# Remember me this way: the role of clothing in contemporary British death practice

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

The candidate further confirms that while drafting this thesis, she has authored the following papers, which are either published or in the public domain. While there is no intentional re-use of material, similarities are possible.

- **2014.** Materials for mourning: Bereavement literature and the afterlife of clothes. Critical Studies in Fashion & Beauty, 5(2), pp.253-270.
- **2014. What to wear for the afterlife** in Religion and Belief: A Moral Landscape, Heath et al, Cambridge Scholars.
- 2015. "Upstairs Now with Billy and Don": Spontaneous Memorials in the Footballing Community. Networking Knowledge: Journal of the MeCCSA Postgraduate Network, 8(1).
- 2015. "Behind the bearers, the black mourning wearers..." The funeral parade as a symbol of regeneration.

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### Abstract

This study examines the role of clothing in contemporary British death practice. It explores the way in which clothing supports the negotiation of loss and curation of memory in present-day Britain; considering both the historical origins of clothing practices and the reasons for their persistence.

Having considered the clothes placed upon the dead body, the disposition of the clothes the dead leave behind, the clothes worn by mourners and the use of clothing as, or in memorials, the study argues that these contribute to a small number of critical objectives. They idealise the dead, refining their memory until they can be considered exemplary ancestors; they provide points of imaginal contact with these ancestral figures and they connect both the living and the dead to imagined communities which provide spaces within which the bereaved are permitted to mourn, and the dead are afforded a rudimentary kind of immortality.

Despite the critical role played by clothing in personal and communal recovery from loss, this thesis also argues that clothing has affective power which, if not carefully controlled, may be experienced as a haunting.

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# Preface

In the developed world of the twenty-first century, where life expectancy is high, it is easy to ignore both death itself and the practices through which people negotiate loss. I managed to ignore these things for thirty-eight years; and then my sister died.

The strangeness of the bereavement experience cannot be overstated. In the period that immediately follows a death, the bereaved find themselves in a landscape where only one thing has changed, but everything seems unfamiliar. Yesterday's priorities seem meaningless yet mundane objects assume an uncanny significance. My sister's clothing fascinated me. I returned from her funeral wearing her necklace and her coat; later I also acquired one of her cardigans and a rather wonderful dress from Monsoon. In the months that followed the funeral I got a great deal of pleasure from wearing these clothes; they offered a sense of physical closeness to Jen and provided opportunities for me to talk about her. People who complimented me on the Monsoon dress learnt rather more about my sister and her death than etiquette would normally permit. Their responses were fascinating: a surprising amount shared their own experiences of keeping or wearing the clothes of people who had died, one or two politely expressed concern about the wisdom or the "healthiness" of what I was doing.

Later, the loss of parents and in-laws alerted me to other aspects of the role that clothing plays in death practice and bereavement. My father died at 91, after a five year battle with Alzheimer's disease had reduced him from an intelligent, sociable man to a confused and shrunken shadow of himself. The tasks of deciding what clothes the undertaker might need, and finding an appropriate way to dispose of the rest, were far from trivial. It mattered a great deal to me that his final outfit should recall the man he used to be, and deciding what to do with garments that evoked memories was hard. I was not the only person who felt this way. "You can't throw this jumper away!" my daughter said, "he wore it to carve turkey every Christmas. He's wearing it in most of my memories".

When my mother-in-law died, clothing caused some controversy within the family. Her partner chose a "nice, comfortable nightie" for her to wear in the coffin, but her sons were horrified. "People need to remember her at her best" they said, "she loved getting dressed up to go out; that's what she needs to wear". Similarly, there was disagreement about what should be done with her wedding rings and costume jewellery: should the locket containing her sister's

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portrait return to her sister, or should it go to her granddaughter to be passed to future generations? The use and disposition of clothing in the death context appeared to be determined by rules, obligations and ascribed meanings. The importance of these was keenly felt, yet the rules had no clear logic and I, at least, had no idea when or where I had learnt them.

This study aims to explore and explain the capacity of clothing to evoke memory, emotion and a sense of obligation in the period following a death. To this end it will

- identify the experiences and behaviours associated with clothing in the death context,
- investigate their origins and
- explore the role they play in the accommodation of loss.

This is an under-researched area, perhaps because Western society has recently passed through a phase when death was "denied" (Becker, 1973: 90, Aries, 2000) or "sequestered" (Walter, 1994), and when clothing, having become associated with triviality and deceit, received little academic attention (Barnard, 1996: 2, Crane and Bovone, 2006); there is thus a gap in knowledge which this thesis seeks to address.

This gap becomes apparent when the terms "death" and "clothing" are combined in a literature search. Most of the items returned relate to clothing which may cause death or garments which inhibit decay. Those articles which do address the cultural role of clothing in the death context are primarily historical, dealing with the gifting of clothing in mediaeval wills (Lambert, 2014) or with garments discovered in historical burials (e.g. Davidson, 2016). Combining the terms "clothing" and "mourning" yields more material, yet again the majority of the texts deal with historical practice (e.g. Buck, 1968, Cunnington and Lucas, 1972, Taylor, 1983).

The list of titles and abstracts resulting from such searches appears to suggest that clothing *once* played an important formal and public role in British bereavement practice: it *used* to matter what the corpse and the mourners wore and there *used to be* an etiquette for disposing of a loved one's clothing, but this is no longer true. There is something unconvincing in this picture however; it seems more likely that the role of clothing in death practice shifted and changed while the academic gaze was averted and that there is a need for a contemporary study.

Searching academic databases using the terms "clothing" and "bereavement", meanwhile, reveals a small, but significant, body of literature which suggests a growing interest in the role played by clothing in the private worlds of bereaved people. The majority of texts are written from a therapeutic perspective and suggest that clothing either helps the bereaved to "maintain a sense of connection [with the dead]" (Layne, 2000, Gibson, 2008, Zisook and Shear, 2009) or jeopardises their peace of mind (Richardson, 2014). The literature on the private usage of clothing reveals a different kind of knowledge gap; the question of whether – and why – clothing might constitute a specially rich form of connective or haunting material is raised from a variety of perspectives, but, frustratingly, is often an aside in a text which is primarily focussed on something else entirely.

The knowledge gap this thesis addresses then, has two dimensions – an under-reported shift in practice and an under-explored theoretical core. The study addresses these through an extended review of previous literature, through gathering data on how bereaved people in Britain use and experience clothing, and by asking where significant behaviours originated and why they persist.

The literature review is presented in three parts. First, key theoretical approaches to death and bereavement are outlined; next the theories of clothing which the study draws upon are discussed; finally the small literature which deals specifically with clothing in the death context is critically reviewed.

The data is presented across four chapters, each of which deals with a distinctive clothing behaviour; dressing the dead body, disposing of the clothes the deceased has left behind, wearing mourning clothes and incorporating clothing in memorials. A final chapter then draws together the common themes and presents an argument that bereaved people attempt to use clothing to achieve strategic benefits (such as idealising the deceased and reaffirming communal principles) but can find their efforts thwarted by the capacity of clothing to evoke uncontrolled memory and stimulate aversive as well as pleasant emotions.

Part I: Background to the project

# Chapter 1 Literature review, part 1: theoretical approaches to death

#### 1.1 The literature considered

The clothing practices associated with death are discussed by a range of authors including costume historians, anthropologists and sociologists. Cunnington and Lucas (1972) present a wealth of historical material on the clothing traditions associated with death, burial and mourning from the mediaeval period to the nineteenth century, but fail to offer any theoretical framework in which to ground them. Taylor (1983) provides an analytical history of mourning clothing, while Gorer (1965) Buck (1968) and Bedikian (2008) discuss the decline of mourning fashions. Academic discussions of the dressing of the dead body are provided by Barley (1983) and Harper (2010a, 2012), while Stallybrass (1999) and Richardson (2014) describe the way in which the garments the dead leave behind become affective objects and mnemonic material. In addition to the texts noted above, the clothing associated with death practice is discussed in a fragmentary way across a range of other literatures, particularly those of archaeology and thanatology.

Although this study focusses on the behaviour of present-day people in Britain, it follows precedents set by Taylor (1983) and Tseelon (1995) in also considering historical and cross-cultural accounts in order to understand the origins of these behaviours and the factors that cause variation: it therefore draws upon a wide range of literature. Texts which theorise death itself are considered in this chapter, Chapter 2 discusses the central tenets of clothing theory, while the literature which deals specifically with clothing in the death context is considered in Chapter 3.

# 1.2 Academic perspectives on death

The literature which deals with death largely casts it as a problem – a threat to the identity of the one who dies, to the psychological well-being of the bereaved and to the structures of value and meaning which hold social groups together. A range of strategies used to counter this threat are also described. However, in considering death as a "problem" requiring remedial action, it is important to note the many different ways in which this problem has been constructed.

The literature identifies three distinct and sequential approaches to death; the "traditional", the "modern" and the "postmodern", although some writers see a great deal of continuity between these paradigms and suggest that this model has been "forced" onto a much more disparate reality. The continuity noted by some authors can be reconciled with the changes identified by others in two ways; either by following Giddens (1990, 1991) in arguing that new approaches overlay rather than displace the old, or by considering the different paradigms to be the result of different theoretical approaches rather than substantive differences in the behaviour observed.

# 1.3 Traditional approaches to death and grief

Traditional approaches to death and grief tend to adopt a structural functionalist model, in which society is imagined as an organism which must be returned to a state of equilibrium after it has been destabilised by death (Charmaz, 1980: 31ff). It is argued, for instance, that in a small village community the death of any individual may create significant gaps in social structure, while the death of a leader or landowner may threaten the very survival of the group (Metcalf and Huntington, 1991: 134). In this situation the needs of the individual must be subordinated to the need to regenerate communal life.

The literature suggests that communal needs are addressed through ritual behaviour, with vacant roles being filled using rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960) and the group's unity and confidence being regenerated through "piacular rites" (Durkheim, 1915) which provide a way of discharging pain (Graham, 2007: 31) or offer hope by presenting an idealised vision of communal life (Jones, 1986). This focus on the wellbeing of the group led to the careful management of where and when it was appropriate to mourn. The personal pain of the bereaved was concealed, or at least confinded to the domestic interior (Buck, 1968) so that it did not adversely affect public morale or undermine cultural ideals. For the same reason, temporal limits to mourning were defined (Davey, 1890). The concealment of grief was so successful that some scholars were able to claim it was insignificant. Ariès (1974, 1981), for example, characterises traditional death as "tame" or unthreatening, arguing that in peasant communities death was as familiar as seasonal change and the bereaved found consolation in the support of their peers and in the church's assurances that death was not the end. Where grief was acknowledged, it was seen as a spiritual "opportunity" for the bereaved to prepare for their own

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death (Douglas, 1975: 503, Taylor, 1983) and as a reminder of their obligations to the deceased.

Despite the difficulties in accessing the beliefs of historical populations (or assessing their orthodoxy), it is assumed that mainstream Christian theology provided the framework within which mourners undesrtood, and tried to support, the afterlife journey of the deceased. Up until the 11th century, the Western Church taught that believers slept in the grave before being resurrected on the last day (and therefore required clothing that afforded comfort and protection). From the 12th century, however, the teachings of St Augustine (AD 354-430), which assumed an immortal soul, gained favour. Augustine taught that individual judgment followed death: the righteous entered the City of God and the unredeemed went to Hell (Walter, 1996a: 16f:). The terrifying prospect of Hell was tempered by the introduction of Purgatory (Le Goff, 1984), a netherworld where those who had committed minor sins could expiate these before progressing to Heaven (Perham, 1980: 33). Sleep in the grave was thus replaced by a journey of self-improvement, and the dead who made this journey could be helped by the prayers of the living (Walter, 1996a: 17). When Protestantism emerged in the sixteenth century, the doctrine of Purgatory was dismissed and intercessory prayer for the dead forbidden (Hayes, 1932: 401). However, the living were still expected to sustain the good reputation of the deceased (Laquer, 1983) and they were encouraged to look forward to a heavenly reunion with those who had gone before (Jalland, 1996: 142). This fostered a strong interest in preserving memories of the dead (Goody, 1993: 277, Vanderstraeten, 2014:4); not merely enshrining them in personal memory, but also in the collective memory fostered by memorial building, portrait painting, biography writing or charitable endowments.

# 1.4 Modern approaches to death and grief

Modern approaches to death switched attention from the needs of the group and those of the deceased individual to the needs of the family left behind. There were several reasons for this. Rising life expectancy increased investment in family bonds (Kellehear, 2007) while the communities and religious institutions that had previously organised and interpreted death were eroded by urbanisation and secularisation (Ariès, 1974: 88, Jalland, 1999). Moreover, death was increasingly sequestered (Mellor and Shilling, 1993a,

Willmott, 2000), denied (Becker, 1973, Illich, 1976) or rendered taboo (Gorer, 1955, 1965).

The literature offers two explanations for this swing towards secrecy. Some writers attribute it to the incompatibility of traditional death narratives with some of the defining conditions of modern life; secularisation for instance, faith in scientific progress and the developing idea that a body-focussed identity represented the life-work of an individual (Mellor and Shilling, 1993b: 411ff). As Ariès (1974: 94) put it, industrial societies "repressed" death to remove the threat to "happiness" which had come to be understood as society's raison d'etre. Other writers, however, attribute the change to the shock of mass fatality in World War I (Gorer, 1965, Kenny, 1998, Walter, 1999b: 133, Berridge, 2001). There is agreement, however, that in this new thought-world both the dying and the bereaved were shunned as unwelcome reminders of mortality (Elias, 1985). Death became a private affair that the family must deal with on their own (Doka, 2008): but while traditional responses to death had confined mourning to the family home, modern approaches made it problematic even there.

The experiences of bereaved families were now understood using medical rather than religious paradigms. The notion of a Christian afterlife went into eclipse (Walter, 1996a: 19) while grief lost its spiritual meaning and became seen as a pointless aberration (Irion, 1966), a disorder which might require treatment (Granek, 2010) and which may, in fact, be a form of separation anxiety arising from the disruption of family relationships (Bowlby, 1960, 1971, 1980). In Bowlby's influential model, the bereaved adult was described as behaving like an abandoned child: "pining" for and "clinging" to their loved one (Bowlby, 1971). Other theorists stressed the ways in which bereavement damaged personal identity and the structure of the family unit (Walker et al., 1977, Fulton and Bendiksen, 1994). It was argued that identities affirmed in marriage were threatened by the death of the spouse (Walter, 1999b: 72) and parental identities by the death of a child (Gorer, 1965: 106, Barrera et al., 2007). Equally, the death of any family member was claimed to create a "structural void" in the family (Bowlby-West, 1983: 279) with both functional roles (such as provider) and emotional roles (such as "the humorous one") falling empty. All in all, death was claimed to create what Bowen (2018; 338ff) described as an "emotional shockwave" within the family.

This new focus on the family was not, however, entirely the result of changes in the social world, but also of changes to the way in which the social world

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was studied. Theological, historical and anthropological approaches to death were all pushed aside by psychological concerns, while structural functionalist analyses were replaced by a symbolic interactionist approach. Symbolic interactionism "postulates that selves and social structures are constructed through continuous interaction over time" (Charmaz, 1980) and that death, dying and bereavement are not objective experiences, but collective interpretations. As death now appeared to be a matter for the family, it was at the level of the family that these interpretations were studied.

When the problems arising from death were constructed from this perspective, two distinct remedies were advocated.

- The vacant roles within the family should be reallocated (Pincus, 1976, Bowlby-West, 1983)
- Bereaved individuals should "work through" the stages of grief, gradually withdrawing emotional energy from the deceased so that it might be re-invested in a new love object. This process, which Freud (1917) termed decathexis, underpinned the most influential therapeutic approaches of the twentieth century (e.g. Lindemann, 1944, Parkes, 1972, Raphael, 1984).

# 1.5 Postmodern approaches to death and grief

While traditional death-ways focussed on the community and modern death-ways on the family, postmodern death-ways completed the shift of attention from group to the individual. In dismissing the "grand narratives" of science and religion, Postmodernism devolved the whole task of interpreting and responding to death to the individual (Ramshaw, 2010), and removed many of the assumptions which had characterised previous approaches to death.

Postmodernism queried the existence of the "ontologically real self" (Mellor and Shilling, 1993a) and raised both medical and ontological questions about what it meant to die (Kastenbaum, 1998). With the nature of selfhood and death both open to debate, it was no longer necessary to imagine death as a radical and permanent separation: what had been destroyed was not so much a person as the assumptive world of the bereaved (Marris, 1986). Therapists stopped advocating decathexis (Davies, 2003), and instead advised the mourner to reconstruct the way in which they understand the world (Neimeyer, 2001), and to find "an appropriate place for the dead in their emotional lives" (Worden, 1991: 509).

Reconstruction involves re-telling the story of the deceased until an acceptable version emerges. This may take place through conversation (Walter, 1996b), or through inner speech. Scholars working in the narrative reconstruction tradition suggest that people make sense of their lives as if they were a character in a story (Frank, 1997, Neimeyer et al., 2002, 2006) and, when bereavement removes characters and negates plot-lines, they reconstruct stories involving the deceased in a way which keeps structures of meaning intact (Seale, 1998: 50). Such narratives are constructed by actively seeking new information about the deceased and blending this with existing knowledge (Hamilton, 1987). The result is what Walter (1996b) termed a "durable biography for the deceased".

Once the death-event has been processed, mourners are expected to sustain a relationship with the reconstructed person of the deceased, who may now be encountered as an inner representation (Klass, 1993a, Marwit and Klass, 1995, Howarth, 2007: 208) or as a "significant other" with whom conversation continues (Derrida, 1986, Gergen, 1987). Silverman and Nickman (1996: 349) liken continuing bonds with the dead to friendships with people who live far away, while Gergen (1987) imagines the dead as part of the cast of "real or fictitious .....characters with whom we engage in imaginal dialogues" (Stroebe et al., 1992: 1210). In such relationships the deceased is acknowledged to be "both present and not present" (Silverman and Nickman, 1996: 351), but is credited with the ability to influence or affect the living party by providing inspiration or solace (Stroebe et al., 1992, Klass, 1993b: 344f, Kellehear, 2002: 176, Howarth, 2007: 207) or by functioning as role model or mentor (Marwit and Klass, 1995: 257, Stroebe, 1997).

Continuing bonds are maintained by the survivor using a range of strategies. They may use memories to gain imaginative access a world where the deceased still lives (Klass, 1993b: 362) or they may use a religious framework to imagine a transcendent space or community where the living and the dead can commune¹ (ibid: 355). Some mourners use linking objects to provide a sense of proximity to the deceased (ibid: 352) or engage the dead in "conversation" through letters (Root and Exline, 2014) or social media posts (Carroll and Landry, 2010). Other mourners may keep the dead close by assimilating their beliefs, attitudes, styles or behaviours.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Communion of Saints is often understood as this kind of intergenerational community; see, for example Lysaught (2003).

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Seale (1998), and Howarth (2000), have proposed a model for continuing bonds which uses Anderson's (1983) notion of imagined communities as the basis for understanding relationships between the living and the dead. Here, the bonds envisaged are not those which link close friends and kin in dyadic relationships, but those that connect an individual to an imagined or virtual community. Imagined communities unite individuals through shared affiliations to nation-states, religions, musical genres and sports teams; and, as Seale (1998) points out, being dead poses no barrier to inclusion in such a group. Klass (2006: 855) also acknowledges this type of bond, suggesting that continuing bonds with the dead are maintained "within a nested series of narratives": beyond, but overlapping with, bonds to family, are bonds to tribe, nation and religion. These communal bonds also make use of linking objects, which, if "rich enough... can serve as...enduring, communally shared symbol[s]" Klass (1993b: 354). Although Klass does not fully articulate this point, he implies that what Durkheim (1915) called the "totemic objects" of a group can play a role in connecting the living and the dead.

#### 1.6 **Death and material culture**

Material culture might be defined as non-textual artefacts which nonetheless serve to reaffirm cultural principles. While this definition includes art objects it does not exclude functional objects: some items of material culture have a prosaic use-value but nonetheless enforce culturally approved behaviours and feelings (Hodder, 1994: 173ff). The material culture associated with death both articulates that society's approach to death and shapes its memories of the dead (Hallam and Hockey, 2000). Unsurprisingly, traditional, modern and postmodern approaches to death make different uses of material culture.

Traditional approaches to death made fulsome use of statuary and purpose-made mementos to tell the stories of the dead, to extol their virtues and to keep them in mind. They also used material culture to mediate a specific – religious – attitude to death and dying (ibid: 213) and to designate spaces in which the dead should be remembered; spaces within which the emotions appropriate to communing with the dead would be stimulated (ibid: 78). Reflecting on Victorian cemeteries in America, Ames (1981: 642) identifies five principles which characterise, not only grave markers, but the material culture associated with traditional approaches to death more generally. As well as articulating the separation of the living and the dead and flaunting excess in

design, death-related artefacts emphasize social hierarchies, glorify family and kinship relations and express a wish for permanence, for triumph over death.

By contrast, modern approaches to death led to its under-coding in material culture. Gravestones became plainer, commemorative statues less common; mourning clothing also faded away (Gorer, 1965) as reminders of death were banished from public space. Moreover, the themes which dominated material culture changed; religious iconography diminished as did the interest in promoting family honour. The themes which became prominent in the postwar years were the idea of death as a great equaliser; hence the serried ranks and standard design of war graves; and the celebration of the sacrificial death - hence the war memorial in every town and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Commemoration of death also became more abstract, less graphic: names often stood in for bodies in monuments to the dead. According to Berridge (2001: 47, 55, 60) these themes are all attributable to the impact of war and reflect not only a refusal to dwell on what had happened to the bodies of those who died in war – but also a hegemonic rationalisation of events; an insistence that those who had died were indisputably heroes and not, as some malcontents suggested, murder victims.

The banishing of commemoration from the public domain and the disappearance of purpose-made mementos may have encouraged the translation of ordinary possessions into vehicles of remembrance; for, as Hallam and Hockey (2000: 211) point out, commemorative items are of two sorts – those which are manufactured to encourage culturally endorsed forms of remembering, and those which "become vehicles of memories by virtue of their entanglement with persons deceased – for instance clothing and jewellery"

Post-modern approaches to death recast the role of material culture in commemoration yet again. The banishment of death from the public domain has been reversed. There is a new appetite for commemorative statues, most particularly for statues of dead sportsmen (Penn, 2005, Russell, 2006, Stride et al., 2013) and there are also myriad informal memorials to the dead in public space; commemorative benches and dedicated trees (Kellaher and Worpole, 2016), spontaneous memorials where tragedy has struck (Santino, 2006, Magry and Sanchez-Carretero, 2007, Doss, 2008). The public domain has become once more filled with "*lieux de memoire* where memory crystallizes and secretes itself" (Nora, 1989: 7), but whereas, previously, hegemonic authorities would have dictated who would be remembered, and where, and

how; informal memorialisation is polyvocal and personal. This concern to conserve and stabilise *personal* memories through material culture also extends to the body, where memorial jewellery and commemorative tattoos (McCormick, 2015) may now turn the mourner's own body into a 'site of memory' (Hallam and Hockey, 2000: 197).

# Chapter 2 Literature review, part 2: theoretical approaches to clothing

Just as the literature on death included both structuralist and symbolic interactionist perspectives, these approaches characterise the relevant literature on clothing. Structuralist approaches see production systems and social structures as bearing down upon and shaping the individual through cultural products including clothing (eg Simmel (1904), Veblen (1912)). Symbolic-interactionist approaches, meanwhile, cast clothing as a communicative medium or ritual device, which sustains social or discursive reality but also permits individuals to adopt roles, signal intentions and construct identities.

There is a further parallel to the death literature in that structuralist approaches tend to be associated with pre-modern clothing, symbolic-interactionist approaches with modernity. There are problems with trying to keep these two approaches radically separate however, for they often describe, not different phenomena, but the same phenomenon through a different lens. The individual wearer of clothes is inevitably conditioned by the clothes their milieu makes available to them, but they can choose whether to adopt, to subvert, challenge or ignore the received meanings of these clothes (Hebdige, 1979, Fiske, 1989). Clothing behaviours appear to be generated at the point where the individual interacts with their culture, but the outcome of this interaction cannot be fully explained by a single conceptual model.

Literature on clothing also presents two very different constructions of personhood. One, closely associated with symbolic interactionism, assumes that to be human is to be a discrete and purposive entity, a problem-solver, a meaning-maker and, in Maslow's (1943: 370) terms, "a perpetually wanting animal" driven to address a hierarchy of inner needs – from the need for warmth to the need for meaning and self-actualisation (ibid: 382f) – in accordance with the expectations of their cultural group. The other, which shares some common themes with the structuralist perspective but is rooted in Latour's (1996, 1999, 2005) Actor Network Theory, represents personhood as an intersubjective phenomena, the product of interactive networks, an effect which extends beyond the body and into the world beyond. Thus personhood may be viewed as an experience or effect generated within a network of people and things (Law, 1992). In this ontology, clothing forms part of the

extended body and not only shapes but participates in personhood. It is argued here that these two constructions of personhood are both separate and inseparable, for as well as representing different academic perspectives on the same reality, the experience of both acting and being acted upon characterises human experience.

In the sections that follow, key theories on the way in which clothing contributes to communal meaning-making and to the shaping of personhood and identity are reviewed. It is necessary at this point to clarify what exactly is meant by the terms "personhood", and "identity", for as Harré (1997: 1) points out, the terminology is a "mass of ambiguities". While acknowledging that other definitions exist, this study follows Apter (1983: 75) in assuming that a person (or a "self" or an "individual) is characterised by "a sense of personal distinctness, a sense of personal continuity, and a sense of personal autonomy"<sup>2</sup>. "Identity", meanwhile ,speaks not of the singularity or uniqueness of a person, but of their affiliations and memberships; the groups, classes or sets to which they belong (Harré, 1997: 6)

# 2.1 Clothing and the experience of the group

Anthropologists such as Durkheim (1915) and Douglas (1966) argue that cultures are founded upon, and bound together by, a shared understanding of the world. This understanding is based upon a classificatory system that imposes order on the world and a shared mythology that ascribes moral values to events and behaviours. This shared social reality is maintained through the reaffirmation of communal myths and values in discourse, material culture and ritual (Berger and Luckman, 1971), through the types of histories that are written, the types of memories conserved and the types of identity made available to group members. Clothing contributes to the maintenance of social reality both by classifying individuals and by giving material form to myth and discourse.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> While this seems at odds Actor Network Theory's insistence that personhood extends beyond the body and that persons may lack autonomy, the problem is more apparent than real. Extended personhood does not negate personal distinctness, it simply moves the imagined boundary of the self. Neither is the argument that personhood is an "effect" incompatible with the idea that persons experience a *sense* of personal autonomy.

## 2.1.1 Clothing as a classificatory system

Clothing provides a visual system that classifies persons, behaviours and events. According to Jones and Stallybrass (2000: 2ff) when capitalism replaced feudalism, social status became determined by parentage, patronage and profession, all of which could be read from the dressed body; as a result, clothing became the structuring principle of the social world. The emblems and devices originally used to identify knights in battle were claimed by particular families (Clark, 1847); servants were paid in, and obliged to wear, livery<sup>3</sup> (Jones and Stallybrass, 2000) bearing these marks. Trade guilds encouraged members to wear livery in order to display their professional credentials (Herbert, 1836: 166, 424) and certain styles and fabrics were reserved for specific ranks<sup>4</sup> (Hooper, 1915). Social identity became something that was "performed" for strangers, largely through the medium of clothing, at public gatherings, of which funerals were the paradigmatic example (Taylor, 1983: 19f).

Over time, clothing came to mark out very specific social roles and identities using the parameters of age, gender, class, religion and political affiliation (Spencer, 1854, Veblen, 1912, Goffman, 1951). Special types of clothing became associated with particular activities and particular times of day (Tseelon, 2016) and thus came to classify (and rank) times, places and activities as well as people. In this way clothing shaped the lived experience of the group and contributed to the reproduction of the social order (Williams, 1981: 38, Barnard, 1996: 32).

### 2.1.2 Clothing and social reality

As noted above, clothing is used to make communal structures and values visible and to articulate how life ought to be lived. Clothing specifies the types of identity available to group members, and the behavioural norms associated with these. It does this by functioning as a signifying system which naturalises particular ideas (Barthes, 1973: 131, Barnard, 1996: 39) and by providing part of the "habitus" through which taste and bodily practice are learnt by

very weeks type of uniform

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Livery was a type of uniform, made distinctive by colours, badges and emblems which identified the wearer as a member of a particular household or group (Jones and Stallybrass, 2000:4)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Laws passed in 1463, 1483 and 1510 made very detailed stipulations: no-one below the rank of knight of the garter could wear red or blue velvet, a shepherd or labourer could not wear cloth that cost more than 2/- per yard or use more than 3 yards of fabric for his gown (Hooper 1915, 433).

successive generations (Bordieu, 1984, Kuchler and Miller, 2005). Signification is in play when stylistic similarities give rise to a sense of shared identity and when social rank is articulated in clothing (Hodder, 1994: 114). Habitus comes into its own when clothing shapes behaviour through "practice and evocation – through the networking, interconnection and mutual implication of material and nonmaterial" (ibid: 117); for example when the corset and the high-heeled shoe physically as well as symbolically restrict the physical power and freedom of women (Veblen, 1912, Fields, 1999). A great deal has been written about the way in which clothing functions as a symbolic language, rather less about the way in which the materiality of clothing shapes lived experience. This bias does not indicate that one area is more important than the other, simply that matters of signification and representation have dominated academic and popular debate in a way that the haptic has not.

### 2.1.3 Clothing and communication

Garments are claimed to have acquired symbolic meaning through repeated patterns of association. Many of these derive from the use of clothing as a signifier of status, prowess or wealth (Spencer, 1854, Lurie, 1983). The hunter wore the pelt of his kill, the soldier trophies captured from the enemy (Carter, 2003: 29); the wealthy flaunted their ability to indulge in conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption by wearing clothes that made physical labour impossible (Veblen, 1912). Clothing meanings which do not relate to status probably originated in the theatrical use of clothing to explicate character and plot (Goffman, 1951, Rogers, 1975). Mediaeval actors relied upon a theatrical code which associated black clothing with mourning, gold and silver with royalty, green with youth and white with purity, in order to translate their bodies into "pictograms" which could be almost universally read (Rogers, 1975: 279). The church also developed a system of clothing symbolism for use in ritual and art: sack-cloth denoted penitence (Daniell, 1996) and specific colours were associated with spiritual states, seasons and saints (Legg, 1887). White was linked to the triumph of good over evil, black to mourning and the unredeemed soul (Taylor, 1983: 249). Violet and blue were associated with the Virgin Mary (Legg, 1887) red with the blood of Christ (Taylor, 1983: 259). Imperial purple might indicate that a particular dead individual had special standing in the imagined kingdom of Heaven (Rolfe, 1879: 32, Taylor, 1983: 259f). Clothing was thus able to inscribe the mythological beliefs and organising principles of a group upon the bodies of its members, not only naturalising these ideas

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(Barthes, 1973: 131, Barnard, 1996: 39) but also allowing group members to re-encounter them as fresh, vital and emotionally compelling<sup>5</sup>.

Two models of clothing communication are proposed in the literature; the processual and the semiotic. Processual models of clothing communication assume that garments are used to deliberately articulate pre-existent meanings to a defined audience. Such models come close to suggesting that meaning resides "in the garment or ensemble itself, in textures, colours and shapes" (Barnard, 1996: 73) and are frequently used to explain clothing behaviours in hierarchical and pre-modern societies. Wilson (1985) and Barnard (1996) argue that this model is outdated; that fashion has created a more dynamic form of clothing communication and that the meaning of clothing is no longer fixed (Barnard, 1996: 19). Whereas clothing historically articulated and reproduced a static form of social reality, it now describes alternative possibilities and (re)shapes the social world by making categories once assumed to be fixed – such as gender roles and social class – dependent on costumed performance (Rouse, 1989: 108, Barnard, 1996: 107).

Semiotic models of communication appear to explain modern clothing practice more appropriately. Such models view clothing communication as a context in which the structure and values of the group are debated, contested, modified and reaffirmed (Barnard, 1996: 131f, Gilchrist, 2009): meaning is produced by participants and may be construed differently, depending on audience and context. Although discrete models of semiotic communication are offered by several writers (Peirce (1902), Saussure (1974), Eco (1976), Barthes (1977)) there is agreement that material items "stand in for" ideas in order to make these communicable (Saussure, 1974); that is to say they become "signs". A sign can denote meanings which are consistent and consensual (like the church's liturgical colours) or connote personal meanings and associations. Items of clothing frequently carry both socially determined and personally ascribed meanings.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Barthes (1973: 110 & 117) argues that visual symbols have such sensory appeal and their meaning is decoded so rapidly that the viewer is tends to overlook their own interpretative activity and become convinced that they have encountered an external truth or revelation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> As for example the church used liturgical colours to broadcast messages about holiness, transcendence and virtue to those attending worship.

Although clothing is widely accepted to function as a semiotic code, using culture-specific rules to connect concepts to signifiers and to determine how these might be combined (McCracken and Roth, 1989: 14, Davis, 1992: 5, Barnard, 1996: 82), there remains disagreement about how this code operates. Lurie (1983) has argued that clothing communication resembles spoken language; with conventional symbols (textures, patterns, colours) acting as words which might be combined using rules that operated like grammar and syntax. As Davis (1992: 5) points out, however, the meaning of symbols is never as stable as the meaning of words, nor are there fixed rules for combining them (ibid: 6)7. For Davis, clothing codes are closer to aesthetic codes than to language and, following Culler (1976: 100), he suggests that while linguistic codes communicate existing knowledge, aesthetic codes reach beyond this "to communicate notions ... which have not yet been formulated" (Davis, 1992: 12, see also Wilson, 1985: 9 and Carter, 2003: 60, 130). Understood in this way, clothing becomes material for thinking with (cf Douglas and Isherwood, 1996, Turkle, 2007) and may have the potential to help people articulate paradox, mystery and change. However, as McCracken and Roth (1989: 28) point out, this is a personal rather than a social endeavour, for one person's successful articulation is not necessarily readable by others.

# 2.2 Clothing and the construction of personhood

Considering the way in which clothing may serve to construct personhood does not require the dismissal of all that has been said about the communicative potential of clothes. It does, however, problematize the idea of bounded individuals who remain radically separate from their garments, while manipulating them to encode semiotic messages. In this view personhood extends beyond the body boundary, incorporating objects, including garments, through processes of consumption and identity performance.

### 2.2.1 Consumption and identity

Sartre (1957: 591f) connects the urge to possess items to feelings of incompleteness, transience and mortality. Similarly, Hoffer (1973) explains consumption as a response to an existential hunger, a sense that self is

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> McCracken and Roth (1989:28f) argue that clothing code has failed to develop rules because it is not formally taught in the way that language is taught; neither is clothing self-referential. While verbal language allows the question "what does this word mean?" to be answered with other words, clothing cannot explain itself in this way

unfinished and needs things to make it complete, to stabilise it and to make it visible to others (Schouten, 1991: 412). This hunger is sometimes exploited by marketing narratives, which play upon consumer's hopes that a specific item or garment will give access to a desired identity (Crane, 2000: 69ff,: Barry, 2014, Ward and Dahl, 2014). However, the term "consumption" evokes not only the metaphor of hunger, but also that of eating, suggesting that goods are incorporated into the self, or "introjected" as part of a project of identity creation and management (Belk, 1988). Any possession which contributes to the projection or experience of self-identity may be introjected; thus frequently used possessions, and garments in which one feels completely comfortable, may be experienced as part of the self rather than as external objects (Lupton, 1998: 138, 144).

# 2.2.2 Identity performance

According to Munro (2015) individuals uses objects to demonstrate to significant others the kind of person that they are; their identity changing each time their performance changes or is differently construed by others. Identity is thus the product of social relations and object relations rather than an aspect of the psychological interior. Clothing holds a privileged position in this model; "if owning goods generates self-identity, then wearing those goods achieves the end in a powerful way" (Goldsmith et al., 2012: 106). The body is the definitive symbol of the individual's self-concept (Schouten, 1991: 413) and clothing provides a rich and varied language for identity performance. A person's wardrobe is thus an assemblage of potential identity carriers from which the individual constructs or realises themselves daily in the act of dressing (Woodward, 2005).

In the twenty first century the performance of identity through clothing is a paradigmatic act of consumption. In this context, however individuals do not "consume" the clothes themselves, but the narratives, or symbolic discourses that clothes sustain; most particularly narratives about gender, class, race and beauty (Davis, 1992: 26). These narratives are strongly affirmed in advertising and the shopping experience and play a critical role in the perpetual reconstruction and the performance of personal identity (Shields, 1992, 2003, Warde, 1994).

### 2.2.3 Actor Network Theory

Actor Network Theory is a particularly radical version of the idea that personhood emanates from interplay of people and objects. In Actor Network Theory, everything that happens, everything that exists is taken to be the result

of "actors" stimulating activity within networks (Latour, 1996: 371) of various materials. Actors need not be human, nor are they assumed to be conscious or to possess intentionality (Latour, 1996: 373, 378, 1999: 21) they are simply objects with "affect"; objects capable of generating a re-action in others, of bringing new conditions into being. Thus a person might be defined as "an effect generated by a network of heterogeneous, interacting, materials" (Law, 1992: 3). It follows that objects play a critical role in sustaining personhood, and not only when the self is performing for an audience. Specific objects may be required to complete the activities associated with selfhood. As Law (1992: 4) points out "if you took away my computer.... my books, my desk....I wouldn't be a sociologist". In the same way, the specific clothing required for the fulfilment of occupational and gender roles might be argued to create, sustain and participate in the work persona and the gendered self.

### 2.2.4 Clothes as receptacles of and conduits for selfhood

Just as objects can be incorporated into the self, so the self can become distributed "through different material objects" (Gell, 1998a: 21) sometimes inadvertently, sometimes with intent. The deformation of an item by repeated usage (the shaping of the jacket to the body, the shoe to the foot) and the accumulation of exuvia8 (Gell, 1998a) in intimate possessions are unintentional, but still serve to distribute "personhood...beyond the body boundary" (ibid, 1998a: 104). Parkin (1999: 303f), however, draws attention to strategies of "socio-material prosthesis" wherein personhood is invested in material items in order to reinforce as well as express the self. When identity is threatened by crisis or death, the preservation of connections to the individuals and objects that contribute to the regeneration of self becomes urgent (Hallam and Hockey, 2000: 42): hence the tendency of refugees to include, among their meagre possessions, things that remind them of "who they are" (Parkin, 1999: 313), mementoes which are able to "encapsulate" personhood" (Hallam and Hockey 2000:26) and hence, perhaps, the eagerness of the dying to pass forward the things that they have treasured (Stallybrass, 1999).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> In biology "exuvia" denotes the cast-off exoskeleton of an insect or crustacean. Gell uses the word to describe the small material traces – skin cells, hair, finger nails – that fall from the human body.

# Chapter 3 Literature review part 3: clothing in the death context

A number of writers specifically address the ways in which clothing is used in the death context in contemporary Britain. There are, for instance, small bodies of work which deal with the dressing of the dead body, with mourning clothing and with the clothes the dead leave behind. However, many of these discussions lack the theoretical richness of archaeological and anthropological accounts; therefore, in the sections which follow, contemporary sociological commentary is juxtaposed with material from other disciplines.

# 3.1 The dressing of the dead body

Accounts of body styling, based on participant observation in funeral homes, are offered by Naylor (1989), Bradbury (1999), Howarth (1996), Gore (2005) and Harper (2010a, 2012). There are also a number of death-worker autobiographies (West, 1988, Albin-Dyer, 2003, 2004, Albin-Dyer and Watts, 2004, Price-Powell, 2004, Franklin, 2009, Williams, 2010, Baker, 2012), which provide complementary insights.

Several themes permeate this body of writing;

- the idea that body-styling constitutes a dramaturgical presentation of communal values
- the desire to stimulate specific emotional responses in the viewer
- the concern to articulate the identity of the deceased
- the wish to conserve, or edit memory
- rites of passage
- the work-practices of commercial undertakers and the expectations of the consumer.

In drawing attention to these themes, the specialist literature indicates that body-styling is a negotiated practice, shaped by the interests of multiple stakeholders.

### 3.1.1 The reaffirmation of communal values

Writers who describe the open-casket American funeral stress the way in which the dead are aligned – through body styling and narrative description – with communal values and totemic images and narratives (Turner and Edgely, 1975, Metcalf and Huntington, 1991). This is associated with both emotional

experiences and ritual effects. The bereaved are comforted to find that the personhood of the deceased is not destroyed but perfected; the dead are translated into exemplary ancestors; the core beliefs of the group are refreshed.

According to Durkheim (1915), the things a community values most highly – its principles and its heroes – become objects of worship or "totems" for that community. Totems<sup>9</sup> symbolise the best qualities, real or imagined, of the group (Shilling, 2005: 213f) and are potent signifiers of group identity. In totemic ritual individuals identify with totemic objects in order to access a sense of transcendence that unites and energises the group (Rappaport, 1999). Certain items of clothing (the medal, the uniform, the wedding dress) constitute totemic emblems, while the idealised dead, who are dressed in such garments, make unsurpassable totems (Durkheim, 1915: 28, Davies, 1997: 14). Turner and Edgely (1975) suggest that the idealisation of the dead in funerary practice translates them into exemplary or totemic ancestors, while Metcalf and Huntington (1991:210, 214) argue that it serves to refresh what Bellah (1967, 1974) termed "civil religion"; a vibrant and positive experience of group membership based upon the sacralisation of communal values and communal history (Bellah, 1974: 255).

Gore (2005: 27, 137), who is a funeral director as well as a researcher, argues that British funeral practice also uses the laid-out body to articulate the shared values of the group<sup>10</sup>: not only to reassure the bereaved that death cannot destroy what the community values, but also to present death itself as part of life's natural continuum rather than its horrific opposite.

A similar argument is made by Bradbury (1999: 116), who follows Bloch and Parry (1982) in asserting that the corpse is styled to demonstrate that "the mode of death was a good one" (ibid: 130). Good deaths are exemplary, even beautiful and present death as the fulfilment of life's meaning (Kellehear, 2007: 90): they are the polar opposite of bad deaths which bring shame to the deceased or the community and which problematize shared assumptions and values (ibid: 95). Good deaths are timely and peaceful or heroic and

<sup>9</sup> The most easily recognised totems are religious symbols and national flags, but some garments (the crown, the military uniform) can give their wearers totemic status.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Similar ideas are found in American studies form Turner and Edgely (1975) and Hyland and Morse (1995)

sacrificial; they promise both "rebirth for the individual....[and] a renewal of the world for the living" (ibid: 16).

In the traditional Christian context the good death "demonstrated" that the deceased had gone to Heaven, thus reviving religious hope in the living (Jalland, 1996), and reminding survivors who they were and what they stood for. Bradbury (1999), however, argues that the good death is no longer a religious concept but a reputational barometer measuring the success of both the deceased and the community. The good death is characterised by the retention of dignity and personhood, by the avoidance of pain and by the provision of social support. Dead bodies are therefore styled to erase signs of pain or medical intervention and their identity restored to eliminate any suggestion the death was bad or the community neglectful (Bradbury, 1999: 193). Naylor (1989: 172, 192) notes that both concern for the appearance of the body and the time spent viewing is greater when the death is shocking or unexpected, implying that more symbolic work must be done to affirm that these deaths were good and to minimise the threat they pose to cultural mythology.

### **3.1.2 Emotion**

The literature understands emotion in two very different ways. As Hockey (1993: 129) points out, emotion is usually regarded in the West as "a natural and uncontrollable entity which is contained within the body": the release of emotion is believed to be therapeutic to the individual but damaging to the order and cohesion of the group. Elsewhere emotion is regarded as a response which is required – and thus deliberately stimulated – for ritual purposes.

Durkheim (1915: 397) argues that the mourner weeps not only to express personal sorrow but because "it is a ritual attitude", and because through the collective expression of emotion in piacular ritual<sup>11</sup> the community may rediscover its power. Radcliffe-Brown (1964: 324) develops this line of thought

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> In piacular ritual, emotion passes from one participant to the next: mourners may be drawn into a "panic of sadness" giving rise to violent expressions of anger and despair (Graham, 2007:31): however, in discharging this emotion the community is revitalised. Alternatively the community may channel their collective emotion into rituals which both express their sorrow and (re)generate a hopeful vision of the future (Jones: 1986)

to suggest that funerary practice works upon participants to induce and sustain a "system of sentiments" crucial to the survival of the group.

This second construction of emotion is most frequently used to explain the mourning behaviours of non-Western societies, but writers on contemporary Western funerary practice imply that the practices of the funeral director serve both to inhibit emotional expression (see 3.1.6) and to induce carefully selected emotional states in the viewer, because these are believed to be therapeutic. For Barley (1983: 19f) the presentation of the corpse seeks to counter distress by evoking its opposite: light colours are chosen because they are "associated with jubilant occasions"; garments such as wedding dresses selected because of their connection with rituals which are the "emotional opposite of a funeral".

### 3.1.3 Articulating the identity of the deceased

The desire to articulate communal values and manage the emotional responses of the bereaved would appear to encourage conventional – even formulaic – approaches to body-styling: nonetheless, most writers affirm that the body is styled to express the identity of the deceased (eg Naylor, 1989, Bradbury, 1999: 131). The corpse is expected to resemble the living individual (Harper, 2010a: 103, Howarth, 1996: 84, 137) and to evoke their treasured characteristics.

