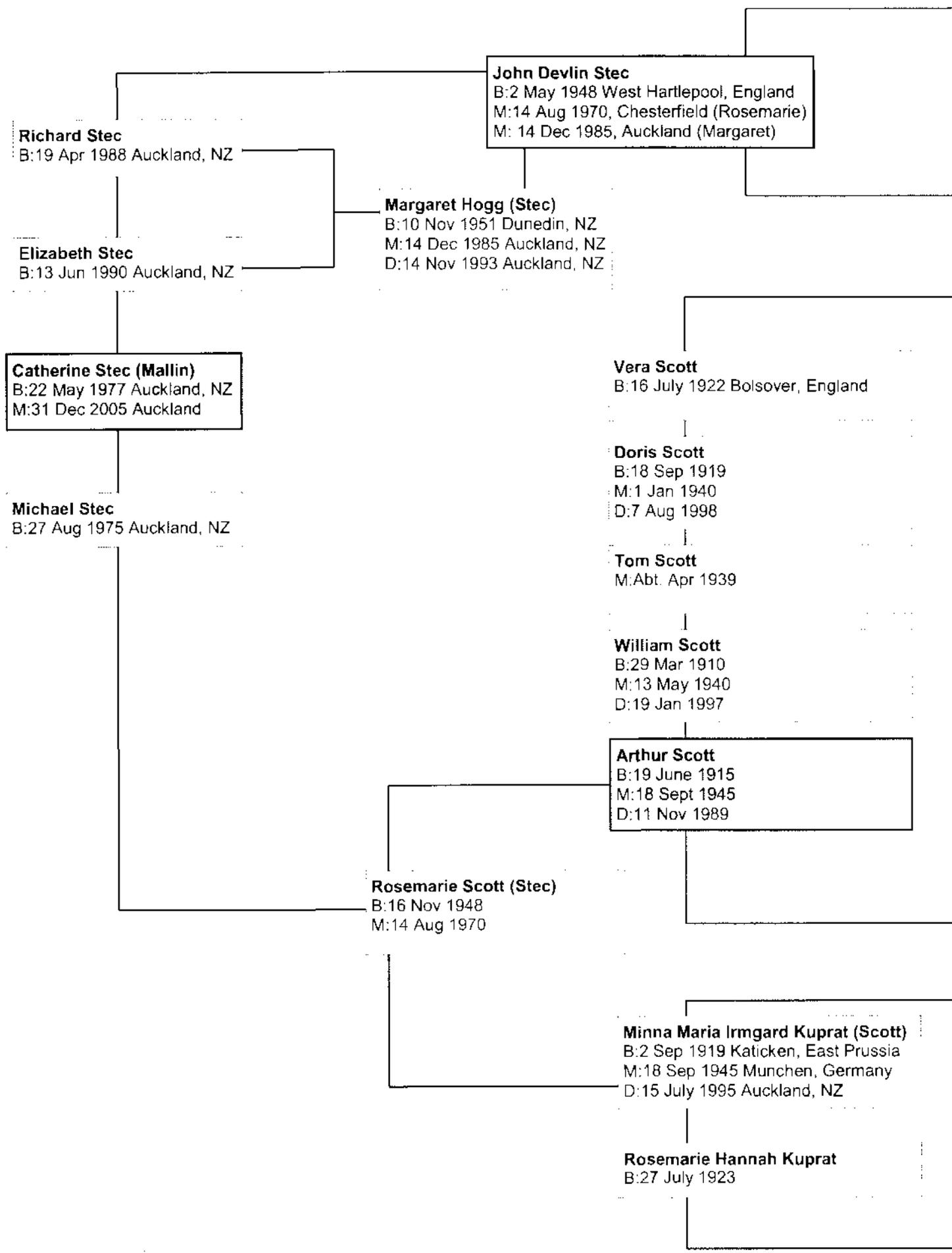
It can be argued that in critical theory of fashion there must be a relationship between the body and clothing. de la Haye and Wilson tribute this to the current shift in critique of the body from the biological to the sociological asserting that the body is now understood as a “social construct producing multiple meanings”.² Eugenie Lemoine Luccioni agrees stating that “clothing draws the body so that it can be culturally seen, and it articulates it as a meaningful form”.³ This new direction in design discourse has elevated the status of fashion theory and new definitions are being put forth, questioning the premise that dress is only a fashion system, a signifier of culture, time and individual and collective psychology, asserting that dress is not only an extension of personality, but a subject in its own right. Far from clothing being perceived as adornment and collective social meanings, fashion relating to the body now encompasses many branches of academic study, no longer only in the realms of aesthetics.