When Naylor (1989) conducted her study it was common for the body to be dressed in a burial robe selected from the small number of styles offered by the funeral director; but even then, she maintains, attempts were made to evoke the style, personality and preferences of the deceased. A blue shroud might be chosen because the deceased "liked blue" or because "Grandad was a very masculine man....[and] a strong Conservative" (ibid: 256f).

When dressing the dead in their own clothing became popular, the character of the deceased could be recreated through costume and props (Ruby, 1995: 78). Gore (2005: 97) confirms that clothing belonging to the deceased, their accessories, cosmetics and even their deodorant are often used in the final presentation. The identity of the deceased, as represented through coffin clothing, may be both idealised and simplified; key attributes and virtues intensified in a way not seen in life, and the outfit expected to define them so accurately that they "would happily spend eternity in it" (Heaney, 2017). As noted in Chapter 2, identity refers not to the uniqueness of person but to their connections, affiliations and memberships, it is therefore unsurprising that

garments that celebrate affiliations and relationships feature strongly in the final outfit; these include clothes worn on special family occasions and gifted or inherited jewellery (Harper, 2010a).

### 3.1.4 The curation of memory

Parker Pearson's (1999: 9) statement that in the final presentation of the corpse "memories of the dead person are congealed" is much quoted in the literature, but there are several way in which this statement might be interpreted. For Howarth (1996: 169) and Gore (2005) the styling of the body represents an attempt to insert a "memory picture" which is unreal, but consolatory into the personal memories of mourners. The intention is to reassure the mourners of the value of the life just ended, to regulate their emotional response (cf Barley, 1983: 18f), to erase unpleasant memories of the dying trajectory and to negate the horror evoked by death itself (Gore, 2005: 21).

Other accounts, however, suggest that the styling of the dead body contributes to communal rites wherein "memories of the dead [are] performed and composed" (Williams, 2006: 20f) in order to shape "social memory". At this point it seems important to clarify what is meant by collective, or social memory. Assman (1995) used the term "collective memory" to describe the informal and disorganised way in which groups of people recall and discuss the past: the elements of memory that were deliberately archived, celebrated, or commemorated he termed "cultural memory". Cultural memory is "drastically selective" (Yerushalmi, 2011: 101) retaining only those memories which sustain identity, shape communal life and impose standards of behaviour. Cultural memory secures the current identity of the group by anchoring it in stories of the past and it turns the dead into ancestors by aligning them with the principles and preferred identities of the group. Although the terminology used is not consistent across the literature, many writers refer to processes whereby the styling of the dead body helps to determine what the bereaved group will remember about the deceased and how those memories will strengthen and stabilise collective identity.

These memory-practices may *mis*represent the deceased in order to advance favoured narratives. Gilchrist (2009), for example, has pointed out that the mediaeval church buried some individuals who were not priests in the clothing associated with sacramental worship, in order to focus attention on preferred identities and behaviours. Similarly Harke (1990) has argued that the Anglo-Saxons provided "warrior burials" for individuals who had never fought. Such

styling strategies inscribe aspirational or "ancestral identities" (Gilchrist, 2009) on the dead body in order to articulate the values of the group – their ideas about how life should be lived.

Thus dressing the dead body appears to be one of the "mourning rituals [that] install the dead into collective memory<sup>12</sup>, not merely into the individual memories of those who knew them" Klass (2015: 102) and in doing so translates them into collective representations or ancestors (ibid). Peers are turned into ancestors through a process of memory curation which removes individuating detail, stresses alignment with cultural ideals (Miller and Parrot, 2009: 506), and attempts to inscribe the stories of the exemplary dead onto communal memory (Williams, 2006). The clothing on the dead body contributes to this process in two ways; it "proves" the exemplary nature of the dead and it serves as a material trace of the past, helping to anchor memories which are experienced as shifting, uncertain and in danger of disappearing (cf Nora, 1996: 13).

Finally, Härke (2007) suggests that dressing and viewing the corpse serves to create a set of linked memories which extend backwards and forward through time. Memories of the past are evoked by garments and other grave goods, memories of the present are created by the practice of viewing, and the recounting of these memories in future is anticipated. This act of connecting the dead to the future and the living to the past generates a rudimentary form of immortality for the dead while buttressing the collective identity of the living.

### 3.1.5 Rites of passage

Many writers on the dressing of the dead body, find value in Van Gennep's (1960) notion of "rites of passage"; arguing that these are used by funeral directors to achieve three different effects. First, to confer ancestral identities on the dead (Naylor, 1989: 349, Gore, 2005: 15, Gilchrist, 2009) thereby sustaining some element of the deceased in the face of threatened extinction (Harper, 2012). Second, to counter the pollution and danger which result from the breaching of the boundary between life and death (Howarth, 1996: 109, Bradbury, 1999: 119f, Harper, 2010a: 100). Third, to support status change in the mourner, helping them to adjust to their loss (Howarth, 1996: 80, Gore,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Klass defines collective memory as memory shared at the level of the family, the tribe or the nation, he does not share Assman's assumption that this is a disorganised, non-specialised form of memory

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2005: 18) move into the next phase of grief (Bradbury, 1999: 130), or accept an inherited role.

Rites of passage first remove the individual from their original role through rites of separation, placing them in a transitional or liminal state where they await reclassification (Murphy et al., 1988: 237). The styling of the corpse is sometimes argued to indicate liminal status: the shroud does this by removing all classificatory markers, but equally, according to Ariès (1985: 36) the corpse in day clothing is marked as liminal when signifiers of life (day-clothing, eyeglasses) are juxtaposed with those of death (closed eyes and folded hands). Liminality, as a boundary-state, is however, associated with threats of pollution. These are countered through routines of cleansing, actions which reinforce boundaries (including the plugging of orifices) and through "rehumanisation" (Howarth, 1996). Later, a further stage of ritual transformation, "reintegration" or "incorporation", installs participants in their new roles, and it is here that the ancestral identity is conferred, using clothing that refers to an imagined or future identity in an ideal realm (Gilchrist, 2009).

The argument that viewing the corpse precipitates status change in the bereaved, encouraging them to accept a new (or inherited) role is problematic however. First because conflating emotional adaptation with status change is not always appropriate, second because no clear correlation can be demonstrated between viewing the body and the recovery of the bereaved (see for example Hodgkinson, 1993, Chapple and Ziebland, 2010). Finally, making the well-being of the bereaved a primary motive for corpse-dressing fails to account for the corpses (well evidenced in death-worker biographies) who are dressed and styled but never visited.

# 3.1.6 The work practices of the funeral director

As funeral directors style the dead body, it makes sense to consider how their interests and work-practices influence the result. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, funeral directors have been accused of providing attentions to the corpse simply in order to maximise profit, with Dickens (1850), Waugh (1951) and Mitford (1963) being perhaps the best-known critics. However the studies considered here suggest different behavioural drivers, based on customer demand and the desire for both an orderly workplace and professional status. It is argued that funeral directors strive to present the body in a way that meets clients' expectations, hoping that the skill, compassion and professional

13 The word liminal comes from the word "limen", which is Latin for "threshold"

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competence they demonstrate in doing so will generate future business (Turner and Edgely, 1975, Naylor, 1989, Howarth, 1996: 137). The expectation that the corpse will be aesthetically pleasing and look like the living individual is attributed by Gore (2005: 23) to inaccurate and stylised media descriptions of death, but this disregards a long history of presenting the dead as beautiful sleepers in tomb-top effigies, paintings and photographs (Ruby, 1995, Linkman, 2014).

The two distinct types of coffin clothing used in Britain – the mass produced gown and the deceased's own clothing – are associated in the literature with different strategies for ensuring an orderly workplace. The commercial burial gown may be presented as the default option if the funeral arranger wishes to avoid an emotional conversation with the bereaved (Naylor, 1989: 256, Bradbury, 1999: 75): it is easy for one worker to place on the body (Franklin, 2009: 42, Baker, 2012) and effective at concealing damage or decay (Price-Powell, 2004: 34, 47, 60, Naylor, 1989: 185); it reduces the risk that bereaved families will be disappointed in the appearance of the corpse by constraining expectations and limiting what can be seen and in this way reduces the risk of reputational damage (Turner and Edgely, 1975, Naylor, 1989).

Dressing the dead in their own clothing, meanwhile, is seen as consolatory and conducive to the grieving process (Howarth, 1996: 204), a way for funeral directors to simultaneously manage the emotional state of the mourners and advance their claims to professional status by adopting a therapeutic role (ibid). Dressing the dead in way that educes only positive memories and seeks to counter the existential fears that death evokes (Naylor, 1989: 184ff) is expected to help mourners come to terms with both this loss and the inevitability of death itself (Ruby, 1995: 15). Some writers go further, and argue that funeral directors attempt to "rehumanise" the dead body so that it provides "not merely a representation, but the physical presence of the individual" (Howarth, 1996: 25, 107, 147f) thus enabling mourners to say their goodbyes and complete "unfinished business" (Hyland and Morse, 1995: 457, 463).

Again, these arguments fail to explain why more bodies are dressed than are viewed. It is, of course, possible that death-workers have interiorised the principles of their professional practice to the extent that these have the power of cultural imperatives. Death-worker biographies, such as those of Price-Powell (2004), Franklin (2009), Williams (2010), and Baker (2012) certainly discuss feelings of shame, anger and disgust when a body has not been given

a dignified appearance and, conversely, pride and affection when badly damaged bodies have been well restored. It is sometimes argued that this represents a "natural" concern for the dignity of the dead<sup>14</sup> but death-worker biographies also detail sufficient cases of badly treated bodies to demonstrate there is no such natural imperative (see particularly Franklin, 2009, Baker, 2012).

### 3.1.7 Viewing the body

Estimates of how many mourners view the dead body in Britain vary greatly. American commentators, Mitford (1963) and Pine (1969) have argued that viewings in Britain are rare, and British studies by Naylor (1989) and Howarth (1996) tend to bear this out. However Gore (2005) argues that the practice of viewing, which became unpopular in the mid-twentieth century, has started to revive in the twenty-first.

It is sometimes argued that mourners assume that they can ascertain the "wellbeing" of the deceased – often understood as the wellbeing of the soul from the appearance of the body (Parkes, 1972: 169, Gore, 2005). Harper (2010b: 315) explains this phenomenon using Gell's (1998a) model of art interpretation which suggests that people read artefacts by trying to unravel the patterns of action and intent that brought them into being. In doing so they assume the existence of four parties: the "prototype", which is the idea or thing represented, the "index", which is the object itself, the "artist" who creates the object and, finally, the "recipient" who views it. The relationships between these parties are imaginatively reconstructed by the viewer in a variety of ways, each of which involves one of the parties acting upon one of the others in what Gell describes as an "agent/patient" relationship. Harper maintains that that the funeral director believes themself to be the artist and the agent, with the styled corpse the index and the patient. Mourners, however, tend to cast the deceased as agent and assume that the appearance of their body reflects their wishes and their wellbeing.

<sup>14</sup> Kenny's (1988) discussion of the treatment of dead bodies on battlefields is interesting in this regard.

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# 3.2 Mourning clothing

Although the history of mourning clothing – and the disappearance of formal mourning etiquette in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – has been well researched, there is very little material on mourning clothing in Britain after the Second World War. This is not to say that there are no longer any specific clothing practices associated with death. For example, while Naylor (1989) found that funeral attendees no longer routinely wore black, interviewees told her that they had chosen to wear their "best" clothes in order to express respect for the dead (Naylor, 1989: 287). Equally, a range of new clothing phenomena associated with death emerged in the late twentieth century without attracting significant academic attention. The most significant of these are:

- Personalised funerals, where the mourners are asked to "dress up"
- Requests for mourners to wear brightly coloured clothing
- T-shirts bearing the name or image of the deceased
- The re-emergence of mourning jewellery
- "Wearing in memory"; the practice of making mourning an aspect of one's social identity though a diverse array of wearable tokens

What literature exists is considered below, but there is considerable scope here for this thesis to make an original contribution.

### 3.2.1 Personalised funerals

Walter (2017) notes that from the 1990s onward there has been an increasing demand for personalised funerals. Indeed, a survey conducted by the British Funeral Service Journal in 2011 found that "almost half ... [of funeral consumers] are keen for their funeral to reflect their favourite hobby, colour, football team or music" (cited by Sanders, 2012: 266). The literature explains this new appetite in a variety of ways. Caswell (2011: 242) associates it with the tendency to view identity and life-course as the personal achievements of the deceased. Ramshaw (2010: 171f) argues that, in a postmodern world where meaning is relegated to the personal sphere, a "personalised funeral" and a "meaningful funeral" may appear to be synonymous. She also notes, that organising a personalised funeral may be therapeutic for the bereaved: giving them the opportunity to do something for the deceased and to regain some sense of control (ibid: 175). Equally, where mourners share nothing beyond familiarity with the deceased, a personalised funeral is the most inclusive format available (ibid: 172f). It may serve to stimulate memory, grief and longing (ibid: 176) so that mourners – even though they are strangers –

can express their grief within a safe environment and share memories and stories (ibidi: 173, 177).

Personalisation usually takes one of two forms: the funeral is either "identity focussed", seeking to describe the life just ended, perhaps through a descriptive eulogy, significant music, the display of photographs or memorabilia; or the ceremony is "themed" around a hobby or passion of the individual. In the latter context mourners may be asked to wear special clothing; perhaps "lively party clothes" (Albin-Dyer, 2003: 222), football tops or even fancy dress. Funeral director Jan Tury (2011: 840) describes a funeral where the mourners arrived wearing "Hawaiian shirts, shorts and sandals" to recall the many happy holidays they had spent with the deceased. He also recalls a funeral where the mourners dressed "in Blues Brothers fashion – smart suit, fedora hat and …sunglasses". He explains these events in terms of family memory-making.

If there is anything good to come from a funeral then I think it is the memories you can take with you... The Blues Brothers theme was a real treat for everyone and one that will be remembered by the family forever (ibid: loc 390)

Sanders (2012: 275), meanwhile, argues that themed funerals replace physical burial in the family plot with symbolic placement of the dead within a (non-geographic) "affinity network"; an imagined community which connects them to others with whom they share allegiances and enthusiasms.

### 3.2.2 The re-emergence of mourning jewellery

Mourning jewellery was first popular during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was both a status marker and a relic-object which gave material form to the continuing bond between the mourner and the deceased (Holm, 2004: 139). Such jewellery declined in popularity, along with other forms of mourning dress, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1980s however, new forms of mourning jewellery were being offered many of which contained – in place of the image or the hair of the dead – their cremains.

Cremains were first used to manufacture verified diamonds (Albin-Dyer, 2003: 213f), but cheaper options soon emerged wherein ashes were mixed with glass to make gems that could be placed in a range of jewellery settings. This is still relatively expensive and the option is only taken up by a minority of mourners (McCormick, 2015: 21). Kellaher et al. (2010: 134) dismiss ash

jewellery as "exotica", but McCormick (2015: 12) claims (without offering any figures) that the appeal of ash jewellery is increasing exponentially.

According to McCormick, ash jewellery aims to sustain continuing bonds with the dead, by enabling the bereaved person to maintain "the everyday intimacy of being with a loved one where presence is both ordinary and special" (ibid: 181). Drawing on Gell's (1998b) notion of extended personhood, Latour's (2005) Actor-Network Theory and Geary's (1986) discussion of the evocative powers of holy relics, McCormick (2015) argues that ash jewellery stands in for the deceased in interactive routines and bodily practice, enabling users to continuously regerenate the social presence of the dead and to experience them as present. Just as the living self was not confined to the body but generated through interaction with people and things, the continuing self of the deceased is not confined to the jewellery but generated when the item is contemplated or used (ibid: 220). Indeed, the social presence of the deceased may be extended without dilution after their death for, as Keller (2016: 118) also notes

when multiple loved ones wear a pendant in which a few grams of cremated remains have been fused with glass it is as if they all carry the whole person of the departed with them.

McCormick's work appears to imply that the historical practice of communing with the dead through pieces of purpose-made jewellery has been reintroduced with very little change.

### 3.2.3 Wearing in memory – diverse tokens of mourning

Moore's (2008) study of charity ribbons proposes that tokens of sympathy or mourning are worn as a way of projecting an empathetic and socially aware identity. Although ribbons are sometimes worn to symbolise a very specific loss (a cancer ribbon may be worn after a loved one has died from the disease) and may even become a metonymic substitute for the deceased, they are also highly commodified accessories. Ribbons may be chosen to complement an outfit or to demonstrate "awareness" of an issue in a way that enhances self-concept or reputation. In this context mourning tokens are an element of social communication, used to impress the living rather than commune with the dead.

According to Williams (2009) and Herzog (2015), the commemorative shirts favoured by the footballing community are also primarily signifiers of identity

and affinity. Such shirts<sup>15</sup> are part of a representational strategy which marks both players and fans as part of a "transgenerational community of living and dead club members" (Herzog, 2015), and makes "the history of the team and the memory of dead colleagues part of the very identity of the club and its... supporters" (Williams, 2009: 28f). To wear such a shirt is to signal allegiance to the dead and to an identity which is felt to transcend both death and history, but it is also to claim for the wearer a particular kind of cultural capital.

# 3.3 The clothing the dead leave behind

According to Gibson (2008: 4) the objects most frequently retained as mementos of the dead are clothing and photographs, but the literature which deals with the clothing of the dead argues that it has an ambiguous power, derived in part from its cultural associations and in part from its materiality, through which it acquires the smell and shape of the owner's body.

### 3.3.1 The positive power of clothing

The positive aspect of this power means that the clothes of the dead can be used by mourners to refine the memory of the dead, to sustain contact with them, to interiorise aspects of their person and to adapt to life without them.

### 3.3.1.1 The curation of memory

The clothes the dead leave behind constitute archaeological traces of the life just ended. "Singularised" and imprinted with "the individuality and everyday experience of their owner" (Lupton, 1998: 143) and carrying the shape and scent of their body (Gibson, 2008: 109) such garments are proof of a past presence. For this reason, clothing may be used to crystallise and refine memories of the deceased, whether used as a focus for imaginative contemplation (Ash, 1996: 224, Hallam and Hockey, 2000: 103) or as a stimulus for conversation and story-telling (Gibson, 2008: 36).

What is remembered about the deceased may be refined through the incremental disposition of their possessions, with their wardrobe being filtered so that only garments which evince consoling or inspiring memories remain (Finch and Mason, 2000, Gibson, 2008: 114). Following Curasi et al. (2004:

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Herzog (2013: 36ff) describes shirts worn by Scottish Heart of Midlothian FC players, embroidered with the names of players killed in the First World War, but a more familiar example might be the shirts sold as part of Hillsborough's "Justice for the 96" campaign

616), Gibson (2008: 42) argues that the garments which families keep are those associated with the myths which shape family life and family identity. Men may be commemorated through items associated with work or sport, while women are represented as beauties or care-takers (Miller and Parrot, 2009: 514).

A very feminine dress belonging to one's mother may be loved because it represents her identification with femininity; similarly, a pair of old work boots.... or a food-stained apron may remind adult children of the responsibilities and sacrifices of their parents as providers. (Gibson, 2008: 26)

Miller and Parrot (2009: 506) suggest that in the early stages of loss, families use commemorative items to evoke the individuality of the deceased; however, as time passes, the deceased comes to be remembered as an exemplar of a key social or kinship role (the good sport perhaps, or the perfect mother) and as a citizen of a particular historical period. The store of mementos is then further refined so that only items which commemorate exemplary role performance remain. Thus, through the filtering of both possessions and memories, the deceased is rendered "gradually ancestral" (ibid: 506).

### 3.3.1.2 Clothes as linking objects

The clothes of the dead also sustain contact, dialogue and continuing bonds between the living and the dead. Daniel Miller (2008) offers a poignant case study of a London woman who frequently consulted the "ancestral ghosts" within her wardrobe (her Aunt Dmitra who made the clothes and her mother who wore them) about matters of present concern ("they must get earache up there" she said (ibid: 34)). While this is an exceptional case – which may owe a debt to the lady's Greek ancestry – other writers also point to ways in which clothing can offer mourners a point of contact with the person they have lost. Stallybrass (1999) even suggests that such contact may be anticipated by the dying, who may try to pass forward intimate or treasured possessions as a way of sustaining their presence and agency after death.

The literature offers several constructions of the relationship between the mourner, the deceased and the clothing of the latter, although these are not mutually exclusive and sometimes blur together. First, the clothes of the dead may be interrogated for clues about their current wellbeing and whereabouts, or about the history and meaning of their life. According to Layton (2003: 458),

the living "read" the "mind" of those who have died in the objects and traces left behind. Ash (1996: 199, 224) suggests that the act of "reading" is similar to that used in encounters with art objects and that the viewer scrutinises the object in the hope of revelation or transformation, sometimes achieving "a more positive comprehension of absence". It is also possible that – as discussed at 3.1.7 – the will of the deceased might be inferred from any array of their possessions if the viewer sees them as the artist and agent.

Second, garments may serve as linking objects which create a bridge between two realities. Contemplating or handling of garments may offer access to "an order beyond immediate comprehension" (Ash, 1996: 219ff), a "temporary outof-present reality" (Cheal, 1988: 276) where the dead can be encountered. Klass (1993b: 355) suggests that "linking objects" function "like relics of the saints"; that is to say they are "numinous" 16 and offer contact with the active and sentient presence of the deceased (see also Geary, 1986: 176, Walsham, 2010: 13). Hallam and Hockey (2000: 78, 164f) meanwhile, use Ranum's (1989: 206-13) concept of a "relic-object" to explain the ability of clothing to connect the living and the dead. A relic-object is the kind of item historically given as a love-token (a handkerchief, a ring); something used often, closely linked to the body, intimate; something that might be "regarded as a fusion of bodily fragment and material object, and possessed of emotive charge" (Ranum, 1989: 246)<sup>17</sup>. Relic-objects were intended to sustain relationships between lovers who were separated by distance (Beck, 1833: xi, 190) but may perform the same role for people separated by death (Hallam and Hockey, 2000: 164).

A third model suggests that clothes belonging to the dead may present an opportunity for the bereaved individual to preserve elements of the lost one through identification or introjection. However, where the ambiguity of the relationship makes introjection or identification difficult, then a fourth model comes into play and the garment may become instead the "means whereby object relationships with the deceased can be maintained externally", with aspects of the deceased and aspects of the mourner being simultaneously projected onto the item (Volkan, 1972: 217, 221).

<sup>16</sup> Here Klass takes the idea of the numinous from Rudolf Otto's (1923) writings on the holy.

<sup>17</sup> These are also the characteristics of objects which Lupton (1988) indicates are most likely to encourage an emotional investment in that object.

Finally, several writers suggest that garments stand in for the deceased (Gibson, 2008: 25), representing them metonymically or functioning as a surrogate body (Richardson, 2014: 68f). Thus the deceased is not encountered *through* the clothing, but within it. Following Belk (1988), Hallam and Hockey (2000: 42), Gibson (2008: 293) and Richardson (2014) all argue that selfhood is not coterminous with the body, but extends into the world beyond, incorporating, or being incorporated by, treasured possessions and oft-worn clothes. When an individual dies, the clothing that both participated in the social self of the individual and received their physical traces may continue to generate "an intimate and sometimes sensory experience of presence" (Valentine, 2008: 159). This is argued to bring solace to the mourner and to facilitate continuing bonds (Klass, 1993b: 345).

### 3.3.1.3 Wearing the clothes of the dead

While it is relatively common for bereaved people to wear clothing left behind by their loved ones (Gibson, 2008: 119f) the literature never explains this in terms of the use-value of a garment, but rather as a way to "bring the dead and the living into immediate proximity" (Miller and Parrot, 2009: 509) so that the living may experience the presence of the those they have lost and the dead may retain a role in communal life.

Pincus (1976), Belk (1988), Stallybrass (1999: 38), Gibson (2008: 132) and Miller and Parrot (2009) all suggest that wearing the clothes of the dead may serve to transfer identities or characteristics from the deceased to the mourner, but offer different (though not incompatible) accounts of how this occurs. Pincus (1976), grounding her argument in Transactional Analysis, suggests that when a parent dies, wearing the clothes of the deceased helps others to assume the caring role. Gibson (2008: 142) suggests that impersonation of the dead may be an attempt to fill the gap that this death has created in the family unit, citing the case of J. M. Barrie (author of Peter Pan) who adopted not only the clothing but also the gait and the whistle of his dead brother in an attempt to console his mother. Indeed accepting the clothes of the dead as a gift may carry the obligation to take on the roles, practices and looks associated with those clothes (Gibson, 2008: 146, Miller and Parrot, 2009: 514f). While these accounts imply that wearing the clothes of the dead permits impersonation or role-play; other readings assume that some essence of the deceased is interiorised by those who wear their clothes.

Stallybrass (1999, see also Jones and Stallybrass, 2000: 14) sustains the metaphor of acting but alludes to the convention of Elizabethan theatre

whereby actors were trans-natured when they donned a costume: a man in woman's clothing was a woman and a mourner wearing a dead person's clothes assumed their identity. Gibson (2008), meanwhile, suggests that wearing the clothing of the dead may permit the mourner to interiorise them in the same way that children interiorise elements of their carer; through identification and imitation; thus the experience of loss is mitigated, and personal growth attained, by "converting...losses into identifications" (ibid: 133).

# 3.3.1.4 Clothing as transitional objects

Both wearing the clothes of the dead and using them as "solace filled objects" (Klass, 1993b: 345) can be time-limited activities, focussed on the period of shock and pain that immediately follows a death. This has led to the clothing of the dead being discussed as comforters (Stallybrass, 1999) or transitional objects in the journey to independent life after bereavement (Gibson, 2008: 32). This model draws upon Bowlby's (1961a, 1961b) analogy between the mourner and the abandoned child and assumes familiarity with several tenets of child psychology. Most obviously the model uses Winnicott's (1953) theory that the developing child uses objects which it can control to symbolise an absent care giver. So-called transitional objects not only make separation bearable but support the internalisation of attributes of the carer. Less obviously, the model draws upon Harlow's (1959) claim that the adverse effects of loss on an infant can be mitigated by replacing the absent carer with a textile comforter, for the child is primed to seek out physical contact and textiles provide the warmth and softness associated with an embrace (Gibson, 2008: 120). Based on interview material, Gibson (2008: 34) argues that "in grieving, as in childhood, transitional objects are a means of both holding on and letting go".

# 3.3.2 The negative power of clothing

Despite the many ways in which clothing can console the mourner, it also holds a negative power. Richardson (2014: 70) describes the case of a widower who felt himself to have been assaulted by his dead wife's clothes, which had become "something other.....'unhomely' or uncanny". Other writers note that the clothes of the dead may compel or prevent action (Stallybrass, 1999: 28) or exert "powerful, and disturbing, agency" (Hallam and Hockey, 2000: 115). This unsettling power is described in a variety of ways.

### 3.3.2.1 Invested and imprinted selves

The first is the notion, discussed at 2.2.4, that selfhood does not end at the body boundary or cease at death, but persists in favourite possessions and oftworn clothes. For Belk (1988) where a garment was incorporated into the self of its original owner, a subsequent owner may find their selfhood contaminated through an exchange of identity which may not be willed or welcomed. Belk suggests that the danger may be particularly acute if the imprinted object is acquired as a gift. Following Sartre (1957), Belk argues that a gift extends the self of the giver to encompass the self of the recipient who is then "encumbered by this partial imposition of the giver's identity and must acknowledge the giver's mastery by accepting the gift" (Belk, 1988: 150). When the giver is dead the acceptance of their identity can feel a little like possession, with the recipient granting a kind of immortality to the deceased, perhaps at their own expense.

### 3.3.2.2 Clothing and affect

The idea that the clothing of the dead may be able to exert irresistible influence over the living is also found in theories of affect. As noted at 2.2.3, "affect" describes the resonance occurring between objects or persons when they are brought into proximity; the capacity of one thing to produce a reaction in another. There are two distinct theoretical approaches to affect; the first sees affect as immanent; arguing that the bringing together of any combination of things (objects, persons, places, bodies and non-bodies) will – through the mutual interaction of these players – generate new modes of being. The second, which is particularly useful in analysing reactions to the clothing of the dead, focusses on the ability of particular objects to evoke change in human subjects (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010).

The latter tradition draws heavily upon Tomkins' (1962, 1984) psychobiological approach which defines affect as the way in which external stimuli create states of arousal (which may be pleasant or aversive) within an individual. Some of these responses are innate, others are learned through individual experience or cultural conditioning. Thus everyday objects can trigger joy, fear or distress (Tomkins, 1984: 166) because they are associated with memories, cultural values, significant locations or other charged objects (Ahmed, 2010). Moreover, once an object has been observed to influence

behaviour it will be expected to do so again<sup>18</sup> (ibid). Lebrecht et al. (2012), describe this power as "affective valence" and argue that this is "automatically perceived" and influences mood, cognition and behaviour.

At times affect theory can be hard to distinguish from other theories of object-interpretation and object-response. How, for example, does it differ from the rapid and perhaps subconscious decoding of semiotic messages? The literature suggests two answers to this question. First that affect operates at a visceral level; not only "beneath...conscious knowing" but also "beyond emotion" (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 1). Second, that affect theory disrupts the traditional boundaries between subject and object, perceiver and perceived, assuming an exchange of influence rather than an interpretative act (ibid: 4).

# **3.3.2.3 The uncanny**

The admission that clothing possesses affect or agency takes it into the realm of the uncanny. In common usage "uncanny" describes occasions "when the world seems wrong" (Cambridge English Dictionary); etymologically it is the antonym of "canny" which means safe, homely or known. Wilson (1985: 1) notes that the clothes left behind by the dead evoke a strong sense of the uncanny, for they "hint at something only half understood, sinister, threatening".

According to Freud (2004:244) the uncanny is experienced where the inanimate appears to have agency, the living are deprived of it and where the boundary between the imagined and the real becomes uncertain. To sense the uncanny is to (re)enter a thought-world quite different to that of everyday experience, a thought-world characterised by Freud as infantile or primitive (ibid: 249). This world includes a heightened sense of personal danger, a belief that one's thoughts can directly influence the material world but also, paradoxically, a sense of predestination, of being part of a larger pattern. The self through which this world is experienced is linked to other selves through identification and telepathy. Freud (2004: 242) explains these patterns of thought as a defence against fears of death and annihilation of self, and as a response to events that cannot be rationally apprehended.

<sup>18</sup> Ahmed (2010:40) notes that an object may only be identified in retrospect as the "cause" or an experience, but after the first occurrence, the object will be expected to cause further sensations or experiences.

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A reductive account of Freud's notion of the uncanny might suggest that people are prone to "revert" to fear and superstition whenever it appears that the world may not operate in the way that they had assumed. As death radically disrupts the assumptive world (Marris, 1986) and the bereavement experience is associated with the reactivation of infantile fears (Bowlby, 1980, Klein, 1991) it is unsurprising that the mourner is oriented towards the uncanny and that superstitious fears re-surface whenever death is faced.

The clothes of the dead may be experienced as uncanny precisely because they challenge the assumptive world of the mourner. They may destabilise memory, hinting at multiple and perhaps unknown identities of the deceased (Ash, 1996: 220); they are familiar and other, the "materialised extension of the embodied person and the material mark of their death" (Hallam and Hockey, 2000: 116) and they simultaneously evoke both the presence and the absence of the dead (Ash, 1996: 221). The evocation of presence absence is perhaps one of the most poignant and troubling properties of the clothing the dead leave behind.

#### 3.3.2.4 Presence absence

The literature presents three (overlapping) explanations for the acute and specific way in which the dead are perceived to haunt their clothing, to be simultaneously absent from, and present in, those empty garments. What these paradigms share is a conviction that the vulnerability of the mourner combines with the symbolic potency of empty clothing to enable either the garments, or their dead owners, to act upon the living.

### 3.3.2.4.1 Disjunction

The first explanation of presence absence suggests a disjunction between two signifying systems, with the deceased being present in one and absent from the other. Absence may be rendered tangible by the tension between physical absence and emotional presence (Maddrell, 2013: 505), by the contrast between what memory recalls and what the eye perceives. An item or individual which is materially absent, but discursively present – still remembered, talked about, valued – may be vibrantly encountered when memory is jolted by a similar, or associated, person or object (Hetherington, 2004; 162, 167).

### 3.3.2.4.2 Signs as emanations

A semiological account, meanwhile suggests that the clothes of the dead generate a sense of presence absence because of the specific way in which

they signify the deceased. Abandoned clothes function as both indexes and icons of the person who has died. They are indexical because they evidence the past presence of the deceased; they are iconic because they recreate, at least partially, the appearance of their subject (Layton, 2003). Gell (1998a: 104) argues that when an item is both an index and an icon it is treated, in "primitive" thought at least, as an emanation of the subject or even as part of that subject. Thus, the dead may be encountered in the clothes they left behind, even while the emptiness of these garments also indexes death.

### 3.3.2.4.3 Ruptured networks

Bissell (2009) argues that empty clothing reveals a state of rupture which gives access to normally hidden "truths" while demanding reparative action. Bissell contends that both artefacts and people derive meaning and shape from their participation in networks of activity and knowledge. Objects in their rightful place in networks facilitate meaningful activity, when they fall out of those networks they disrupt these purposive flows (ibid: 101): the network is damaged and the object loses those referents which hold its meaning stable (ibid: 99). The removal of an object from a network does not "get rid of its semiotic presence and the effects that are generated around that" (Hetherington, 2004: 159) indeed the empty space may be more influential than the previous (taken-for-granted) presence. The "gap" is experienced as disorder to be remedied, and the missing item itself becomes "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1966). These matters are hard for the viewer to ignore.

Taking the example of the lost glove in the street Bissell notes how a seemingly insignificant item can "invoke absent presences" (ibid: 97) and stimulate both emotion and reactive behaviour in the finder. The lost glove draws the eye because it is (jarringly) out of place and signifies a disorder which must be resolved (ibid: 101). It then draws the finder into conversation with the absent owner, creating empathy and concern about events before and after their loss (ibid: 104f). In the act of lifting the lost glove onto a wall where it may be found, Bissell sees an effort to restore social order, an attempt to help the glove's owner, and empathetic engagement with a symbol of loss and transience. In this model the lost glove is more than a symbol of individual absence, it is somehow archetypal and, in evoking the "spectral, haunting presence" of the glove's owner (ibid: 110), it appears to offer access to a rarely glimpsed reality that is somehow sublime (ibid: 104).

### 3.3.2.5 Clothing and the abject

Clothing may also become affective or haunting material because of its association with the abject <sup>19</sup>. The abject describes things which are impure and contaminating (Kristeva, 1982), that which threatens life, order and identity (Hughes, 2009: 405) and that which society struggles to repress or expel (Creed, 1993: 65). The abject is dirty, where "dirt" describes either those aspects of corporeality which people hide because they wish to transcend; defaecation, death, decay, natural bodily processes and products (Grosz et al., 1990: 87f); or "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1966), things which defy classification, thereby constituting an affront to civilisation and to categorical thinking.

Clothing is one of the devices used to repress the abject by concealing corporeality and imposing classification, but this role exposes it to contamination. In providing a "second skin" that conceals the imperfections and instability of the first, clothing collects sweat, skin cells, hair and dust – the bodily sheddings that Gell (1998a) calls exuvia – which are themselves abject. Since that which is shed from a living body, even one's own body, evinces revulsion (Allport, 1955: 43, Cavallaro and Warwick, 1998), the sheddings of dead others may be experienced as doubly disturbing.

### 3.3.2.1 Uncontrolled memory

Finally, the power of clothing to disturb is associated with its mnemonic power. Parkes (1972) found that about half of the widows he interviewed were drawn to objects that reminded them of their husband; they treasured former possessions and found that the smell of his clothes could simulate his presence. However this same group of women reported being disturbed when memory laden items appeared unexpectedly; if they could not control when and where they imaginatively encountered the dead they were also unable to choose the kind of memories evoked (Walter, 1999b: 64, Hallam and Hockey, 2000: 105). When memory cannot be controlled, the imprinted clothing of the dead becomes terrifying as well as reassuring (Stallybrass, 1999: 28). For this reason, newly bereaved people may avoid the clothing of the dead altogether, often hiding it from view (Hallam and Hockey, 2000: 92, 105).

<sup>19</sup> While a debt is owed to Julia Kristeva for development of the idea of the abject in relation to death and corpses, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss her work in depth.

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### 3.3.3 Disposing of the clothing of the dead

The disposal of the clothes of the dead is often termed "divestment" in the literature. Divestment is one of the ways in which people "separate from relationships" (Miller and Parrot, 2009: 502). Divestment – understood as a sifting of possessions and disposal of those which are no longer meaningful – may also present bereaved people with the opportunity to review and reinterpret their personal history, and the sense of self which flows from this (ibid: 512, drawing on Marcoux (2001))<sup>20</sup>. Although the literature does not explore this, there is a parallel here with theories of mourning which stress the need of the bereaved person to create a new identity independent from the deceased (e.g. Lopata, 1975). It appears that the clothing of the dead is intimately connected with the way in which, over time, the deceased individual renegotiates their relationship with both their lost loved one and with death itself.

Quick disposal of property may express the desire not to be reminded of a painful loss, or may provide an opportunity to act out the sense of abandonment and anger experienced by the bereaved (Gibson, 2008: 18). Conversely, delayed disposition may represent an attempt to replace "the unplanned biological death with an ordered and ordained social and ritual death" (Miller and Parrot, 2009: 507). For Miller and Parrot, divestment is not a conscious or prescribed process, but "something that people creatively develop as their own particular strategy" for dealing with loss (ibid: 509). For other writers it is a matter of compulsion (Stallybrass, 1999: 28) or a response to agency exerted by the clothes themselves (Hallam and Hockey, 2000: 114f, Harper, 2010b). Gibson (2008: 16), however, notes that the bereaved also experience pressure from friends and family to dispose of possessions of the dead in order to demonstrate that they are recovering from bereavement and getting on with their life. The wish to retain such items may be associated with death-denial (McAteer, 2013) or with "atrophied" and unhealthy forms of grieving (Gorer, 1965). It is notable that even though scholarly models of grief have replaced decathexis with continuing bonds there is still popular discomfort about keeping the possessions of the dead.

Disposition involves more than "getting rid" of the clothes of the dead, however; disinvestment rituals must be completed and an appropriate disposal strategy must be selected. Drawing on the work of Lastovicka and Fernandez

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> See also Hawkins and Muecke 2003: xiii

(2005: 814), Gibson (2008: 15) argues that the bereaved may find it difficult to dispose of the possessions of the dead if they feel that ownership still resides with the deceased. Laundering items to remove traces of their dead owner and gradually moving them from the centre to the periphery of the living space helps to resolve these difficulties. Nonetheless, a sense that the dead still have an interest in their clothes may inhibit disposition choices. Selling the clothes of the dead for profit is often considered inappropriate, even immoral and charitable disposition is the choice of most mourners (ibid: 4f, 114f).

### 3.3.3.1 Charitable donation of the clothes of the dead

The recent appropriation of vintage clothing by mainstream fashion (Palmer, 2005: 199) has focussed academic interest on second hand clothing markets including the charity shop. However, while the experiences of vendors and purchasers have been well documented, the literature on donation is slight, with Horne and Maddrell (2003) making the only significant contribution. Consequently, there is scope for this study to extend knowledge in this area.

Horne and Maddrell (2003: 12, 62) note that fast fashion has increased the amount of clothing that people own, while increased concern about stewardship of the planet has created the desire to dispose of superfluous items in an ethical, sustainable manner: accordingly, over 60% of adult clothing which is disposed of goes to charity. Donors interviewed by Maddrell (2001) identified convenience, recycling and the wish to support a specific charity as the primary motives for donation. Horne and Maddrell (2003: 125), however, identify additional benefits, noting that passing goods to charity shops may enhance and protect personal identity; donation marking the giver as a charitable individual while placing a welcome barrier of anonymity between donor and recipient. Discussing the donation of clothing belonging to the dead specifically, they suggest that this may have ritual elements, serving to extend established relationships between dead individuals and their favoured charities, thus fulfilling their (explicit or assumed) wishes: as a consequence, bereaved families may experience donation as "therapeutic and...a positive element of the grieving process" (ibid: 68).

The literature also identifies a range of benefits to the purchaser of second hand clothing, including thrift (Palmer, 2005: 197f, Roux and Korchia, 2006: 29, Botticello, 2014: 118), the avoidance of waste (Roux and Korchia, 2006: 29), the opportunity to express "individuality and connoisseurship" (Palmer, 2005: 197), cultivate a unique look (Thompson and Haytko, 1997, Xu et al., 2014), express the existential self through clothing (Palmer, 2005, Botticello,

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2014) or identify with idealised others from other times and backgrounds (Roux and Korchia, 2006: 30). In short, second hand clothing allows shoppers to "subscribe to mainstream....material culture" at a reduced price or to resist these values and construct an alternative identity (Horne and Maddrell, 2003: 120). Shoppers may also find access to hedonic pleasure in their visits to second-hand shops; both the thrills associated with a treasure hunt (Palmer, 2005: 199, Roux and Korchia, 2006) and opportunities for pleasurable social interaction (Horne and Maddrell, 2003: 42ff).

Nonetheless, some people are resistant to buying used clothes on the grounds that they may be dirty or contaminating (Horne and Maddrell, 2003: 68f, Roux and Korchia, 2006: 29), or that they may be the possessions of the dead (Roux and Korchia, 2006: 33) and thus, in some way, dangerous. Conflating Belk's (1988) idea that the identity of the original owner is imprinted on second hand goods, with Goffman's (1971) definition of contamination as a violation of one's personal space by some aspect of another person, Roux and Korchia argue that the transfer of clothing from one body to another transgresses psychological and hygienic boundaries and endangers the recipient's sense of a distinctive and coherent self. Some items are considered more contaminating than others: those worn closest to the skin being the most disturbing (O'Reilly et al., 1984: 59, Horne and Maddrell, 2003: 50f) and those worn only once (e.g. evening-wear or fancy dress) the least. The clothes of a stranger are more th reatening than those of family: indeed contamination from family members may be counted as positive, for family are already part of the extended self.

Concerns about contamination may be over-ridden if the garment is highly desirable as a status object or as an exemplar of a time or place the purchaser holds dear. Palmer (2005: 199) notes that marketing second hand clothing as "rare", valuable or "designer" removes "the negative, tainted aspects of used garments", perhaps because the original owner can be imagined as idealised and elite. Similarly, marketing used items online disassociates them from the "unsavoury.....elements of second-hand markets" (ibid: 199), while some of the back-room processing carried out in charity shops (most particularly steam-cleaning) serve to symbolically – if not scientifically – remove traces of previous owners (Horne and Maddrell, 2003: 124).

According to Roux and Korchia (2006: 29), there are three distinct orientations towards second hand clothing. One maintains that clothing always remains separate from its owner and can thus be transferred from one individual to

another in an unproblematic manner. This attitude is common among people who do not invest strongly in their own clothing (ibid: 31). The second approach holds that clothing *is* incorporated by its original owner, *can* transfer traces of that individual to a new owner, and this is undesirable; the third welcomes the opportunity to absorb the traces of the previous owner. An individual may vacillate between these approaches depending on object and context.

This body of literature suggests that clothes are donated to charity because this seems both moral and convenient. However, because the act of donation extends rather than curtails the "social life" of the items (Appadurai, 1986, cited by Horne and Maddrell, 2003: 68) and, perhaps, the agency of the deceased, purchasers of second hand clothing may be impacted by the real or imagined history of these items.

# Chapter 4 Aims and Methods

# 4.1 Implications of the literature review

The diverse texts considered in the literature review suggest that clothing is used in many recuperative strategies following bereavement. However, the strategic use of clothing in the death context is by no means straightforward, for there are many stakeholders and clothing can constitute haunting as well as recuperative material. The task of this study is therefore to map the key principles that operate in this area, both to add to knowledge and to consider whether any recommendations can be made which will assist mourners or those who support them. The study will also seek to address some of the questions and the gaps in knowledge revealed by the literature review. Significant gaps include the lack of theory to explain:

- the practice of carefully dressing corpses that will not be viewed,
- the emergence of new forms of mourning garments in the late twentieth century, and
- the significance of charitable donation as a way of disposing of the clothing left behind by the dead.

Finally, it is far from clear that the literature addresses all of the clothing practices associated with death and mourning in present-day Britain.

The fact that the literature engages with several constructions of death, two very different constructions of personhood and more than one approach to emotion, makes it very clear that such an investigation cannot start with any pre-existent theoretical model, but will need to start with the data.

# 4.2 Aims and research questions

This study will therefore

- Gather data on how bereaved people in Britain use and experience clothing
- 2. Identify significant behaviours
- Examine the origins of these behaviours and their reason for persistence
- 4. Explore the specific gaps identified in the literature.

Data will be gathered to answer the primary research question "What do the people of present-day Britain do with clothing when death occurs?" This will be sorted thematically, and the following subsidiary questions asked of each data-set

- 1. What are the historical origins of these behaviours?
- 2. Do these behaviours address needs or deliver benefits in the present or are they simply relics of ancient practice?
- 3. How do people experience these interactions with clothing?
- 4. What causes clothing behaviours to change?

Where the literature review has raised a specific question about a clothing behaviour, the data gathered will also be used to address this question.

# 4.3 Scope of the study

The study will focus on the clothing practices associated with death in Britain. Clothing is taken to be any item worn on the body and thus includes jewellery and other accessories: body modifications such as tattooing are not included. This distinction was made in order to keep the data-set manageable, but also because body modifications cannot be transferred from one body to another<sup>21</sup>, thus they cannot be kept after the death of an individual, or gifted in the ways that garments often are. The study focusses on present-day practice, but also examines the historical origins of current behaviours.

Given that Britain is a multicultural society, shaped by the convergence of multiple traditions, the statement that "British" death response will be examined requires some explanation. The community of interest is not defined by ethnicity, social class or religious belief but rather by exposure to a particular set of narratives about death; narratives arising from the way in which death is "managed" (Kastenbaum, 1998: Ch 3) in contemporary Britain. In Britain today, death usually takes place in a hospital setting (Mulkay, 1993), where the emphasis on saving and prolonging life may make death appear to be some sort of failure. Commercial undertaking practice perpetuates forms and norms which developed under the influence of Christianity – or more specifically

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> However, see Cheadle (2015), Dunn (2015) and Moss (2017) on salvaging tattoos from the bodies of the dead.

Anglicanism – as the state religion (Howarth, 1996: 130)<sup>22</sup> <sup>23</sup>, while the Western medical tradition has, until very recently, promoted an understanding of grief that is located somewhere between a set of psychological symptoms which may require therapeutic intervention (Granek, 2010) and a reconstructive project that the bereaved must undertake (Lindemann, 1944, Worden, 1983). Living with this construction of death and bereavement gives rise to both common behaviours and to discourses which render these behaviours meaningful. Thus while the British are far from culturally homogenous, British death practices are institutionalised and mediated, giving rise to a set of behaviours, norms and explanatory stories that meet Geertz's (1973) definition of a culture. Any family living in Britain, accepting medicalised definitions of death and bereavement, and using the services of a commercial undertaker without requesting any deviation from their standard "post-Protestant" practice, can be regarded as part of this cultural group.

### 4.4 Research Methods

Research methods were selected after careful consideration of

- the nature of the research questions,
- the ontological approach adopted,
- the type of data being assembled,
- the resources available for the project.

The research questions were concerned with matters of "what?", "how?" and "why?" but not, to any significant degree, with "how often?" The study adopted a constructivist ontology, assuming that meaning is not a property of objects, but is generated through the interaction of persons and objects. The data collected came from a variety of sources and was diverse in nature, including images as well as texts, material from the past as well as material from the present. All of these factors indicated that qualitative approaches would be required, for while quantitative approaches are appropriate when questions can be answered through objective measurements and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Walter (2017:195) argues that "white Christian or secular funerals... comprise the vast majority of British funerals" and describes a single funeral format for both belief systems.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Smale (1985:113, 117) has argued that funeral directors believe that the funerals they provide "reflect traditional beliefs" and offer the bereaved a sense of "historical authenticity".

manipulation of variables, qualitative approaches must be used when this is not possible (Tseelon, 2001: 240f). Qualitative approaches are suited to the study of social behaviours which are not logical or rule-bound, which need to be studied in their natural context (Morse, 1994: 1), which cannot be measured with any degree of statistical significance, and which cannot be explored using experiments (either for ethical reasons or because the variables are unclear at the start of the study (ibid:1)). Qualitative methods make sense of social behaviour by uncovering, not natural laws, but patterns, social conventions, cultural norms (Tseëlon, 2001:245f), favoured narratives (Geertz, 1973:7) and frequently-adopted solutions to the perceived problems of living (Glaser, 1992).

However, quantitative and qualitative approaches are not necessarily antithetical, and much research in the social sciences is positioned on a continuum, between the two (Hammersley, 2002: 164) or deliberately uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches "on the ground that this promises to cancel out the respective weaknesses of each method" (ibid: 167). Glaser and Strauss (1967: 18), however, argue that quantitative and qualitative data should be juxtaposed, not one to check the other but "as different forms of data on the same subject, which, when compared, will generate theory".

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach in order to reap the benefits of triangulation. The term "triangulation" derives from the navigational practice of determining one's position by referring to different bearings. In social and cultural research, however, the term is used to describe the combination of different methods, materials and theoretical perspectives, not to reveal a position of absolute truth but to problematize the idea that such a point exists (Saukko, 2003: 23). Thus, triangulation is more than the use of a second method to check the first (Hammersley, 2002), or an unwillingness to accept any finding until it has been confirmed by more than one data-set or approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) – although such checks are useful. Triangulation involves the use of multiple strategies "to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin, 2012: 82) and to acknowledge that the "truth" about any social phenomenon is neither singular nor fixed, but is "amoeba-lie, multifaceted, evolving" (Saukko, 2003: 23) and meanings are "refracted off of the edges of crystals, not triangles" (Denzin, 2012: 85).

The methods selected were varied. Questionnaires and autobiographical accounts of bereavement were used to study the ways in which people explained the way they used and responded to clothing in the context of death

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and bereavement. Q-methodology and the collection and analysis of an archive of cultural products were used to explore the behavioural drivers that actors may be unaware of (Figure 1). The chosen data collection strategies were connected by the consistent aim to capture what Geertz (1973: 10, following Ryle, 1971) called "thick description" of the phenomena being studied. Thick description goes beyond the description of behaviours to include the intentions, the social understandings and the meanings communicated by these. Thick description records not only what people do, but how it feels and how people explain their own behaviour and that of others (ibid:5). It is through gathering thick description that a polyvocal and multifaceted account of the phenomena being studied may be generated.

Some methods were avoided for logistical or ethical reasons. For example, interviews and focus groups, which are often used to access the life-worlds of research subjects, were not used in this study. To encourage people to talk about bereavement in a way that is both productive and responsible requires time, accommodation, skilled interviewers and the ability to refer distressed participants to appropriate counselling; the project lacked all of these resources. However, it is argued here that the findings of the project are not compromised by this omission. Responses to questionnaires indicated strongly that people did not understand the reasons for their own behaviour, this suggested that they would also struggle to explain it in interviews or focus groups. Second, it seemed possible that interviews and focus groups may produce narratives that would not otherwise have existed (cf. Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2001: 68). Of course, if Walter's (1999b: 70) notion that people adjust to be reavement through conversation is taken seriously, it could be argued that interviews or focus groups would simply accelerate and make visible an inevitable process; nonetheless, concerns about distorting the findings through "experimenter effect" (Venkatesan, 1967) remained. Using written accounts of bereavement as a way of accessing the narratives through which people make sense of their losses, avoided the risks identified and ensured that the meaning-making activities of the narrator were not subordinated to those of the investigator (cf. Riessman, 2003).

As well as drawing upon a wide variety of data, and using a range of methods, the study took an interdisciplinary approach, drawing upon fashion theory, fashion history, sociology and thanatology. This was not only intended to maximise both the data and the insights available, but also to embed within the study the recognition that "reality changes when we change the research

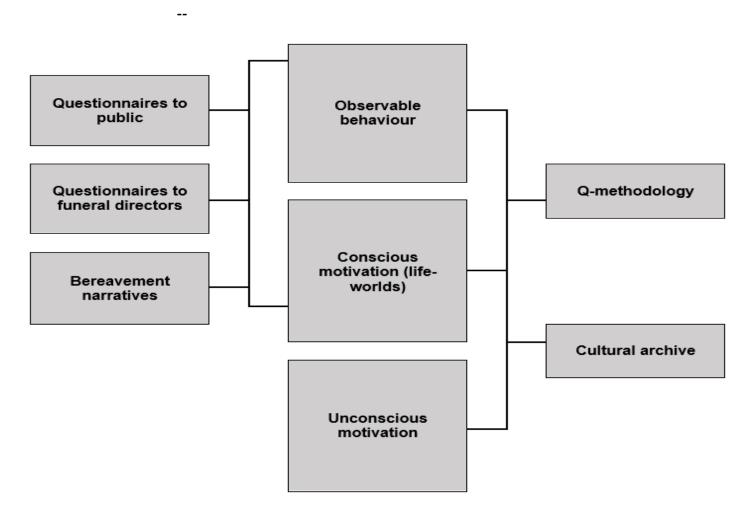


Figure 1. Data sources and what they reveal

approach, or lens, through which we look at it" (Saukko, 2003: 9). The material was organised and analysed using a Grounded Theory approach, which offers tools for analysing very different data sets and which supports both inter-disciplinarity (Glaser, 1992: 35) and mixed methods research (Henwood et al., 1996: 89).

As noted above, data was collected using questionnaires, bereavement literature, an archive of assorted cultural texts and a Q-methodological exercise. Two of these collection methods were associated with distinct interpretative strategies, which were applied before the material from different sources was integrated. The bereavement literature was analysed using discourse analysis while Q-methodology incorporates both data collection strategies and methods of analysis. Data gathered from questionnaires and cultural texts however, was treated as "raw material" for the data analysis techniques associated with Grounded Theory, which are discussed at 4.54.5.

### 4.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to address the research question "What do the people of present-day Britain do with clothing when a death occurs?" in a very direct manner. Two surveys were distributed; one to members of the public which aimed to capture a snapshot of the thoughts and assumptions of "the person in the street"; a second survey, sent to funeral directors, aimed to uncover the routinized clothing practices employed within the funeral industry. Although industrial practice is described in the literature (see, for example, Naylor, 1989, Howarth, 1996, Bradbury, 1999) these accounts are around twenty years old. The survey thus represented an attempt to establish whether the practices described were still representative of current practices and attitudes. Survey questions and responses can be found in the appendices.

The first questionnaire was distributed using the snowball method. It was sent via social media and email to friends and colleagues, some of whom recruited additional respondents. This survey asked participants about their experiences of attending funerals, dealing with the clothing of people who had died, and whether they had considered what they might wear in the coffin. Eight questions were posed: a mixture of closed questions ("have you ever been in a position where you had to choose clothes for someone who had died?") and open-ended ones inviting reflection and description ("please describe the clothes you chose and the reason for this decision"). Respondents were then asked to categorise themselves by ticking the items that applied to them in a

list of statements about gender, life-stage and religious conviction. Thirty responses were received.

A second questionnaire was sent to 80 British funeral directors who had published an email address on the internet. This comprised 23 questions: some were multiple choice, but most were open-ended. Questions covered common choices for dressing the dead, who made these decisions, whether guidance was requested or given and what changes had been observed over time. Fifteen responses were received.

Questionnaire responses provided both rich qualitative material and scope for analytical generalisation; that is to say that when several respondents described similar experiences and behaviours these were deemed, not universal, but common or typical, and the behavioural tropes so identified were used to generate "ideal typologies", hypothetical models that aim to identify the hidden drivers of behaviour (Halkier, 2011: 790).

### 4.4.2 **Q-methodology**

Q methodology (Stephenson, 1953, Brown, 1980) is derived from traditional factor analysis which measures traits and considers why some traits frequently co-occur and others appear mutually exclusive. However, while factor analysis concentrates on the individuals being tested, Q methodology focusses on the patterns of correlations and clusters (Watts and Stenner, 2005: 71f). When Q is used in the realm of attitude and belief, it does not look at who holds a particular set of beliefs, but at which beliefs occur together. In this way "Q can... be used to map out the terrain of possible/culturally available viewpoints on a topic" (Stainton Rogers and Dyson, 2011: 199). The technique was used in this study to test for correlations between religious belief or life values and particular clothing behaviours.

Q analysis begins with the construction of a "concourse"; a set of statements that aims to represent everything that can be said about the subject being explored. The concourse for this study was compiled by combining statements on clothing behaviour from questionnaire responses and preliminary surveys of academic literature, with statements about death response from two respected academic schema; that created by Davies et al. (1991) to explore the afterlife beliefs of 20th century Anglicans, and that presented by Bauman (1992) to describe the strategies used by all peoples to come to terms with death. The list was then refined to remove duplications and unnecessary complexity. After refinement, the list comprised 43 statements including "I believe in an afterlife", "The dead are not gone while the living remember them" and "if I had to sort

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out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would get rid of everything straight away". The full list of statements appears in the appendices. Once the "concourse" had been assembled, the statements were entered into an online survey template<sup>24</sup>.

Q sorting was traditionally performed by writing each statement onto a card and asking participants to arrange them in a pyramidal grid in which the central column indicated neutrality and the outer columns strong opinions. The design of the survey grid forced the participant to decide which small selection of the many statements they very strongly agreed or disagreed with (Figure 2). This study used computerised Q sorting, which works in a similar way. The participant was presented with a statement and asked to drag it into the appropriately labelled column. Each column would only accommodate a defined number of statements; thus, when the "strongly agree" column was full, the participant could not place another answer here without moving one of the previously selected responses elsewhere. For analytical purposes, the levels of agreement were translated to numeric values ranging from 4, "very strongly agree", to -4, "very strongly disagree" (Figure 3).

Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Don't know/ neutral	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Very strongly disagree
						_		

Figure 2: Q sorting grid

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> QSortWare developed by Alessio Prunnedu of York University.

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	Number of statements to which this response	Score assigned to statement when this
Response	can be made	response is made
very strongly agree	3	4
strongly agree	4	3
agree	5	2
slightly agree	6	1
neutral/uncertain	7	0
slightly disagree	6	-1
disagree	5	-2
strongly disagree	4	-3
very strongly disagree	3	-4
	total number	
	43	

Figure 3: Q sort statement scores

Participants for Q studies are selected by trying to predict the attitudes that might exist within the population as a whole and actively seeking people who represent each one: thus Q reveals nothing about "what the majority of people believe" (Stainton Rogers and Dyson, 2011), but draws attention to distinctive configurations of belief, attitude and practice. In this study participants were sampled on the basis of religious orientation, on the assumption that religious belief would inform attitudes and behaviours in the death context.

The study involved two rounds of Q testing. A pilot involving friends and colleagues was used to test the efficacy of the software, the clarity of the instructions and the completeness of the concourse. A second round of testing was performed using a group known to include practicing Christians and people who identified as agnostic<sup>25</sup>. Christians were identified through membership of the local Methodist church, agnostics through their participation in online discussions. This second sorting exercise required people to self-identify as Christian, Clergy, Agnostic or Other before completing the sort.

<sup>25</sup> "Agnostic" here refers to people who actively reflect upon and debate existential matters but choose not to align themselves with either a religious or an atheist viewpoint.

The software used returned results as a spreadsheet (Figure 4) with one column for each respondent, showing the score given to each statement based on the relationships defined in Figure 3.

	<u>l</u> A1	A2	A3	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
sta_1	3	1	4	4	4	3		1 /
sta_2	4	1	3	-1	0	0		
sta_3	0	0	4	-1	-1	-1		
sta_4	0	0	-2	1	2	0		
sta_5	-2	-2	1	-2	-1	-1		
sta_6	-2	-3	-2	1	-3			
sta_7	-1	2	1	3	-1			
sta_8	3	3	2	1				
sta_9	2	-1	2	1				
sta_10	4	-1	-4	-1				
sta_11	1	-4	1	-2				
sta_12	-3	-2	-3					
sta_13	-4	-1						
sta_14	2	2						
sta_15	-2	2						
sta_16	1							
sta_17								
sta 18								

Figure 4: Output from Q sorting as spreadsheet (sta\_1 is Statement 1, A1 is Agnostic 1, C1 is Christian 1)

Results were analysed by manipulating the data in Excel and also by running it through the statistical software PQ method (Schmolck and Atkinson, 2002, Schmolck, 2014). Excel was used to identify the most highly favoured and the most disliked statements. PQ method was then used to identify characteristic sort patterns and recurrent constellations of ideas (Watts and Stenner, 2005: 68). The output of PQ method is a series of lists of statements in preference order. These lists represent sorting patterns that the software recognises as distinctive: where a number of participants produce sorts with a significant level of similarity the software produces a single paradigmatic sort. From such lists – and the way in which specific statements are identified as highly approved or categorically rejected – the researcher must intuitively construct the represented view point.

The potential drawbacks of Q method are extensively discussed in the literature. The difficulties of creating a valid concourse are highlighted: significant statements might be omitted (Stainton Rogers and Dyson, 2011) or statements may be correlated linguistically, so that if a participant strongly

agrees with one statement they are logically obliged to agree with its metonym, and dispute its antonym (Sundland, 1962). Furthermore, while online Q sorts usefully minimise "experimenter effect" (Venkatesan, 1967), remote testing also removes the opportunity to assess the participant's level of engagement and the extent to which they felt their views to be represented by the final Q sort (Watts and Stenner, 2005: 78f). Finally, the intuition required for the articulation of "viewpoints" introduces a significant level of uncertainty. Nonetheless, Q presents a unique insight into the ways in which specific attitudes, discourses and behaviours, while superficially unconnected, may be mutually exclusive or consistently appear together. As argued in connection with the questionnaires above, here is a way of glimpsing the hidden drivers of behaviour and exposing an ideal typology.

#### 4.4.3 Reading bereavement literature

One of the richest sources of "thick description" of clothing in the death context turned out to be grief memoirs, a form of autobiographical writing which details the death of a beloved individual and the reactions of their intimate associates. Writing accounts of feelings and experiences is often recommended to the bereaved as a therapeutic activity (Baikie and Wilhelm, 2005) and such texts find a ready audience in other mourners (Gilbert, 2006, Leader, 2009, Prodromou, 2012).

Over 70 such narratives were sourced by searching libraries and online booksellers using key words and phrases such as "story" and "death" or "story" and "bereavement": most texts discovered were linked to similar examples of "grief memoirs" through citation or marketing. The majority of the accounts considered were published as books in their own right, but some formed chapters within an autobiography, or appeared in collections of reflective essays. A full list is provided in the appendices.

Some of the texts came from beyond the community under consideration (America for instance has produced a high number of bereavement narratives; books by Catholic or Jewish writers were also regarded as being beyond the scope of the study as the death rites observed are not those imprinted with the Protestant forms of British state religion). Some of these "outsider" texts were used as a source of contextual information and to consider whether contemporary British practice is particular to the identified community or part of a wider pattern (cf Glaser and Strauss, 1999: 51).

To ensure that the context and nature of each text was taken into account, each book or article was analysed using a three-step process. First a short

background summary was written (usually only two or three sentences) that sketched in the social context and the author's motives for writing. Secondly, the key statements that related to the use of clothing in bereavement practice were transcribed, along with any other statements that were felt (intuitively) to be significant. In the early stages of reading, the statements that felt significant were often those that were made by so many respondents they started to feel "normative" or, by contrast, those that stood out as rare, counterintuitive, even unique. At a later stage, apparent correlations between one kind of statement and another were noticed – for example, a link emerged between the theories of mourning that narrative writers subscribed to and their use of clothing in memory rituals. Once such a connection was suspected, further evidence (or contraindication) was sought in other texts.

The material extrapolated from bereavement narratives was analysed using discourse analysis, which aims to uncover the representational strategies behind cultural texts, to establish how (and why) they produce or reproduce a specific version of social reality (Seale, 2004: 373). It does this by examining rhetorical effect (Seale, 2004: 377), narrative structure, the things left deliberately unsaid (Billig, 1991), the intention of the author and how they might benefit from presenting the world in this way (Bryman, 2008: 507f). Using discourse analysis to interrogate bereavement narratives involved the recognition that the memories recorded were not unmediated statements of fact, but rather cultural myths which offered dramatic accounts of transformation (Cohen, 1969: 337) and sought to explain, justify and console by making the psychological struggles and social obligations of the mourner part of a deeper symbolic order (Cassirer, 1961). When the bereavement narratives were considered in this way it became possible to identify and label not only clothing behaviours but also the mythological narratives and personal agendas which appeared to shape these behaviours.

#### 4.4.4 Creating a cultural archive

From the earliest stages of the project, material that may prove relevant was gathered from library and internet resources and through museum visits. Material included magazine articles, undertakers' invoices, extracts from death-worker autobiographies, discussions in internet fora and photographs, as well as historical publications and extracts from previous academic research. The archive was constructed as the electronic equivalent of a card-based archival system and was intended to provide a contextual backdrop to

the project as a whole. Each piece of evidence was embedded in an individual digital slide, which also included details of origin, and associated notes<sup>26</sup>.

The bringing together of a wide range of images and descriptions of the clothing practices associated with death made it possible to identify themes, commonalities and behavioural tropes. Moreover, by grouping the slides thematically and arranging them chronologically within their sets, it was also possible to identify points of transition and to connect them hypothetically with historical events.

Although the items that went into the archive were not collected in accordance with any sampling strategy, those that were selected for inclusion in the study were selected purposively, because they appeared to cast light upon the phenomena being studied and because they were not isolated cases (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007: 242), which is to say that the archive contained sufficient instances of this behaviour to achieve theoretical saturation – that point at which new instances bring no additional knowledge (Glaser, 1992: 40).

## 4.5 Analysing the data using Grounded Theory

The data collection strategies described above generated a diverse data-set. Questionnaires yielded descriptions of personal behaviour and industrial practice which revealed distinct cultural patterns in both the dressing of the dead body and the disposition of the clothes the dead left behind. Q-methodology produced a series of tentative "maps" of the attitudes and assumptions that shape the clothing behaviours associated with death. Bereavement literature offered additional descriptions of clothing behaviours, many of which were accompanied by statements about personal motivation; more importantly, however, this body of material revealed the connection of clothing behaviours to culturally specific narratives of consolation and recovery. Finally, the cultural archive contributed additional textual material, but also captured elements of visual culture (fashion, memorials, art) that appeared to be both the inspiration for, and the traces of, death-related clothing behaviours, and, here again, distinct behavioural tropes presented themselves for analysis.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Examples of slides from the archive are shown in the appendices at A12

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This material was analysed using the principles of Grounded Theory, an approach developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in an explicit attempt to break sociology's commitment to verifying pre-existent hypotheses and to provide tools for generating new explanatory paradigms (Kelle, 2010: 192). It operates by first describing what is going on and then generating a "conceptual theory that is *abstract* of the descriptive detail from which it was derived" (Breckenridge et al., 2012: 67).

Glaser and Strauss developed their own distinctive versions of the methodology (Bryman, 2008: 541). Straussian Grounded Theory uses analytical tools grounded in a specific understanding of human behaviour and social relations, but the Glaserian version, which this thesis adopts, makes no such assumptions. It rather encourages the researcher to enter the field of investigation without any prior assumptions and to classify data using the theoretical frameworks that seem most appropriate. This flexibility makes the Glaserian model particularly appropriate to areas of study where the drivers of behaviour are contested or unclear or where more than one theoretical approach is required in order to make sense of a situation (Kelle, 2010: 206).

Glaserian Grounded theory makes only one assumption; that all human behaviour is purposive, directed towards securing a benefit, addressing a need or solving a problem (Glaser, 1992: 4, 43). The researcher's task is to work out how the behaviour being studied delivers benefits or mitigates problems. Although "ordinary actors in the everyday world" are aware of some motives for action, there are also behavioural drivers that they neither understand nor recognise (Glaser, 2002: 25). Glaserian Grounded Theory claims to expose both kinds of causation. This is of value, because clothing phenomena appear to result from both the strategic actions of people and from unwilled patterns of cause and effect within networks.

Researchers using Grounded Theory are encouraged to immerse themselves in the data before reading any "established theory" (Glaser, 1992: 32) and to compare that data systematically but intuitively (ibid:29), classifying it according to common themes and characteristics rather than depending upon the classificatory models established in previous studies<sup>27</sup>. The themes, and

<sup>27</sup> Glaser began his career at a time when sociological research frequently aimed to test the "classical" sociological theories of such thinkers as Marx and Durkheim in a variety of different contexts. Glaser insisted that all researchers should be permitted

ultimately the theory, should be allowed to "emerge" from the data (Glaser, 1992: 4). However, it is by following distinct analytical procedures that the researcher facilitates emergence.

Grounded theory requires data to be classified and labelled ("coded") as it is collected. The labels used are phrases that best describe a key characteristic of the datum and connect it to specific actions, events or characteristic patterns within the data (Bryman, 2008: 542). As new pieces of data arrive, their fit with the chosen classificatory system is assessed and the data will be re-sorted and re-classified if necessary.

Thus the behavioural tropes and the significant ideas revealed by the questionnaires were labelled with (clumsy and provisional) phrases such as, "making the deceased look like their best self" and "sharing good memories". Similarly, the themes emerging from the bereavement narratives were given labels, with "memory" and "continuing bonds" coming quickly to the fore. The constellations of ideas emerging from Q-methodology were also coded with the idea of "ancestor creation" emerging strongly here. It was the sorting of the slides in the cultural archive, however, that had the greatest influence on the early development of the project.

Sorting the slides thematically caused four primary categories to emerge from the data. These were the distinct contexts in which clothing was implicated in death practice: the dressing of the dead body, the clothing worn by mourners, the disposition of the clothing left behind by the deceased and, finally, a category that was not predicted by the literature review, the use of clothing as, or in, memorials. This categorical system emerged forcefully from the data and seemed significant enough to become the framework of the thesis. Further (sub)-categories were then identified by:

- 1. Considering concerns and motives frequently alluded to by participants ("memory" for example, or "care for the deceased")
- 2. Exploiting the categories and concepts suggested by literature in the field (such as "identity" and "tradition")
- 3. Arranging the data chronologically and focussing on the reasons that an established practice might change (such as "legislation", or "commercial interests")

received concepts of others, especially those concepts of unduly respected theoretical capitalists" (Glaser, 2002:23).

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4. Reflecting on some of the questions that Glaser (1992) suggests should guide the coding process: "What problem is being processed here?", "What solution has been adopted?" and "Who benefits from the chosen solution?"

Reflecting on the beneficiaries of specific behaviours led to recognition that some clothing behaviours were intended to benefit the dead, some to console mourners; others addressed the cultural group as a whole and some profited specific groups (undertakers or the aristocracy for instance). However, it also became clear that some clothing phenomena were not the results of purposive action – indeed they seemed to represent some kind of material resistance to such action – and thus an additional category, provisionally labelled "hauntings" was introduced to the scheme.

Once a best-fit coding and classification system for the data has been established, Grounded Theory requires that each category should be defined. This means that a description which can be clearly illustrated with examples from the data should be written for each category (Henwood et al., 1996: 97f). Next, the categories should be integrated by mapping and defining the relationships between them. This is often (as was the case in this thesis) supported by the generation of diagrams and flow charts (ibid: 99). The mapping of relationships is expected to reveal the "core categories", those actions, events or intentions which give focus and meaning to the others. At this stage the categories with few examples and limited explanatory power may be abandoned.

Grounded Theory does not aim to explain every aspect of behaviour but rather to offer a "parsimonious theory" (Glaser, 2002: 24), grounded in these core categories that explains key elements of the phenomenon being studied. The final stages of research thus involve integrating and editing the themes and concepts uncovered until a "best fit" account of the behaviour in question and the factors that drive or sustain it can be articulated. Again Glaser (1992) suggests that reflecting on specific questions can inform the construction of a behavioural model. For example, researchers are encouraged to reflect on the different factors or conditions that lead to different strategies being adopted; on the power relations and social forces that sustain specific practices; and on the appearance of similar behaviours in different contexts, for not only might behaviours have been copied or displaced, it is also sometimes possible, as Hodder (1994) notes, to explain behaviours about which little is known through analogy with well-understood behaviours.

## 4.6 Project structure

As indicated above, the initial categories which emerged forcefully from the data became the following thematic chapters:

- Chapter 5: the dressing of the dead body
- Chapter 6: the clothes the dead leave behind
- Chapter 7: the clothes that mourners wear
- Chapter 8: the use of clothes in, or as memorials.

Each chapter begins by reprising the questions that must be asked of the data; both generic questions about what is going on and specific questions prompted by problems or gaps in knowledge revealed by the literature review. The data is then presented and categories identified. Connections between categories are tentatively mapped and answers to the questions suggested.

In the final chapter the findings of the thematic chapters are integrated in order to produce "a parsimonious theory" (Glaser 2002: 24) of clothing in the death context, which advances knowledge while still reflecting the insistence of Denzin (2012) and of Saukko (2003) that the conclusion of any cultural study must be polyvocal, nuanced and reflect the diversity of human experience.

# 4.7 Validity

Grounded Theory aims to explain the behaviours it studies. However, because it generates explanations, or hypotheses, which are not tested empirically, a series of validation principles are offered. Glaser and Strauss (1999) argue that for a hypothesis to be valid and valuable it should

- 1. closely fit the data.
- 2. be demonstrable using data from different sources (triangulation).
- 3. be readily understood by a layman with some knowledge of the area.
- 4. have general explanatory power (rather than being a descriptor of one very particular situation)
- 5. have predictive power (in that it indicates the likely result of a specific change or intervention)

The findings of this study are tested using these principles in the conclusory chapter.

Part II: The Data

## Chapter 5 Dressing the Dead Body

This chapter will address the following questions:

- 1. How is the dead body dressed in twenty first century Britain?
- 2. What are the historical origins of this presentation?
- 3. Does the chosen clothing strategy address needs or deliver benefits in the present or is it simply the relic of ancient practice?
- 4. How do people experience these interactions with clothing?
- 5. What causes clothing behaviours to change in this area?
- 6. Why is the dead body often carefully dressed and styled even when it is not to be viewed?

These questions will be approached by, first, presenting historical data from both primary and secondary sources to expose the origins of current behaviours and the factors likely to precipitate change; and second, by using the contemporary data collected to construct a thick-description account of how the dead body is styled in Britain today.

#### 5.1 Historical material

Cunnington and Lucas (1972) draw on historical manuscripts, images and monuments to provide an account of corpse dressing from the Saxon period to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They describe two basic approaches to dressing the dead. Individuals might be dressed in clothes appropriate to their rank, or their unclothed body might be wrapped in a shroud (ibid: 156); in both cases an outer textile wrapping described as a winding sheet or sceat was used until coffin burial became the norm in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (ibid: 159). The consistent rationale, they argue, was to provide the corpse with clothing that would "promote comfort if it were living and give decorum in death" (ibid: 125). However, the examples provided by these and other writers on the historical treatment of the corpse, indicate that the clothing provided for the dead has been shaped by numerous intersecting principles. Some of these relate to the management of death, other factors parallel the reasons for clothing choice among the living.

### 5.1.1 Managing death

#### 5.1.1.1 **Tradition**

The traditions of the ancient world, most particularly the Roman world, have exerted a continuing influence on the treatment of the corpse in Britain (Habenstein, 1955: 36-50, Bradbury, 1999: 131). The Roman practice of washing the corpse and then displaying it, beautifully groomed (Carroll and Wild, 2012) and posed in an attitude of peaceful sleep, was adopted by the Christian Church and sustained by both the passing of knowledge from one generation of laying-out women to the next (Naylor, 1989: 52f) and the administrative arrangements of burial guilds (Parsons, 1997: 26). These practices were also standardised and mediated by depictions of the styled corpse in tomb-top effigies (Ariès, 1985: 112) and by paintings of the dead (Ruby, 1995: 30).

#### 5.1.1.2 Containment of the body

Before the introduction of wooden coffins and body preservation techniques, grave clothes also served to protect the body. Shrouds might be wrapped tightly to make the body easier to handle, or soaked in beeswax (Todd, 1996), gum or resin in order to inhibit decay and facilitate transportation. Such wrappings were often termed "cerecloth" (Tarlow et al., 2018). According to Ariès (1981: 168) and (Park, 1995: 118) these containment techniques also served to reinforce the boundary between the living and the dead.

#### 5.1.1.3 Managing the distance between the living and the dead

While cerecloth maintained a safe distance between the living and the dead, other clothing strategies sought to minimise the distance – even blur the line – between the living and the dead. The desire for proximity with the dead is evident in Victorian practice, which was shaped by the Romantic conviction that love overcame death and the religious idea that the family home prefigured the Heavenly "home" where the dead awaited the living (Douglas, 1975, 1996). Such attitudes gave rise to body styling practices which aimed specifically to symbolise, to preserve and to demonstrate to others the persistence and the value of the affectional bonds between family members.

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Caroline Smith, a Birmingham suffragette<sup>28</sup> made "her own shroud of her three children's long baby clothes<sup>29</sup>", while many families chose to display postmortem photographs in the family home (Ruby, 1995, Linkman, 2014). Photographic images of the styled dead body served first to domesticate death by making the corpse attractive and familiar (Linkman, 2014: 32, 34); second, to express the relationship, "the devotion", between the deceased and their mourners (Dick, 1906: 8f); third, to preserve and share the "evidence" of a good death and successful transition to Heaven (Jalland, 1996: 290, 329, Linkman, 2006: 335, Flint, 2009). Finally, through a combination of these devices, post-mortem photographs served to stimulate the kinds of emotion that made it possible to experience an ongoing connection with the dead (Ruby, 1995).

Although the staging and lighting of the deceased helped post-mortem photographs achieve their desired effect, clothing and accessories also played a critical role. Dressing the corpse in the clothes worn for special occasions triggered happy memories of family life; white robes or religious symbols provided evidence of the "spotless innocence" (Figure 6) that guaranteed salvation, while empty shoes laid beside the body (Figure 7) symbolised mortality and triggered a culturally specific sense of nostalgia. The dead who were commemorated in this way were not considered shocking, frightening or even fully absent, they were beloved family members awaiting reunion in Heaven<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> the sister of George Holyoake, prominent humanist and advocate of the cooperative movement.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Evidenced by a note on the reverse of a portrait archived at London Metropolitan University: for detail see http://twl-calm.library.lse.ac.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&pos=1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> This point has been evidenced using photographs from American sources, as well as images from Britain. Postmortem photography played a similar role in both contexts but more examples have survived in American than in Britain.



Figure 5: Post-mortem photographs of children<sup>31</sup>

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Centre: baby in a tie-back shroud (Newcastle upon Tyne, c1891): Image from eBay http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/Victorian-post-mortem-cabinet-card-/272379950770?&\_trksid=p205606.I46 where the item was offered for sale (accessed 18 Sept 2016)

Bottom: Violet died 1910, America: laid out in party clothes. Image reproduced with kind permission of Jack Mord of Thanatos.net

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Top: John Garmston Hopkins who died in 1871. This image is embedded in a memorial to John and his two year old brother in at St-John-in-Bedwardine in Worcester; http://www.midlandsheritage.co.uk/ © Bereniceuk.



Figure 6: Sixth-plate daguerrotype of Charles Thompson Gibbud, died 1855, Connecticut courtesy of Jack Mord, Thanatos.net



Figure 7: Deceased child with empty shoes beside him (America, 1890)<sup>32</sup>

## 5.1.1.4 Superstition and religious belief

Although the Christian Church has never specified how the dead body should be presented (Puckle, 1926:35, Bullough, 1983, Bazelmans, 2002) afterlife beliefs have influenced the dressing of the corpse, in a variety of ways. In popular death culture, dressing the dead body was part of a supernatural battle to help the deceased into the afterlife and to keep the living from harm (Richardson, 1989: 109). The soul was believed to remained linked to the body for an unspecified period after death (Frisby, 2011, 2015a, 2015b), lingering in the home in a state of reduced and needy personhood (Frisby, 2015b: 404). Washing the body was assumed to purify the soul while wrapping the corpse in "some religious garment" was expected to bring "ease to the poor departed" (Blomefield, 1739). However, strategies of appeasement or physical restraint were also used to reduce the dangers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> This image is the property of the Thanatos archive http://thanatos.net/ and is reproduced with the kind permission of Jack Mord.

posed by the dead body; the deceased may be given gifts of clothing or rings to prevent them from envying or tormenting the living (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 128, 237) or their feet may be bound to prevent them from walking (ibid: 123).

The shroud was widely credited with the ability to both protect the living and help the dead. Shroud burial was copied by Christians from their Jewish forebears, who used it in rituals of purification and containment in order to reconcile the contradictory ideas that the corpse was sacred (because it carried God's image (Goodman et al., 2011: 300) and belonged to God (Dorff, 2005)) but also a source of contamination (Deuteronomy 21:23). Burial in a plain linen shroud became popular among Christians in Britain from around the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Lucy and Reynolds, 2002: 20f, Hoggett, 2010: 205), either in imitation of Christ<sup>33</sup>, (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 156, Richardson, 1987: 21) or in simulation of monastic burial rites which were believed to confer both ritual purity and membership of a divine community (Daniell, 1996: 27f).

Sermons and stories associated shrouds with a wide range of virtues and blessings. Based upon texts such as "naked I came from my mother, and naked I will return" (Ecclesiastes 5:15, Job 1:21, 1 Timothy 6:7) shroud burial was represented as the antithesis of earthly pride and materialism, a humble surrender to the will of God. Clothing symbolism in the Book of Revelation<sup>34</sup>, meanwhile, associated the dressed state with redemption, nakedness with shame (Figure 8) and white robes with Martyrdom, giving rise to the assumption that a white shroud might be used to confirm the virtue of the deceased. Elsewhere, shrouds were claimed to represent equality before God, penitence, acceptance of death, confidence in the resurrection and deliverance from sin (Walton, 1639, Erbe, 1905: 294, Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 157). These ideas retained their resonance for the faithful until at least the mid-17th century, when John Donne indicated his readiness for the afterlife by posing for a portrait in his shroud (Flynn, 1995: 6).

<sup>33</sup> For detail of Christ's burial see Matthew 27: 57-61; Mark 15: 44-47; Luke 23: 50-54; John 19: 38-42

<sup>34</sup> Revelation 3:4, 4:18, 6:11, 7:9, 16:1

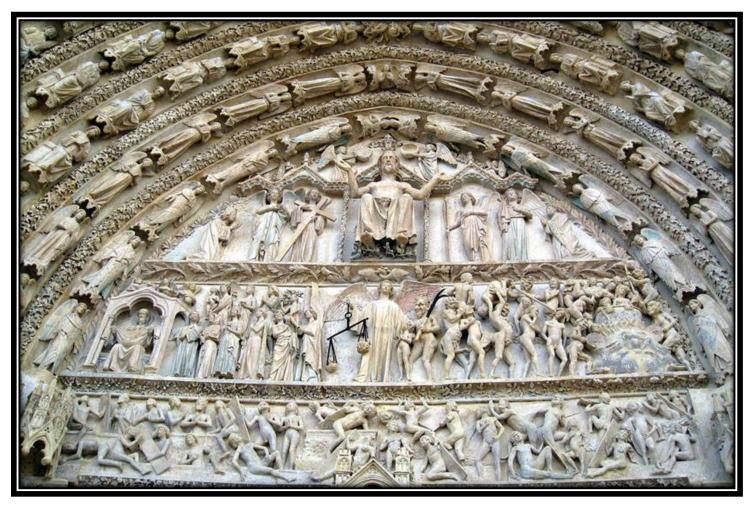


Figure 8: Judgement scene from Bourges Cathedral, showing the righteous clothed and the condemned naked. Image from Aries (1985), Images of Man and Death

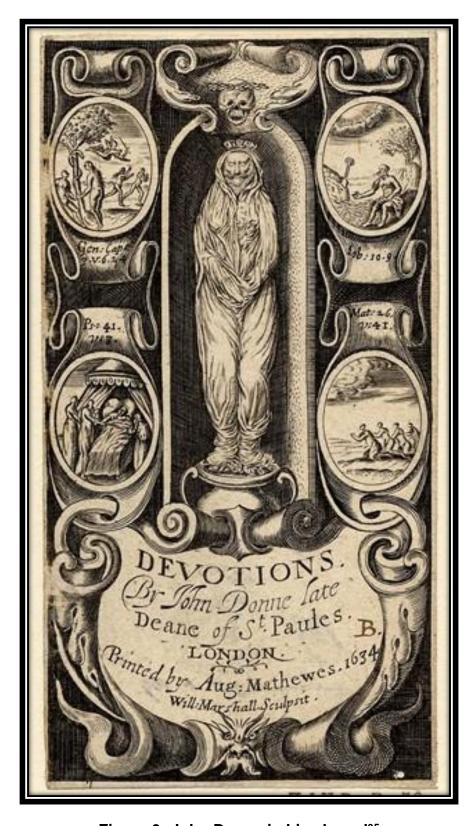


Figure 9: John Donne in his shroud<sup>35</sup>

Image from the British Museum

#### 5.1.1.5 The good death

Despite the prominence of the shroud in clerical discourse, dressed burial also reflected some elements of religious belief; for example, the dead body was expected to provide evidence that the individual had died well. Mediaeval understandings of the good death were premised on the conception of death as a supernatural battle where the forces of good and evil fought to take possession of the individual's soul (Ariès, 1981: 108ff); the good death thus involved the dying one resisting temptation and demonstrating faith in order to gain access to Heaven. Until the 19th century this supernatural drama was enacted before an audience of family and supporters (Houlbrooke, 1989a: 26, Jalland, 1996, Tankard, 2003: 265). However, when the deathbed fell under medical supervision and became increasingly private (Houlbrooke, 1989b: 10, Jalland, 1996: 85) it became common for friends and neighbours to pay their respects after death had occurred (Hole, 1961, Ariès, 1985: 103). From this point on, the corpse provided the only evidence that the individual had died well: thus, between the point of death and the arrival of visitors, the body was styled to provide this evidence (Ariès, 1985: 112), so that the bereaved might be reassured that the deceased was alright, and that Heaven was a real and accessible location (cf.Jalland, 1996: Ch 1).

The deceased might be presented in either their night-clothes or in the best clothes they had worn in life (Ariès, 1985: 112, Linkman, 2014: 33)) each presentation giving access to a distinct set of consolatory images. Night clothing bridged the gap between the (idealised) deathbed and the peaceful sleep before resurrection (Ruby, 1995: 63f). Fine clothes demonstrated success in life (Linkman, 2014: 34), success which was assumed to be deserved, divinely ordained<sup>36</sup> and an indication of the greater riches to be enjoyed in Heaven. The spotless, unruffled appearance of the clothing further implied that this death had involved a calm and painless transition to Heaven.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Christianity accepted that wealth and success might be a matter of divine providence. An original verse in the hymn "All Things Bright and Beautiful", ran "The rich man in his castle, The poor man at his gate, God made them God made them, high or lowly, And ordered their estate" See https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/3668059/The-story-behind-the-hymn.html



Figure 10: Victorian magic lantern slide c 1890 showing man laid out in the same formal outfit he wore for a portrait<sup>37</sup>

# 5.1.2 Parallels with the clothing of the living

Just as the clothes of the living may be used to demonstrate personal virtues, an individual's position in social hierarchies and their membership of particular groups, the clothes worn by the dead also fulfil these functions.

#### 5.1.2.1 Affirmations of virtue

As noted in the discussion of the good death, the living survey the corpse in the hope of a revelation about this person's true nature and how they are likely

<sup>37</sup> This image is taken from eBay where the slide was offered for sale. http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/Man-lying-dead-in-coffin-glass-slide-/400330573235?\_trksid=p2047675.l2557&ssPageName=STRK:MEWAX:IT&nma=tru e&si=pHfYTII4aVYidKJcvHN27nRVkZ4%3D&orig\_cvip=true&rt=nc accessed 28 October 2012

to fare at judgement. Indeed there is a long-standing tradition of "reading" the corpse for such evidence.

William Fitzstephen, biographer and contemporary of Thomas a Beckett, described his death in 1170 using the symbolic language of colour and clothing to provide evidence of saintliness. Blood and brain spatter were claimed to presage "the two-fold stole" that Thomas would receive in Heaven "white for faithfully administering his archiepiscopal office, crimson for happily consummating his martyrdom" (Sinclair, 1944: 93). The clothes in which Thomas died (a hair shirt and a monk's robe beneath canonical garb) were claimed reveal his "true" character; the self known only to God (Sinclair, 1944: 99)<sup>38</sup>; that is to say, the final outfit revealed the individual as God saw (and judged) him. Those who prepared Thomas's body for burial strove to further articulate this "true" identity by adding extra layers of clothing; the vestments in which he was ordained, the archiepiscopal tunic, his chasuble and ring; in order to provide a biographical summary of a life that combined power with religious humility.

In the case of St Thomas, as in more routine deaths, it was assumed that both the spiritual status and the afterlife journey of the deceased were discernible from the corpse. Crucially, the clothes on the body were assumed to reveal rather than hide the inner self; functioning not as symbolic statements about the nature of the deceased, but as "proof". However, the dressing of the dead body was also embraced as an opportunity to tell – and mythologise – the lifestory of the deceased for the edification of the living.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century it was common to evidence the baptised status of the deceased by using the chrisom<sup>39</sup> as a shroud for infants or a fastening on the shrouds of adults (Litten, 2002: 61)). Equally women were dressed to emphasize their standing as either virtuous wives or virgins. Married status was indicated by a shroud fastened with bride-laces<sup>40</sup> (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 159), or by burial in clothing worn on the

<sup>39</sup>The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> There is a parallel here with Lurie's (1983:244) assertion that the clothing worn closest to the body represents the "true" self and outer layers a public persona.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> The linen cloth used to absorb surplus oil at baptism

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Bridal laces combined armorial devices of bride and groom (Jackson, 1950: 20). The 16<sup>th</sup> century ballad "The Brides' Buriall" includes the lines "My bride-laces of silke/ Bestow'd on maidens meete/ May fitly serve, when I am dead/ To tie my hands and feet" (Jewitt, 1881: 146)

wedding day (ibid 163 Davies, 1992: 102ff). Virginity and virtue were indicated by the provision of "maidens' garlands" or "crants" (see 8.3.1.1) elaborate head-dresses fashioned either from foliage, or from textile and paper (Bromley, 1747, Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 139, Spriggs, 1982, Morris, 2011)<sup>41</sup>.