From my investigations I have determined that absence and space are social constructs within the fashion world, producing multiple meanings, and that what is not there, a ‘negative absence’, is important in the future formulation of fashion design and understandings. In my interpretation of my grandfather’s

2 Amy de la Haye, and Elizabeth Wilson, eds., *Defining dress: dress as object, meaning and identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999)3

3 de la Haye: 2

jacket I have looked to myself, my father and my family, the tailor, the clothmaker. I have interpreted new designs from a social perspective, as the space and absence was only relevant when reviewed in a social context. This is a factor for consideration in the future of fashion design and theory; with a growing interest in the body and individuality and exclusiveness, if it is to be compared to each other, the space that surrounds our individual selves can be considered a social construct.



Jan Stec

B:Debica, Radzin, Poland

Michael Stec

B:6 Apr 1911 Debica, Radzin, Poland

M:7 Jun 1947 St Joseph's Church,
West Hartlepool, England

D:16 Feb 1997 Billingham, England

Marishka (Stec)

B:Debica, Radzin, Poland

James Patrick Devlin

B:England

Eva Salkeld Devlin (Stec)

B:10 Feb 1920 West Hartlepool, England

M:7 Jun 1947 St Joseph's Church

D:8 Jul 1988 Billingham, England

Ann Bella Salkeld (Devlin)

B:Yorkshire, England

Isaac Arthur Scott

B: 1 Mar 1889

M: Bet. Oct-Dec 1909 Staveley, England

D:6 Sep 1992

Ann Scott

B:Abt. 1871 England

Albert Scott

B:Abt 1873 Staveley, England

William H Scott

B:Abt. 1867 Staveley

Sam Scott

B:Abt. 1875

D:In a coal mining accident

Tom Scott

B:Abt. 1879 Staveley, England

John George Scott

B:Abt. 1882 Staveley, England

M:Bet.Jan-Mar 1902 Chesterfield

D:19 Jan 1997

Sarah (Elizabeth) Scott

B:Abt. 1884 Staveley, England

Nelly Hay

B:Bet. 1896-1897

D:12 Jul 1984

Annie Eliza Hay (Scott)