#### 5.1.2.2 Affirmation of social membership

Just as the living might be granted membership of a group through clothing rituals (such as in*vest*iture) or excommunicated by the confiscation of symbolic garments (Beck, 1833: 201)<sup>42</sup> the clothing of the dead marked them as insiders or outcasts. In Anglo-Saxon England, convicts and outcasts were buried without the normal body preparation rituals, their bodies consigned to the ground dressed as they had died (Lucy and Reynolds, 2002, Reynolds, 2009: 44, 56, 159, 183ff, Sayer, 2013) to indicate permanent expulsion from the group. The emergence of Christianity brought no significant change: punitive burial rites were retained for the convict, the outcast and the suicide until the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Harte, 2011), with body preparation rites being withheld in the belief that this would exclude them from Heaven.

In 18<sup>th</sup> century England, executed criminals were typically buried dressed as they had died<sup>43</sup>. This fate was so dreaded that some convicts tried to avoid damnation by obtaining a shroud and wearing it to the gallows. Thus, describing a recent execution, the London Journal of 1730<sup>44</sup> reported that the [malefactors] proceeded to Tyburn, and were executed, one.... went in his Shroud, and would not be prevail'd with to put on any other Dress.

Equally, an advertisement<sup>45</sup> for The Newgate Calendar, a periodical which described the crimes and the executions of high profile criminals, promised

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Cases of unmarried women buried in wedding clothes are relatively common (Puckle, 1926: 36, Taylor, 1983a: 51,184, Ashenburg, 2003) this can easily be assimilated with the thesis that the styling of the dead body articulates contemporary beliefs about how things "ought to be".

 $<sup>^{42}</sup>$  A disgraced knight for example, would be forced to surrender the clothing that confirmed his status; in the mediaeval period this would have been gloves, more recently a medal.

 $<sup>^{43}</sup>$  An article in The Daily Advertiser in 1790 (issue 45) described the case of a boy sent to Botany Bay for the crime of stealing clothing from the bodies of convicts awaiting burial

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> The London Journal, 1730-1731, Issue 127, page 3 © Adam Matthew Digital <sup>45</sup> In the York Chronicle (1772-3)

illustrations of "Bryan Seymour, in a shroud, walking through Edinburgh to the place of Execution" and "Stephen Gardener, in his shroud, exhorting the spectators at Tyburn" (Figure 11). In this context the shroud is as much as a claim of social inclusion as a signifier of penitence and salvation, and it is perhaps for this reason that anxieties about being buried without the correct attire are commonly reflected in ghost stories (Maxwell Stuart, 2007, Lecouteux, 2009).



Figure 11: Stephen Gardiner addressing the crowds at Tyburn<sup>46</sup>

 $^{
m 46}$  Image from Hayward (1775) who reproduced it from the Newgate Calendar 1772-73

#### 5.1.2.3 Affirmation of social structure

Historically burial clothing has also been used to confirm the relative position of individuals within the social group. The Saxons dressed their dead in a shirt (or "camisia"), over which were placed clothes appropriate to their rank in life before the body was wrapped in a *sceat* or a winding sheet (Strutt, 1796:156, Cunnington and Lucas, 1972), while Arthurian legend<sup>47</sup> claims that shrouds made from jewelled damasks and cloth of gold were used for noblemen: these sumptuous wrappings provided a dramatic focus to the funeral procession and affirmed the social worth of the deceased (Ariès, 1981: 145f, 184).

When, as noted at 5.1.1.4, the plain shroud became the norm for churchyard burial, dressed burial was retained for clergymen, knights and kings (Ariès, 1981, 1985: 246). Thus, in mediaeval Britain the community of the dead was represented as a massed rank of commoners, indistinguishable in their shrouds, ruled over by magnificently attired bishops and kings. This was the symbolic corollary and justification of the conditions of earthly life and commemorative representations of the clothed dead body made this symbolic affirmation of social arrangements visible and enduring. When a monarch died, their clothes might be placed not on their actual body, but on an effigy of wax or wood (Figure 12) which was carried in the funeral parade and displayed in the church as a theatrical spectacle: splendid, incorruptible and surrounded by religious and heraldic devices. This display valorised not just the deceased individual but also the spiritual, ceremonial and political power of the institution they represented (Lockyer, 1962:44, Finucane, 1981: 47). In this way, the dressing of the dead helped to symbolise the ideal society, aspired to in life and (apparently) realised in Heaven.

<sup>47</sup> Arthurian legend is usually associated with the "Ancient Britons" or "Celtic Britons" who lived in Britain prior to the Roman invasion, accepted Roman citizenship and then fought the Saxons for control. The extent of ethnic and cultural difference between Saxons and the Romano-British is now widely questioned, see, for example, James (2011)



Figure 12: Funeral effigy of Charles II on display in Westminster Abbey c1910<sup>48</sup>

### 5.1.2.4 . Legislation, commerce and consumption

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the clothes that were placed on the corpse were also affected by commercial and legislative factors. The Burial in Woollens Act, enforced from 1678 in order to boost the woollen industry and reserve linen for use in the paper trade (L. C., 1678: 4, Puckle, 1926: 37, Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 159), specified that only woollen garments could be used in the grave. An affidavit declaring compliance had to be submitted within 8 days of burial (see Figure 13, Figure 14 and Figure 15) and failure to comply led to a five-pound fine (Litten, 1997: 48). This Act meant that both the linen shroud associated with Christ's burial, which was believed to protect the deceased (Richardson, 1987: 21), and the insignia of social or religious status had to be forfeit. This caused huge consternation among ordinary Christians (L. C., 1678, Kellaway, 1956). Pamphleteers both articulated and mocked the popular concerns that burial in wool was uncomfortable, disrespectful to the dead and perhaps even "a Popish device" (L.C., 1678: 7, see figure 13), a way of enforcing penance after death, thereby jeopardising their claim to be saved through faith alone.

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<sup>48</sup> Image from The Gentle Author's London Album (2013), reproduced from <a href="http://www.itv.com/news/london/2013-10-17/hundreds-of-historic-london-images-seen-for-first-time/">http://www.itv.com/news/london/2013-10-17/hundreds-of-historic-london-images-seen-for-first-time/</a> (accessed 26 December 2017)

Some people went to great lengths to avoid being buried in wool, either allowing for the fine in their will<sup>49</sup>, or choosing to be buried naked, their body packed in hay or wildflowers (Kellaway, 1956). However, the widespread anger and distress resulting from the Burial in Woollens Act created a market for an innovative new product: the custom-made burial gown (Richardson, 1987: 20). Such gowns used decoration – ribbons and embroidery – to compensate for having to use despised materials; restoring the dignity of the dead through embellishment and the satisfaction of mourners through conspicuous consumption. Within months of the Act being implemented, The London Gazette (1678) was advertising "decent and fashionable laced Shifts and Dressings for the Dead made of Woollen" (Cunnington and Lucas 1972: 161).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Edmund Steere, who wrote his will in 1714, explicitly left 50 shillings to the poor of the parish "on account of my being….buryed in Linnen": thus avoiding the need to pay the informant (Bax, 1890).

```
1740.
30 June.
           Richard son of Charles and Jemima Harris was bapt.
           Mary Harris was buried. Aff. made 18 July.
14 July.
           9 April, 1741. Allowed by us,
                            Wm. Freke.
    Henry Embris, Rector.—Tho. Freke.
                               1741.
           Elizabeth Oliver was buried. Aff. made 26 April.
21 April.
           Mary daughter of Thomas and Hannah Masters was bapt.
 9 Aug.
           Sarah Masters was buried. Aff. made 28 Aug.
24 ,
                               1742.
14 Feb.
           George Buckland and Ann Harman were married.
 8 March.
          Richard Ryal was buried.
                                                     Was buried in
                                        Aff. made.
              woollen.
                               1743.
27 March. Hugh the son of Hugh and Mary Granger was bapt.
23 April.
           Hugh Granger was buried.
           Robert son of Thomas and Melior Pidle was bapt.
 I May.
           William son of John and Ruth Toup was buried.
                               1744.
11 March.
           Robert son of Hugh and Mary Granger bapt.
          William son of John and Ruth Toup was bapt.
10 March.
 8 July.
           Joan Cozins was buried in woollen only.
           William Masters was buried in woollen only.
 - Aug.
24 8 ber.
           Eliz. Foard was buried in woollen only.
*26 July. 1773. Richard Noake was buried in woollen only.
 *6 Feb. 1774. John Darby was buried in woollen only.
 24 Feb. 1774. John Gould was buried in woollen only.
```

Figure 13: Transcript of the Parish Register at Beer Hackett showing affidavits made to confirm burial in wool

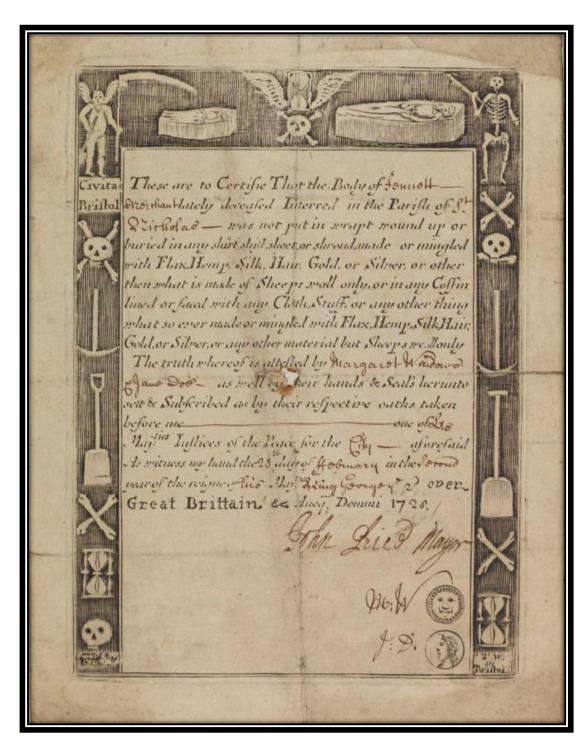


Figure 14: Affidavit relating to the burial of Jennett Merchant; dated 1728<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> The image is from the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University <a href="https://lewiswalpole.wordpress.com/2015/01/12/these-are-to-certifie-that-the-body-of-blank/">https://lewiswalpole.wordpress.com/2015/01/12/these-are-to-certifie-that-the-body-of-blank/</a> (accessed 28 January 2015)



Figure 15: Affidavit confirming burial in woollens from Stone in Worcestershire in the 1680s<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Image from <a href="http://www.explorethepast.co.uk/2014/10/treasures-from-worcestershires-past-47.html">http://www.explorethepast.co.uk/2014/10/treasures-from-worcestershires-past-47.html</a> accessed 26 November 2015

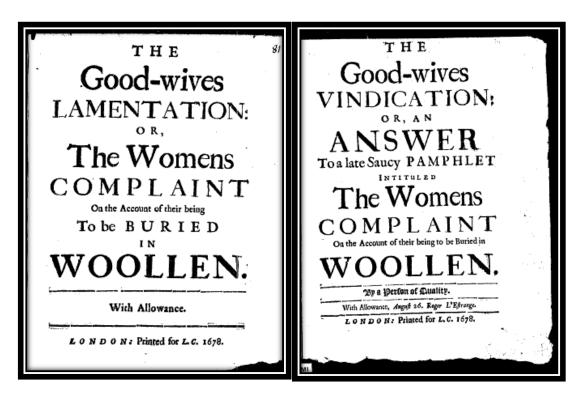


Figure 16: Pamphlets in response to the Burial in Woollens Act

By 1719, an outfit comprising a decorated flannel shift, tied below the ankle (Dezallier-D'Argenville, c 1731) and accompanied by headdress, chin strap and gloves (Litten, 2002) had become standard and could be bought "readymade, of what size or price you please" (Misson, 1719). As a direct result of a ban on the use of linen shrouds, an entire burial outfit had appeared (Figure 17).

Although the Burial in Woollens Act was not formally repealed until 1815, enforcement ceased well in advance of this (Hudson, 1904) and undertakers developed shrouds or gowns in a choice of styles and qualities in order to exploit the market presented by an affluent and ambitious middle class (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 163). Crape, a crimped fabric associated with mourning because of its light absorbing properties was particularly popular with "double crape" and "superfine crape" presenting more costly variations (Gilbert, 1973). Such fabrics expressed tenderness and dolour and purported to make the corpse comfortable on his journey, but they also enabled the bereaved to articulate their social position and aspirations by purchasing the fabric appropriate to the real or imagined status of the deceased (Richardson, 1989: 111). Thus, while the clothes of the dead had historically reaffirmed social arrangements they began to provide a channel through which these arrangements might be contested.

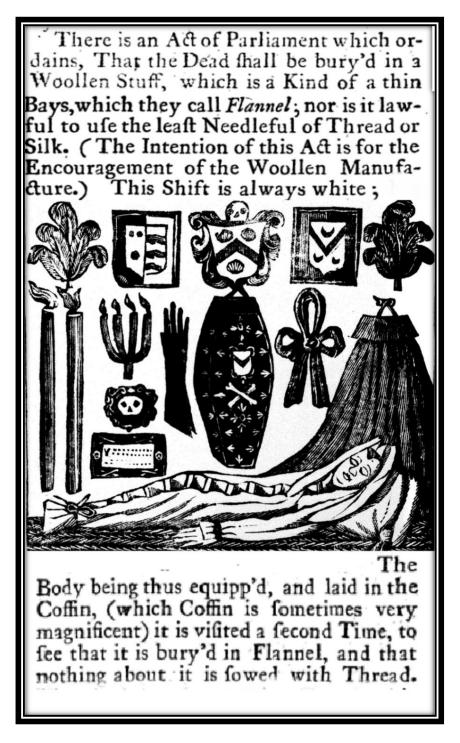


Figure 17: Flannel shifts for the dead<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> The image is from a 1720 trade card for the undertaker Eleazar Malory of Whitechapel, published in Litten (2002). The text is from Misson (1719), <a href="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdid=book-yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=\_yQ2AAAAAMAAJ&rdot="https://play.goo

The decline of the standard burial outfit is frequently explained in terms of a failure to keep offering satisfactory consumption experiences to the bereaved. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, outfits for the dead were being manufactured on an industrial scale in "shroud rooms" 53. The archaic styles of the 17th century were retained (compare, for example Figure 17 and Figure 18), but the opportunity to choose between a wide range of textiles declined over time. When synthetic fabrics became popular in the 20th century, these were also used for shrouds, and nylon was used to clothe the dead long after its popularity declined among the living. It was only when the public were already starting to reject the burial robe, that manufacturers tried to salvage the declining market by increasing colour choices and signifying luxury and comfort through gowns that resembled smoking jackets and dressing gowns (Figure 20). Newman Brothers of Birmingham, who introduced shrouds in a variety of colourways (Figure 19) found considerable success with a design that used the wine and blue colours favoured by both the freemasons and the local football team<sup>54</sup>. However, the changes appear to have been too little, too late to save what was once a thriving shroud industry<sup>55</sup>.

#### As Baker (2012: 42) put it

Nowadays there is a far greater range of gowns available, in considerably more subtle colours and/or different patterned fabrics, but ironically the vast majority of families now opt for the deceased to be dressed in their own clothes anyway.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> there is a preserved example at the former Newman Brothers factory in Birmingham http://www.coffinworks.org/

<sup>54</sup> Personal conversations with Coffinworks staff

<sup>55</sup> Personal conversations with Coffinworks staff

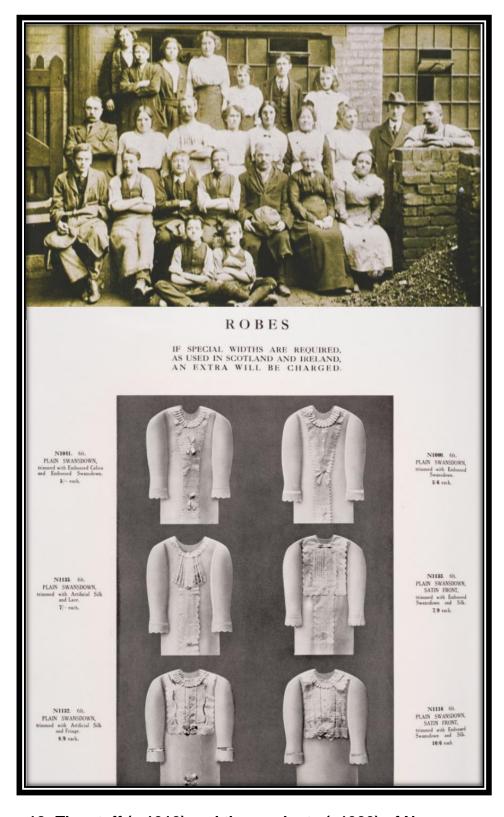


Figure 18: The staff (c 1912) and the products (c1920) of Newman Brothers in Birmingham  $^{56}\,$ 

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Images from the Newman Bros Museum http://www.coffinworks.org/



Figure 19: the new "dressing gown style" shroud in a variety of colourways<sup>57</sup>

57 Items from Newman Brothers collection, photography, Judith Simpson

### Male gown selection

To see a selection of female gowns click on the link (right)

**Stirling** - a gentleman's gown design based on a dressing gown; padded revers, soft satin finish.

Colour: green, navy and maroon.

Gown No. 62





Bristol - high quality gown in taffeta.

Spot dobby rever, with attractive braid edging. Cord girdle. 9" single ruched frill.

Available in white, pink, peach, cream, blue, oyster, green and helio.

Gown No. 41

**Avon** - high grade taffeta gown with padded lattice dobby rever, with attractive braid edging. Cord girdle. 9" frill only.

Available in white, pink, peach, cream, blue, oyster, green and helio.

Gown No. 42



Figure 20: Readymade coffin-wear (http://www.arnold-funerals.co.uk/accessed 2014)

### 5.1.3 Summary of historical precedents

This brief survey of historical material has demonstrated that the dressing of the dead is negotiated between a range of stakeholders; the bereaved family who wish to ensure the wellbeing of the deceased and their own good standing, hegemonic forces with an interest in preserving the status quo and commercial interests including the undertaker and the textile trade. There are also a range of other forces at play. Tradition appears to inhibit change in form, without stabilising meaning, while the desire to demonstrate group membership, declare the social worth of the deceased, evidence the good death and manage the relationship between the living and the dead exert significant influence on the dressing of the dead body.

The historical material appears to demonstrate that

- the final outfit will articulate the values and structure of the group, for it
  is by aligning the deceased with approved identities and behaviours that
  their social worth is demonstrated
- changing understandings of the good death may alter presentation
- hierarchical or competitive societies may seek to differentiate the dead while egalitarian groups may choose a standard garment
- shifting relationships most particularly the emotional distance between the living and the dead – influence the styling of the dead body.

In the section that follows, there will be the opportunity to consider whether these principles continue to drive the dressing of the dead body in the twentyfirst century.

### 5.2 Contemporary material

Contemporary practice was investigated through two questionnaires, a Q-methodology exercise, reading bereavement narratives, and considering material from the cultural archive.

### 5.2.1 Questionnaire 1: the general public on what the dead should wear

A questionnaire distributed to members of the public elicited 30 responses (see appendices for detail). The responses described bereavement in a wide variety of religious contexts (Jewish, Sikh and Catholic as well as Protestant) and it was sometimes the case that the deceased was of a different faith to the

person describing their death. However, only in the Jewish case was a distinctive approach to dressing the dead described: here shroud burial was described and the respondent felt there was "no choice". In other cases there was an assumption that the dead would wear their own clothes and that those clothes would express their personality. A British agnostic describing the funeral of a Sikh neighbour remembered the deceased wearing

fire colours – yellow, orange, reds...(to match her personality) (P14). 58

Other responses suggested that the dead body should be styled to make the deceased look like their living self and, more importantly, their *best* or definitive self. People who described viewing the dead expressed disappointment when the body did not resemble the living individual. Sometimes associating this with a lack of care and respect for the deceased.

My mother's hair had not been done - her image was very important to her (P10).

Conversely, choosing the "right" clothes for the body and ensuring that they looked comfortable was interpreted as a demonstration of care and affection.

I choose clothes for my brother. He wore a shirt, tie and suit (grey). He looked very peaceful and I was glad to do it for him (P8)

The right clothes appeared to be garments that reflected the personality and preferences of the person who had died:

For my mother, I chose her favourite dress, it just seemed the obvious choice (P12)

One respondent summarised what most implied:

I would try to find something that was like they would wear in life and consistent but also try to make them look at their best (P9).

This pattern of motivation was apparent whether respondents were speaking about actual bereavement experiences or trying to predict future behaviour, and whether they were speaking of other people's coffin clothing or their own. An overriding commitment to depicting the deceased as their best self, was

 $<sup>^{58}</sup>$  Individual survey respondents are referred to using "P" for "public" and "FD" for "funeral director" followed by a number.

accompanied by a desire to evoke good memories and to symbolically depict the networks and relationships that were important to the deceased.

One respondent described the clothes that the family had chosen for their mother:

we chose Mum's favourite outfit which she had recently worn to my sister's wedding - we all thought she'd have agreed with our choice! (P5).

Another respondent hoped that she, herself, would wear something that evoked

the 'happiest' times in my life - e.g. a glamourous dress worn to a special occasion (P14).

The focus on happy memories and interpersonal relationships appears to explain both the bodies presented in their best clothes (P2, P5, P6, P8, P30) and the casual clothing noted by one survey respondent who had seen numerous bodies as a minister of religion

I've been surprised how many families have opted for a rugby or football shirt of a favourite team. I think I used to assume it should be something smart and sombre (P28)

Casual clothing is associated not just with memories, but frequently with the most social aspects of the deceased's identity; their affiliations, passions and treasured relationships: principles this same respondent acknowledges when he suggests that his own final outfit might include

one of my 'Doctor Who' scarves. Maybe one of the jumpers my wife has made for me (P28).

The fact that memories are being edited and curated in the presentation of the dead body is evident in responses which express relief that the final memory was a good one and that unpleasant memories of the dying trajectory are thus displaced. One respondent expressed

relief that my last memory of this special person was so nice. I expected worse (P22)

Another respondent (P1) was even more explicit, expressing amazement and gratitude that the funeral director had managed to make his father "look like himself" again, when he had looked very different at the point of death.

Those respondents who chose not to view the body also referred to the desirability of hanging onto the most favourable memories

I couldn't [view the body, I] had to leave the room as it upset me so much; prefer to keep the last good memory I have of them rather than seen them like that (P12).

Other respondents concurred with this, stating that they would "rather remember them as they were alive" (P19).

Most of the responses can be related to the idea that a final memory picture of the deceased is being constructed. Where it is not possible to fashion the corpse into a positive representation of this sort, then the mourners would prefer not to see it at all. As noted above, however, the optimal memory picture is never one of an isolated individual – their connections to others are lovingly articulated as part of that which will be remembered.

### 5.2.2 Questionnaire 2: funeral directors on what the dead wear

A questionnaire sent to funeral directors evinced 12 responses (see appendices for detail). This represented a 15% return rate, higher than is often reported for this sector<sup>59</sup>. All of the responses came from small, service-oriented businesses, perhaps because a website<sup>60</sup> used by such businesses promoted the survey. Unfortunately no responses were received from the type of funeral establishment (commercial and owned by a chain) that provides the majority of British funerals (Naylor, 1989).

Respondents confirmed that the clothing worn in the coffin was normally chosen by the next of kin, occasionally acting on specific instructions left by the deceased but more frequently relying on the funeral director's advice (a matter not mentioned by anyone responding to the first survey). Funeral directors, for their part, tended to base their advice on what previous clients had found helpful. Although they wanted families to "own" decisions on how the deceased was presented, they often defined the options available, and indicated what constituted a "good" choice.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Surveys sent to funeral directors by the Natural Death Centre normally evince a mere 5.5% return rate (Albery et al, 2000:14)

<sup>60</sup> http://www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk/

I would suggest a gown as a last resort, [but] we usually try to encourage the family to bring in some clothes (FD8).

Most respondents indicated that religious tradition or belief was "very rarely" a factor in the choice of coffin clothing; age, gender and life-style being a more effective predictor of choice. When respondents were asked to describe what the dead wore in the coffin they mentioned:

- Formal or smart-casual daywear.
- Items with personal significance: this included "fan-wear" indicating
  allegiance to a sports-team or place, quirky outfits linked to the life-style
  or foibles of the individual (gardening breeches, theatrical costume,
  bikers' leathers), favourite clothing, preferred colours and items
  indicating achievement, such as medals for former soldiers.
- Items associated with other rites of passage, such as christening robes and wedding dresses.
- Differences based on age; with young people being casually dressed, middle-aged individuals formally dressed, the elderly attired as if for sleep.

Respondents stated that most clothing worn in the coffin came from the deceased's regular wardrobe. New clothing might be bought if prolonged illness had changed body-shape or the family wanted them to have something special, but these were High Street purchases, it was relatively rare for the funeral director to be asked to provide a shroud or a gown. Only two respondents reported regularly ordering gowns from a wholesaler while several remarked that gowns were becoming less popular.

I am seeing more people being dressed in their own clothes. I rarely use gowns anymore, as opposed to when I first started, 90% were dressed in gowns, now I would say it's the other way around (FD8).

Insofar as they felt able to explain this change, respondents linked it to the weakening of death taboo (FD7), an increasingly multicultural society (FD2), consumer rebellion (FD5), changing attitudes within the funeral industry (FD1, FD2) and technological advances which have made it possible to create and sustain a life-like appearance in the dead (FD2, FD8).

Funeral directors appeared to regard the styling of the dead body as an opportunity to domesticate the death scene, thereby reducing the horror and shock it evoked. In describing the clothing of the dead, they used words that

stressed its commonplace nature and implied continuity between the living individual and their dead body; "normal" (FD6, FD7), "everyday" (FD1, FD2), "comfortable" (FD1, FD2, FD7, FD8), "favourite" (FD 3, FD6, FD7, FD9, FD10). The corpse in their own clothing, looking "as they were when they were alive" (FD3) or "like the person they know" (FD10) was believed to comfort the bereaved (FD5, FD7).

The project of making the deceased look like their living self, and domesticating the death scene sometimes extended beyond clothing to include a range of other "biographical" items that were placed in the coffin. These items might further articulate the personality, preferences and life-style of the deceased (spectacles, books, alcohol, cigarettes); they may refer to relationships and memories (photographs, letters) or simply express the wish of the bereaved to care for the deceased (pillows, soft toys, flowers).

The great care and attention given to clothing and accessorising the body was, for some funeral directors, part of an attempt to stage-manage a therapeutic final scene between the mourners and the deceased; where farewells may be said and mourners could start to come to terms with bereavement. One funeral director noted:

We...recommend viewing, [it]: a) helps to come to terms with the death /acceptance, b) takes away fear of death (FD2).

### Another wrote:

The head and the heart learn things differently, seeing is the beginning of understanding and acceptance (FD1).

A third respondent expounded a belief that that mourners who view the body are able to

talk to them and make any peace they have to with them (FD3).

However, some funeral directors saw the decision on whether to view as extremely personal and maintained a studious neutrality on the matter (FD4, FD5, FD6, FD9, and FD11):

viewing the deceased is a personal choice and I would never recommend it.

The person must make their own decision as to what to do (FD10)

Great variation in viewing practice was reported: five respondents indicated that at least 80% of their clients viewed the prepared body, but three stated that less than 30% did. What seems certain is that more bodies were provided

with special clothing, artefacts and gifts than were actually viewed in the coffin. This suggests that the clothes are being provided for an imaginary dead body, the artefacts for an imaginary death scene;

people...want to imagine what someone will look like, even if they are not visiting the person in the chapel of rest (FD11)

In some circumstances, funeral directors encouraged bereaved families to accept a verbal description of this imagined body *(FD11)* in place of an encounter with the corpse;

if the death was sudden, then sometimes it may help not to view, remember them as they were, so to speak. If the deceased has been ill for a long time and may have changed in their appearance somewhat, then after embalming, it may be nice to see them at rest and looking peaceful (FD8).

The reasoning appears to be pragmatic; whichever experience seems the most likely to provide comforting memories is recommended.

Several themes emerged from the funeral directors' responses. Like members of the public they stressed the need to create a positive memory picture which articulated personality, memories and relationships. The deceased should appear "as they were", "like themselves" and "at their best". However, where the public saw this as a mark of affection and respect, for funeral directors it was a professional standard with therapeutic intent; it was supposed to console the bereaved and help them "progress" in their mourning. Funeral directors also saw themselves as domesticating death; hiding its horror, presenting it not as the oppositional other or life but as part of a natural continuum. In this sense their approach had a rhetorical function that transcended the consolation of individual families and sought to explain the nature of death and what this implied for the living<sup>61</sup>.

### 5.2.3 Q-methodology and dressing the dead

A Q-sorting exercise was completed by 24 participants. 15 took part in a pilot exercise, 9 in a follow up which required participants to make a statement about religious belief before completing the sort. Although informal feedback suggested that participants had found the exercise easy, enjoyable and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> This is a theme that has been developed in several funeral director biographies, see particularly Albin-Dyer (2003, 2004), Albin-Dyer and Watts (2004), Bethard (2011).

interesting, a few of the sorts revealed inconsistencies in the sorting of statements about afterlife belief. Specifically, 5 participants agreed or strongly agreed with both the statements "I believe in an afterlife" and "death is the absolute end" despite the logical inconsistency this implied. This was initially a source of some concern (had they misunderstood or sorted carelessly?) However given the fact that none of the participants who declared themselves to be Christian sorted in this way, but two of the agnostics and two of the "other" participants did, this may stand as evidence of either significant cultural ambiguity about what happens to people when they die or an affirmation that a binary choice between survival and extinction did not do justice to their views on the afterlife.

The data collected through Q-sorting was reviewed manually to identify popular and unpopular answers, and a statistical package was used to identify underlying patterns and attitudes (see 4.4.2).

### 5.2.3.1 Manual analysis

Manual analysis focussing on statements about dressing the dead body (Table 1) revealed general approval of the statements:

- If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would choose an outfit they had worn on a special day, when they were happy and in their prime
- If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would try and provide an outfit they would have been likely to choose themselves

This was entirely consistent with the outcome of the questionnaires.

Manual analysis was also used to look specifically at the sorts of Christian respondents, in order to establish whether afterlife belief shaped choices of coffin clothing. The evidence suggested that it did not. None of the Christians connected the dressing of the dead with their "needs" in the afterlife and 4 out of 6 concurred with the popular assumption that the deceased should wear the clothes that they themselves would have chosen. Moreover, not all Christian sorters accepted the premise of an afterlife: none expressed more than mild disagreement with the statement "death is the absolute end" and 2 of the 6 agreed to some extent with this statement.

Table 1: Popularity of statements about dressing the dead body<sup>62</sup>

	Agnostic 1	Agnostic 2	Agnostic 3	Christian 1	Christian 2	Christian 3	Christian 4	Christian 5	Christian 6	Other 1	Other 2	Pilot 1	Pilot 2	Pilot 3	Pilot 4	Pilot 5	Pilot 6	Pilot 7	Pilot 8	Pilot 9	Pilot 10	Pilot 11	Pilot 12	Pilot 13	Pilot 14	Pilot 15	Popularity
It doesn't matter what clothes are placed on the dead body	4	- 1	1	- 2	- 1	3	- 1	0	0	- 2	- 2	0	3	- 2	1	1	0	- 2	- 2	2	2	- 2	- 4	1	- 1	- 1	-19
I would choose an outfit they had worn on a special day, when they were happy and in their prime	2	1	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	0	4	1	2	4	0	1	0	3	1	33
I would try and provide an outfit they would have been likely to choose themselves.	2	2	0	4	3	0	4	2	4	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	2	- 1	1	4	4	2	2	0	44
The dressing of the dead body is the family's last opportunity to show care and respect.	2	0	1	3	- 1	1	3	0	4	0	- 2	- 1	1	- 1	- 1	3	- 2	3	3	2	1	1	1	2	0	3	6
It's important to be appropriately dressed for the afterlife.	3	3	- 2	- 1	- 4	- 4	- 2	2	0	3	- 2	1	1	2	3	0	- 1	2	3	4	- 1	0	- 1	2	0	- 4	-21

<sup>62</sup> Green shading represents agreement of strong agreement; pink indicates distinct disapproval. The final column, "popularity" simply totals the weightings of responses to produce a raw indicator of the acceptability of each statement.

### 5.2.3.2 Analysis using PQ method

PQ method identified 7 distinctive sort patterns ("factors") in the data, 3 of which (Factors, 4, 5 and 6) loaded strongly on one of the statements about dressing the dead body (see appendices for detail).

#### 5.2.3.2.1 Factor 4

This factor<sup>63</sup> ranks the statement that "the dressing of the dead body is the family's last opportunity to show care and respect" above all others. Other statements indicate strong approval of continuing bonds with the dead. However, the sort insists that the personhood of the deceased and that of the mourner remain radically separate. While the clothes the dead leave behind are valued as clues to identity and connections to the past, they remain the inviolable possessions of the deceased. (For these sorters, "dressing and acting like someone who has died may be a sign of mental illness", it is certainly not an appropriate way of "honouring their memory"). Given this insistence on the discrete personhood of the deceased, the strong interest in the final appearance of the body must be read as the construction of a memory picture, and – perhaps – as some kind of separation ritual.

### 5.2.3.2.2 Factor 5

Factor 5 64 puts in joint first place, three statements which sit oddly together:

- I am sure there is no afterlife. Death is the absolute end.
- It is healthy to put those who have died behind you and concentrate on new relationships.
- It's important to be appropriately dressed for the afterlife.

This is a viewpoint based upon decathexis and the radical separation of the living and the dead. To be dressed appropriately for the afterlife can thus only mean that the deceased wears clothes that mark them as gone from this world. It seems likely that the sorters envisage the deceased will be dressed in a burial gown, for they are adamant that the clothes left behind by the dead should be used to benefit the living.

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<sup>63</sup> The defining sorts for this factor were Agnostic 1 and Pilot 1

<sup>64</sup> The defining sorts for this factor were Christian 1, Pilot 7 and Pilot 14

#### 5.2.3.2.3 Factor 6

Factor 6 (Table 2)<sup>65</sup> is predicated upon belief in an afterlife and ongoing connections between the living and the dead. Here, statements that the dead should wear the clothes they might have chosen, clothes which evoke happy memories, are ranked as highly important and are embedded in a narrative about consoling survivors and sustaining bonds with the dead. These respondents are concerned with domesticating death, holding onto those who have died and blurring the line between the dead and the living. Where the previous factors insisted upon a some form of separation between the living and the dead, this factor denies that death constitutes a radical separation and uses the styling of the body to emphasise continuity and connection.

statement	score	rank	
I believe in an afterlife.	1.8	1	
Handling and wearing the clothing left behind by those who have died can be very comforting to the survivors	1.59	2	
If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would choose an outfit they had worn on a special day, when they were happy and in their prime	1.44	3	app
If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would try and provide an outfit they would have been likely to choose themselves.	1.37	4	approved
Clothing belonging to someone who has died is a connection to the past, to history	1.33	5	<u>d</u>
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person can help you feel close to them	1.19	6	
The dead can and do contact the living	1.15	7	
Thinking about people who have died is pointless and upsetting. It is best to focus on the here and now and look after the living.	-1.23	37	
If someone dies leaving designer clothes behind them I would wear those: not chainstore stuff though!	-1.26	38	
People who are unable to dispose of the clothing belonging to the dead may be suffering from chronic grief	-1.26	39	disliked
No contact is possible between the living and the dead.	-1.37	40	¥
If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would get rid of everything straight away.	-1.48	41	ed
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is distasteful	-1.48	42	
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is unhygienic	-1.51	43	

Table 2: Strongly approved and disapproved statements for Factor 6

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<sup>65</sup> The defining sorts for this factor were Pilot 2 and Pilot 13

### 5.2.3.3 Implications of Q-methodology

The Q-sorts clearly indicate that there are different attitudes to death and to corpse dressing even in the small cohort surveyed. Despite cultural approval for continuing bonds with the dead, some sorters still favoured decathexis and "moving on". While manual analysis of the data did not reveal a clear connection between afterlife belief and clothing practice among Christian sorters, when the data was analysed using PQ method it became clear that, across all sorters, the way people understood the relationship between the living and the dead influenced the way they made sense of clothing behaviours, even if it did not change those behaviours significantly. Indeed the most significant finding of the Q-methodology exercise appears to be that people may do the same thing for very different reasons.

### 5.2.4 Bereavement writers on dressing the dead body

The writers of bereavement narratives provide complementary insights into the dressing of the dead; offering not only descriptions of what they had done but often (retrospective) explanations of these behaviours. Many writers attached great importance to viewing of the dead body, often hoping that this would help them adjust to their loss (Picardie et al., 1998: 115, Downham Miller, 1999: 76, Miller, 2007: 93) and reassure them that the deceased had found peace (Short, 1992: 157, Loudon, 2007: 36). In particular they hoped to see evidence that the loved one died without pain and without any loss of their essential self, but had somehow been liberated from the body which had failed. Some accounts of the last look at the deceased indicate that this reassurance had been found:

She was cold and pale but she still looked lovely, much younger than her 77 years, and remarkably peaceful, as if she had just nodded off....she had died, I am sure without any pain (Norman, 2013: 228).

Other accounts make it clear that the posing and dressing of the body had contributed to the impression of peaceful beauty (e.g. Aldiss, 2000: 225) yet regardless of this, the beauty is taken to be both natural and an indicator of the spiritual state of the deceased. Whitehead (1992) for, example, helped to prepare the body of his partner, but was still deeply moved by the result.

I washed him with the nurse, and laid him out properly and dressed him in the clothes he wanted and stripped the bed and laid him down in clean sheets. And he looked beautiful, I mean, he really looked beautiful.

Some writers expressed fears about viewing the deceased, which appeared to stem from the possibility that, instead of demonstrating death to be a peaceful and natural transition, the corpse would provide evidence that their death had been painful and a reminder that one's own was inevitable (e.g. Key, 1991: 78). French writer Simone de Beauvoir (1965: 105) describes the same experience, indicating that this is not a specifically British phenomenon.

The clothes worn by the deceased might thus be seen as elements of a staged presentation of the perfect death scene in which the deceased is styled as their "true" self; either the self that they had projected in life, or the self that their death had prevented them from realizing (Payne and Gekoski, 2004: 68). The clothes they had chosen to wear in life (and occasionally statements they had made about aspirational outfits (ibid Harper, 1996)) were viewed as a palette from which the "true self" of the individual might be inferred (Loudon, 2007: 96) and through which it might be articulated. Thus the schoolboy was buried in his uniform with a calculator protruding from a pocket (Leach, 1981: 27), and families strove to ensure that the deceased was in their "best" or favourite clothes (Evans, 1995: 153, O'Dwyer, 2002: 66).

Shrouds were rarely mentioned by this body of writers and positively only once (Lindsay, 2009: 19); for the shroud effaces rather than articulates the identity of the deceased.

I was horrified and so upset when I went over to the coffin where Gary lay. He was dressed in a shroud and he had a veil over his face. He looked like something out of a horror movie...Gary was a jeans and T-shirt person (Wait, 1995: 82).

Beyond staging a perfect death scene and articulating an idealized identity for the deceased, choosing clothes to be worn in the coffin was associated with four other interwoven themes: physical comfort, cosy domesticity, interpersonal relationships and memory.

Clothes might be chosen to make the deceased comfortable (Cameron, 1985: 91), or to keep them warm: fears that the dead might be cold in the grave were frequently admitted (Douglas-Home, 1997: 42, Bawden, 2005).

Mothers especially were keen to care for the deceased just as they had cared for them in life (Webb, 2012: 30). Again, these phenomenon do not appear to be exclusive to Britain, for they are also mentioned by American writers Smith-Greer (1992: 31, 57, 64), D'Arcy (1995: 83) and Gilbert (1997: 115).

Quirky clothing items and small personal touches served to domesticate the death scene and make the deceased reassuringly familiar. Taylor (2002: 195) recalls that

there was amusement over his Simpsons socks. I pulled up a bit of his left jeans leg up to see if it was Bart or Homer (it was Homer).

Finally, the role of clothing in celebrating human relationships and memories cannot be overlooked. The clothes worn in the coffin might have been given as a gift (Taylor, 2002: 194f), worn on a special occasion when the family had gathered or featured in treasured photographs (Dunmore, 1998: 98f, Goody, 2009: 241). It was not uncommon for the styling of the deceased to incorporate multiple symbolic suggestions of cosy domestic relationships and affectionate memory.

### 5.2.5 Contemporary evidence from the cultural archive

Further information about the dressing of the dead body was sourced from the popular press, which frequently runs human interest stories on this matter. The subjects of these stories are often celebrities, or individuals whose death had resonance for a large number of people because it seems either shocking or exemplary. The coverage given to the funerals of Jade Goody and Zachary Barker is typical of this kind of journalism.

Jade, a star of reality television who died of cervical cancer, was buried in her wedding dress. The Daily Mail described Jade's death, the preparation of her body and the visual effect achieved in a way that suggested she was a perfect daughter, bride and mother. She died on Mother's day, they noted; she was prepared for burial by her own mother; she looked like Sleeping Beauty (glamorous and passive – neither of which were adjectives often applied to Jade in life) and was buried with her wedding ring and photographs of her children. In this way the article – through describing body-styling – aligned Jade with highly valued social roles and sought to emphasise the strength of the bonds that still connected her to the family she left behind.



Jade Goody's mother Jackiey Budden has dressed her daughter in her wedding dress ahead of her funeral. And the grieving 51-year-old revealed how her daughter, who died on Mother's Day after a battle against cervical cancer, 'looked like sleeping beauty'.

'She's wearing her wedding dress. She will also have on her wedding ring, and before she died she chose photos of sons Bobby and Freddie to be placed inside her coffin.

Read more: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-1164852/Jade-buried-wedding-dress-mum-Jackiey-reveals-looks-like-sleeping-beauty.html#ixzz53JUGR4C4

Figure 21: News article about Jade Goody's funeral. 66

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<sup>66</sup> http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-1164852/Jade-buried-wedding-dress-mum-Jackiey-reveals-looks-like-sleeping-beauty.html (accessed 5 January 2018)



# Ex-Liverpool stars sign replica shirt for tragic Anfield-mad schoolboy to be buried in

Now all the ex-Liverpool players at his local Premier League side Stoke City have honoured the Anfield addict by all signing a Liverpool FC replica shirt for him to wear when he is buried this Tuesday.

Joe Allen, Glen Johnson, Peter Crouch and Charlie Adam - who all now play for Stoke - signed the Zachary's shirt after being approached by a police liaison officer at their training ground.

Shaken Welsh midfielder Joe Allen expressed his sadness at the tragedy that happened just days before Christmas.



Joe Allen, Peter Crouch and Glen Johnson warm up (Image: PA)

The Liverpool shirt has been provided free of charge by Hanley's Sports Direct store, in Staffs, and has the name of his favourite Reds player Coutinho on the back.

Assistant Sports Direct manager Michelle Anderson said: "A police officer came into the store and asked if we would donate a Liverpool top for a little boy who had died just before Christmas. "Straightaway I said 'yes' because myself and all the staff felt so strongly about it.



Figure 22: Article on Zachary Barker, buried in signed football shirt<sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Images and text from Daily Mail (Riches, 2017)

Schoolboy Zachary Barker was killed in a road accident a few days before Christmas. The local Sports Direct store donated a Liverpool shirt for him to be buried in and former Liverpool players who had transferred to Zachary's local team signed it. This clothing transaction inserted Zachary into one of the most powerful and socially connected roles available to a child: the sports fan. As a fan he is assumed to be sporting, energetic, enthusiastic, loyal and bonded to fellow fans, the team he follows and to the football community more generally. In gifting and signing the shirt the football community confirms how much Zachary is valued. Once again, the two things that are highlighted are the idealised personhood of the deceased and the strength of the bonds that continue to link them to the living.

### 5.3 Identifying key categories

The diverse data sets considered revealed a series of themes or, in the parlance of Grounded Theory, "categories". The historical material suggested that the dead body was styled to ensure the well-being of the deceased and to instruct and inspire the living. The final outfit was expected to demonstrate a good death, to confirm the social worth of the deceased and to manage the "distance" between the living and the dead. It also served, however, to reaffirm the core values and social hierarchies of the group. Some commentators on historic practice describe such practices as conferring an ancestral identity upon the deceased.

Contemporary material highlighted the wish to present the deceased as their best self, with the networks and relationships they participated in referenced wherever possible. Funeral directors presented this as a way of domesticating death and consoling mourners, while for mourners it demonstrated care and respect for the deceased and served to replace distressing images of the dying trajectory with a durable and idealised memory picture. Q-methodology indicated that the attentions paid to the dead body still presented a way of managing the distance between the living and the dead – either constituting a separation ritual *or* blurring the line that divides the living from the dead – while the material from the cultural archive stressed the way in which dressing the dead conferred an idealised persona upon the deceased. Again, there are grounds for arguing that an ideal, imaginal identity was being conferred on the deceased.

These recurrent themes or categories can be organised by identifying

- 1. Stakeholders
- 2. Intentions; what stakeholders intend or hope to achieve
- 3. Influences and constraints; those external pressures that determine how intentions might be acted upon
- 4. Strategies; the purposive patterns of behaviour that emerge

Historically, hegemonic forces (represented by nobility and clerics) used corpse dressing to reproduce the social order and confirm both hierarchical arrangements and the requirements of citizenship. However, in the twenty-first century the job of interpreting death for the group and ensuring that what is of value is preserved has been devolved to funeral directors, to the media and to bereaved families. These three stakeholder-groups wrestle with a particular set of concerns. They need to make sense of death, deal with the horror and contamination associated with the corpse, help the bereaved adjust and reconfigure the social group. This last involves determining the whether the deceased remains a member and restoring collective confidence.

A series of inter-related strategies are used to achieve these ends (Figure 23). The domestication of death prevents the corpse from becoming "other" and insists on the durability of social arrangements. The styling of the dead body to resemble the living individual contributes to the project of domestication but also facilitates status change, by encouraging leave-taking and replacing the corpse with an idealised memory picture. The alignment of the deceased with cultural values also generates several benefits: it translates the deceased into an exemplary ancestor, thereby refreshing the values and identity of the group and enhancing the reputation of both the deceased and those who mourn them. Finally, the encouragement of continuing bonds with this ancestral figure mitigates the pain of loss and reduces the fear of death itself.

Both the activities of the funeral director and the death narratives popularised by journalists can be read as strategies intended to reaffirm the principles of group life. Both parties "rank" interpersonal relationships (with partners and family accorded special importance, although – as the article on Zachary Baker makes clear – the influence of imagined communities is also increasingly acknowledged). Both parties also reaffirm traditional roles and values (associating men with confidence and athleticism, women with beauty, social compliance and maternal virtue): this is frequently articulated

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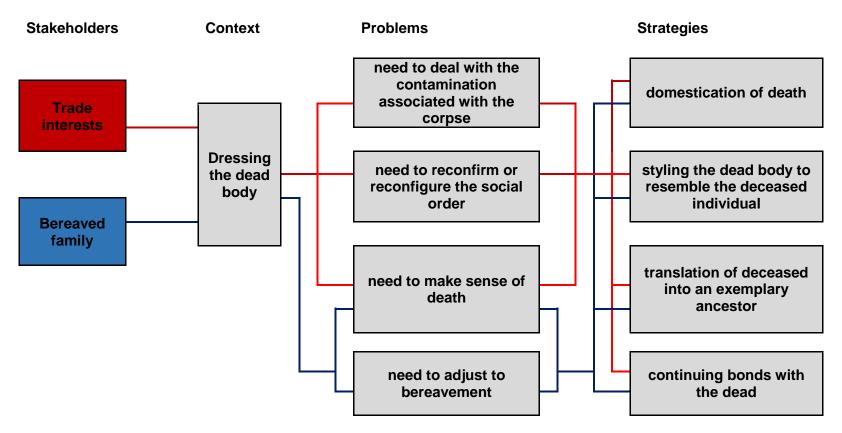


Figure 23: Strategies influencing the dressing of the dead in the twenty-first century

through the placement of conventional clothing signifiers (medals, sportswear, uniforms, wedding dresses) on the corpse.

### 5.4 Chapter summary

Drawing out the salient categories in this way suggests that the styling of the dead body is a mechanism for creating an idealised representation of the deceased with whom an imaginal relationship can be sustained. The appearance of the corpse is not only intended to sustain the identity of the deceased but also to provide symbolic confirmation of the culturally approved traits for which they will be remembered. Thus through the interwoven strategies of domestication, ancestor creation and continuing bonds, the dressed dead body denies the power of death to erase both individuals and those things which the community values. These insights make it possible to answer the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter.

### 5.4.1 How do the people of contemporary Britain dress the dead?

It is now common practice to dress the deceased in their own clothing; funeral directors may advise this where the family have no preference. The objective is to present the deceased as their best self, at the point when they were most closely aligned with cultural ideals.

### 5.4.2 What are the historical origins of these behaviours?

Historical precedents for dressing the dead in their own clothes can be found in several contexts. The Roman practice of displaying the dead in their finest clothing is a very close parallel, and the aesthetic norms of this presentation have been sustained and mediated through religious art and statuary. Other ancient ideas also echo in the present however. The idea that the corpse is both sacred and profane and requires "intervention" to keep it pure and prevent it from becoming a horrific other is shared by the Jews of the Old Testament and twenty first century Britons. Equally the conviction that the dead body should evidence the virtue and social worth of the deceased while demonstrating that they died well unites Thomas a Beckett's biographer and contemporary funeral directors. The fact that the good death is no longer a religious conception and that virtue and social worth are no longer associated with access to Heaven, has not reduced their influence on the appearance of the dead body.

## 5.4.3 How do people experience these interactions with clothing?

Bereaved individuals perceive the dressing of the dead body to be important even though they often cannot explain why. This puzzle can cause great anxiety. The mourner's confusion might be explained in three ways. The first derives from difficulties grasping the rationale for dressing the dead: is it supposed to assist the dead or comfort the living? If the styled body constitutes a message then who sends the message and who will see or decode it? Where mourners feel obliged to make clothing choices but are unable to make sense of the requirement this can generate feelings of anxiety and a fear of doing the wrong thing<sup>68</sup>.

Alternatively it may be argued that the importance attached to clothing behaviours derives from cultural knowledge that dressing the dead is intended to signal the respect of the bereaved for both the deceased and the social order. Such cultural transactions have traditionally been framed by etiquette, but the importance attached to individuality and freedom in the twenty-first century has eroded these behavioural norms. It is the requirement to independently ensure the outcomes once determined by etiquette that makes the mourner anxious.

The third and final explanation suggests that the importance attached to dressing the dead represents an echo – a cultural memory – of clothing practices that were expected to benefit the dead, to assist them into the afterlife or to confirm their membership of some sacred community. It is possible that some new clothing practices – the dressing of the dead in fanwear for example – reimagine these ancient clothing behaviours by inserting the dead into imagined communities and claiming for them the immortality of the "eternal fan" (McNamee and Gallagher, 2004).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> This is seen in some bereavement narratives; Humphries (2012: loc 603) offers a British example, with de Beauvoir (1965: 86f) and Roth (1991: 233ff) providing international equivalents.

## 5.4.4 Do these behaviours address needs or are they simply relics of ancient practice?

Dressing the dead as their best self generates several positive effects:

- By aligning the deceased with culturally approved roles it refreshes communal identity and reifies shared ideals
- it makes the deceased appear familiar rather than frightening
- it evokes consolatory memories and
- it blurs the line between life and death in a way that facilitates continuing bonds

By domesticating death using clothing and the routines of bodily care, the bereaved community are able to reduce its power; by curating the memory of the deceased they lay the foundation of continuing bonds. In this sense body styling practice can be regarded as a communal approach to "processing" some of the particular problems arising from death.

### 5.4.5 What causes clothing behaviours to change in this context?

It is sometimes argued that the forms and norms of body styling simply echo ancient practice, the meaning of which has long been lost. This narrative derives its power from the slow pace of change and from significant resistance to innovation<sup>69</sup>. However, practice *does* change and close consideration of the replacement of the standard burial garment with personal clothing offers an opportunity to understand some of the drivers behind body styling.

It is sometimes assumed that shroud burial and dressed burial are associated with different constructions of selfhood; shroud burial being practiced by communities who believe that the self is immortal and the discarded body of no value, dressed burial being practiced where selfhood is associated with the physical body. This does not map convincingly onto the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> This was seen historically in the opposition to Burial in Woollens. More recently attempts to replace the wooden coffin with a woollen shroud for environmental reasons gained little favour. An American innovation, Jae Rhim Lee's (2011) mushroom burial suits which claim to quickly reduce the body to soil-enhancing elements (saving burial space, minimising the horror of rotting bodies and "being eco- and wallet-friendly" (Janin, 2016)) have attracted much media attention, but only one customer to date (CBS, 2016).

historical evidence however; the Christian community has used both forms, sometimes concurrently, for different sections of the community.

Shroud burial is more convincingly associated with two other dimensions of experience – with a sense of egalitarianism and with a desire for distance between the living and the dead. The final generation to bury their dead in shrouds – or at least in gowns specifically manufactured for the dead – were the generation who lived through two world wars. These were the death deniers, the champions of decathexis; they were also the generation who, having fought shoulder to shoulder in the trenches considered themselves to be equals, and who, having lost much, were keen to focus on the wellbeing of those who survived.

Dressed burial meanwhile responds to the needs of a postmodern community who need visual language to explore ontological questions that no longer have formulaic answers: what does it mean to be human? What happens when we die? How should life be lived? Historically clothing functioned as a denotational code which (re)affirmed social and spiritual status. However, as both social hierarchies and the meanings attached to clothing items have become more fluid the act of dressing the dead body has become a way of exploring the personhood of the deceased, both what they were and who they will continue to be.

Finally, dressed burial might also be seen as a response to two other changes: a shift in the relative importance of stakeholders (it is now the mourner rather than the deceased who is assumed to benefit) and a change to the imagined relationship between the living and the dead. It is no coincidence that interest in dressing the dead to look like "themselves" revived at precisely the point that continuing bonds replaced decathexis as the culturally approved paradigm for "dealing with the dead".

## 5.4.6 Why is the dead body often carefully dressed and styled even when it is not to be viewed?

The answer to this, final, question is intimated in death-worker biographies and confirmed in the survey responses of funeral directors. Death workers connect the dressing of the dead body to the concept of respect for the dead, which is embedded in their professional code. Where violations occur, death workers are shocked (Franklin, 2009: loc 1469) and may even lodge complaints against perpetrators (Baker, 2012: 160ff).

Moreover, in their dealings with mourners, funeral directors are primarily concerned with the *imagined* body of the deceased. Where the successful restoration of a body is unlikely, or where the family has reservations about viewing, funeral directors may invite mourners to bring clothes and comfort items for the deceased so that they can imagine them made attractive and comfortable. They may also offer a verbal description of the prepared dead body as an alternative method of furnishing the bereaved with a positive and consoling memory picture. The efficacy of clothing symbolism is not reduced by being described or imagined rather than seen.

In summary, it is argued here, that when death occurs the body both falls out of, and appears to challenge, the assumptive world of meaning and value. The routines of cleansing and dressing seek to bring the body back within the realm of shared meaning through a process of rehumanisation (Howarth, 1996), while the inscription, on that body, of a an idealised ancestral identity, shores up the assumptive world by celebrating shared values.

### Chapter 6: The clothing the dead leave behind

This chapter will address the questions:

- 1. What happens to the clothes left behind by the dead in twenty first century Britain?
- 2. What are the historical origins of these behaviours?
- 3. Do disposition practices address needs or deliver benefits in the present or are they relics of ancient practice?
- 4. How do people experience these interactions with clothing?
- 5. What causes clothing behaviours to change in this area?
- 6. Why are the clothes the dead leave behind so often donated to charity?

These questions will be approached by reviewing historical data and then using the data from questionnaires, Q-methodology, bereavement narratives and the cultural archive to first describe and then explain practice in contemporary Britain.

### 6.1 Historical material

It is possible, indeed likely, that contemporary attitudes towards the clothing of the dead are shaped by historical clothing practices. The cultural history of garments and practices appears to contribute to their semiotic potency even when historical detail is forgotten.

#### 6.1.1 Clothes in wills

Before the industrial revolution made it possible to manufacture textiles in bulk, cloth, and therefore clothing, was of high value. According to (Stallybrass, 1999: 37) "A single jerkin for the Earl of Leicester cost more than the grand house that Shakespeare bought in Stratford". Clothes were therefore an important part of the deceased's estate, and presented a way of redistributing wealth.

The Giggleswick Project (North Craven Historical Research Group, 2014) reviewed the contents of 231 wills from 1390 to 1600, noting that 21% included clothing bequests. A wide variety of garments were bequeathed – cloaks, jerkins, jackets, hose, hats and shoes. The garment bequeathed was often described as "my best", which is more likely to have indicated high

financial value than personal preference. In a similar way, the will of Katherine, Countess of Northumberland (1542) bequeathed items described as "my best sloppe" and "my worst cloike" (Raine, 1869: 180) in what appears to have been the judicious distribution of a wardrobe between friends so that the garments received were of equal value (Figure 24).

And also to Jane Labane my best slope, my best kirtle, and my worst cloike, and to Anne Heire my next best sloppe and best cloke, and either of theme a petticott, with all other my woollen arayment to be devided betwixt theme.

Figure 24: Extract from the will of Katherine, Countess of Northumberland (1542)

### 6.1.2 Clothes and the afterlife

Up until the Reformation, clothing also functioned as a currency which could be used to benefit the deceased in the afterlife. Under the system of "soulscot" or "mortuary", a payment was made to the church every time someone died. Described as a "payment for the soul" in laws introduced by King Æthelred in 1008 (Hadley and Buckberry, 2005) soul-scot appears to be a Christian re-interpretation of pagan offerings to, or for, the dead. The normal form of payment was the "second best chattel" (Stenton, 1971: 153); in rural areas this might be an animal, but in towns it was likely to be a garment (ibid Harvey, 2008); thus expensive clothing including women's dresses (Basl, 2001) and jewelled gloves (Beck, 1833: 19) were frequently handed over to the church. The will of Miles Metcalfe of York (drafted 1485-6) stated

I geve my saule to God Almighty, our Lady Seynt Marie and the hole company of heven....Also I will that the parson of my paryssh churche have my best gown in the name of my mortuary (Raine, 1869: 9).

Under this system, the fine clothing that pagans might have "offered" by placing it in the grave was passed to the church instead (Stenton, 1971: 153, Daniell, 1996: 189). Soul-scot offerings thus served as a kind of chantry

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<sup>70</sup> A chattel is an archaic term for a personal possession or asset.

payment<sup>71</sup>, a way of ensuring that prayers were said for the soul of the deceased in order to reduce the time they spent in Purgatory. In a will of 1546, William Mering left a "blaike gowne" to the chantry priest of Bekinghame (Raine, 1869: 248f), while William Compton's will of 1552-3 left:

to the Abbey Church of Winchcomb in the county of Wigorn
Worcester[shire] my wedding gown of tinsel satin to make a vestment to
the intent that they shall pray for my soul (Nicolas, 1826).

The clothing donated in this way frequently remained within the church. Priests would wear some garments, fine cloth might be recycled into vestments or furnishings (Basl, 2001) while small items such as gloves or rings were left on display to remind the parishioners who attended each Sunday to pray for the souls of the dead (Daniell, 1996: 189).

Clothing was also bequeathed to individuals on the understanding that they would pray for the deceased. Some clothing bequests (particularly those to servants) also counted as charitable acts which presented another way of reducing time in Purgatory. Thus, the decision of Katherine, Countess of Northumberland, in her 1542 will, to give to

Elinor Haggas, gentlewoman, which hath bene my servaunt of old tyme, xxs in money and a blake gown, to pray for me (Raine, 1869:180)

would have been expected to yield a double benefit.

### 6.1.3 Clothes and contamination

Despite the evident benefits of passing on and receiving clothing, the idea that clothing transmits disease emerged long before the articulation of germ theory<sup>72</sup>. From the time of the Black Death, it was common to burn the clothes and bedding of those with infectious diseases (Williams, 1975, Shakespeare's England, 2012). However, stories about the about the infectious nature of clothing were often embedded within a wider discourse about appropriate behaviour and social class. This can be seen in Anna

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<sup>71</sup> Chantries were endowments that paid for Masses to be celebrated for the souls of named individuals, in order to reduce their time in Purgatory (Roffey, 2006: 124). The very rich would pay for new chapels or altars to be built, poorer individuals would make donations to incumbent priests in exchange for prayer.

<sup>72</sup> Credited to Pasteur and Koch in 1870 (Richmond, 1954)

Bray's (1838) account of a man who used violence to obtain the clothes of a cholera victim but, in taking them home, infected and killed the couple he lived with; "the innocent ... [receiving] the punishment due to the guilty!". It can also be seen in the concerns of Victorian photographer Brangwin Barnes (1883: 450), about "conveying home in [his own] clothing germs of a disease which may attack one of [his] children" after photographing a corpse; for, according to Barnes, these dangers were the fault of irresponsible working class families who kept corpses in well-heated living rooms and lied about the cause of death. In each case a middle class commentator is implying, first, that it is the behaviour of the poor which renders clothing dangerous and, second, that clothing becomes dangerous when it crosses boundaries; whether it is stolen from the dead by the living, or when it travels with the middle class photographer into the homes of the poor. As clothing also marks and upholds social classification it follows that the pollution associated with clothing may be that associated with "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1966) rather than the result of bacterial infection.

### 6.2 Contemporary material

Data from questionnaires, q-methodology, bereavement narratives and the cultural archive were used to explore present-day treatment of, and responses to, the clothing of the dead.

### 6.2.1 Questionnaires

Of the thirty members of the public who completed a questionnaire, around half had been in a position where they needed to dispose of clothing following a death. All described doing one or more of the following things:

- Keeping and wearing garments
- Keeping garments without putting them to any practical use
- Distribution to family and friends
- Disposal via a charity shop
- Disposal via recycling
- Disposal as rubbish

Although selling the clothes of the dead was logically an option, no respondent mentioned this.

The most common pattern of behaviour described was to select the items that could be used to sustain positive memories and then donate the remainder to charity. One respondent stated this bluntly

Most went to charity shops; we asked family first if they wanted anything. (P7)

but others provided more detail.

With Mum's clothing, myself and two sisters each chose a few items to remember her by... Basically things we remember her wearing on happy occasions. It was quite difficult to choose - we wanted to hang on to everything! We then gave the rest of the clothing to charity / to be recycled. (P5)

The memories which mourners sought to conserve were not always memories of the deceased individual; sometimes what was cherished was a link with either the mourner's own past or an imagined bygone era.

All of the clothes went to charity except a Mink, a Sable and a Blue Fox fur. I'm unlikely to wear any, [but] would be reluctant to let them go as I have fond childhood memories of the textures. (I once went clubbing in the fox fur). (P10)

Two respondents stated that they had disposed of everything in order to avoid unpleasant memories (P23, P30), another found it difficult to confront the clothing because they could not control the memories or emotion evoked

[I] found it hard to deal with things I had known she had worn for a reason like my wedding... (P25)

The disposal of clothing as rubbish was rare and was described as distressing by the few individuals who mentioned it. Throwing something away meant determining first that it had no value, and second that nobody else would want it: the first determination was painful, the second risky.

It was difficult because the person didn't have much and what they had wasn't any good so I had to throw everything away (P8).

One respondent noted that he had very much wanted his father's hats, "but by the time I got to his clothes, my mum had thrown these away... as she always thought them tatty" (P33).

The key finding to emerge from the questionnaires was that disposition followed a *process*. The clothing the dead left behind was first used to sustain and disseminate positive memories of the deceased; items which could not be used in this way, or whose mnemonic value had been exhausted, were usually donated to charity.

### 6.2.2 **Q-methodology**

Once again, the data generated by Q-sorting was interrogated both manually and using PQ software.

### 6.2.2.1 Manual analysis

When manual analysis focussed on statements about dealing with the clothes left behind by the dead, it revealed high levels of agreement across all participants (including those in the pilot), with the following statements:

- The clothing left behind by those who have died might be an important source of information about those people; what they liked and what they believed.
- Clothing belonging to someone who has died is a connection to the past, to history
- The clothing left behind by those who have died should be donated to a charity favoured by the deceased

There was strong disagreement with the following items:

- Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is unhygienic
- Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is distasteful

While there was general approval of the re-use of the clothing of the dead, there was some negativity towards the idea that clothing should be sold for profit (see Table 3). 10 sorters expressed significant dislike for the idea that the family should profit, only 1 expressed significant approval, yet the statement "I would feel uncomfortable selling the clothes of someone who had died for profit" evoked a much more mixed response. This seems to indicate that profit itself is not an issue, but rather where the profit goes. As noted earlier, the idea of charitable donation (an indirect method of selling for profit) was extremely popular, it is the idea of the family selling clothes for their own financial gain that offends. This suggests the existence of a widely

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	A1	A2	A3	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	90	10	02	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	6d	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be sold for profit. The family should benefit	1	-4	1	-2	-3	1	1	3	-3	-2	-2	0	0	0	0	-1	-3	-4	1	-1	-1	-1	0	-4	0	-2
I would feel uncomfortable selling the clothes of someone who had died for profit.	-3	4	-1	2	-4	-2	-1	1	1	-1	0	-2	2	0	-1	-2	1	3	-2	0	-2	1	-1	4	-1	3
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be donated to a charity favoured by the deceased	3	3	2	1	2	4	1	1	3	2	4	2	4	3	4	4	2	0	2	1	2	2	2	3	1	2

Table 3: Ranking of statements about selling the clothes of the dead

accepted – if rarely articulated – moral discourse that implies the interests of other stakeholders should be placed above the interests of the family in this context. This raises interesting questions about whose interests should predominate. Is it the interests of the wider community who may benefit from philanthropy, or the interests of the dead themselves who might be commemorated through clothing or who might benefit from charitable acts performed in their name?

Manual analysis also revealed a general approval of the use of clothing as a means of remembering the dead; only one reservation was articulated, and this related to the elderly. Sorters strongly rejected the notion that old people should be encouraged to keep the clothes of a dead partner as mementos. This contrasts markedly with attitudes expressed elsewhere. If everyone else may access memories of the dead through their clothing, then why not the elderly? Perhaps because memorialising the dead involves the idealisation of memory and the clothing available to an elderly person after their partner has died may not lend itself to this, but may evidence instead a leaky, failing body.

### 6.2.2.2 Analysis using PQ method

PQ method generated two sorting patterns (factors) where the clothes the dead left behind were of more interest than those placed upon the corpse. One, associated with a lack of afterlife belief, used such clothing to benefit the living; the other, which assumed the existence of an afterlife, used it to sustain links with the dead.

#### 6.2.2.2.1 Factor 2

Factor 2<sup>73</sup> expressed little interest in the afterlife; the ranking of statements concerning afterlife belief suggested scepticism, but the matter was relegated to the centre of the sorting grid and did not evoke strong emotion. Both the most highly favoured and the most disliked statements related to the treatment of the clothes of the dead.

The statements evoking the strongest agreement were:

 I would feel uncomfortable selling the clothes of someone who had died for profit.

<sup>73</sup> The paradigmatic sort was Christian 5

- Clothing belonging to someone who has died is a connection to the past, to history
- The clothing left behind by those who have died should be donated to a charity favoured by the deceased.

While the following evoked very strong disagreement:

- The clothing left behind by those who have died should be sold for profit. The family should benefit
- If someone dies leaving designer clothes behind them I would wear those: not chain-store stuff though!
- I would want to keep clothes that someone I loved had worn a lot.
   These would be the ones that evoked most memories.

There is an absolute rejection of the idea that the family should be interested in the monetary value or designer cachet of the clothes; however, the use of oft-worn clothing items as memory prompts is also rejected. According to this analysis the clothing should be used to benefit the wider community.

In ranking statements relating to communal memory over those referring to personal memory, and preferring the clothes associated with significant life events and with relationships and affiliations to those connoting individualism, this sort maintained that the clothes of the dead should be used to preserve *communal* (as opposed to familial) history and shape *collective* (as opposed to personal) memory. The sort thus prioritised the creation of exemplary ancestors and the mediation of communal mythology over the commemoration of unique individuals. When considering the disposition of surplus clothing these sorters again considered the interests of the wider group, insisting that waste should be avoided at all costs and surplus clothing repurposed or recycled.

### 6.2.2.2.2 Factor 7

Factor 7<sup>74</sup> associates the clothing the dead leave behind with the maintenance of continuing bonds – particularly communal bonds. The three most favoured statements are

- I believe in an afterlife
- The dead are not gone while the living remember them.

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<sup>74</sup> The paradigmatic sort was Christian 6

 The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their ties and loyalties (things like football shirts or uniforms)

While among the most negatively weighted statements are

- It is healthy to put those who have died behind you and concentrate on new relationships.
- No contact is possible between the living and the dead.

This sort also indicates that bereaved people should be warned against disposing of the clothes of the dead in haste, for these are both a source of historic information and a way of holding onto happy memories.

In this context the strong dislike of the suggestion that old people should be encouraged to keep the clothing of a dead partner in order to revive memories of that relationship seems odd. Although antipathy towards this statement was previously linked to a cultural conviction that aging moves the individual away from the ideal, there may be a second meaning in this sort, for private or dyadic forms of memorialisation are considered vastly inferior to the celebration of communal bonds.

### 6.2.2.3 Findings from Q-methodology

Q-methodology revealed the existence of distinct rationales for the disposition of the clothing of the dead, each of which creates (slightly different) moral obligations. The clothes the dead leave behind may be regarded as a material through which the dead may be translated into ancestors and a version of communal history conducive to the wellbeing of survivors sustained. These garments might also be regarded as a material resource which should be used for the common good (through recycling or charity donation). Equally, such clothing might be used to sustain continuing bonds with the dead, but Q-sorts also revealed some tensions over whether the bonds that should be encouraged were those with personally known others, or those with imagined (and idealised) communities.

Q-methodology drew attention to the complexity of motivation in this context by highlighting disagreement between individuals (and probably dissonance within individuals) about whether the interests of the dead, the mourner or the group should be prioritised. Q-sorts also revealed that people explained the same behaviours in different ways, linking them to very different conceptions of the afterlife and of relationships between the living and the

dead. Significantly, factors 2 and 7 represented completely different ontologies, but were both based on sorts from individuals who identified as Christian.

## 6.2.3 Bereavement writers on the clothing the dead left behind

Bereavement writers describe disposing of the belongings of the dead as gruelling (Golden, 1995: 19) with the disposition of clothing being particularly difficult (Bawden, 1994: 16, Hunniford, 2008: 271) because of the memories attached to clothing and the imaginal encounters they stimulate. This is not a British experience, per se. American writer Joan Didion (2005, 2012) writes very movingly of her inability to deal with her dead husband's clothes, while Shirley Koers (1986: 56), a New Zealander, remarks:

Here are his garden shoes....still mud-caked. If he is anywhere in memory, he is here

Keeping the clothing of the dead was often linked to the hope of reunion or (re)connection with the deceased; disposition with the destruction of either the relationship or the person (Easterbrook, 1994: 179, Mcleod, 1994: 166f). However, people often leave a lot of clothing, and it cannot all be kept. Bereavement narratives suggest that clothes associated with bad memories or with the dying process are disposed of quickly

some of his things......had the aura of illness about them. These I could not wait to part with (Sheepshanks, 1997: 150)

but the rest may be kept for a period, either because the bereaved are making use of them or because disposition is blocked by specific concerns.

#### 6.2.3.1 Using clothes to shape memories of the deceased

As bereaved individuals sort the clothing of the dead, they interrogate it for new information about the wearer. For Picardie (2006: 12), as for many other mourners, her mother's clothes were "material clues to her history". This exploratory activity is, in part, an attempt to sustain ongoing dialogue with the deceased (Bawden, 1994: 16, Picardie, 2006: 12, Miller, 2007, Loudon, 2007: 66) and to experience their continuing agency. As O'Rourke (2011: 221) put it, "she was still capable of generating novelty! So perhaps she was not quite dead." In the main, however, this is an act of creative remembering. New insights encourage the revision of oft-told stories, the

filling of narrative gaps and the glossing of memory (Scoble, 1995: 170, Picardie, 2006: 130).

As the literature predicted, the bereaved seek evidence of socially approved traits and behaviours in the deceased and keep the garments that provide this proof. Writers described treasuring their mothers' clothes as evidence of romantic pasts (Picardie, 2006) or maternal self-sacrifice:

She was a very perfect mother. We had Chilprufe vests and a rocking horse.....She bought cheap and serviceable material and sewed dresses for herself in an hour (St Clair, 1994: 39).

By contrast, men are remembered by football kits (Downham Miller, 1999) and ties (Ash, 1996: 223) which connote power, energy and authority. This creative remembering results in the generation and dissemination of an imaginal biography of the deceased which is positive, inspiring, conducive to peace of mind (ibid: 222) and may be used to overwrite disturbing memories of decline and death by foregrounding images of the individual in their prime (Miller, 2007: 40). Again, this is not exclusively a British practice. American writer Phyllis Greene (2001: 10) describes this recovery strategy very clearly:

There is one picture in my mind of Bob that I return to over and over again....he comes back up the hill in his tan poplin suit and his repp stripe tie and his blue button down shirt, tan and healthy...When I say "Bob" and that is the picture that flashes into my mind and heart, then, perhaps, I can say that I am recovered.

As indicated above, the clothes most likely to be kept are those associated with times when the deceased individual, and their relationship with a particular mourner, came close to the ideal. Children keep evidence of good parenting; lovers cherish items associated with romance.

We each remember you most clearly from when you most belonged to us. Mum thinks of you when you were a baby and a little boy. I remember you when we were both teenagers... Death makes you ours again, even if it's only in memory (Humphreys, 2013: 179).

Items that are kept are thus the evidence for, and the dramatic "props" implicit in, the most cherished family stories.

Although most writers describe the process of sorting clothes as daunting and difficult, some later validate the decisions they have made (and the biographic account thus assembled) by declaring them to have been natural, instinctive (Hunniford, 2008: 271, Golden, 1995: 19), a matter of immediate unspoken consensus (Picardie, 2006: 103) or even shaped by the deceased (Lindsay, 2009: 23). It is significant that these accounts are usually gendered and traditional, even when the individuals being commemorated were not.

### 6.2.3.2 Using clothes to sustain the presence of the deceased

Handling or contemplating the clothes of the deceased can provide a way of sustaining contact with them. Abandoned garments may focus attempts to create a psychic link or may stimulate emotion which in itself evokes closeness (Diamond, 1995: 226f, Aldiss, 2000: 191, Hunniford, 2008: 114, Norman, 2013: 251). Bereavement writers discuss a range of clothing practices which are intended to evoke the presence of the dead: wearing their clothing (Mara, 1998, Thompson, 2007: 41f, Lindsay, 2009: 20, Humphreys, 2013: 182), hugging it (Smith-Greer, 1992: 61, Lindsay, 2009: 28), or using it in meditation practices which involve repetitive, hypnotic, bodily movements, twisting a ring or stroking a fabric (Picardie, 2006: 102).

Writers attribute the mnemonic power of clothes to their close association with the body of the deceased; a body which has (re)shaped them (Gillilan, 1992, Stallybrass, 1999: 28) and given them a distinctive smell (Baldock, 1995: 58, Hunniford, 2008: 82, 114); and to their involvement in treasured routines (Smith-Greer, 1992: 51, Aldiss, 2000: 191). This combination of memory-triggers permits clothing to generate immersive memory experiences which transport the mourner not just into the company of the dead person, but also into the past they jointly inhabited (Easterbrook, 1994: 181).

I close my eyes, my face already wet, as I find her red sweater to pull it to my face as though I am hugging her tight .... I smile. I am with her in Bordeaux and we have all the time in the world (Daste, 2011: 249).

As well as sustaining the presence of the dead in the private imagination, their clothes, reused or displayed, sustain their social presence in the home; ensuring that they are not forgotten, that they are talked about and that they

remain someone whose attitudes and opinions can still exert an influence (Monckton, 1994: 86, Evans, 1995: 153).

[We will] fill the cupboards with your clothes and leave your shoes in random places all over the house. We will take you with us wherever we go. You are part of this family. You will always be part of this family (Thompson, 2007: 264).

#### 6.2.3.3 Using clothes to support adaptation to loss

Some writers discuss using the clothes of the dead as "tools" in their "survival kit" (Hunniford, 2008: 82), things that can support psychological adjustment to loss. Sheepshanks (1997: 151f) described how her husband's jacket functioned as a transitional object

There was one garment I couldn't part with.... This was a very soft and light Puffa jacket which I had bought for Charlie about two years before he died... He had loved it. After he died I wore it constantly, and felt some sense of closeness to him by doing so .

She "minded very much" when the item was destroyed in a laundry mishap a year after Charlie died, but observed "perhaps it was a good thing really: it had served its purpose." (ibid: 152).

For Stallybrass (1999: 28), wearing the jacket of his dead friend enabled him to incorporate the traits and attitudes of that individual, to host the personality of the deceased in his own body: "if I wore [Allon's] jacket, Allon wore me". Incorporation of the deceased emerges as an important strategy of adjustment: mourners find comfort, pleasure and pride in becoming more like those they have loved and lost. As Bruce Kent (1994: 38) put it "[I] want to imitate. I enjoy being my mother's son....I also like being like [my father]". Female writers in particular described the processes through which they incorporated elements of their mothers' personality into their own by imitating their "look": first appropriating, and later copying, their wardrobe. Rose (1994) bought her own versions of her mother's playdex sandals and fifties frocks, while Ainley (1994: 199) wrote:

I put on clothes that she might have worn, try on new glasses that turn me back into her. I worry what it means to be recreating her, but it's also a kind of security when she stares back from my mirror, looks through my wardrobe.... And it looks good.

#### 6.2.3.4 The haunting power of clothes

While bereaved individuals exploit the power of clothing to evoke memories and sustain the social presence of the deceased, these same powers may be a source of considerable distress. Some writers describe clothing as having a "terrible potency" (Mara, 1998: 90) which may erode over time, but which temporarily prevents disposal and disempowers the bereaved.

The disturbing power of clothing manifests in two particular ways; it triggers memory experiences in which the dead are seen (Hunniford, 2008: 271f) or heard (Wolterstorff, 1987: 55), and it suddenly forces the "presence of absence" into mind (Barthes and Leger, 2010: 69, cf Leach, 1981: 22, Koers, 1986: 64) in a way that mixes the pain of loss with a frisson of existential terror.

I haven't been into your room for two months. I find it hard even to look through the door. Your school shoes still sit neatly side by side at the foot of your wardrobe... I have never thought of shoes being empty before. Your shoes are empty. Your clothes are empty (Thompson, 2007: 273).

Confronting the belongings of the deceased may overwhelm the mourner with a tide of memory and grief (Leach, 1981: 23, Truman, 1988: 54, Hunniford, 2008: 177). The home might be experienced as "mined" with the dead one's possessions (Haycraft, 1992: 89) which could, at any moment, intensify the pain of loss unbearably (Leach, 1981: 104, Lawley and Lawley, 1995: 197).

I found your scarf behind the washing machine today. The red paisley scarf I gave you, I don't know how many years ago, lying dusty on the floor. So poignant, that scarf in the dust. It's the unexpected I can't cope with. It was much worse than going with the children to put flowers in the churchyard on your birthday. I steeled myself for that (Truman, 1988: 54).

The danger of stimulating acute and unexpected emotional pain is managed through practices of containment. Distressing items are hidden away, contained within rooms or drawers that are avoided (Thompson, 2007: 273, 290) or in liminal spaces such as a loft, barn or garage (Scoble, 1995: 170, Payne and Gekoski, 2004, Hunniford, 2008: 271). An alternative strategy is to keep selected items in plain sight; for mementos which are always in view can be regarded with pleasant nostalgia, but to "[come upon] them unaware – oh it would be unbearable" (Greene, 2001: 54).

#### 6.2.3.5 The fading of power

The clothing of the dead gradually loses its haunting power as the physical traces of the deceased erode (Gillilan, 1992: 191, Aldiss, 2000). Thus there comes a point, one to two years after the death, when garments lose their power to overwhelm mourners with tides of uncontrolled memory, but also their ability to sustain the presence of the dead.

The power of clothing appears to fade at precisely the point when the bereaved are finally able to confront the truths that abandoned clothing reveal: that the loved one is gone, never to return (Harper, 1996: 96, Didion, 2005: 36, 2012: 44f, Thompson, 2007: 140). At this point sorting and disposing of clothing appears possible, even necessary (Scoble, 1995: 170): it is, nonetheless, a significant chore, distressing (Golden, 1995: 19), draining (Scoble, 1995: 170) and full of difficult decisions (Sheepshanks, 1997).

#### 6.2.3.6 Disposition of the clothing of the dead

Bereavement writers describe several barriers to the disposition of the clothing of the dead. They find it hard to believe that the dead will have no further use for these items (Didion, 2005: 36, 41), some items seem to remain the inviolable possessions of the dead (de Beauvoir, 1965, Stott, 1994: 84, 146) and where the dead have left instructions about some of their possessions, the bereaved may feel that they remain interested in them all (Humphreys, 2013: 26). Lynn Lindsay (2009: 79, 84f) who disposed of her husband's possessions quickly, dreamt that he returned, hurt and angry, to ask where they were.

Other writers described fears that the dead may be more literally hurt by the disposition of their intimate effects. Disposition was described as kicking the deceased out of their life (Truman, 1988: 18f), dismantling their personality (Jackson, 1987: 97) or expunging them (Jones, 1998: 32). The deceased was felt to be present within their possessions (de Beauvoir, 1965: 98, Stallybrass, 1999: 28, O'Rourke, 2011: 143, Wolterstorff, 1987: 17) and for this reason the disposal of clothing was sometimes experienced as either a second bereavement or a murderous act (Easterbrook, 1994: 179, Mcleod, 1994: 166f).

Disposal is also hindered by the sense that this activity is watched by an imaginary audience of friends, family members and medical personnel. Mourners are left in no doubt that there is a correct way to dispose of the

clothes of the deceased, for there are cautionary tales about disposing too swiftly (e.g. Hunniford, 2008: 119), but mourners also recognise that clinging to reminders may be interpreted as a failure to show the appropriate signs of recovery (Diamond, 1995: 226).

The final barrier to disposition is the difficulty of establishing a rationale for what should be kept and how the remainder should be disposed of. Most writers adopted three disposal options: (re)distribution within the family, charitable donation and the destruction of what was "no good" (Golden, 1995: 19, Scoble, 1995: 170, Wait, 1995: 87, Sheepshanks, 1997: 151, Didion, 2005: 36, O'Rourke, 2011: 254f). Selling clothes for a profit was extremely rare; the texts considered contained only one example. Lindsay (2009: 62) sold her husband's skiwear having determined that it had a high resale value and limited emotional associations. However, she berated herself for being "mercenary" and was concerned that her husband would disapprove.

The problem of assigning clothes to the appropriate disposition category lies in the fact that clothing items have more than one type of value. Even if monetary value is not considered, they still have (re)use value and mnemonic value: families may find themselves conflicted over which should prevail (O'Rourke, 2011: 245f). Although the system used to assign value to and sort clothing was not obvious, it was relatively consistent. First, the clothing that was associated with bad memories or troublesome ideas was disposed of, then items associated with positive memories were given to the person best qualified to sustain this memory. This left items with use value but negligible emotional charge, and these were given to people who would benefit from and appreciate them, in order, it appears, to make something good come out of the death.

The clothing associated with bad memories was most often that worn while the person was dying (de Beauvoir, 1965: 9, 48, Sheepshanks, 1997: 150f). Getting rid of these clothes appears to represent an attempt to overwrite recent and horrific memories with more positive recollections of the person who has died: for while survivors may "[grieve] for the lovely man he once was... [they] don't want to remember the almost fleshless stranger he had become" (Sheepshanks, 1997: 184).

The redistribution of garments among the family appears to have two functions: it makes visible the bonds of affection, loyalty or blood, and it

perpetuates the (refined) memory of the deceased. Both of these functions make it important that the most appropriate recipient is identified. Jewellery is often consciously used as an heirloom, linking one generation to the next and mapping out, in terms of who inherits and who does not, the valued core of the family (Stott, 1994: 84, Jacobs, 1994: 30, Aldiss, 2000: 59ff, 79, Hunniford, 2008). The redistribution of jewellery may be planned by the deceased well in advance of their death, with pleasure being found in the anticipation of "passing forward" items which symbolise relationships and memories (Harper, 1996: 149, Aldiss, 2000: 79). Unlike jewellery, clothing is rarely willed, yet it may still be used to create a thread of continuity between family stories of the past and those of the present and future.

It gave me joy, and would have pleased Charlie, that William wore to his own wedding the morning coat that had been made for Charlie for ours (Sheepshanks, 1997: 151).

To inherit a piece of clothing is to inherit an obligation. The item must be treasured, just as its original owner treasured it (Moyes, 1995: 33), and the affection evidenced by the gift must be reciprocated in acts of remembering. The writers of bereavement narratives made it very clear that treasured items of clothing could only go to those who had been emotionally close to the deceased (Goody, 2009: 291), that they were expected to appreciate them (O'Dwyer, 2002: 83) and that their significance as keepsakes, relics or reminders should not be forgotten (Rudd, 1995: 8).

Clothes not destined to be family mementos tend to be gradually moved from wardrobe, to box, to remote storage area (Hunniford, 2008, Scoble, 1995) before being finally disposed of. They are also carefully laundered (Jackson, 1987:162, Harper, 1996: 180) before being passed on to individuals who will be grateful, or who will at least be able to recover any remaining use value in full (Hammond, 1995: 139). These strategies are seen as giving the possessions "dignity" (Hunniford, 2008: 119), a dignity that is extended by association to their original owner. Mourners strive first to identify a personally known recipient beyond the family whose gratitude and appreciation is visible and provides a kind of consolation (Smith-Greer, 1992, Madill, 1995: 151, Downham Miller, 1999: 91). Second choice is charitable donation to someone whose gratitude and appreciation can be imagined (O'Brien, 1995, Harper, 1996: 180, Mara, 1998). Bob Jackson was unusual in finding a solution that combined these strategies, donating his

son's clothing to a mission school in India, and then visiting the school to see the clothing in use.

It didn't take me long to spot the boys....who were wearing Matthew's shirts, jerseys or shorts. It was an emotional moment.... The clothes were all grubby and worn because these kids had no others. But, clearly, they were needed and appreciated" (Jackson, 1987: 171)

The third choice is the charity shop which will sell the clothes to raise money for a specific cause (Spottiswoode, 1991: 86, Hammond, 1995: 134, Mara, 1998: 90, Lindsay, 2009: 98). Charitable donation represents an opportunity to bring something good out of the tragedy of bereavement (Cameron, 1985: 105, Rudd, 1995), perhaps fighting back against the condition that killed their loved one (Diamond, 1995: 154, Aldous, 1995: 79) or taking over a charitable commitment that the deceased had initiated (Harper, 1996). Above all, sending something to a charity shop does not constitute the destruction of the deceased's possessions (Humphries, 2012: loc 7600); rather than erasing the significance of the deceased it places them in the (powerful) position of benefactor.

According to bereavement writers, however, there remain two barriers to charitable donation. First, that the clothes may be recognised as belonging to a dead person when they are handed over; this is feared because it may offend the recipient, provoke embarrassment or evoke either sympathy or disgust (Jacobs, 1994: 27, Scoble, 1995: 170). Second there is the fear that the clothing may be seen on its new owner (Harper, 1996) and become once more the source of uncontrolled and distressing memory. To avoid these difficulties some families chose to divide the clothes between several charity shops (Scoble, 1995) or select a shop a long way from home (Harper, 1996).

#### 6.2.4 Incidents from the cultural archive

To a large extent the material from the cultural archive mirrors the experiences of bereavement writers. However, it also offers more detail on the experience of wearing the clothes of the dead, endorses the re-cycling of such clothing into craft items and discusses a variety of risks and dangers.

#### 6.2.4.1 Continuing bonds

Discussions in internet fora confirm that many people use the possessions of the dead as ways of imaginatively accessing their presence. Handling, wearing or even looking at the clothes of the dead is associated with immersive or "Proustian" memory experiences which the bereaved find comforting or healing.

#### 6.2.4.1.1 Wearing the clothes of the dead

Author and journalist Jennifer Egan (2010), described wearing jumpers belonging to her father, step-father and father-in-law, jumpers which smelled like their former owners and triggered many memories, as "like being wrapped in a protective force field". Another journalist, Angela Neustatter (2011), described wearing her dead mother's clothes as restoring to her; through "a rush of memories" triggered by texture and scent; the mother of her childhood (Figure 25). This imagined mother, by reminding her that she was loved, and therefore lovable, gave her the strength to carry on. Neustatter, who had found it "hard to hold on to any sense of the woman my mother was before her illness" discovered that this earlier mother could still be accessed through her wardrobe and began to wear her clothing as "proof of my love for her".

Neustatter's article triggered many online comments, which described similar experiences. Contributors to the thread described using the clothes of the dead to (re)experience the comfort and affection the deceased supplied, to sustain a dialogue with them or to incorporate some aspects of their personhood.

#### JCQ of London wrote

I wear my Fathers dressing gown which always makes me feel that he's giving me a hug, he died 12 years ago now but it still does the trick.

#### For Christine

wearing an item that belonged to someone dear...is a way of keeping them alive in our lives.

#### Amy made very much the same point:

reaching for their things and using them as part of my daily life makes me feel my loved ones are still relevant and part of my life.



# Wearing my dead mother's clothes has kept her memory alive

By ANGELA NEUSTATTER

Last updated at 11:45 AM on 20th October 2011

Her scent lingered on her clothes long after she had gone. Even now, I am not sure whether the smell of my mother's lily-of-the-valley perfume really withstood the many times I washed her powder pink crepe de chine blouse, with its tiny glass buttons, or whether that aroma — the one she wore for going out — was so associated with that garment that I smelt it anyway.

The blouse was one of few items of clothing I kept when, after her death at the age of 50, the contents of my mother's wardrobe were bundled away.





Figure 25: Angela Neustatter on wearing her mother's clothes<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>75</sup> Mail Online. Accessed December 2011

Another respondent, Susan, affirmed the value of clothing for sustaining contact with the dead, but also revealed fears that this comfort may be transient:

I sometimes wear my mum's fleecy jacket in the house. I can still smell her perfume on it and it makes me feel close to her, I don't want to wash it in case it doesn't smell of mum any more.

More sustainable clothing practices are mentioned by other writers: Pinkx5 wore her grandmother's ring as a reminder to "to give her a moment every day", while Angie wore her mother's cardigan not only for "courage and comfort" in difficult situations but also as a way of "becoming more like Mum", a strategy of incorporation which aimed to make her mother persistently available.