B:9 Sep 1890 Wolstanton, Staffs

D:16 Mar 1972 Walton Hospital

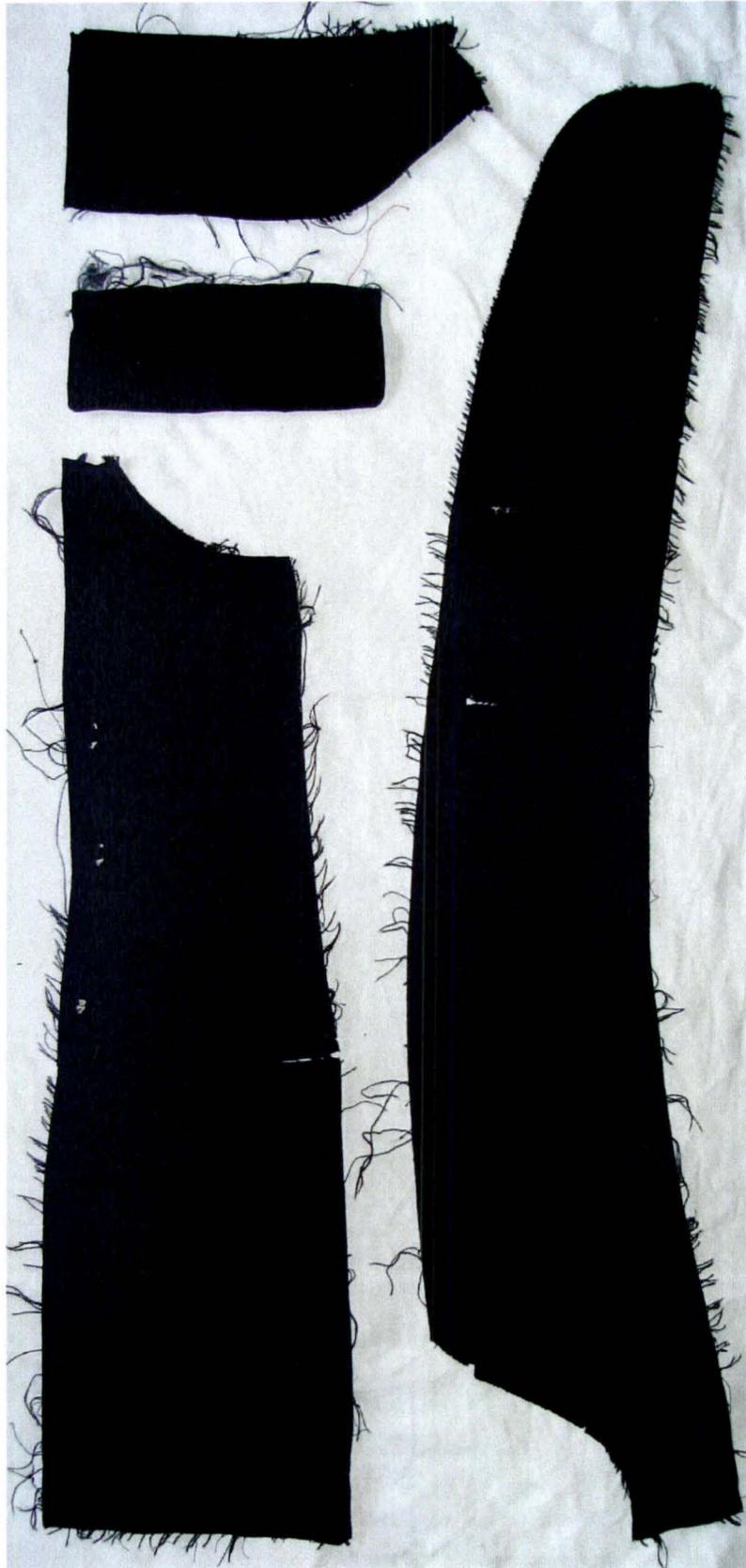
Ernst Kuprat

B:1888

D:1972

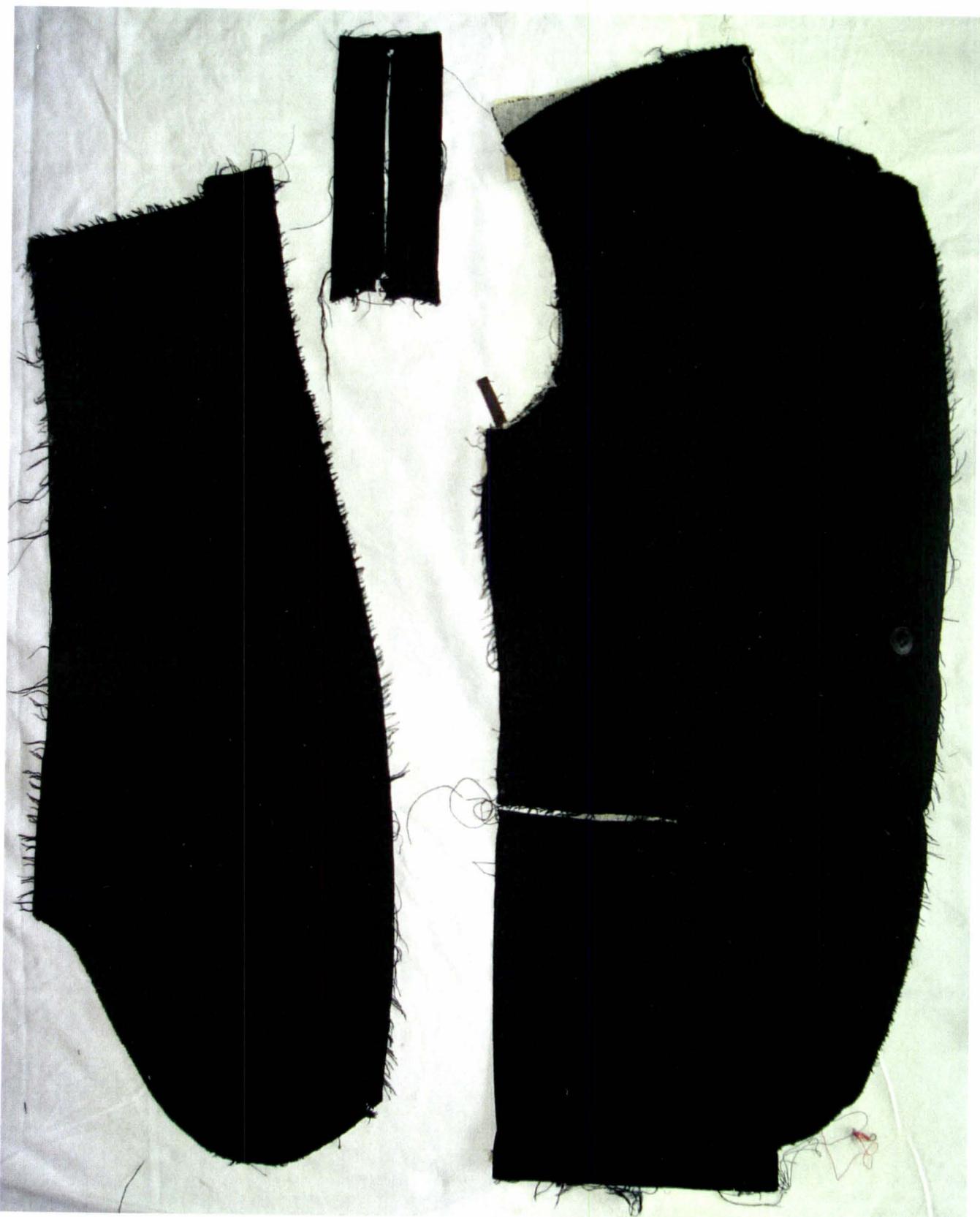
Minna (Kuprat)