Reviewing blogs and websites from beyond Britain reveals that the clothes of the dead also feature in strategies of remembrance and incorporation in Europe and America. In "Self-portrait with my mother" the Polish photographer Karolina Jonderko posed in the clothes belonging to her mother who died of cancer in 2008 (Figure 26). Alongside each image she outlined a memory evoked by the outfit. The photographs demonstrated both the way in which those who have died continue to exist "inside those who remain and those who loved them" (George, 2015) and the way in which clothing permits the living to momentarily inhabit the past life of the deceased.



Figure 26: Self portrait with my mother, Karolina Jonderko<sup>76</sup>,

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<sup>76</sup> http://www.karolinajonderko.com/#/selfportraitwithmymother/

Writing in the Reader's Digest online, American George Flynn (2016) described wearing his father's jumper to rake up leaves every autumn, arguing that the garment gave access to his father's wisdom and strength as well as to memories. Flynn was delighted when people told him he looked like his father (Figure 27): he had hoped to assimilate some essence of his father and a visible resemblance seemed evidence of success. Similarly Greg Adams (2016), writing on the bereavement website Open to Hope, described wearing his father's clothes as a comfort, a challenge ("to stretch and incorporate more of his presentation into me") and as a way of acknowledging that

my father's imprint, my mother's presence, and the influence of all whom I have loved and who loved me... will continue to be part of me...[which] is some consolation in the midst of loss. (Adams, 2016)

All of these stories – and the many more that they represent (e.g. Badger, 2015, Royle, 2015) suggest that the clothing of the dead is strongly associated with the most positive constructions of continuing bonds, where the bereaved is helped towards recovery by continuing to engage with the deceased, who becomes either a treasured element of self or an ancestral other with whom dialogue can be maintained.

It is interesting that the same practices, explained in the same way, appear in Britain, in America and in Poland. America shares the two characteristics which were argued to be characteristic of British death culture (a Protestant past and a quasi-medical approach to grief), but Poland has a different religious history (the emergence of Protestantism resulting not in the suppression of the Catholic faith, but in a declaration of religious freedom and tolerance followed by a "counter-reformation" 77). It is beyond the scope of this study to explore this fully, but this may imply *either* that the use of clothing to remember the dead has little to do with religious background *or* that it is the distant common ground of a Catholic history that encourages the living to translate the clothes of those who have died into relic-items.

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<sup>77</sup> see Keenan and Thought (2013) for detail.

# I Wore My Dead Father's Sweater to Feel Closer to Him. It Made Me a Better Person.

Wearing his faded, stained sweater keeps my father close to my heart.

BY GEORGE M. FLYNN



The sweater belonged to my dad. I had given it to him new on a Christmas long ago. It saw a lot of holidays and events over the years, but eventually the sweater frayed badly and was relegated to leaf-raking and other yard work. When I cleaned out Dad's hall closet after he died, I found it.

When I wear it now to gather the leaves, my dad feels close. I can faintly smell his Old Spice cologne on the fabric. I feel his warmth, his strength. I see him making a humongous pile of leaves for the grandkids to cannonball into. It seems when I wear the sweater, I rake up as many memories as leaves.

"You look just like your dad in that sweater," Carole says.

That was one of the nicest things Carole—or for that matter anyone else—has ever said to me.

https://www.rd.com/culture/dead-father-sweater/

Figure 27: George Flynn on wearing his father's sweater (Readers' Digest)

#### 6.2.4.1.2 Crafting with the clothes of the dead

Items from the cultural archive confirmed that the clothes left behind by the dead may still give material form to continuing bonds even if refashioned into other items: again this was a practice regularly described in both Britain and America. A contributor to an American internet forum (Metaboob, 2015), described how a friend distributed mementos among the family by making the jeans of the deceased into rugs for the children, and jumpers into gloves for the grandchildren. A British correspondent, (J Huxter, 2011) revealed that

When my Father died my Mother unpicked one of his fishing jumpers and re-knitted the wool into 2 shawls one for me and one for my sister. I always felt like his arms were around me when I wore mine.

Transforming clothing into keepsakes and display items is strongly recommended by bereavement websites and peer-support fora. A variety of uses for refashioned clothing are suggested, including picture frames (RAProblems, 2015), cushions, rug making and memory blankets or quilts (Tracy\_McG, 2011). While memory quilts are an American tradition, making the clothes of the dead into rugs is well established in the UK. A contributor to a textile museum's comments book<sup>78</sup> recalls how the rag or "proggy" rugs in her grandparents' Halifax home stimulated family story-telling:

The window-seats and stone floors were covered in rag rugs made from the clothes of our ancestors. Who and what they were, when and how they died were repeated week after week as my grandfather wove the facts into stories (Ayling-Smith et al., 2012).

Instructions for making a variety of craft items are available online (Figure 28 and Figure 29), while the Saga<sup>79</sup> website directs those without craft skills to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> This response was to an exhibition entitled "Cloth and Memory" held at Salts Mill, Shipley in 2012. See http://www.clothandmemory.com/memories-of-cloth/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Saga is a British company which provides services for the over 50s (insurance, holidays, dating) and markets these through an online lifestyle magazine https://www.saga.co.uk/magazine



Figure 28: Memory pillows on Facebook<sup>80</sup>.

<sup>80</sup> Accessed 26 November 2015

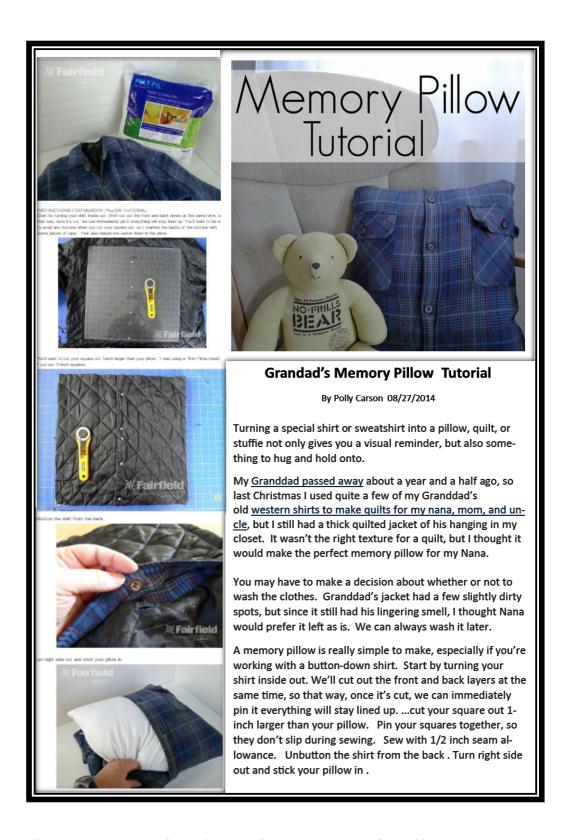


Figure 29: Instructions for making a memory pillow81

<sup>81</sup> https://www.fairfieldworld.com/2014/08/granddads-memory-pillow-tutorial/ accessed 20 December 2017



Figure 30: http://www.carriebears.com/82

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<sup>82</sup> Accessed 19 November 2017

companies which will turn the clothing of loved ones into memory-bears (Figure 30) or memory-blankets (Faulkes, 2016).

The refashioning of the clothing of the dead originated at a time when cloth was expensive and wasting it foolish. The (re)emergence of handicrafts as a way to reuse the clothing of the dead may, however, reflect the need to deal with the unprecedented volume of clothing left by the people who die in the 21st century. Keeping everything that is emotionally significant can put great pressure on living space, so it makes a certain kind of sense to try and "make something meaningful out of a subset; [to take] swatches of your loved one's favourite clothing items and [create] something to keep in your home" (Williams and Haley, 2016)

#### 6.2.4.2 Protesting the absence of the dead

On occasion, the clothes of the dead might be worn by the bereaved in order to protest the death or make a political point. One clear example of this, sympathetically reported in the British Press, was Ami Denborg's decision to wear the clothes of her murdered sister Anni Dewani to the trial of her husband, Shrien. Ami told reporters that she was wearing Anni's clothes not only "to be close to her during these difficult days" but also "to give Anni a presence in the courtroom" (Marris, 2013). This act stood as a reproach to Shrien Dewani, but also as a challenge to judge and jury to ensure that justice was done (Figure 31).

It is impossible to assess the frequency of such acts. The wearing of the clothes of the dead as a personal act of witness or solidarity is mentioned in bereavement narratives (Thompson, 2007, Turner, 2009), but such acts can only become political if the wearer has a chance to draw attention to the clothing: they are effective and evocative *if* known about, yet without narrative explanation they are likely to go unnoticed.



Figure 31: Article on Trial of Shrien Dewani. Metro newspaper, October 13 2014, page 23

#### 6.2.4.3 Disposing of the clothes of the dead

The difficulties of disposing of the clothes the dead leave behind are discussed at great length in web chatrooms and advice pages based in both Britain and America. These discussions follow very similar patterns. One contributor writes of being unable to dispose of the possessions of the dead even years after their passing, with each item surrendered feeling like an additional bereavement (Horsley, 2014); other voices remind them of the need to move on. The point is made, over and over again, that recovery involves selecting a few memory-items to treasure and allowing everything else to revert to "just stuff" (ibid): when this point is reached "letting go is the right thing to do" (Garner, 2015). What becomes clear, however, is that people are pressured to dispose of the clothes of the dead before they are ready to do so.

Mourners speak bitterly of "buttinsky friends" (Smolowe, 2016) who encourage them to demonstrate their recovery by disposing of items when grief is still raw (Anne, 2012). Disposition is not only taken to be physical

evidence of psychological recovery, it is also linked to moral narratives about "de-cluttering", prioritising the needs of the living over the dead, transcending the material and re-evaluating life (Horsley, 2014, Weinstock, 2016).

The bereavement experts and life coaches who advise the bereaved via websites and blogs present "de-cluttering" after a death as a series of (painful but cleansing) decisions about what will be kept and what will be rejected as "them-but-not-me" (Horsley, 2014). This, they suggest, is how mourners adjust to their loss. "A person's daily possessions form a kind of exoskeleton, and the act of disposing of them is another stage of mourning and letting go" (Garner, 2015). Even a spiritualist website urges,

consider spring cleaning your home AND your heart this spring. It may be the perfect time to start moving through your grief! (Frey, 2016).

Physical objects, this discourse runs, are not necessary for the maintenance of memories of, or bonds with, the dead and may simply serve to emphasise their absence (Weinstock, 2016); "our memories are within us, not within our things" (Fields Millburn, 2017). There is an implication that it is wrong, selfish, to hoard what has been acquired from the dead: some sources even imply that the dead themselves would be offended, expecting their clothes to be used for the communal good.

One woman, posting in Reddit on the anniversary of her mother's death, asked for advice on the bags, boxes and closets full of clothing that she was still storing (lostnlustless, 2015). She was told to

get rid of them if you're not going to put them into your regular rotation for outfits. If you're not going to use it, at least someone else can (lilfunky1, 2015).

This point was made over and over again; the kept clothes were not benefitting her, but if she donated them to charity they could have a transformative effect on somebody else's life. Some sympathetic correspondents talked about coping strategies, but to a large extent charitable disposition was presented as a moral act, an obligation; something that honours the dead and proves the mourner to be focussed not on the material realm but on something perceived to be transcendent.

Keep the [clothes] you use and give away the rest to someone who needs it, her soul will appreciate it when they are used by someone who needs it.

I lost my grandfather, and we gave away his stuff.... [b]ecause he was the kind of person who is not materialistic....He didn't value stuff, he valued human relationships (Khattify, 2015)

This imperative to dispose of "redundant" clothing moved Neil Mossey (2017) and his father to empty the wardrobe of his deceased mother (Figure 32):

I don't want to get rid of them...but it's not like it's helping having them around in the meantime either....She was a hoarder. And neither of us want to be (Mossey, 2017).

In blogs and websites, as in bereavement literature, sorting the clothes of the dead is noted to lead to a resurgence of memory. Kodanaz (2011) advocates taking "the time to savour the memories of each item that goes through your hands, while Johnston (2012) recounts

It was when I tearfully removed Doug's clothing from the clothes hangers that he returned. As I slid his long-sleeved, brown shirt off its hanger I suddenly felt very connected to him.

Such encounters with the dead may inhibit disposition. The wardrobe may be kept resolutely closed because mourners fear the return of the dead, or the clothes may be kept for their promise of future reunion. While clothing is retained it offers a material focus for memory and demonstrates continuing affection for the deceased. Following disposition, other ways of sustaining memories and demonstrating love may be sought. As Mossey emptied his mother's wardrobe, for instance, he photographed her garments to preserve the memories they evoked, and uploaded a video of the sorting process to his blog to demonstrate, quite publicly, his continued love for his mother. This demonstrates that just as wearing or treasuring the clothes of the dead can be a way to "prove" affection for the deceased, disposition also offers opportunities to make continuing bonds visible.



Figure 32: Neil Mossey disposing of his dead mother's clothes83

 $<sup>^{83}</sup>$  Video at https://neilmossey.blogspot.co.uk/2017/07/getting-rid-of-my-dead-mums-clothes.html accessed 19 November 2017

#### 6.2.4.4 Clothes as a source of danger

Alongside online discourses which present the clothes of the dead as a mnemonic resource to be preserved, or an economic resource to be redistributed, is a contrary account which suggests the clothes of the dead are dangerous or contaminating. "I don't think dressing in your mother's clothes is healthy," Lin from London told Angela Neustatter, while Alex from Glasgow agreed that was it "too creepy for words". A contributor to another online discussion shared their distaste.

When my grandfather died... my grandmother insisted that I take his bathrobe,... that it would probably fit me and that I would find it useful. As much as I loved the man, the thought of that creeped me out then and it still does (jfoobar, 2009).

The dangers alluded to appear to have three sources: germs, breached boundaries and ghosts (who are themselves, arguably, the results of boundary breaches).

#### 6.2.4.4.1 Clothes and germs

Mourners are sometimes repelled by the clothes of an individual dead person, recalling them as personally unhygienic;

the last thing I would have wanted was to don some of my old man's clothes.....they always looked like strangers to the laundry basket! (Steve, 2011)

but, the historical conviction that clothing can contaminate and infect is also persistent. Websites still warn that "body lice, chicken pox, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and hepatitis... can be transmitted through clothing" (Duffy, 2017). While there is some evidence, from research in hospital environments, that clothing and textiles may constitute an infection risk (Milam et al., 2001, Bergen et al., 2009, Fijan and Turk, 2012), stories about infectious clothing usually originate outside the scientific community and – just as they were in the historical context – continue to be moral stories as well as commentaries on hygiene. Mel Campbell (2013) argues in her blog that the distribution of second hand clothing through charities has cemented its association with poverty, desperation and disease, but she also relates an urban myth from America which highlights the risks associated with crossing social boundaries.

#### 6.2.4.4.2 Clothes and boundaries

In this story "a dress worn by a corpse at a funeral is sold to an unsuspecting lady who is subsequently poisoned by the embalming fluid" (ibid). There are several versions of the tale – in which the purchaser suffers outcomes ranging from "a nasty rash" to a horrible death – but most contain warnings against the social mobility that clothing facilitates. In one version the dress featured in the original owner's plan to "marry up"; a vanity punished by her own death and that of the frock's second owner. In an alternative version, the danger posed by the dress is exacerbated because its second sale takes it across a racial boundary, from the black community to the white.

Concerns about crossing other boundaries also appear in commentaries on the clothing of the dead. One contribution to an internet discussion referenced generational and gender boundaries in their comment

I know a man who wears his dead mother's jumper, it's lemon coloured and far too small for him, she's been dead 12 years and he's now early sixties, it's never right. It was odd when she first died but now it's downright madness (Hilary from Chester, 2011)

Another blogger notes the boundary between kin and strangers:

I don't feel comfortable wearing clothes from someone that I don't personally know....If it is a friend or family member then I am fine but otherwise I just don't like to (Deffes, 2015).

#### 6.2.4.4.3 Clothes and ghosts

Ghost stories involving second hand clothes imply that the passing of clothes across the boundary between the dead and the living may also be dangerous.

I brought a jacket home from a charity shop I put it in my wardrobe... all of a sudden there was all like movement round my wardrobe...and the room went very cold.. I ran downstairs scared out of my own skin (Sturbex, 2017)

The idea of the haunted garment is a trope of horror fiction, where wearing the clothes of the dead is associated with risks of possession, madness and annihilation at the hands of the vengeful dead (Figure 33). In the novel "Psycho" (Bloch, 1960), Norman Bates becomes murderous when he allows

the spirit of his mother (whose clothes he wears) to inhabit his body. The nameless heroine of Du Maurier's 1938 novel "Rebecca" precipitates a sequence of events that almost culminates in her own death when she is tricked into wearing Rebecca's clothes. Rosalind in Henry James' gothic tale "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes" fares even worse. Having tried to break into the trunk of clothes that her dead sister had set aside for her own daughter, Rosalind is discovered dead "and on her blanched brow and cheeks there glowed the marks of ten hideous wounds from two vengeful ghostly hands" (James, 1868: 14). In each case, the living protagonist has their will directed, or their wishes thwarted, by the previous owner of the clothes, who is able, somehow, to use the garments as a conduit to the present.

The idea that clothing may enable the dead to possess or destroy the living recurs in fiction, because it resonates with fears that are embedded in British culture. An old Lancashire proverb warns that "the clothes of the dead will not wear long" (Ladbury and Addy, 1909: 346), for those who wear them risk their own death. The ghost stories and urban myths circulated in conversation sustain the idea. Picardie (2006), for example, tells the story of a journalist friend who tried on a Biba blouse in second-hand shop and saw not her own reflection in the mirror but that of its deceased owner.

The origin of these fears may be explained in a variety of ways. First, as noted above, they may represent attempts to shore up social boundaries. Psycho is, at some level, a story about gender, and Rebecca is a story about class. Second, such fears may be grounded in the notion that personhood extends beyond the body. The concept of an extended body helps to explain why the dead are believed to linger in their abandoned clothes, and how the selfhood of one individual – imprinted in their clothing – might contaminate, haunt or possess that of another. Third, it is possible that the anxiety engendered by the clothing of the dead is linked to the sense that there are obligations attached to this clothing which must not be ignored. Perhaps the clothing should be used to benefit the dead in some way; to fulfil their wishes, sustain their memory, enhance their reputation or assist their soul.



Figure 33: The dangers of old clothes: warnings from fiction<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Top left, Norman Bates (https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3343599/). Top right "Rebecca". A painting of the first Mrs de Winter shows her in the outfit that the second Mrs de Winter is tricked into wearing

<sup>(</sup>https://longreadsblog.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/31161.jpg?w=640). Bottom: fan art depicting the death of Rosalind in Henry James' novel

<sup>(</sup>https://www.polyvore.com/romance\_certain\_old\_clothes/set?id=165544069 and https://t00.deviantart.net/W869ON9vqfc0PZww9RYm6HcCjqw=/fit-in/700x350/)

#### 6.3 Identifying key categories

The categories which emerged from the different data sets were first listed (Table 4) and then sorted into stake holders, problems and strategies. The historical data suggested that principal the stakeholders were the deceased and their family, who used clothing to redistribute the deceased's estate and help them in the afterlife. The concerns about hygiene and taboo which emerged in the mediaeval period may have been rooted in fears that if clothing was used in other ways, crucial obligations may not be met.

Among the contemporary British population, Q methodology also revealed specific patterns of obligation:

- the obligation to use the clothing of the dead to generate a version of history and a pantheon of ancestors likely to enhance the morale and reputation of the group,
- the obligation to conserve material resources
- the obligation to sustain particular kinds of continuing bonds with the dead.

Q also revealed the tensions caused by uncertainty over whose interests should be prioritised, those of the dead, those of the group, or those of the bereaved individual.

Bereavement narratives identified close family as the principal stakeholders, suggesting that the clothing the dead left behind provided them with an opportunity to idealise the memory of the deceased and access their presence. The cultural archive, reiterated these themes, while also noting that wearing the clothes of the dead could offer opportunities for identification, imitation and introjection.

Theme	distribute wealth	help deceased in afterlife	avoid disposal as rubbish	conserve memories/history	perfect memory of deceased	benefit wider social group	sustain continuing bonds	help bereaved adapt	evoke immersive memory experience	clothing is the deceased	support incorporation/identification	haunting & disturbing	disposition is a process	make bonds visible	create intergenerational connections	impose obligations	importance of charity	convey protection and affection of dead	protest the absence of the dead	sustain social presence of deceased
Historical data	Х	Х										Х					Χ			
Survey (public)			Х	Х	Х												Х			
Q method						Χ	Х	Х									Х			
Bereavement literature				Х	Х		Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х			
Cultural archive				Χ		Χ	Х	Χ	Х		Х	Х	Χ	Х	Х		Χ	Х	Χ	Χ

Table 4: Themes emerging from the material on the clothes the dead leave behind

Barriers to strategic action also emerged however. First, in all the data-sets, the clothes of the dead appeared to have a haunting and disruptive power which seemed attributable to uncontrolled memory experiences, the evocation of presence absence, and the sense that the dead persisted within their things. Second, the material from the cultural archive also drew attention to social pressure to dispose of such clothing, pressures which were linked to discourses about de-cluttering, redefining the self and to prioritising the living over the dead, the transcendent over the material.

When all these things are considered together, it is clear that although the principal stakeholder is the individual mourner, their actions are shaped by the expectations of the wider community and the assumed interests of the deceased. The "problems being processed" are the need for personal adjustment to loss, the need to transform the relationship with the deceased and the need to deal with the haunting potential of the clothes of the dead. The strategies used to deal with these problems centre on the processual disposition of clothing, the translation of the deceased into an exemplary ancestor with whom bonds will be sustained and the interiorisation, by the living, of the treasured characteristics of the deceased. The relationship between the principle stakeholder, their problems and strategies is diagrammatically represented in Figure 34.

The forces which shape these strategies are hard to adduce. Participants described compulsion, obligation and fears of what others might think. Therapeutic narratives attribute some behaviours to psychological regression. This thesis, however, argues that behaviour is also shaped by cultural memories of past clothing practice and by the haunting properties of clothing itself.

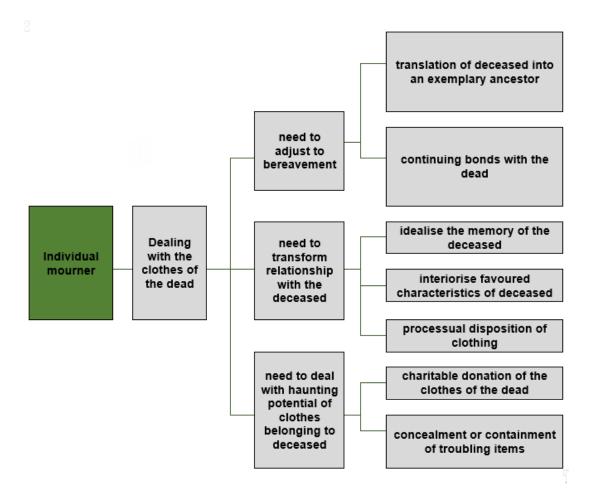


Figure 34: Strategies associated with the clothes the dead leave behind

#### 6.4 Chapter summary

In common with the material on dressing the dead (reviewed in Chapter 4), material reviewed in this chapter highlighted the importance of translating the deceased into an exemplary ancestor and sustaining bonds with this ancestral figure. However, it problematized the idea that clothing could "domesticate" (normalise and disempower) death by demonstrating that the clothing also has the power to unexpectedly reanimate the horror of loss.

Having identified and mapped the themes emerging from data on the clothing that the dead leave behind, it became possible to frame contextual answers to the research questions.

#### 6.4.1 What do the people do with the clothing of the dead?

The clothing the dead leave behind is filtered, used and disposed of according to a predictable scheme (Figure 35). Negatively charged items (those evoking bad memories or flawed personhood) are disposed of quickly in order to perfect the memory of the deceased. Items associated with happy or inspiring recollections are used to sustain both memories of the dead and their social presence; they may also be used to interiorise aspects of the deceased, or to imaginatively access a past where they still live. Residual items, and those which have completed their work as transitional objects and are no longer required, are "processed" through strategies of detachment – laundering, placing in storage – before being disposed of in a way that appears to make some good come out of the death.

Disposition is usually deferred until the imagined location of the deceased has moved from their possessions to the psychic interior of the mourner. Mode of disposition is chosen carefully. Inappropriate strategies (sale for profit, disposal as rubbish) are perceived as attacks on the deceased, while others bring them honour. However, bereaved people often experience pressure to dispose of inherited clothing before they are ready: a variety of moral imperatives, including thinking of others, not dwelling on the past, not hoarding and honouring the memory of the deceased may be invoked. Charitable donation presents an appealing disposition strategy because it accords with these imperatives and positions the deceased as benefactor.

Strategies of disposition appear to be shaped by the convergence of two contradictory ideas: the fear that the dead may be hurt or damaged by the disposition of their things and the persistence of social discourses advocating "de-cluttering" as a way of processing grief. The tendency to pack possessions away (to keep them, but hide them) may be interpreted as an inertia deriving from the tension between these ideas; alternatively it may represent the recognition that such items have potential future value, that they will become treasured mnemonic items once their capacity to cause pain has lessened.

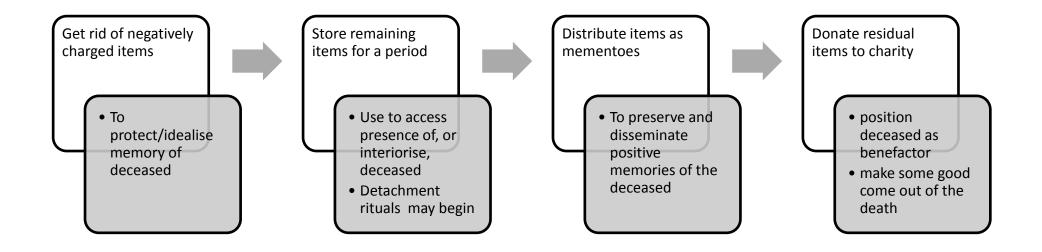


Figure 35: Common pattern of disposition

#### 6.4.2 What are the historical origins of these behaviours?

The need to dispose of large amounts of relatively low-value clothing when somebody dies is a fairly new phenomenon, yet present-day behaviours still appear to be haunted by cultural memories of previous practice. When clothing was expensive and in short supply, it was used to transfer wealth within the family, as heirlooms which created bonds between the generations and as payment for prayer. The present-day mourner's sense that disposal of the clothing of the dead is not a trivial matter may derive from cultural memory of these obligations. It is also possible that the popularity of charitable donation might be explained by its similarity to ancient practices of "offering" the clothes of the dead for the benefit their soul. There are, of course, modern moral narratives which require similar behaviours ("don't hoard"; "prioritise the needs of the living") but the association of the clothes of the dead with moral obligations appears to be longstanding.

As well as determining the things that must be done with the clothing of the dead, historic practice also dictates a range of things that can't be done. The sense that the clothes of the dead should not be misappropriated, squandered or destroyed may derive from the high value of cloth in the past. Equally, the use of clothing to mark social boundaries (boundaries of class, creed, gender and generation) over many generations has created a legacy of fear and disapproval about clothing actions which transgress these boundaries.

# 6.4.3 How do people experience these interactions with clothing?

Mourners often experience the clothing of the dead as being charged with mnemonic and affective power. This can be a source of hope for it affords an opportunity to engage with dead loved ones, however, the sense that the garments have some kind of agency – compelling remembrance, emotion and action – can be utterly terrifying.

The memories which clothing evokes are often beyond the mourner's control and, as such, they may be experienced as a kind of haunting. In addition, the idea that clothing participates in the personhood of the deceased, or provides a kind of surrogate body through which they may be encountered, may create a horror of disposition, in case the deceased is accidentally damaged or destroyed.

The semiotic power of clothing can also become problematic when the owner of the clothing has died. Clothing associated with the projects and achievements of life can come to symbolise not only the end of those projects, but also their essential vanity. Moreover, when clothing practice is understood as a communicative act, the unresolvable questions of "who is saying what to whom?" "who is the audience or beneficiary of clothing behaviours?" are drawn (disquietingly) to the fore.

As mourners seek to bring the signifying, mnemonic and affective power of clothing under control, they feel themselves to be scrutinised and judged by an audience of friends, neighbours and professionals who seek to impose both therapeutic and moral narratives upon them, thus making their struggle for consolation and meaning more difficult still.

# 6.4.4 Do these behaviours address needs or are they simply relics of ancient practice?

The undeniable power of the clothing of the dead – affective, mnemonic and ritual power – has given rise to distinct patterns of behaviour which seek to operationalise, control or constrain this power. The strategies of processual disposition, the curation of memory and the translation of the deceased into an exemplary ancestor are long-established but still vital, they are persistent responses to perpetual problems.

# 6.4.5 What causes clothing behaviours to change in this context?

Three factors precipitate change in attitudes to, and behaviours involving, the clothes the dead leave behind. The first is the assumed relationship between the living and the dead. Popular acceptance of decathexis in the early twentieth century gave rise to the expectation that the bereaved would set aside not only their affection for the deceased, but also their possessions. Once the value of continuing bonds with the dead was recognised (from the 1980s onwards), the practice of retaining garments belonging to the dead as connecting items became acceptable. However, this first principle, interacts in a complex way with the second: the declining value of cloth.

As cloth became cheaper, the dead began to leave sufficient clothing behind them to pose a problem. It couldn't be kept and, in the mid twentieth century second hand clothing was no longer a valuable gift, but the marker of poverty and shame. The problem of surplus clothing was resolved in the late twentieth century by the rise of the charity shop; second-hand shopping

came to be seen as both respectable and responsible, donation as ethical and philanthropic.

The final variable which appears to determine clothing behaviours is the extent to which the clothing of the deceased is understood to participate in their selfhood. Concepts of extended bodies and constructed selves permeate academic discussion of clothing, yet the data considered cannot demonstrate whether these ideas are prevalent within the community in scope<sup>85</sup>. What it does provide, however, is evidence that the perception that the dead are present within their clothing waxes and wanes over time. Thus, the deceased is felt to be present in their clothing in the weeks and months after loss, but, one to two years after the death, this presence is felt to have evaporated. Thus the clothing of the dead will be treated in different ways depending upon the emotional and temporal distance of the death event.

# 6.4.6 Why are the clothes the dead leave behind so often donated to charity?

Mourners have four compelling reasons to donate clothing to charity. First, charitable donation echoes some very ancient traditions, including making offerings to (or for) the dead, and performing acts of charity on behalf of the deceased. In the context of death, traditions are attractive, for to do for one's own dead what was done for their ancestors offers some defence against transience and meaninglessness. Second, charitable donation may constitute a "ritual of resource management" (Cheal, 1988), a practice which aims to ameliorate a bad situation through practical action. Third, donation presents an alternative to destruction of the possessions of the deceased; replacing a behaviour associated with lack of respect for the deceased and seen as injurious to them with one that enhances their reputation and places them in the powerful position of benefactor. Finally, charitable donation allows mourners to comply with the expectations of the wider community; expectations shaped by a reaction against mass-production (or overproduction) of cloth; concerns about sustainability, a horror of waste and a kind of anti-materialism that encourages "de-cluttering". By donating the clothes of the dead to charity bereaved people can demonstrate that they are not hoarders, they are not materialistic, they are recovering from their loss and that they have the interests of the wider community at heart. The

<sup>85</sup> And this may be, in fact, a productive area for further research.

downside of this is, of course, that mourners may feel pressured into surrendering items when they would prefer to keep them.

## Chapter 7 The Clothing worn by mourners

This chapter considers the clothing practices through which the people of twenty first century Britain commemorate the dead or indicate that they have adopted a mourning role. In seeking to expose the social and psychological drivers of these behaviours it considers their historical origins and asks what conditions precipitate change.

#### 7.1 Historical material

As noted at 1.1, Taylor (1983) argues that that mourning clothing permitted, and even encouraged, the performance and negotiation of social status and identity. According to this argument, the grand costumed parade associated with state funerals emerged as a way of demonstrating and consolidating the power of the elite, but "trickled down" through the aristocracy to the ambitious middle-classes to create a situation in which families used ostentatious funerals and elaborate mourning clothes to proclaim or advance their social standing. In a similar way the emulation of court mourning became "the yardstick by which every ambitious...middle-class woman measured her own behaviour" (Taylor, 1983: 31). Mourning clothing became the emblem of respectability; it was worn to maintain family honour and show respect for the social order, with the widow in black believed to exemplify the virtues of piety and chastity as well as social status and social expertise (ibid, 1983: 65, 102).

The wider literature on mourning dress tends to confirm Taylor's findings, while subsuming what she describes as social competition into discussions of consumption and identity where mourning fashion appears as the product of interaction between the individual's drive towards self-actualisation and the efforts of manufacturers and retailers to maximise profit. It also points out however, that mourning clothing contributes to status change and that wearable keepsakes provide a point of contact with the dead. These concepts – which may also have explanatory power in the present – are considered thematically below, and illustrated with material from the cultural archive.

## 7.1.1 Rites of Passage

The costumed funeral parade and the drab clothes of mourning are argued to facilitate status change by assisting the afterlife journey of the deceased, installing them as an ancestor and ensuring that the social role they have vacated is taken up by their heir. These transitions are achieved by using clothing to first erase the classificatory markings that clothing normally confers, and then to replace it with the indicators of a new social order.

## 7.1.1.1 Rites of separation and the demonstration of liminal status

Jastrow (1900: 24f) argues that since clothes and their status markings provide a "metaphor for society" with its hierarchies and etiquette, clothing must be masked or set aside in order to initiate change. In ancient Semitic practice mourners would strip off all garments in in a full rejection of civilised norms: "therefore I will lament and howl, go about barefooted and naked," (Micah 1:8)<sup>86</sup>. Jastrow argues that when nakedness became unacceptable this practice was replaced by two alternative signifying strategies. The first – the tearing of clothes to express personal grief and to make visible the damage that death had inflicted upon the social world – was adopted by the Jews; the second – the concealment of clothes which carried current cultural meaning by archaic garments (ibid: 25ff, 30) – was the solution adopted in mediaeval Britain with the introduction of the mourning cape (Taylor, 1983: 56).

According to this line of argument, the damaged or anonymising clothing worn by mourners achieved three things

- 1. It marked them as ritual participants, thereby indicating who was within and without the affected group.
- 2. It provided a way of dramatizing, sharing and venting personal pain
- 3. It confirmed their liminal status.

While in mourning, individuals were marginalised, excluded from key social events, and their clothing enforced seclusion. The Roman citizen in mourning was expected to abstain from banquets (Carroll, 2011: 100) and to

<sup>86</sup> See also Isaiah 20:2-4

either set aside the toga which demarcated social status<sup>87</sup>, or to wear it in the dark colours normally associated with the poor (Planche, 1876: 5, Hope, 1962: xlii). In a similar way, the Victorian widow could "neither accept invitations nor frequent places of public amusement [for] a widow's cap in such scenes has a most incongruous appearance" (Buck, 1968: 32).

#### 7.1.1.2 Rites of incorporation for the dead

The clothing worn by mourners was also expected to support – ritually and symbolically – status change in the deceased. The funeral parade is argued by many writers to be the symbolic enactment of the journey to the afterlife. It is claimed that in pre-Christian Britain funeral parades traced boundary paths, visited sacred sites (Draper, 2004, Williams, 2006, Brookes, 2007) and included ritual pacing and special funeral songs which both mourned the deceased and described their journey into the afterlife (Gummere, 1901: 224-6). The distinctively Christian form of funeral parade, which emerged around the 13<sup>th</sup> century, sought to dramatically represent the journey of the soul as depicted in funerary art (Ariès, 1981: 161); thus what was originally imagined as

a supernatural procession composed of angels and clergymen in alternating order, became a real procession... of monks, clergymen and cowled mourners (ibid: 245).

The cowled mourners – who escorted the deceased in place of the angels – were usually the poor of the parish. They were paid for their participation and the will of the decedent often specified their number and the colour of their robes (Figure 36).

<sup>87</sup> The toga was a semi-circular swathe of woollen cloth, which was wrapped round the body asymmetrically, so that the left arm was fully covered, and the right unconfined. High status individuals wore bleached white togas, respectable citizens retained the natural colour of the wool and artisans wore dyed robes (Hope, 1962: xlii)

#### VII. THE WILL OF ALICE THWAITES.

[Reg. Test. v. 276a.]

March 11, 1485-6. Alice Thwates,\* advoesse, sum tyme wife of Thomas Thwaites, esquier. My body to be beryd neigh my saide husband, Thomas Thwaites, lyeng in the southe ile win the monastery of Seynt German of Selby. I bequieth xv lb. wax to be birned aboute my corse the day of my beryall, wt iiij torches to be borne wt iiij poer men unto my grave, which shall have iiij white gownes and iiij white hodes,

Figure 36: Section from the published will of Alice Thwaites, Testamenta Eboracum (1869)

As a piece of religious theatre the funeral parade used a variety of strategies to improve the prospects of the deceased in the afterlife. First, it enacted what *ought* to happen, using sympathetic (or homeopathic) magic to ensure that it did (Frazer, 1983). Second, the costumed parade sought to maximise prayers for the dead by moving observers emotionally (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 143) and by allowing the poor to keep their mourning cloaks as a reminder to pray for the soul of their benefactor. Third, in providing these cloaks (along with "doles" and a good meal) the deceased performed a final act of charity which was expected to count in their favour at judgement (Ariès, 1981: 166). After the Reformation, concern shifted to the way in which the funeral parade could enhance the reputation of the deceased, for reputation (rather than intercession or indulgence by was now believed to benefit the deceased at judgement (Laquer, 1983).

As well as installing the deceased safely in Heaven, the funeral parade also conferred an ancestral identity upon them (Gilchrist, 2009). Ancestral identities encapsulated that which would be remembered about the deceased individual; they were simplified, but idealised, identities which focussed on preferred social roles and behaviours. Ancestral identities reassured the bereaved that the deceased would prosper in the afterlife, but, in providing them with a powerful lesson about how to live, also contributed to the reproduction of the social order.

<sup>88</sup> Payments for participating in a funeral parade

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Indulgences were granted by Catholic bishops to reduce the time served in purgatory; they could be obtained in exchange for religious or charitable acts, or they could be paid for.

Ancestral identities were conferred by using clothing symbols to articulate social identity, social value and virtue. If the family was entitled to bear arms, then the armour of the deceased and the heraldic devices which represented them (Figure 37) would be carried in the funeral parade (Taylor, 1983). For commoners, signifiers of age, gender, marital and occupational status were deployed. The coffin was carried by peers of the deceased; women would carry the coffin of a woman, children that of a child (Figure 38) while workmates, wearing the clothes that proved their common identity, would carry that of a man. A report in 'the Old Whig' in 1735 noted that the coffin of a head cook was carried by men dressed in in cooks' aprons and hats (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 136), and, where the deceased had been a member of a union or guild, a liveried parade with banners (Laquer, 1983) might be arranged.

The marital status (and, by implication the virtue or social compliance) of the deceased, might also be indicated with clothing signifiers. White scarves were used at the funerals of bachelors (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 135), while white mourning was worn and crants or "maidens' garlands" (Figure 86, see also 8.3.1.1) were carried to symbolise virginity and virtue at the funerals of unmarried women (Picart, 1733, Beck, 1833: 239, Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 139, 147).



Figure 37: Heralds at the funeral of Sir Philip Sidney in 1587<sup>90</sup> carrying his spurs, gauntlets and helmet

<sup>90</sup> Image from Bridgeman Education.(Image number XJF2920845)



Figure 38: Children carrying the coffin of a child in an 1876 painting by Frank Holl<sup>91</sup>



Figure 39: Funeral of Bobby Dowson of the Bilsdale Hunt, with fellow huntsman as bearers, June 1902<sup>92</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Frank Holl's Her Firstborn, Horsham Churchyard (1876). Photograph: © The McManus, Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum. Image from <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/jun/18/frank-holl-victorian-master">https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/jun/18/frank-holl-victorian-master</a>

<sup>92</sup> Image from a postcard published by Armstrongs of Stockton

### 7.1.1.3 Rites of incorporation for the living

In describing the social roles played by the deceased, the funeral parade also made it clear what titles and obligations were to be inherited by the living. According to Taylor (1983), the elaborate costumed funeral parades organised by the College of Arms<sup>93</sup> for the Tudor nobility aimed to ensure that heirs stepped into vacant positions with no disruption to the social hierarchy. When death occurred in an armigerous family94 the helmet, surcoat<sup>95</sup>, gloves and spurs of the deceased (Figure 37), together with "hatchments" and the appropriate quantity of pennants and banners for their social rank, were carried in the funeral parade to articulate fully (and accurately), the honours and titles to be inherited (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 129, Taylor, 1983, Fritz, 1994). The heralds themselves attended noble funerals wearing tabards painted with the king's coat of arms<sup>97</sup> and floor length black cloaks<sup>98</sup> to express the monarch's sorrow at this death; in this way they affirmed the continued primacy of the monarch, while transferring the king's allegiance from the deceased to his heir (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 183, Laquer, 1983: 110, Taylor, 1983, Fritz, 1994: 244).

The transfer of roles and power from the dead to the living remained implicit in the special treatment accorded to headdresses and gloves at funerals for many centuries, for both items were historically associated with investiture, the transfer of power and the forging of social bonds (Beck, 1833). Gloves

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> an association of Royal Heralds, who had expanded their interests from organising knightly tournaments to keeping genealogical records and organising ceremonial activity (College of Arms, 2015)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Armigerous means "entitled to bear arms" or to use as a mark of identity and affiliation one of the crests originally used to identify knights in battle. For detail on the development of the armigerous system see Keen (1999: 94ff)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> After the funeral these would be donated to the church in order to provide a permanent memorial display (Cunnington & Lucas, 1972: 130)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Hatchments is a short term for "heraldic achievement" which may refer to all the items a noble family was entitled to display, armour, tabard, pennants, shield, or simply to the coat of arms displayed on a black lozenge for funerary purposes.

<sup>97</sup> British Museum, MS Harl. 6064, f.26v

<sup>98</sup> British Museum, MS Harl. 6064, f, 183v

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Figure 40: 1889 undertakers' invoice including an order for 23 pairs of gloves<sup>99</sup>

remained common gifts for mourners until the early twentieth century (Figure 40), and the helmet or cap of a uniformed officer is still displayed on their coffin today.

## 7.1.2 The regeneration of communal life

Both the costumed funeral parade and the clothes worn during the mourning period have been used by many societies to regenerate the forms and norms of communal life by making social structures visible, articulating shared history and values, and by carefully managing both the morale and reputation of the group.

<sup>99</sup> Image from

http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/resources/images/3045007.jpg?type=articleLandscape accessed 13/10/2015

#### 7.1.2.1 Social structures reaffirmed

As noted earlier, Taylor (1983: 19f) presents the funeral procession as the paradigmatic opportunity for the enactment of social status and social structure, with the heraldic funeral parade often grouping the mourners by rank and dressing them in status-specific clothing (Figure 41). Laquer (1983: 111) notes that the hierarchical ranking of mourners persisted in British funeral parades of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, continuing to function as a "mnemonic device" through which social relationships were displayed and naturalised. Wolffe (2000: 14) too, argues that the choreographed funeral processions of Victorian England presented with "visual didactism" the hierarchical arrangement of society. The purpose of this, Gittings (1999: 170) suggests, was to reassure group members that while death might remove a person, the communal structures, the very order of life would be sustained.

Choreographed funeral parades were not reserved for the wealthy. When commercial undertakers emerged in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they adapted the template of the heraldic funeral parade for commoners with a smaller budget, arranging the mourners in a complex formation that reflected both their relationship to the deceased and their social rank. The clothing signifiers that distinguished between ranks and relationships might in this case be subtle – the width of a hatband signifying closeness to the deceased, its fabric denoting social class (Webster, 1879, Buck, 1968: 37, Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 149f, 196, Hunter, 1993: 18)<sup>100</sup> – but the distinctions were still made.

Even in rural areas, where social structure was the least hierarchical, social relationships were still carefully articulated, with the funeral parade following complex local traditions (Clark, 2000: 5f). This had the effect of making social arrangements appear preordained and eternal and also served to

18).

<sup>100</sup> The fabric of the hatband could betoken social status in life or importance in the funeral parade (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 149f, 196. The width of the band represented the closeness of the relationship – it was 7 inches for a widower, but the loss of a father or brother would be marked by a narrower band (Buck, 1968:

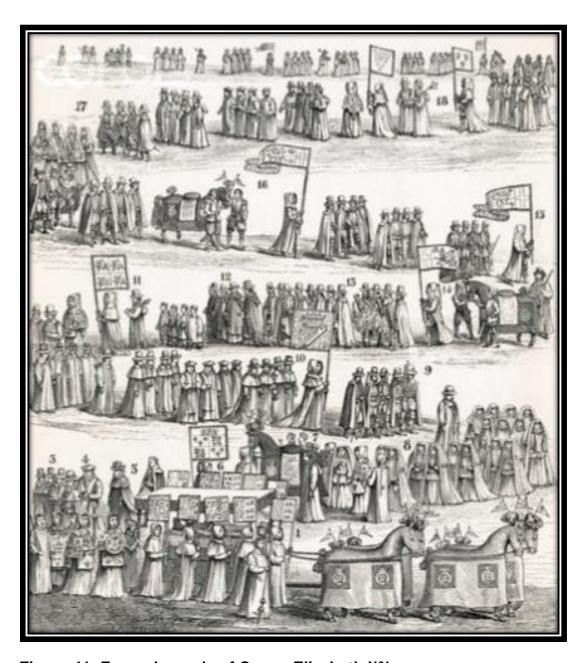


Figure 41: Funeral parade of Queen Elizabeth I<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Image from Getty Images online, accessed 16 Aug 2015

identify those critically affected by the loss, in order to direct sympathy and social support in their direction. Clark (2000), who studied funeral practices in Staithes, explained that the women who would serve the funeral tea led the parade, walking

"in pairs, one wearing her sash diagonally from the left shoulder and the other wearing hers from the right in order to form an inverted V pattern." (Clark, 2000: 5f)

Other villagers completed the monochromatic symmetry with persons grouped according to type (be it gender, role in the ritual or relationship to the deceased) just as had been the norm in medieval parades.

"Male coffin bearers wore small white bows or rosettes in their lapels, three men with them on the right side and three on the left side. The bows had to be worn on the side near the coffin. Women bearers wore black skirts white shawls and white hats. Behind the bearers came the men, wearing sealskin caps or bowler hats, dark blue jerseys and serge trousers. Then came the women, all in black." (Clark, 2000: 6)

Just as funeral parades made social structures visible, so too did the conventions for mourning clothing imposed in Britain following the Reformation. These were based on the mourning etiquette of Ancient Rome and drew attention to social relations based on kinship and gender. In the Roman scheme mourning clothes were worn for a year in honour of parents, siblings or spouses (Davey, 1890: 23); children were mourned less, especially if they died before the age of 3 (Carroll, 2012). In this way, the importance of family bonds was reinforced, and the relative importance of individuals within society clearly demarcated. The British etiquette was very similar. "The most extreme form of mourning, unmistakable in its depth and duration was the mourning dress of the widow" (Buck, 1968: 32). A widow wore mourning for a minimum of two years (ibid), drawing attention to both the importance of the marriage bond and the subordination of women in a patriarchal society (Phillippy, 2002). The sibling relationship was accorded more importance in this scheme than that between parent and child; a sibling being mourned for six months, a parent or child for only three (Buck, 1968: 33). The details are, however, less important than the principle: a key function of mourning dress is to rank both persons and relationships.

### 7.1.2.2 History and values reaffirmed

As well as presenting a tableau of idealised social relations, the funeral parade is also argued to present a mythologised account of group history. Shelton (1998), DeMaris (1999), and Favro and Johanson (2010) analyse Roman funerals in this way, noting how eulogies, ancestor masks and triumphal regalia were used to align the deceased with cultural ideals and connect them with characters and events from both real and imagined pasts. The point of the funeral procession was not to depict biographical events, they argue, but to showcase the principles and aspirations of the group, inflame the audience with national pride and impress upon them what they should remember, and how they should respond.

What finer spectacle could there be than this?...The fame of men who have done great deeds is made immortal.... and handed down as a model to future generations. The most important thing, however, is that young men are inspired to endure or suffer anything on behalf of the common good. (Shelton, 1998: 99)

Wolffe (2000: 275) sees a similar principle in action in the state funerals of Victorian England, which, he contends, used parades of clerics, military uniforms and heraldry to foster nationalistic emotion and to create and sustain a civil religion<sup>102</sup>; "a complex hybrid of Christian and national inspirations and practices" (ibid: 7). Pearsall (1999) makes a similar point in explaining how the funeral of the Duke of Wellington was used as an opportunity to define and extol the notion of "Englishness". What is argued here is essentially that placing the body of the deceased at the centre of a celebration of group values and mythology establishes them as a totem of these particular values; thus commemoration of the individual also serves to refresh communal identity.

religion, Wolffe owes a debt to Metcalf and Huntington (1991).

<sup>102</sup> The term "civil religion" was coined by Robert Bellah (1967) to describe the moral and spiritual dimension to national life; the "sentiments of social commitment without which it would be impossible to be either a good citizen or a faithful subject" (Rousseau, 1968: 43). In arguing that funerals shape as well as express civil

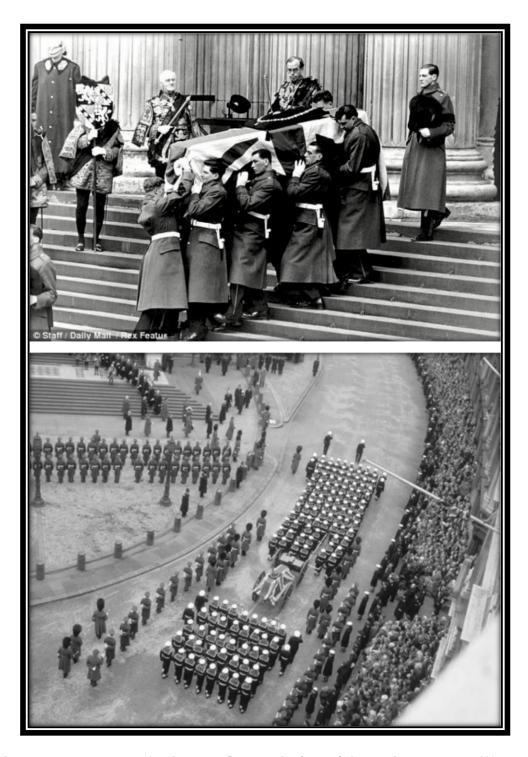


Figure 42: Funeral of Winston Churchill (1965) featuring heralds<sup>103</sup> and a military procession<sup>104</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Top image from Daily Mail (http://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2013/04/17/article-2310773-192D6E2D000005DC-939\_634x415.jpg accessed 16/12/2017)

<sup>104</sup> Lower image from Daily Express (https://cdn.images.express.co.uk/img/dynamic/141/590x/secondary/State-Funeral-for-Winston-Churchill-247369.jpg accessed 16 Dec 2017)

Mourning etiquette is also used to cultivate particular attitudes within and toward the community, maintaining the distinctive ethos of the group and its reputation. According to Phillippy (2002), the introduction of Roman mourning practice into Britain following the Reformation represented a deliberate attempt by Protestant leaders to change the ethos and image of British society from one of sentimental Catholicism to one characterised by Puritanism and patriarchy, an effect they achieved by depriving widows of their social power and requiring them to dress like nuns.

#### 7.1.2.3 Maintaining morale

While the clothing behaviours associated with mourning generally afford a welcome opportunity to display the principles and the mores of the group, mourning behaviours may be suppressed at times of extreme stress. At such times the opportunity to display social compliance and mutual affection is sacrificed to the wish to present the group itself as vigorous and immortal.

The suppression of mourning can be noted in a number of historical contexts. In Ancient Greece widows were discouraged from marking their status through clothing, for a state of perpetual war had killed so many men that the high number of widows stood as a reproach to government (Cudjoe, 2000: 21, 29f). Cyprian's *de Mortalitate* encouraged members of the early Christian church to abandon dark clothes and lamentation at the very time their numbers were being decimated by plague (Scourfield, 1996: 20), while the Roman insistence that mourners abstained from social events allowed Roman society to present itself as powerful, prosperous and immortal (Rubel, 2013: 235). In the same way mourning was discouraged in Britain during World War I, for, as Gorer (1965: 6) puts it, "[to sustain] public morale; one should not show the face of grief to the boys home on leave from the trenches".

These examples suggest that hegemonic forces use clothing etiquette to "manage" the experience and behaviour of bereaved individuals in order to benefit either the hegemony or the group. In twentieth century Britain the hegemonic voice more often made itself heard through the media rather than through government edict; thus it was the press and fashion writers who told the country that mourning was inappropriate in times of war. Columnist Carmen of Cockayne (1915) argued that "elaborate mourning is in the worst of bad taste" while the Editors of Vogue (1925: 529) encouraged readers to take a spirited stand against despair.

The awful devastation of war taught us to look upon death [as]...the lot of any of us at any moment; a fact to be faced with defiance. Black would be the livery of the world unless the spirit of those left behind rose against it....Mourning therefore....should not be worn too long.

Such advice cultivated a stoical response to death in which the emotion of the individual had to be subordinated to the needs of the (embattled) group. People were still expected to experience pain when bereaved, and to signal this pain to others, yet at the same time they were expected to make it clear that there would be no emotional breakdown and that business would continue as usual (cf. Walter, 1997). The wearing of "sober clothes" (as opposed to specific mourning wear) at times of tragedy became the way in which this very specific response was coded (Figure 43).



Figure 43: National Mourning for George V 1952 (Daily Mirror, February 13, 1952)

#### 7.1.3 Relations with the dead

While the black clothes of mourning identified the wearer as someone focussed on the dead, it was often small wearable keepsakes (scarves, gloves and mourning rings) that provided points of contact with the deceased. Houlbrooke (1989b: 35) argues that the distribution of such keepsakes at funerals was encouraged by the Protestant Church in the hope that respectful reverence for the exemplary dead might replace the Catholic appetite for relics and intercessory prayer. However, the keepsakes distributed were precisely the types of object traditionally gifted (complete with sentimental verse)<sup>105</sup> by lovers, and this perhaps made it inevitable that their intended role as instruments of moral education would be eclipsed by their use as a point of connection to the lost love.

According to Mogavero (2013) the evolution of mourning rings presents a neat illustration of this principle. Mourning rings, which appeared in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, were based on the memento mori rings popular with Puritans, which were intended to remind the living to prepare for their own death. However, the mourning ring added to the funereal imagery and the religious mottos of the memento mori ring, some of the features of rings used to commemorate historic events; names, dates and imagery associated with affection and loyalty. Although letters and wills make it clear that mourning rings were intended as both keepsakes for loved ones and the most solemn of memento mori (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 253ff)<sup>106</sup> the eschatological warnings of early rings gradually gave way to the romantic evocation of lost love. Moreover, even before the memento mori motifs faded, mourning rings had become substitutes for the relics of saints forbidden by the church; the emotions and practices formerly associated with holy relics being transferred to items associated with the personally known dead (Lutz, 2010).

<sup>105</sup> A book of recommended sentimental inscriptions for love tokens was published in 1674, tellingly it was entitled "Cupids Posies, For Bracelets, Handkerchers, and Rings, with Scarfes, Gloves, and other things"

<sup>106</sup> The will of Anne, Lady Newdigate of Arbury, who died in 1637 gave a detailed description of the rings to be distributed after her death:

<sup>&</sup>quot;a few playne gould Rings made of tenne or twelve shillings price with a pansie being my ffather's Crest, engraven on the outside and two letters for my name enameled with blacke on either side of the pansie and an inscription within to by lattyn these words following "Death is the beginning of life" (Newdigate-Newdegate, 2013)



Figure 44: Mourning rings. 107. 108. 109. 110

107 **Top left, 17**<sup>th</sup> **century memento mori ring** Ashmolean Museum, reproduced from <a href="http://www.jewelrynerd.net/the-secrets-of-mourning-jewelry-revealed-a-series-in-three-parts/">http://www.jewelrynerd.net/the-secrets-of-mourning-jewelry-revealed-a-series-in-three-parts/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> **Top right mourning ring with death imagery and personal details** Image from <a href="http://www.jewelrynerd.net/the-secrets-of-mourning-jewelry-revealed-a-series-in-three-parts/">http://www.jewelrynerd.net/the-secrets-of-mourning-jewelry-revealed-a-series-in-three-parts/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup>Lower left, 18<sup>th</sup> century mourning ring with urn and willow imagery Image from <a href="https://artofmourning.com/2014/04/28/the-urn-willow-and-onyx-in-the-18th-century/">https://artofmourning.com/2014/04/28/the-urn-willow-and-onyx-in-the-18th-century/</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> lower right mourning ring with pansy cameo and hairwork dated by inscription to 1843Image from eBay where the item was offered for sale <a href="http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/HARDSTONE-CAMEO-MOURNING-HAIR-18CT-GOLD-RING-DATED-1843-">http://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/HARDSTONE-CAMEO-MOURNING-HAIR-18CT-GOLD-RING-DATED-1843-</a>

<sup>/190680387928?</sup>pt=UK\_Jewellery\_Watches\_VintageFineJewellery\_CA&hash=item 2c656fd158. Accessed 20 October 2012.



Figure 45: Mourning brooches suitable for use as relics.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Top left, Gold brooch with lock of hair under glass (c1830-40). Top right, 19<sup>th</sup> century mourning brooch with hair and pearls. Bottom left, mourning brooch with a portrait (c1860). Bottom right, late 19<sup>th</sup> century mourning brooch featuring a painting of a young girl on jet. All images copyright Leeds Galleries and Museums

Other forms of mourning jewellery soon emerged which constituted relics of the dead in a more literal sense: the locket or brooch holding the image of the deceased or curls of their hair (Figure 45), the hair bracelet or watchchain. The hair jewellery which emerged in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century was particularly effective as a relic-item (Oliver, 2010), for the incorruptible nature of hair linked it by association to the incorruptible bodies of saints as well as to idealised images of dead kin and lovers (Lutz, 2010, Harmeyer, 2013).

## 7.1.4 Consumption and identity

Mourning clothing may have been, in the first instance, an obligation, part of a ritual intended to benefit the group, but it created subject positions, consumption opportunities and identities which led wearers to see, in the acquisition of mourning clothes, the potential for self-realisation. As cloth became cheaper and as a wide range of mementos of the dead came onto the market, the very nature of mourning began to be framed by the desires of tradesmen to sell and of the bereaved to consume

## 7.1.4.1 Mourning fashions and mourning identities

Cunnington and Lucas (1972) describe the way in which mourning clothing became fashionable as a result of its emergence among the elite. Court mourning emerged in England in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when mourning domestic losses offered an opportunity to make relationships of power and patronage visible and wearing black to honour foreign rulers was a way of fostering alliances<sup>112</sup>. The clothes worn for court mourning were monochrome versions of contemporary styles and introduced, for the first time, a mourning identity that empathised with the losses of others without relinquishing any social power. This made mourning clothing a potential vehicle for status competition.

Sumptuary laws prevented courtiers from competing with royalty by stipulating the quantity and quality of fabric, and the stylistic details, that people of specific ranks might use in their mourning garments<sup>113</sup>. Only the

<sup>112</sup> The first recorded instance of this is in 1364, when Edward III commanded his court to wear black in memory of the French king John II (Planché, 1879: 114)

<sup>113</sup> For a state funeral a duke was expected to wear a gown, and mantle made of 16 yards of cloth at 10 shillings per yard, whereas a knight was only permitted a gown and hood fashioned from 6 yards of cloth at 6 shillings 8 pennies per yard (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: Appendix 4)



Figure 46: 14th Century court mourning<sup>114</sup>.

<sup>114</sup> Image originally published in "Dress and Habits of the People of England" by Joseph Strutt (Henry G Bohn, 1842). Reproduced from Bridgeman Education image database, http://0-www.bridgemaneducation.com, accessed 24 February 2015

nobility could wear hoods and no one below the rank of earl was permitted a hood with a "sleve" or roll over the head (Planché, 1879: 151); Margaret, the mother of Henry VII, published detailed rules which insisted that archaic styles were worn and that the longest trains or capes were reserved for the highest ranking individuals (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 208). Yet sumptuary rules could only be enforced at court and there was nothing to prevent wealthy townsfolk emulating what Margaret had prescribed for dukes and countesses (Taylor, 1983, Bedikian, 2008: 37). Rich widows began to wear dark clothing that simulated monastic influence<sup>115</sup> (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 261f) but which were made of costly fabrics such as samite<sup>116</sup> (Planche, 1876): this was not religious wear but a fashion inspired by religious wear and subject to romantic interpretation<sup>117</sup>. The severe frock of the middle class widow was supposed to suggest that, like Chaucer's (1846) Creseide<sup>118</sup>, she was renouncing the world now her lover was dead. In this way mourning garb evidenced a woman's romantic history, as well as her present loss.

Somewhat ironically, the efforts of Protestant reformers<sup>119</sup> to create a distinctively Protestant approach to death by insisting on sombre clothing for prescribed periods of mourning (Phillippy, 2002: 27) and encouraging the distribution of wearable keepsakes of the dead (Houlbrooke, 1989b: 35) appears to have fostered the development of this romantic feminine mourning identity. Once defined, this identity offered a range of opportunities, even pleasures to the bereaved: it provided a point of contact with the dead, the opportunity to display personal piety and chastity, to flaunt family wealth and status (Taylor, 1983: 65) and to savour the romantic associations of lost love. When it became possible for middle and working class women to realise this imaginary persona through affordable clothing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> The barbe, a bib of white cloth that covered the front of the neck and the bosom, resembled the nun's wimple and the dipped front to the headdress known as the "widow's peak" recalled the mourning hood.

<sup>116</sup> A luxurious silk twill, which frequently included silver or gold threads. In Chaucer's (1846) poem Troilus (written around 1380), the widow Creseide is described as "in widdowes habit large of samite brown"

<sup>118</sup> See Troilus, Book IV, cited by Strutt, 1796:210

<sup>119</sup> The start of the Protestant Reformation is usually associated with Luther's 95 Theses (see http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html) which were pinned to the door of his church in 1517. The English church broke from Rome in 1534 and the Reformed Prayer book was published in 1549.

purchases, obtaining mourning wear became a significant form of conspicuous consumption (Bedikian, 2008: 37).

#### 7.1.4.2 The influence of trade

The development of a mourning identity which could be realised through clothing purchases created both huge opportunities and significant threats for trade. Companies such as Courtaulds made a fortune from manufacturing crape<sup>120</sup> (Coleman, 1969, Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 151); but perpetual mourning could also depress trade by limiting the number of coloured garments that people purchased (Strachey, 1943: 199, Fritz, 1982). In April 1731, the Gentleman's Magazine reported that they had received a letter from the improbably named Richard Shuttle, a weaver, who complained that the deaths of foreign princes and the lengthy mourning that followed "universally prevailed to the great damage of the weavers" 121. Mr Shuttle suggested that changing the specification of mourning clothes every two weeks, specifying colours other than black and forbidding working class women to emulate court mourning would remedy the problem. While such extreme measures were never adopted, the detrimental effects on trade were limited by regular changes to the specifications for court mourning<sup>122</sup>, the occasional fore-shortening of mourning periods<sup>123</sup>, the vigorous promotion of mourning wear as a fashion product and the development of a complex clothing etiquette which made the regular purchase of new clothing necessary.

<sup>120</sup> Crape was a crimped silk fabric; slightly translucent, it was used for mourning veils and as a trim for mourning clothes. Crape's light-absorbing properties made it suitable for the "dead black lustreless look" that Mrs Sherwood described in "Manners and Social Usages (1884)

<sup>121</sup> Gentleman's Magazine, "Of Court Mournings". Vol 1: 158

<sup>122</sup> The specifications for Court mourning frequently indicated that a certain type of crape should be worn, or that particular stylistic details ("buttons to the sleeves and pockets" (Fritz, 1982) should be observed

<sup>123</sup> As Ackerman's Repository noted, the mourning for Princess Charlotte was cut short "in order to prevent that general stagnation of trade which must have ensued" had it been maintained for the anticipated duration.

Court mourning was divided into three phases, each between one month and three in duration (Fritz, 1982: 306), with a different wardrobe being required for each phase (Figure 47). Widows' mourning dress followed a similar pattern. Full (or first) mourning called for unrelieved black with no trimmings other than crape. Secondary mourning reduced the quantity of crape, while ordinary mourning reserved crape for use on the bonnet and permitted embroidery, ribbon and lace. A final stage of half-mourning (which some widows wore for the rest of their life) reproduced the fashions of the day in the mourning palette of black, grey, mauve and white (Bedikian, 2008: 39).

all Peers, Peeresses, Privy-Counsellors, for the Court's going into Second Mourning on May wear fringed or plain Linnen or Muslin, white Gloves, black and white Shoes, Fans and ippets, white Necklaces and no Diamonds : - Undress, Damasks, Oi. he Men to wear Black, and Buckles, ;-- Undress, Grey Frocks The Coaches of the Nobility, & to have their Arms, Creft and Supporters, painted in their proper Colours on Black oaches

Figure 47: Court Orders for Second Mourning, 1738124

<sup>124</sup> This notice was published in the Gentleman's Magazine Vol. 8 Apr 1738 Page 218, available online at http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/ilej/image1.pl?item=page&seq=7&size=0&id=gm.1731.4.x.1.x.x.158 (accessed 7 November 2012)

This complicated etiquette obliged mourners to regularly refresh their wardrobe, while crape manufacturers ensured people bought a new wardrobe for each bereavement by encouraging the superstitious belief that it was unlucky to store crape when not in mourning (Taylor, 1983: 126).

These efforts to stimulate demand for new mourning clothes were so successful that by the mid-nineteenth century mourning warehouses had appeared on the streets of all big cities (ibid: 191), selling everything required by the woman who must now spend years in mourning. The arrival of the mourning warehouse coincided with the appearance of the ready-to-wear gown and lavishly illustrated fashion advertising. Thus, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the feminine mourning identity gave access to the pleasures of shopping and the possibilities for self-realisation associated with this. Mourning clothes were marketed using images of beauty and the language of the new, the exotic and the aspirational (Figure 49, Figure 50). Advertisements and fashion spreads told the Victorian lady that in mourning, as in all her clothing needs, she should seek refinement, elegance, taste and novelty – as found for instance at Jays, or Peter Robinsons in London (Loeb, 1994: 28, 87) or in such local establishments as the Bradford Mourning Warehouse, which was declared to be

replete with every article required for deep or slight mourning .... the best markets [having been] sought to secure the latest novelties and fashions of shape (Bradford Observer, 4 May 1854, cited by Rawnsley and Reynolds, 1977)



Figure 48: Costumes for full, secondary and ordinary mourning published in the Ladies' Treasury 1890<sup>125</sup>

125 Image reproduced from Buck (1968)



Figure 49: Advertisements for mourning wear in a special issue of the Gentlewoman issued to commemorate the death of Queen Victoria



Figure 50: Fashionable mourning attire promoted in the Illustrated London News, following the death of Edward VII

## 7.1.5 The decline of traditional mourning dress

According to the literature, mourning clothing reached a peak of extravagance in the mid-Victorian period and then faded away. It is clear from newspapers and magazines that mourning fashions were vigorously promoted up to the time of the First World War, but consumer appetite was fading, and venders had resorted to tempting them with speedy delivery and discounts (Figure 51). Various explanations are offered. Increased life expectancy and reduced child mortality meant that it was no longer necessary to consistently focus upon the accommodation of loss (Jacobs, 1899, Kellehear, 2007: 201f); women were increasingly working outside the home and were less able – or willing – to take on the work of mourning (Post, 1922, Buck, 1968, Taylor, 1983: 136); organised religion was in decline (Walter, 1994: 18, 64) and the development of extramural cemeteries had made the costumed procession to the grave unsustainable (Naylor, 1989: 65f, Parsons, 2014). It is commonly argued that a combination of these factors led to the decline of mourning clothing, while the shocking death toll of World War I made public mourning undesirable (Gorer, 1965, Berridge, 2001, Jalland, 2013).



Figure 51: Mourning wear advertisement 1910

It is argued here, however that the crucial factor in the decline of formal mourning wear was the evaporation from public consciousness of any sense of the original purpose of these clothing practices. The ritual and religious significance of mourning dress were obscured by its involvement with trade and consumption. This led both the intelligentsia and the Church to declare mourning clothing pointless (Taylor, 1983: 266), in poor taste (ibidi) and needlessly expensive (Buck, 1968: 37). The National Funeral and Mourning Reform Association (founded 1875) and the Church of England Burial, Funeral, and Mourning Reform Association (founded1880): both condemned extravagant mourning, arguing that it benefitted no-one but "the trade" who bullied people into spending money on archaic and incongruous practices (Chadwick, 1843: 267, May, 2007).

Without cultural endorsement, black mourning clothing gradually disappeared from British society, lingering longest in rural communities and among older people and the working classes (Jalland, 2013: 17). Its demise was hastened by the austerity arising from two world wars which made black clothing harder to obtain (Naylor, 1989: 288f), and by the growing informality of clothing in general which made it acceptable to wear coloured clothes to a funeral (ibid). When Gorer (1965) interviewed mourners in the early 1960s, less than half of the women questioned said that they had altered their dress to indicate that they were in mourning when attending a funeral. Only around 18 per cent of the men and 22 per cent of the women said they had worn mourning clothes for more than three months after the funeral (ibidi: 46). Drawing on personal experience, Gorer argued that the disappearance of a public mourning etiquette was dangerous. His sister-in-law Elizabeth, widowed young,

did not wear black clothes, nor ritualize her grief; she let herself be almost literally eaten up with grief, when she most needed help and comfort she was left alone (Gorer, 1965: 217).

However, as Jalland (2013) points out, those mourners who wore black in the mid twentieth century, could no longer count on social support.

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<sup>126</sup> the man's suit and the woman's hat were no longer wardrobe staples

## 7.2 Contemporary material

The contemporary data for this chapter comes from two sources; from bereavement narratives and from the cultural archive.

## 7.2.1 Bereavement writers on mourning clothing

A small number of bereavement writers discuss – albeit briefly – the clothes they wore for the funeral and the use of commemorative jewellery.

#### 7.2.1.1 Clothes for the funeral

None of the writers considered felt any obligation to wear black in deference to social duty or tradition. Most viewed the clothing worn for the funeral as an opportunity to frame a personal message about the individual who had died and the family's response to that death. Although mourners were sad – sometimes devastated by their loss – it was not sadness that they chose to express through funeral clothing.

Some mourners were bright clothing to articulate their belief that death was not (only) an ending, but also an occasion for hope, and that the funeral was therefore a special occasion (Monckton, 1994: 51).

I decided I wanted to wear the bright viridian blue linen dress I had worn on the last night of his life. It was an elegant, uplifting and positive colour and it spelt new life...Joey, my sister, wore a dress...of vibrant emerald green, another colour of birth and eternal life (Key, 1991: 63).

These ideas were often accompanied by the sense that the funeral should celebrate the life of the deceased (Jackson, 1987: 59, Monckton, 1994) and the history they shared with the mourners (Want, 2011: 192): it should constitute a "good send-off" (Hunniford, 2008: 59), articulate the affection of the mourners and be a source of imagined pride and delight for the deceased (ibid). The funeral might even be understood as symbolically replacing some of the joyous social occasions the deceased would not now enjoy.

As there would never be any fairy-tale wedding for [Sarah] we wanted to give her the most perfect funeral we could think of. It was the only thing left we could do for our little girl: bury her like the princess she was (Payne and Gekoski, 2004: 68).

Some mourners also used clothing to articulate continuing bonds between the living and the dead. Some wore clothes that were of significance to the deceased or had previously belonged to them (Want, 2011). Reg Thompson, whose 11 year old daughter, Charlie, was killed in an accident, decided not to wear his suit to her funeral because she hadn't liked it, instead he wore jeans, a white shirt and Charlie's school tie (Thompson, 2007: 28).

Using the funeral as a way of celebrating the life just ended and the bonds that persist is seen as both a tribute to the deceased and a strategy of adjustment. As Gloria Hunniford (2008: 273) puts it:

if you can get the key to celebrating the life your loved one had and the memories they left behind, rather than dwelling on what might have been, you have a better chance of survival.

For the bereavement writers considered, dressing for the funeral of a loved one was a meaningful act, intended to communicate affection, hope and pride. However, this common end was achieved in diverse and personal ways. That is to say, there is no longer a distinct cultural product that might be labelled "mourning wear" (nor a gap in the market into which a new mourning wear supplier might insert themselves). Want (2011: 192) spent a great deal of money on her outfit, but she spent it on the High Street and online auction sites.

On eBay I bought a beautiful 1940s crepe wool dress, and I got a black coat and black shoes from Jigsaw. My friend.....took me to Harrods where I bought the most expensive hat I have ever owned

Based upon the evidence of bereavement narratives, "mourning wear" as a distinctive product that might be purchased for a family funeral, has vanished.

### 7.2.1.2 Mourning jewellery

The use of wearable keepsakes as a way of sustaining relationships between the living and the dead is mentioned in bereavement narratives from both Britain and America. Such mentions are rare, but draw upon ways of talking about and using commemorative jewellery which would have been familiar to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century mourners.

When she knew she was going to die, Jade Goody bought engraved rings for her close friends (Goody, 2009: 215) and friendship bracelets for her sons (ibid: 225, 229)

I gave the boys the posh friendship bracelets I'd bought them. 'Never take them off', I said. 'And rub them if you're ever sad or missing me and thinking of me' (Goody, 2009: 229).

In this way Goody provided a physical token of her affection for her sons, a point of connection that would transcend the separation of death, and also a coping mechanism for the difficult times ahead. In suggesting that her sons rubbed the bracelets she was advocating the very practices historically used with relic items (7.1.3) and also mentioned by mourners who had kept jewellery belonging to the deceased (Picardie, 2006: 102). There appears to be something about touching, caressing, rubbing that makes the experience of contact with the deceased more concrete, more satisfying.

Meghan O'Rourke also used a friendship bracelet to represent her continued connection to her dead mother, but for her, the bracelet offered a way to externalise feelings of sadness and loss in a culture that no longer sanctions mourning dress (O'Rourke, 2011:158). The bereavement narratives considered did not discuss custom made jewellery at all: just as mourners bought their funeral clothing from mainstream stores, mourning jewellery was purchased from high-street retailers and re-purposed.

## 7.2.1.3 Incorporating the clothes of the dead in mourning outfits

Bereavement writers spoke of wearing items belonging to the dead as a way of remembering the deceased in the period after the funeral. This was principally a way of experiencing the presence of the deceased – a way of maintaining continuing bonds:

Mummy is wearing all your clothes, the jeans you drew on.... and a black top with a black fake fur collar. She wears the Ugg boots we bought in Cambridge last Christmas because you used to wear them (Thompson, 2007: 41f).

However, as noted at 6.2.3.3, wearing the clothes of the dead might also be associated with consolation (Sheepshanks, 1997), or with attempts to channel or assimilate elements of the dead one's personality (Ainley, 1994, Rose, 1994, Stallybrass, 1999)

#### 7.2.2 Incidents from the cultural archive

While the bereavement narratives discussed clothing practices which were private and personal, the cultural archive focussed on those intended to catch the public eye, both themed funerals and wearing in memory were plentifully evidenced.

#### 7.2.2.1 Personalised and themed funerals

The kind of funerals where mourners wear themed clothing often gain press attention (see Figure 52 to Figure 58). As Sanders (2008) points out, this makes it hard to assess how common such events are: they are frequently reported, but it is their *novelty* value that attracts press attention. Nonetheless when such funerals are considered as a distinct data-set, several themes emerge quite forcefully.

Themed funerals connect the mourners, uniting them as a distinctive and visually cohesive group and offering them an alternative, imaginal identity. They connect both the deceased and the mourners to a discursive reality which transcends both temporality and death and in doing this declare that deceased remains an important member of the community.

Themed funerals often evoke emotions of triumph and joy which are in direct opposition to traditional responses to death, but which serve to reconnect mourners with group values and give them a reason to go on. They activate happy memories of the past and serve to inscribe selected stories about the deceased on communal memory. They are often described by participants as the kind of event that the deceased would have enjoyed, and they tend to be organised in response to deaths which are particularly shocking or tragic – often because the deceased is young.

These themes can clearly be seen at play in the superhero themed funeral at Figure 52 and also in images from the funeral of toddler Angel Pitts (Figure 53 and Figure 54). Angel was killed by her father's reversing car and was mourned in the kind of clothing that she herself had enjoyed: "animal onesies... Disney dress up...[and] bright colours" (Yorkshire Evening Post, 2014, 24 June).



Figure 52: Funeral with a superhero theme 127



Figure 53: Funeral parade for Angel Pitts 2014<sup>128</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Picture from The Metro. http://metro.co.uk/2017/05/08/would-you-want-a-themed-funeral-after-you-die-6622359/. Accessed 6 January 2018

<sup>128</sup> Image from www.dailymail.co.uk accessed 18 August 2015



Figure 54: Funeral parade for Angel Pitts, 2014<sup>129</sup>

As noted earlier, extravagant themed funeral parades are often organised in response to deaths which problematize communal systems of meaning (senseless deaths, the deaths of children). The most effective offer benefits to both the deceased and the mourners. The deceased is afforded a kind of immortality – through inclusion in an imagined community – while the bereaved are presented with an inspirational picture of what communal life should, and could, be like. Whereas the traditional funeral procession segmented society by class, these new rites bind mourners into egalitarian groups held together by "affectivity". Members of imagined communities now offer the support once derived from family and neighbours, and the ideal community is no longer hierarchical and ordered, but inclusive and marked by amity and co-operation.

Football funerals can be particularly effective rituals, for they draw upon a vigorous pre-existent commemorative culture, wherein living and dead players and fans are understood to be part of a single intergenerational

<sup>129</sup> Image from www.dailymail.co.uk, accessed 23 December 2018

community (Herzog, 2015: 187), imagined as "marching on together" <sup>130</sup> and as never walking alone<sup>131</sup>. The funeral parade for Ben and Aaron Peak, who were killed by a drunk driver in 2008 was themed around Manchester United; the bearers were in football shirts and many mourners wore the team colours. The funeral parade thus articulated the social identity of the dead boys and signalled that they were important members of an imagined, affective and immortal community. It also made every future assembly of Manchester United fans an occasion when the dead boys might legitimately be commemorated, for they had become part of the team's lore and identity.

While footballing funerals serve to install the deceased into affective communities or communal memory, and to refresh and valorise the identity of the group, other themed funerals use a costumed parade to translate what may have appeared to be a meaningless death into a sacrificial or exemplary death, or to articulate a distinctive message of hope. The funeral parade for teenage suicide Hannah Smith became a vehicle for an antibullying campaign (Press Association, 2013), with mourners encouraged to wear colourful onesies; comfortable and egalitarian items associated with the security of the domestic interior and the deliberate opposite of the statusdressing which so often fuels bullying (Figure 56). In a similar way, the funeral of Olivia Campbell-Hardy, killed when a bomb exploded at an Arianna Grande concert (Watterson, 2017), became an opportunity to demonstrate resistance to terrorism. Although attendees were encouraged to wear blue clothing in casual styles, reflecting Olivia's favourite colour and preferences in clothing, many decorated their blue clothing with the bee logo used to signify Manchester's refusal to be intimidated by terror following the bombing in May 2017 (Joseph, 2017, Bainbridge, 2017). In this sense the themed funeral is what Cheal (1988) termed a "ritual of resource" management" - an attempt to do something about the death, or about the circumstances that led to it.

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<sup>130</sup> The Leeds anthem "Marching on Together" (Reed and Mason, 1972) has the words "We're gonna stay with you forever, at least until the world stops going round".

<sup>131</sup> The Rogers and Hammerstein song "You'll never walk alone" has been adopted by Liverpool FC, and Celtic and was also used to commemorate victims of the Bradford stadium fire.



Figure 55: Funeral of Ben and Aaron Peak, 2008<sup>132</sup>

132 Image from <a href="https://www.mirror.co.uk">www.mirror.co.uk</a> accessed 18 August 2015



Figure 56: Funeral of Hannah Smith<sup>133</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Photograph by Rui Vieira/PA http://homes.yahoo.com/photos/hannah-smith-funeral-photo-103223568.html?soc\_src=copy accessed 13 March 2014



Figure 57: Mourners with bee logo at funeral of Olivia Campbell-Hardy<sup>134</sup>

The funeral of teenage cancer victim Stephen Sutton operated in a similar way. Stephen had become famous for his good cheer in the face of pain and for his selfless and eccentric fundraising. His funeral, held in the local cathedral and televised, determinedly celebrated his life rather than lamenting his death and encouraged others to emulate him. Mourners wore yellow accessories and were encouraged to perform random acts of kindness in Stephen's memory. In this way Stephen was translated into an exemplary ancestor for the widest possible community and a death that could have appeared meaningless became a source of hope.

<sup>134 (</sup>http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4620532/Funeral-held-Manchester-bomb-victim-Olivia-Campbell.html. Accessed 30 June 2017



Figure 58: Funeral of Stephen Sutton, featuring yellow accessories<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Images and text:http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2642996/Stephen-Sutton-given-final-thumbs-mourners-ahead-funeral.html Accessed 6 Jan 2018.

Funeral parades, whether traditional or "themed", function as theatrical displays that instruct viewers what to remember and how to feel. The indexical properties of clothing are used to indicate both the (idealised) character of the deceased and that of the bereaved society. In this way group members are encouraged to recommit to the shared values that unite them, and they often find some emotional released in doing so.

Funeral parades can be moving events even for those who have no connection with the deceased, as the Facebook conversation at Figure 59 makes clear. The gathering of many, to pay tribute to an individual, is taken as a symbol of hope, solidarity and the persistence of communal values.



Figure 59: Facebook discussion of local funeral (13 January 2015)

## 7.2.2.2 Requests for mourners to wear colourful or quirky clothing

It has become extremely common for death notices to request that funeral attendees wear bright clothing (Figure 60) and this is often stated to represent the wishes of the family, or of the deceased individual. While this resembles the themed funeral in its insistence on celebrating the life of the deceased and remaining positive, it occurs at the opposite end of the continuum between public and private meaning-making. Colourful clothing – as the bereavement writers make clear – is implicated in expressing hope and pride and turning the funeral into a celebration of the life just ended. It speaks of the joy people find in relationships, though it may reveal little about the person who has died.

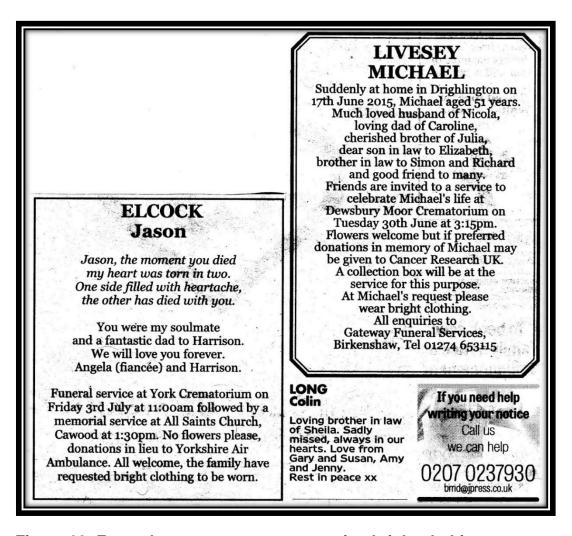


Figure 60: Funeral announcements requesting bright clothing, Yorkshire Evening Post, 29 June 2015

Personality may be evoked, however, if colourful clothing is linked with humour. Huddersfield grandmother Margaret Harper not only insisted that no-one wore black to her funeral, she also asked the funeral director to dress as a jester. The rationale for such requests is two-fold: humour is deployed to ensure that hope triumphs over sadness, but the deceased's distinctive approach to life is also recalled: "someone even said 'only at Margaret Harper's funeral could they turn up and everyone bursts into laughter" (Examiner Live, 2012).

This same approach is apparent when families ask mourners to wear specific clothing items; these items recall the idiosyncrasies of the individual in order to stimulate private remembrance, but the incongruity of the attire in a funeral setting evokes therapeutic laughter. When Steve Booth, a former professional rugby player died, mourners attending his funeral were asked to wear, not the Leicester Tigers' shirts associated with his public identity, but flip-flops, Steve's "footwear of choice" (Troughton, 2019).

Distinctive clothing at funerals appears to do one of two things. It can *either* make bold statements about the principles, the values and the mythologised history of the group, rendering the deceased ancestral by subsuming them into these collective representations; *or* it can evoke the uniqueness of the Individual in order to stimulate memory. What these approaches share is their capacity to generate pleasurable emotion among mourners.

### 7.2.2.3 T-shirts bearing the name or image of the deceased

While the data on contemporary funeral wear demonstrates that mourners use clothing and consumption to articulate the identity of the deceased and that of the bereaved group, it reveals little scope for manufacturers to predict or address the needs of bereaved people. This changes once the funeral is over; for there is a developing market in commemorative items – particularly items that can be personalised.

T-shirts, bearing the name or the image of a deceased individual have become an increasingly popular way of expressing sympathy and solidarity. Where the individual mourned is a celebrity (Figure 61, Figure 62), then wearing such a shirt is primarily a way for the mourner to articulate their own identity and make their affiliations visible. However, this behaviour may also have a ritual element. To wear a shirt with a dead celebrity's portrait is to declare that individual a totem (or totemic ancestor); to stand among many



Figure 61: Commemorative t-shirt offered on eBay 2012



Figure 62: T-shirts and hoodies at Jade Goody's funeral<sup>136</sup>

http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/gallery/2009/apr/04/jade-goody-funeral?picture=345524140#/?picture=345524140&index=24 accessed 11 November 2015

<sup>136</sup> Images from the Guardian website. Left image Gareth Cattermole/Getty Images, Right Zak Hussain/PA

people wearing the same shirt may be to access the pleasures of totemic ritual.

Occasionally such shirts also articulate moral or political messages; they may suggest, for example, that the death should not have happened, was somebody's fault. The commemorative shirts worn at Jade Goody's funeral, for example, allowed other young, working class women to identify with a successful, popular peer, while also protesting her death from a cancer that is normally treatable (Fig 62).

Where t-shirts are commissioned to honour the personally known dead, the motivation appears to be slightly different (Figure 63). Such garments are sometimes associated with protest, but more frequently with fundraising for a cause that aims to prevent similar deaths in future. This is a further instance of mourning clothing being implicated in rituals of resource management; of mourners seeking to transform a situation or a perception through practical action. The death that seemed shocking or meaningless is transformed through the actions of the mourners: the reputation of the deceased is enhanced, their story inscribed in communal memory and material benefits to the living may be generated. This kind of mourning behaviour is seen in charity events such as Race for Life (Figure 64) which mobilises affection for the dead in order to raise money for charity and gives mourners the opportunity to move the deceased from the role of victim to that of patron or benefactor.

There are, of course, other reasons why an individual might wear a shirt carrying the name or image of a dead relative. It may be a way of demonstrating a continuing bond with the deceased, of expressing a sadness which is hard to articulate in other ways, of sustaining the social presence of the deceased or creating opportunities to talk about them. However, as a result of the efforts of professional fundraisers and publicists, the commemorative t-shirts which are associated with charitable initiatives are much more numerous – or at least more visible – than those which are not.



Figure 63: Singer Katherine Jenkins in a shirt commemorating her late father<sup>137</sup>

 $<sup>^{137}</sup>$  Image published by the Daily Mail, 21 April 2013



Figure 64: Race for life (https://raceforlife.cancerresearchuk.org/)

#### 7.2.2.3.1 Wearing in memory

A wide range of commemorative trinkets – shirts, hats, charms, key chains and badges – are now available for sale, either direct from charities or via online marketplaces. These items allow wearers to either project a personal identity which is shaped by connections to the dead, or to express sympathy with the losses of others; this is a form of mourning wear which does not marginalise the mourner, but forces knowledge of loss into the mainstream. Moreover, the loss announced is not a source of shame but a source of pride as wearers declare the honour of the dead and the strength of their continuing bonds.

Many commemorative items confer ancestral identities on the dead, hailing them as angels or heroes (Figure 65, Figure 66), perfect parents and sources of ongoing strength and comfort. Some items make explicit claims about the nature of continuing bonds. A t-shirt commemorating a lost father insists that "he is part of me always there, to guide me, love me and protect me" (Figure 66).

While some mementos are designed to have the name of the deceased inserted, generic items commemorating parents, siblings and unborn children are also available (Figure 68, Figure 70). To a large extent, the ancient convention that family bonds are the most important and that kin should be mourned ahead of friends and lovers is reflected here, although several manufacturers assume that pets will also be mourned as family members. The inclusion of mementos for unborn children ("angel babies") is significant, for this represents a claim to a parental identity that has not been achieved in life.

Wearing in memory may be as much about displaying bonds with the dead as experiencing them, but this does not mean that the bond is not real, or important. Indeed the prayer card supplied with the bracelet commemorating an unborn child (Figure 70), the naming of that child on the bracelet and the association of this name with symbols of hope and faith (angels, stars, anchors) indicate a strong desire to invest in this imaginal relationship, to make tangible losses that may otherwise seem unreal and to displace memories of traumatic medical events with more positive imaginings of a child growing up in Heaven.

While the primary drivers of "wearing in memory" are the articulation of personal identity and the affirmation of continuing bonds with the dead, rituals of resource management are also a recurrent theme. In America, a range of mementos are sold on behalf of medical charities (Figure 72), while baseball caps are used not just to commemorate but also to protest cancer deaths (Figure 71). In Britain the more subtle marker of the charity ribbon is often preferred, but the same principle is in operation; this is a clothing practice which focusses on the wish to "do something about the death" whether this is through protesting the cause of death, through fundraising or through enhancing the memory and reputation of the deceased.