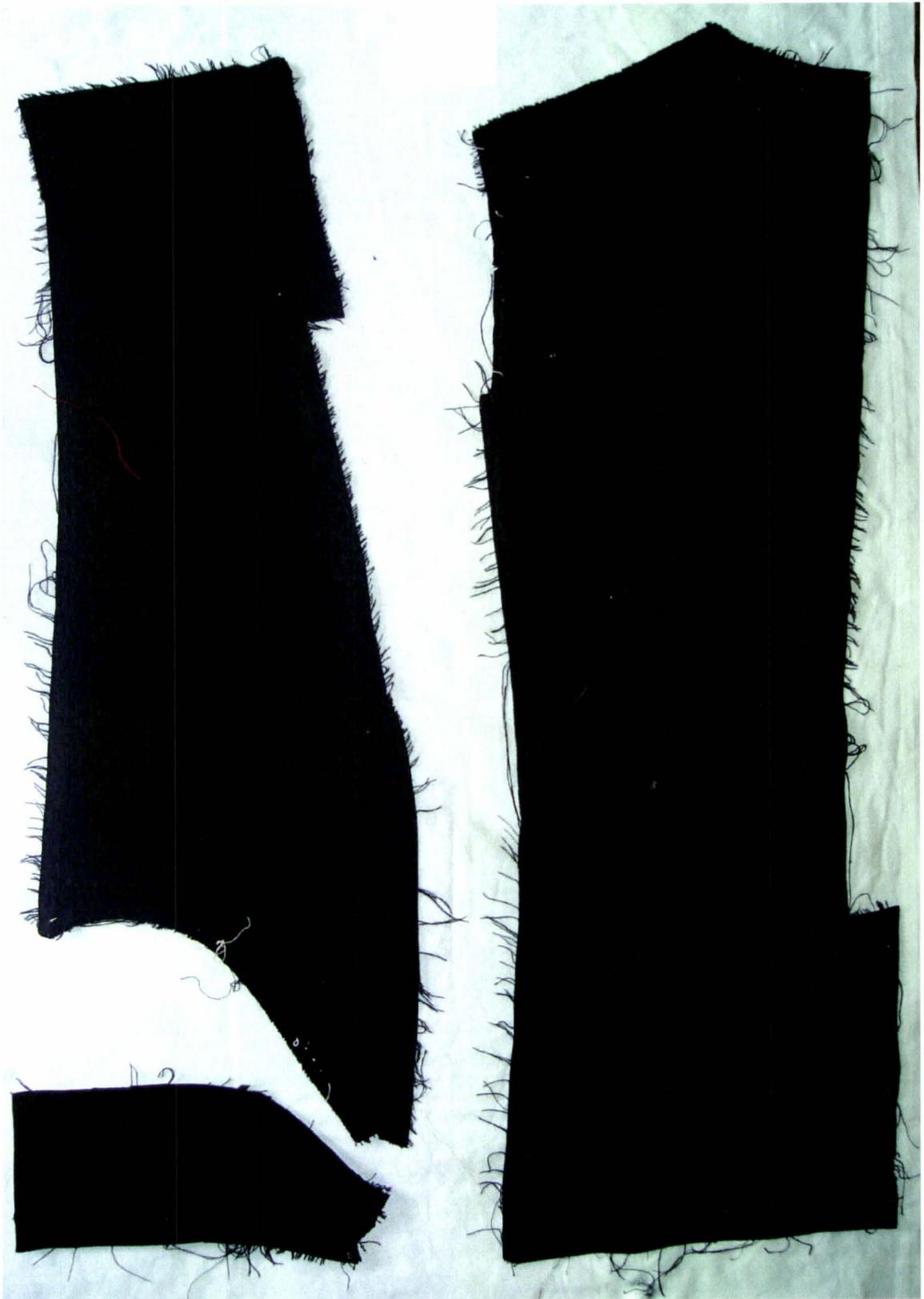
B:18 Dec 1892



Screen-Printing

This page: Screen 1. Opposite page: Screen 2.





Screen-Printing

Screen 3

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