Figure 65: T-shirt commemorating a nephew<sup>138</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Item offered for sale on Amazon <a href="https://www.amazon.co.uk/Guardian-Angel-Nephew-Repass-">https://www.amazon.co.uk/Guardian-Angel-Nephew-Repass-</a>

Remembrance/dp/B07PKDH5YV/ref=sr\_1\_3?keywords=memorial+t+shirt&qid=155 8284960&s=gateway&sr=8-3, accessed 19 May 2019



Figure 66: T-shirt commemorating a dead father 139

<sup>139</sup> Item offered for sale on Amazon, <a href="https://www.amazon.co.uk/Daddy-Memorial-Guardian-Angel-T-">https://www.amazon.co.uk/Daddy-Memorial-Guardian-Angel-T-</a>

Shirt/dp/B07R8QJJM4/ref=sr\_1\_12?keywords=memorial+t+shirt&qid=1558285205 &s=gateway&sr=8-12 accessed 19 May 2019



Figure 67: Charms commemorating family pets, eBay 2012



Figure 68: Charms sold in memory of family members, eBay 2012



Figure 69: Mourning tokens offered for sale on eBay, August 2012



Figure 70: bracelet commemorating an unborn child, offered for sale on eBay, August 2012



Figure 71: Memorial cap promoting a cancer charity, advertised on eBay by an American vendor, August 2012

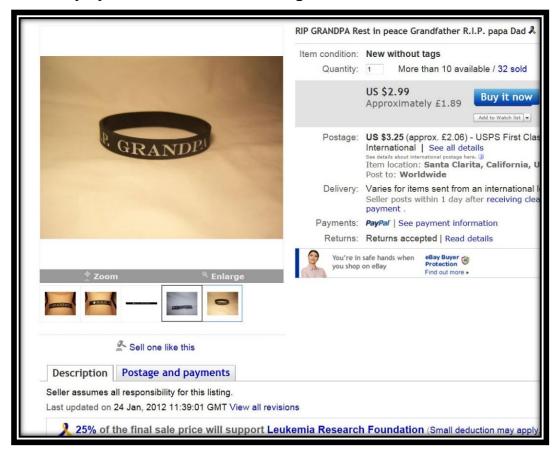


Figure 72: Charity wristband from American vendor, offered for sale on eBay August 2012

### 7.3 Identifying key categories

When the themes which appeared in the different data sets were first extracted, they appeared to be myriad (Table 5). This is unsurprising, given that different historical contexts were reviewed, that bereavement narratives focussed on private clothing practice and the cultural archive on the public domain. Nonetheless, a small number of themes appeared in all contexts and these did, intuitively, appear to have a special significance. These were sustaining and idealising the memory of the deceased, continuing bonds, and identity (both the identity of the individual and that of the group). The use of clothing to manage emotion and effect ritual transformation also seemed particularly important. While some of these themes have also been observed in the data reviewed in previous chapters the role of clothing in managing emotion emerged with unprecedented clarity from this dataset.

When the themes or categories are sorted into stakeholders, problems and strategies, what emerges is a picture of complex interaction between the interests and tactics of four distinct stakeholder groups whose relative importance has shifted over time (Figure 73). First there are the hegemonic forces who historically used mourning clothing to reproduce a social order and social practices which benefitted them, but whose influence appears to be on the wane. Second there are trade interests, whose profit-directed activities historically played an important role in fostering the mourning identities used by individual mourners to adjust to loss. Third, there are mourners who employ clothing in the, now familiar, strategies of ancestor creation and continuing bonds, but who also use garments to stimulate memories, to evoke emotional responses in others and to indicate when and where it is appropriate to talk about the deceased. The fourth stakeholder is the community – once a local embodied social group deprived of a member, more recently an imagined community that claims the deceased as an ongoing member. The clothing practices associated with mourning provide such communities with opportunities to refresh communal identity, reaffirm group values and enhance group reputation, in part through declaring the deceased to be a totemic ancestor, in whom the ideals of the group can be seen and celebrated.

Data	Supports rites of passage	Reproduces social structures	Reproduces social values	Benefits the dead in the afterlife	Confers ancestral identites on the dead	Sustains and idealises memory of deceased	Makes relationships visible	Marks places and times for mourning	Identifies community of mourners	Performs and transforms social identity	Demonstrates respectability/group membership/social	Provide a point of contact with the dead	Shaped by consumption	Shaped by trade	Shaped by social competition	Celebrates/mythologises group history	Maintains morale of group	Maintains reputation of group	Creates civil religion	Make continuing bonds visible	Shapes mourning identity	Shape social consciousness	Enables social competition	Directs social support towards the mourner	Encode personal message about a particular loss	Express the emotion of the bereaved	Insist the deceased still part of imagined community	Create alternative identities & reality for mourners	Evoke memories to stimulate emotion	Transform deaths into inspiring events	Inscribes story of deceased onto communal memory	Totemic ritual/civil religion	Identify with deceased	Protest death	Fundraising/rites of resource management
Historical data	Х	Х	Х	Χ	Χ	Χ	Х	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Χ	Х	Х	Х	Χ	Х	Х	Х		Χ			Χ			Х			
Bereave ment literature						X	Х		X			X								Х					Х	X									
Cultural archive					Х	Х	Х		Х			Х								Х							Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Χ

Table 5: Tabulated themes for mourning clothes

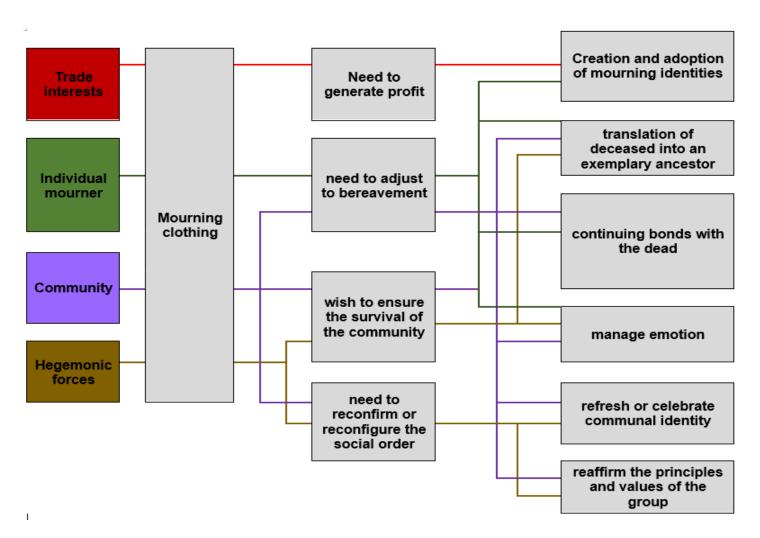


Figure 73: Stakeholders, problems and strategies implicated in mourning clothing

### 7.4 Chapter Summary

In common with findings in previous chapters, the data on mourning clothing indicates that the clothing practices associated with loss are recuperative practices. There is, however, a new emphasis on the role of clothing in regulating the attitudes and emotions of bereaved communities and reinforcing social norms and discourses after death has threatened to erase them. In the section that follows, these insights are used to respond to the research questions.

# 7.4.1 How do the people of the twenty first century use clothing to indicate mourning and remembrance?

The people of twenty first century Britain have largely abandoned the black clothing associated with traditional mourning, but they do choose the clothing they wear at funerals to express or induce emotions (often hope or pride), to evoke memories, to confirm group membership and to celebrate group values. While such people may claim to believe that death is the end, the clothing chosen for funerals challenges both linear conceptions of time and the boundary between life and death. Such clothing evokes the past, binds the living and the dead together in immortal communities and challenges the power of death using hope, affection and humour.

After the funeral, mourning tokens may be worn either to affirm relationships with the personally known dead, or to express sympathy for deaths occurring outside their close social group, but within their imagined community. Such clothes may invite conversations about death and the dead, waiving the normal social rules that inhibit it.

A variety of clothing rituals also serve to transform the deceased from victim to ancestor or benefactor while attempting to "do something about" this sorry situation; these include commemorative practices like the themed funeral which prevent the dead from being forgotten and the charitable activities associated with fund-raising t-shirts and commemorative ribbons.

#### 7.4.2 What are the historical origins of these behaviours?

Many of the clothing practices associated with present day mourning have evolved from earlier practice. The themed funeral parade is directly descended from the Victorian funeral parade, which was itself based upon the heraldic funerals of Tudor Britain. The objectives (idealising the

deceased, articulating their social identity, demonstrating group cohesion and ensuring that any emotional display strengthens rather than weakens the group) remain the same.

There is also a close relationship between the use of relic objects and ash jewellery in the present and the mourning rings and brooches of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century; the wish to use evocative objects to sustain bonds with the dead having re-emerged after a century in abeyance. Equally, the use of mourning tokens to express sympathy for the losses of others, resembles complimentary mourning. Both the Victorian woman in complimentary mourning and the present-day wearer of an Aids ribbon or Hillsborough shirt project a favoured identity based upon compassion, affiliation and savoirfaire. The forms of mourning dress may have changed, but its purpose remains the same.

## 7.4.3 How do people experience these interactions with clothing?

Bereavement narratives suggest that – despite the absence of any clear etiquette – bereaved families find it "natural" to use the clothing worn at the funeral to articulate messages about both the deceased individual and their own response to loss. It is therefore somewhat ironic that the symbolic use of clothing at funerals is often said to have disappeared. Bereavement literature also indicated that people who choose to wear mourning jewellery, or clothing associated with the deceased, in the post-funeral period do this in order to feel close to the dead.

The cultural archive revealed a variety of additional clothing practices which the bereavement narratives did not discuss: themed funerals, commemorative t-shirts, clothes associated with charitable activities on behalf of the dead. The data reviewed afforded only limited access to what it feels like to be involved with these practices, but some reasonable assumptions can still be made. It is clear that the clothing worn to funerals constitutes a kind of theatre that engages observers and moves them emotionally, even if they do not know the deceased. This is evidenced by the facebook discussion at Figure 59 and the extent to which funeral clothing is pictured or described in the media. There is also reason to believe that themed funerals are arranged "for" the deceased, just as charitable activity is undertaken on their behalf; in this sense both practices constitute rituals of resource management which restore a sense of control to the bereaved and

allow them to imaginatively transform a tragic situation into something more palatable.

Theories of totemic ritual and civil religion, meanwhile, indicate that the experience of wearing the same commemorative garment as other people (a hoody with a portrait, the colours of the deceased's favourite team) can allow bereaved people to experience a sense of social solidarity that verges on transcendence.

# 7.4.4 Do these behaviours address needs or are they simply relics of ancient practice?

The clothing practices associated with mourning show a great deal of continuity with historical precedent, nonetheless, it is argued here that these behaviours are needs-driven and that the needs being addressed have changed over time.

Historically, mourning clothing was used to pursue religious and moral goals; to purify the soul of the mourner, to assist the deceased on their afterlife journey and to facilitate contact between the living and the dead. It was also used to shape a society that was sober, contemplative, hierarchical and patriarchal, by encouraging mourners to demonstrate their personal and collective respectability.

In the twenty-first century mourning clothing continues to express and give shape to relationships with the dead. It also continues to reaffirm the identity and cohesion of particular social groups, though increasingly these are imagined rather than geographical communities and they lack both the hierarchies and the religious orthodoxy of their forebears. While the old clothing practices belonged to a tradition which installed the body in the churchyard and the soul in Heaven, the new clothing practices (as Sanders (2008) notes) play an analogous role in a tradition which confirms the place of the deceased in an imagined community believed to be both immortal and ideal. Themed funerals may place the deceased in a community of football fans or film buffs, but the family funerals at which people wear bright colours to express their pride also place the deceased in the imagined community defined by family mythology.

## 7.4.5 What causes clothing behaviours to change in this context?

Over the period considered, the costumed procession to the grave and rigid mourning etiquette have given way to personalised funerals and practices of wearing in memory. It is clear that the direction of change has been determined by the waning power of traditional hegemonic forces, the rise of individualism and the increasing tendency to root identity and affiliation in virtual rather than geographic communities. The variables which have exerted the most distinctive influence, however, are attitudes to death and the dead. When people are encouraged to reflect on death and maintain bonds with the dead then the clothing practices associated with mourning are seen as meaningful and important. When death is sequestered and separation between the living and the dead enforced, these clothing practices are seen as pointless, wasteful, even wrong.

### Chapter 8 Clothing In Memorials

This chapter considers a clothing behaviour revealed by the cultural archive but not anticipated by the literature review: the use of clothing in, or as, memorials. From the 1980s onwards, empty clothing was frequently used as a way of remembering the dead. In Britain, this was seen most often in the deposition of football scarves and shirts in spontaneous memorials (Figure 74) while in the USA a wider range of clothing memorials, including "shoe protests" (Figure 98) appeared.



Figure 74: Clothing in a memorial to Gary Speed November 2011<sup>140</sup>

To compensate for the omission of this phenomenon from the literature review, this chapter begins by summarising academic approaches to spontaneous memorialisation and reviewing the literature that considers how empty clothing is used as a symbolic resource in contemporary art. Data from the cultural archive is then interrogated to reveal the historical origins of

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<sup>140</sup> Photograph by Ian J Simpson

clothing memorials, the effects achieved by the inclusion of clothing in memorials and the solutions and benefits this practice appears to offer. The chapter closes, as previous chapters have closed, by offering a summary description of the practice and its evolution, by considering how people experience this clothing behaviour, who benefits from it, and what might cause practice to change.

### 8.1 Background literature

#### 8.1.1 Spontaneous memorials

The term "spontaneous memorial" is used to describe memorials erected in public space as soon as tragedy is announced, and without any obvious coordination of activity (Santino, 2003: 52). Spontaneous memorials appear when members of the public leave tributes at the death scene or at a site already associated with commemoration.

The literature suggests that the spontaneous memorials now appearing in Britain are exercises in bricolage which look to the past, and to other cultures, for emotionally resonant materials from which to create a new ritual forms (Magry, 2011). Various sources of inspiration are suggested, including the shrines seen on foreign holidays (Taylor, 1989), the roadside crosses of Europe and America, and the spontaneous memorials built in other countries<sup>141</sup> (Doss, 2008, Collins and Opie, 2010). The rapid spread of such memorials is attributed to favourable media coverage, which has associated memorial building with communal recovery and meaning-making (Grider, 2001: 3, Santino, 2003: 54, Riegert and Olsson, 2007). According to Grider (2001: 2) memorials appear to represent collective attempts to come to terms with tragedy, to "reduce the overwhelming enormity of the catastrophe to a more manageable human scale" and thereby regain a sense of purpose, a sense of control (ibid).

Not all spontaneous memorials include clothing. The memorials built in response to the Locherbie aircrash (1988), the Dunblane massacre (1996) and the death of Princess Diana (1997) included flowers, candles, photographs, drawings and cards (Walter, 1999a, Santino, 2003, Magry and Sanchez-Carretero, 2007) but no clothing. However, when 96 Liverpool fans

<sup>141</sup> Doss (2008) points to the memorial built for Olaf Palme, the Swedish Prime Minister assassinated in 1986 as a possible example.

died at Hillsborough in April 1989, Liverpool's Anfield stadium was completely covered with football scarves and shirts, as well as with flowers (Figure 75). This distinctive response has been explained in terms of Liverpool's Catholic heritage with its affinity for shrines, relics and rituals for the dead (Walter, 1991), but also as a form of protest and a way of passionately reaffirming a collective identity perceived to be under attack<sup>142</sup> (ibid, Stone, 2007: 181). Once clothing had been used in this way, however, it became a distinctive and predictable element of the response to deaths in the footballing community.

The literature explains clothing in spontaneous memorials as tokens of identity, which connect individuals to groups, and groups to places and to histories. In symbolising the lifestyle, passions and affiliations of the deceased, clothing invokes their personality in order to perpetuate their memory (Collins and Opie, 2010, MacConville, 2010). In representing *shared* affiliations, these tokens celebrate group identity and serve to reaffirm social solidarity in times of crisis and loss (Walter, 1991, Hughson and Spaaj, 2011, Doss, 2008).

Several writers note a connection with what Tuan (1990) termed "topophilia"; an attachment to a specific location that informs cultural or subcultural identity. The clothes deposited in football memorials connect the dead to both the club's sacred sites and their history (Russell, 2006: 7) and declare them continuing members of a community defined, in part, by geographical affiliations (Penn, 2005, Doss, 2008: 19). The bonds between past and present community members are affirmed by statements such as "never walk alone", "never ever forget" and "marching on together" (Simpson, 2014). For Mellor (2004: 282) this amounts to the construction by football clubs of a romantic narrative – woven from local loyalties, nostalgia and loss – that offers consolation, kinship, even pleasure; a narrative which can be marketed and consumed.

142 the memorials built to the Hillsborough victims have been read by Walter (1991) and others as a rebuttal of journalistic accounts that attributed the dreadful events in Sheffield to the behaviour of the Liverpool fans (see for example Conn

(2016))



Figure 75: Tributes at Anfield 1989<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Getty Images, LFC3. Reproduced with permission of Liverpool Football Club

Without disputing any of this, Santino (2003, 2004, 2006) claims that clothes in shrines are also ritual objects; they may mark out ritual space wherein the meaninglessness of death might be countered by symbolic action; they may constitute offerings to, or for, the dead; or they may represent the dead metonymically so that they can be encountered at the memorial site. Discussing the scarves hung on fences in football memorials, Santino (2004) points out a visual and functional resemblances to the rags hung on trees at the holy wells of mediaeval Britain.

Thus spontaneous shrines are argued to function simultaneously as ritual spaces for healing and transformation, as proud proclamations of collective identity and as sites of protest where empty clothes draw attention to wrongful death. The contribution that clothing might make to this polysemous display, can be explored by considering the messages that clothing articulates in contemporary art.

### 8.2 Empty clothing in art

The literature that deals with empty clothing in art argues that artists use cast-off clothing to describe relationships between the living and the dead and between the powerful and the marginalised. Empty garments speak of the dead and absent body and the transience of life, but they also draw attention to the power of hegemonic structures to exclude the individual, to negate their claim to citizenship and even to annihilate them.

#### 8.2.1 The dead and absent body

Brownie (2016: 1) notes that, just as suicides have been both revealed and simulated<sup>144</sup> by a pile of clothes on the beach, empty clothes in art "index the absent wearer, and invite speculation about the event that has separated body from garment". They disturb the viewer not only because, in Douglas's (1966: 35) phrase, they are "matter out of place" but because they are evidence that something bad may have happened (Bissell, 2009)<sup>145</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> Real examples include the Labour MP John Stonehouse, fictional examples include Reginald Perrin.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> In episode 26 of Star Trek the New Generation (2013) it is the discovery of Captain Picard's empty uniform on an alien ship that convinces the Enterprise crew he is dead.

Moreover, the ability of clothing to represent the body means that when it appears slack and empty, without the animating presence of a wearer, it can be read as a very literal symbol of death. Jan Kounellis takes this idea to its logical limit (Figure 76) by suspending an empty coat and hat from a beam in order to simulate a hanging.

Boltanski, who has used empty clothes in several installations, has stated in interviews that, for him, clothes are the body; discarded and without function once their owner dies (Rosenbaum-Kranson, 2010, Cash, 2010). In No. Man's Land (Figure 77) immense heaps of discarded clothing (borrowed from a recycling company and destined to be made into felt (Cash, 2010)) speak of the transience of life and "the anonymity death confers" (Searle, 2010). The work is a memento mori, which forges a visceral link between the unknown owners of the clothes and viewers who must acknowledge that they are, what Bregman (2011: 41) has called, "the future dead". What Boltanski warns about is not, however, mere physical death, but the erasure of personhood, the replacement of identity with anonymity; for, he argues, when clothes are separated from the body and mixed together, it becomes impossible to imagine their owners: "there is no more individuality" (Cash, 2010). What Boltanski implies is both a development of, and a reversal of, the argument made at 2.2.2: because clothes are used to construct identity by the living, when they are cast-off and abandoned they signal the erasure of that identity. There is a parallel here with the phenomenon discussed at 6.2.3.6; the fear of bereaved individuals that disposing of the clothes of dead loved ones will destroy them.



Figure 76: Janis Kounellis, "Untitled" (2004)<sup>146</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Image from <a href="https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/kounellis-untitled-ar00073">https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/kounellis-untitled-ar00073</a> <a href="https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/kounellis-untitled-ar00073">accessed 1 August 2018</a>



Figure 77: Christian Boltanski's No Man's Land (2010) 147

### 8.2.2 The dead as marginal figures

Much of Boltanski's work references the death of Jewish holocaust victims<sup>148</sup> and the way in which this has been semi-concealed by history. The use of the storage box, the warehouse and the cupboard, to archive (or hide) garments and shoes in *The Clothes of Francois C* (1972), *Canada* (1988) and *Sachlich* (1995) calls attention to the way in which the dead who are represented by empty clothing move in and out of view (Caines, 2004), haunting public memory but often omitted from public discourse (Figure 78, Figure 79).

When Boltanski produces what he implies are the clothes of the holocaust victims, he draws attention to a historic crime that has been concealed and denied. The fact that the "evidence" is symbolic rather than real (clothes sent for recycling and not clothes taken from the dead) creates two vibrant

<sup>147</sup> Image by James Ewing and reproduced from <a href="http://www.museomagazine.com/CHRISTIAN-BOLTANSKI">http://www.museomagazine.com/CHRISTIAN-BOLTANSKI</a>

<sup>148</sup> A matter of personal resonance: Boltanski's father was Jewish, and during World War II the family faked his disappearance (Searle, 2010)

effects. It strengthens the empathetic bond between the marginalised dead and the viewer – for the displayed clothing is not only just like theirs, some of it might *be* theirs. It also amplifies the sense of presence/absence: the dead are symbolically present and physically absent, but the clothes that symbolise their presence are simulated evidence, a symbol of a symbol. Doubling the layers of representation emphasises the distance between the dead and the living, but also draws attention to the way in which the affective power of the dead leaches through both the psychological defences and the political denials of the living, using the mnemonic and semiotic potential of the material world to gain access.

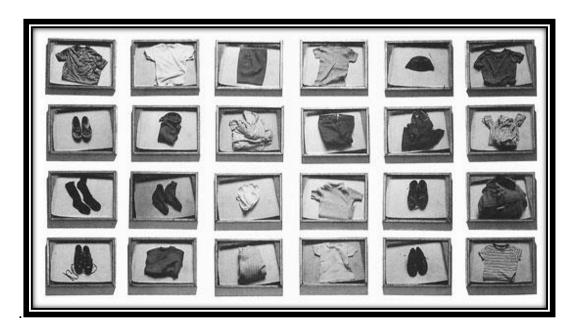


Figure 78: Boltanski's Clothes of Francois C149

<sup>149</sup> Image from Ernst van Alphen, Art in Mind. The University of Chicago Press 2005, p.41 fig.9.

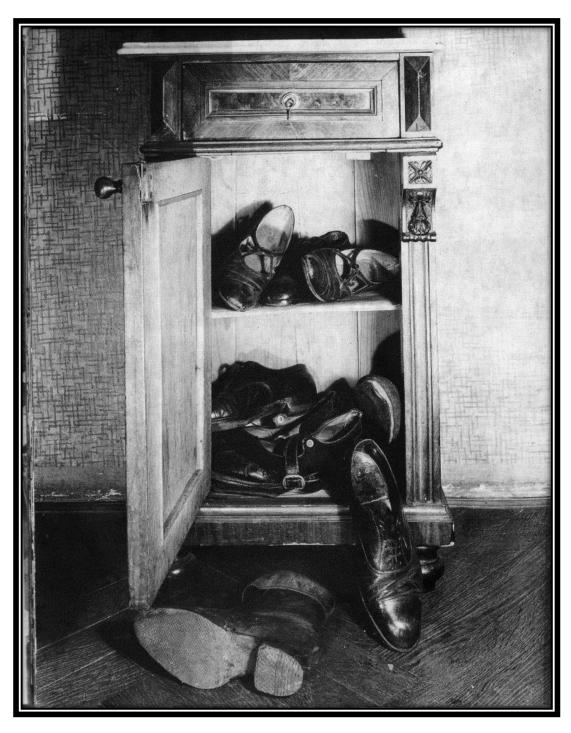


Figure 79: Objets confisqués par les Nazis et déposés au Musée Central des Juifs, Prague. Christian Boltanski<sup>150</sup>

150 This image is one of many in Boltanski's book Sachlich ("Factual") which represents items taken from Jewish holocaust victims by the Nazis.

Gyula Paeur and Can Togay also activated the power of symbolic or simulated evidence when they installed iron casts of empty shoes (Figure 80) on the banks of the Danube as indexical markers of "the presence of the absence, and the absence of the presence, of the Jewish citizens who once stood there before being shot" (Trezise, 2009: 17). The simulation of evidence cannot advance justice forensically, but is an effective way of protesting wrongful death for it draws the living into empathy with the murdered and the lost in the hope of spurring a political response.

Doris Salcedo used the same device when she placed empty shoes in sutured boxes (Figure 81), to represent the murdered women of Columbia whose bodies could only be identified by their shoes. The near-opacity of the boxes indicated the efforts made to conceal the crime, whilst the provision of empty boxes suggested that further deaths were inevitable. Thus a series of very different art-works are connected by their use of clothing to highlight injustice, to protest absence and to draw the viewer into empathy with the vanished dead.

The use of clothing from charity shops and re-cycling companies to simulate the clothing of crime victims is significant. While this clothing reveals nothing about the individuals whose death is commemorated, it tells the viewer that people who are just like them have been obliterated. This clothing used may not have been shaped by the bodies of the remembered victims, but they have been formed or deformed by contact with unknown bodies; bodies which might be dead, but which may also be standing among the viewers. Such works push empathy for the dead towards ontological insecurity – a fear for one's own existence. Thus the fight for justice for the dead may be fuelled by fear for one's own safety

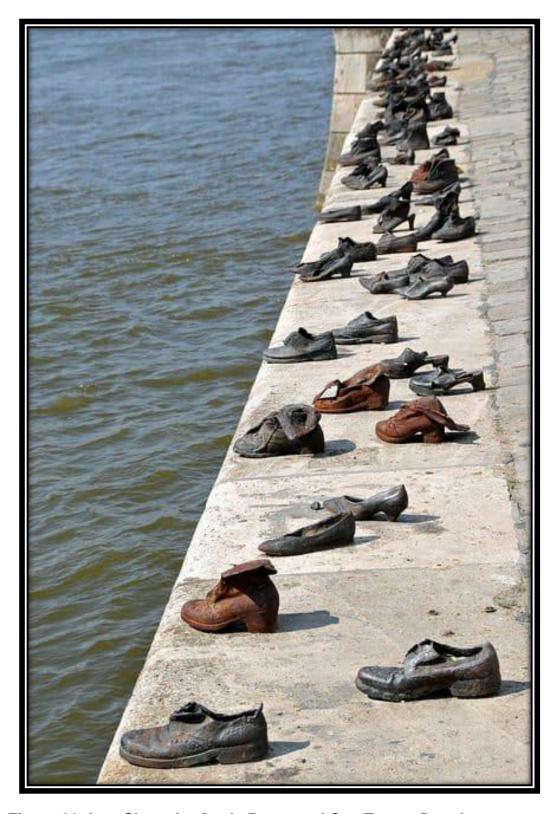


Figure 80: Iron Shoes by Gyula Pauer and Can Togay, Danube Promenade, Budapest<sup>151</sup>

<sup>151</sup> Photo credit Steven Holt

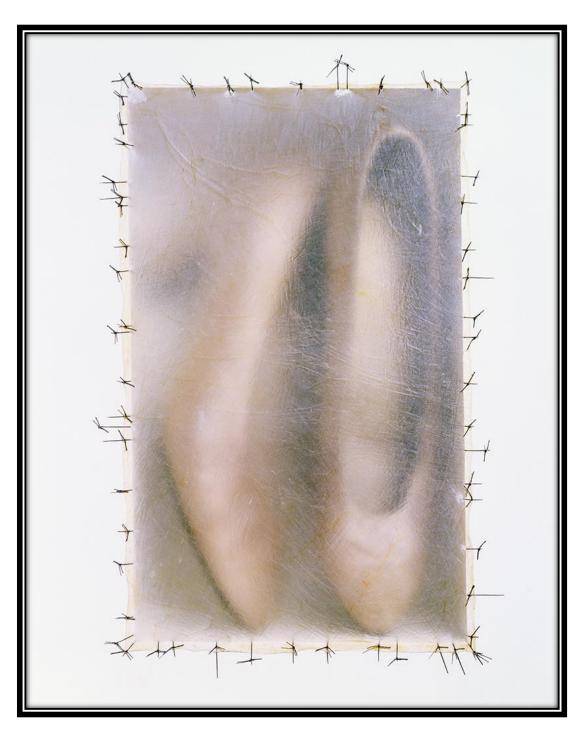


Figure 81: Shoes from Doris Salcedo's installation Atrabiliarios<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> Image from the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, http://www3.mcachicago.org/2015/salcedo/works/atrabiliarios/ accessed 13 Jan 2018

## 8.2.3 Marginalising the living

When empty clothing appears in art but does not specifically reference death it carries a different message; speaking of group membership and of power relations; of who is included in the group and who is excluded, who wields power and who is disempowered. The absence that empty clothing connotes can be an absence from history, a lack of voice, as well as an absence from a specific time and place (Felshin, 1993: 8). Kathy Groves used empty clothing in this way to illustrate the peripheral role accorded to women in history: appropriating famous historical art pieces – often paintings of women by male artists – and erasing the female subject leaving only clothes behind (ibid). In a similar way, Gotscho (Figure 83) attached empty clothing to photographs of (culturally inappropriate) bodies, demonstrating that the system of gender stereotypes that clothing endorses and perpetuates disempowers and excludes certain groups and individuals (ibid).

The use of empty clothing to make political comments about society's structures and hierarchies has more in common with the work of Boltanski and Salcedo than might be assumed, for the deaths these artists refer to are those of people who did not confirm to the preferred identities of the culture they lived in. The Jews were persecuted as a result of their religious identity, Salcedo's murder victims were marginalised by "race and gender and poverty and class" (Stone, 2009: 205). Indeed the visual language of empty clothing is deployed most poignantly when it refers to those who are *both* absent through death and socially marginalised. Here it not only draws attention to wrongful death and insists upon a place in history for those who might otherwise be forgotten (Felshin, 1993: 8ff), it also creates empathy for marginalised others and demands the viewer to consider whether their own acceptance of the structures and hierarchies that clothing articulates makes them somehow complicit in death and injustice.



Figure 82: After Man Ray by Kathy Grove, 1990-92 Gelatin silver print<sup>153</sup>

 $^{153}$  Image from  $\underline{\text{https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/294330}}$  accessed 2 February 2019



Figure 83: Photographies habillée, Gotscho, 1996<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Image from <a href="http://www.gotscho.net/">http://www.gotscho.net/</a> accessed 02 February 2019

#### 8.3 Historical material

Although the use of clothing as, or in, memorials, became suddenly prominent in the 1980s there is a long tradition of displaying clothing associated with the dead in churches and using empty clothing to evoke the presence and power of absent individuals in domestic buildings and at sacred sites.

### 8.3.1.1 Clothing in churches

From the Anglo-Saxon period onwards, wills indicate that clothing was bequeathed to churches (Coatsworth and Owen-Crocker, 2007:13). As noted at 6.1, these might be intended as soul-scot offerings or as payment for prayer and the fabric would be refashioned into hangings, altar cloths or vestments (Basl, 2001). Small items, such as gloves and rings, appear to have simply been displayed in the church (Daniell, 1996: 189): thus items belonging to the dead remained persistently in view of the congregation. Up until the Reformation these garments functioned as prompts for intercessory prayer (ibid), and for this reason their presence within the church was believed to materially affect the afterlife experiences of the deceased. Following the Reformation, the garments that remained in churches (and new donations) were used to elicit memory and to maintain the good reputation of the deceased. However, benefits to the dead were still assumed; a good reputation was believed to count at judgement (Laguer, 1983) and it was thus the family's sacred duty to foster continual recognition of "the name.... and the deeds of the departed" (Geary, 1994: 2) over the generations until resurrection day.

Clothing displays in churches determined both who was remembered and what was remembered about them. The items chosen were often those associated with culturally approved characteristics (bravery, spiritual power, chastity). In this way, commemorative clothing served to confer "ritual identities" (Gilchrist, 2009) upon the dead, positioning them as exemplary ancestors and thereby serving to reproduce the social order. Clothing was displayed in churches in order to reify local hierarchies and to model desired behaviours to the living. The display of a knight's "achievements"; his surcoat with heraldic imagery, his helmet and gauntlets; not only commemorated their dead owner (Cunnington and Lucas, 1972: 129f), but also articulated and vindicated local power relations. The heraldic figures on

the surcoat<sup>155</sup> identified the lineage of the deceased, the gloves represented the inheritance of feudal power<sup>156</sup> (Beck, 1833), while the helmet and breastplate implied that this power had been historically legitimised through physical and military prowess. The clothes of priests, meanwhile, were displayed to illustrate and verify tales of saintly lives, the faithful being encouraged to engage with these exemplars, through pilgrimage, prayer and emulation.



Figure 84: The funeral achievements of Richard III in Canterbury Cathedral 157

It was not only the stories and reputations of the elite that were sustained by the clothing displayed in churches however. The virtue of those who died young and without marrying was affirmed through crants or maidens'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> In battles or tournaments the family devices on a knight's coat fulfilled exactly the same function as the name on the football player's shirt.

<sup>156</sup> This is clearly seen in investment rituals, but historically gloves were sent to an individual to transfer rights and property. According to French parliamentary records dated 1298 the town of Flanders was ceded to King Philip the Fair through the gift of a glove (Beck, 1883, 28)

<sup>157</sup> Image from Su-lin's photostream on Flickr, accessed 27 November 2012. http://www.flickr.com/photos/su-lin/with/1424344859/

garlands<sup>158</sup>, wooden frames, shaped like a mitre and "decorated with flowers, ribbons, emblematic articles such as gloves,...poetical inscriptions" (Andrews, 1904: 146) and symbols of mortality<sup>159</sup> (Figure 85). They were carried in the funeral parade<sup>160</sup>, laid upon the coffin during the funeral like the helmet or cap on the coffin of a soldier (Jewitt, 1860: 9) and later hung in the church in a further parallel to the display of heraldic achievements (Figure 86)<sup>161</sup>.

According to Jewitt (1860: 5) crants derive from an early Christian tradition of placing a garland of flowers at the head of a dead virgin. In a later article, Jewitt (1881) suggested that the helmet-like shape represented the flower-decked hearse<sup>162</sup> traditionally placed over a virgin's grave<sup>163</sup>; however, the use of terms such as "crown" and "chaplet" (Montagu, 1838, Andrews, 1904: 150) and references in ballads to maidens' garlands being worn by the deceased (Jewitt, 1860: 6), suggests that crants were imagined as symbolic garments that ritually conferred a specific type of identity. This identity was characterised by "youth, purity and loveliness" (Rhodes, 1824: 181) all of which were symbolised by the concept of virginity; an attribute sometimes explicitly claimed in messages attached to the garlands (Andrews, 1904: 149).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Crants were hung in the church as a memorial, just as the achievements of knights used to be, until the church objected to the potentially pagan origins of the tradition BROMLEY, E. S. 1747. Letter on the topic of Maidens' Garlands. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 17, 264f.

<sup>159</sup> These included hourglasses and blown eggshells (Jewitt, 1860: 6)

<sup>160</sup> According to Hinton (1722), the Irish custom was to place the garland on the head of the young female mourner who led the procession to the grave

<sup>161</sup> Although crants were usually provided for unmarried women, in some parishes, such as Abbots Ann, crants were also supplied for bachelors, the decision on who merited a crown being made by a church committee (Spriggs, 1982)

<sup>162</sup> A metal framework used to support a canopy, pall or candles above a coffin

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> This theory is lent credence by a line from John Marston's 1605 play the Dutch Courtesan "I was afraid i' faith, that I should ha' seene a garland on this beautie's hearse"



Figure 85: Illustration of a Maiden's Garland published in Jewitt (1860)

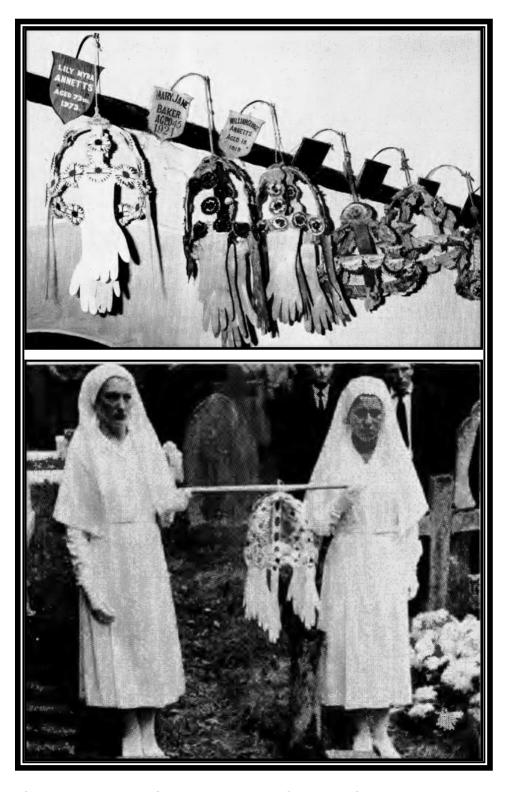


Figure 86: Top, Maidens' garlands displayed in the church at Abbotts Ann in Hampshire. Bottom, similar headdress carried in a funeral parade in that parish in 1953<sup>164</sup>

 $^{164}$  Upper image by A I Spriggs, lower by Jack Garnham. Both reproduced from Spriggs (1982)

Conferring the ritual identity of pure virgin transformed the person who had died, removing sin and blame. Women who had been "wronged" (Jewitt, 1860) or who, like Shakespeare's Ophelia, loved foolishly or committed suicide might thus be redeemed through this practice (Quinlan, 1954 : 304). The decision on who would be honoured with a maiden's garland was often made by a parish committee (Spriggs, 1982) and these decisions appear to have depended less on the actual virtue of the deceased than on local sympathy and the ease with which their biography could be translated into a useful moral tale.

Like other clothing displays, crants may have been expected to benefit the deceased in the afterlife, but were also intended to educate and engage the living. The 18<sup>th</sup> century poet Anna Seward (1810: 4) noted the ability of crants to move the viewer; to "draw the soft tear from thrilled remembrance sprung"<sup>165</sup>; while Jewitt (1860: 11) describes them as

silent yet loving monitors, giving out their solemn warnings, generation after generation, to the worshippers in the church, and teaching them... that virtue...'is a thing of beauty' which shall 'be a joy forever' 166

While displays of symbolic garments in churches used the dead to endorse particular social arrangements and particular forms of behaviour, this did not always reproduce the hierarchies and the mores of the past. According to some writers, competition for social status among the living turned the bodies, the images and the clothing of the dead into sites of symbolic battle. Gilchrist (2009), for example, argues that the special treatment afforded to the dead bodies and emblematic garments of warriors and priests in the mediaeval period gave material form to a conflict over the nature of hegemonic masculinity; the physical, military and patriarchal power of the warrior being pitted against the claim of the effete and celibate priest to channel the power of the divine through his own body.

Conflicts between families and regions might also be reflected in clothing displays. A display of "achievements", for example, extended reputational benefits to living family members and claimed familial rights to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> This is from Seward's poem *Eyam* in which she describes Eyam church and its "simple memorials of the early dead."

<sup>166</sup> The reference is to Keats' (1818) poem Endymion.

surrounding land. Displays of priestly clothing, meanwhile, might be associated with the political ambitions of a parish or diocese (Farmer (2011: xi), for where the deceased could be presented as a saint, the clothes became holy relics; relics brought pilgrims and pilgrims brought trade to the area and "thank-offerings and other benefactions" to the church (ibid: xi).

### 8.3.1.2 Relics and power

The clothes of saints were popular relics in churches which disapproved of the dissection and distribution of the actual corpse (Rollason, 1978: 80, 81)<sup>167</sup> for there was an assumption that the holy power of the saint flowed from their body to their clothing so that even small scraps of cloth could be conduits of this power (Magoulias, 1964: 228, 247). Indeed the number of relics available could be maximised by periodically disinterring and redressing the bodies of dead saints: if the corpse and clothing appeared well preserved this was taken to be further confirmation of their incorruptibility and sainthood<sup>168</sup> and reason to believe that their clothing would be exceptionally powerful. Eyre (1887: 288-295) notes that the winding sheet, gloves, girdle, chasuble<sup>169</sup> and ring of St Cuthbert were all considered potent relics and displayed first at Durham and later at the Priory on Holy Island. The winding sheet – given to Cuthbert by St Verca and placed against his skin after death – was associated with at least three miracles.

A range of assumptions underpin the use of clothing as relics, some of which persist in later practice. It is assumed, for example, that

- clothes can stand in for an absent individual;
- clothing can channel the personal power of the wearer to those who handle the clothes<sup>170</sup>;

<sup>167</sup> Roman law insisted on the integrity of the body and, while the Anglo Saxon church was happy to receive body fragments of foreign saints, they preferred to keep the bodies of local saints intact (Rollason, 1978: 81)

<sup>168</sup> When St Cuthbert's body was disinterred in 698 it was said to be "like [that] of a living person [and] all the vestments and the shoes that came in contact with his skin were undecayed" (Eyre, 1887: 142 citing the "Lindisfarne Monk", assumed to be a contemporary of St Cuthbert)

<sup>169</sup> The chasuble is the outer cape worn by a priest when celebrating mass

<sup>170</sup> As noted at 7.2.1.2, there is a biblical precedent for this belief in the gospel story of the widow who touched Jesus's cloak; Matthew 9:20–22, Mark 5:25–34, Luke 8:43–48

- clothes evidence as well as symbolise metaphysical powers.
- the power held in clothing is divisible without being in any way reduced, so distributing fragments of a garment extends the power of the saint without diluting it<sup>171</sup>.
- the power of all previous owners may be sedimented in the textile<sup>172</sup>;

# 8.3.1.3 Clothing and magic

Outside the church, as well as within it, clothing was credited with the ability to channel protective and transformative power. There are numerous examples of clothing being hidden within the fabric of houses, apparently in a bid to protect the occupants or exclude malevolent spirits. Swann (1996) notes more than 1000 mediaeval examples of shoes being concealed in buildings, while Randles (2013: 116f) argues that the practice persisted until the twentieth century in some areas and represented attempts to "extend the power normally exerted by [the wearer's] body...to the limits of the building".

According to Randles (2013: 119), just as clothing was able to transfer the power of a person to a place, it could also transmit the power associated with a place to the wearer. The Distaff Gospels (c1570), for example, advised women to hide their husband's shirt beneath the altar cloth during Mass and make him wear it the following Sunday. This would transfer the virtue of the altar to the man and he would be "sweet, pleasant and courteous towards his wife" (ibid).

The power of clothing to connect person to place is also seen in "clootie" 173 or "rag wells". These are sacred places, usually associated with healing. To obtain a cure, the supplicant would drink water from the well, dip into the water a piece of clothing associated with the part of the body that was causing the problem, and leave the garment hanging on a nearby tree (Van den Eynden, 2010: 242). In some areas, a rag torn from the garment would stand in for the whole. Where a blessing rather than a cure was desired, the type of cloth, or its colour, might be symbolically linked to that which was

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<sup>171</sup> St Cuthbert's winding sheet, for example, was cut into small squares and distributed among the faithful: a merchant named Rodbert of Perth was apparently cured of a longstanding ailment after touching a portion of the sheet carried by a travelling monk (Eyre, 1887: 296)

<sup>172</sup> in this way the power of St Verca as well as that of Cuthbert might be accessed through the winding sheet of the latter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> The term "clootie" is a Scottish word for cloth.

desired (Barrette, 2010). Clothes or rags left at clootie wells were offerings; ritual objects surrendered to effect a change in the donor's life (Walhouse, 1880); but they were also evidence of a supplicant's past presence and enduring faith to be noted by later visitors (Santino, 2004), and a way of giving material form to the emotional connection between the donor and the site (Rix, 1907).



Figure 87: Clothing hung on a tree at Munlochy Clootie Well<sup>174</sup>

https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/munlochy/clootiewell/index.html accessed 02 Feb 2019

<sup>174</sup> Image from



Figure 88: Nightdress with message left at Munlochy Clootie Well 175

The clothing used for magical purposes is not the clothing of the dead, but it *is* the clothing of people who are both absent and present at the site of deposition. Physically, they are elsewhere, but they are bound to the location because their clothing is there. The act of binding is significant and recalls both the use of gifted clothing to cement relationships<sup>176</sup> and the

175 Image from

https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/munlochy/clootiewell/index.html accessed 02 Feb 2019

<sup>176</sup> See for example Beck (1833) on gloves, though wedding rings are also an obvious example

ability of clothing to represent, stand in for, or *be* the body. The person who is bound to a sacred site is able to participate in its power despite being physically absent.

#### 8.3.1.4 Summary of historical material

The historical material considered has drawn attention to several discourses about clothing which are unfamiliar today, yet which may explain some of the clothing behaviours associated with contemporary mourning. Clothing has been shown to model desired behaviours, to align the dead with core cultural values and to encourage the living to emulate them. Clothing has also been shown to connect individuals to living and dead others, as well as to places. Moreover, the bonds forged with clothing can be used to channel power, protection and virtue. Finally, clothing has been noted to stand in for an absent individual, making their presence and their power discernible in a place where they are not. It seems very significant that while the empty clothing appearing in contemporary art speaks of mortality and marginalisation, empty clothing has historically been used in memorials to create precisely the opposite effect

# 8.4 Contemporary material

Examples of present-day memorial practice were examined using Grounded Theory techniques. Attention was directed to similar situations in which different things happen, and to similar phenomena appearing in different situations, in order to establish the conditions that must be met for clothing to become a salient element of memorial practice.

The following questions were used to interrogate the data:

- What kind of memorials feature clothing?
- Why does clothing appear in some spontaneous shrines and not in others?
- Why is clothing left at memorial sites but not at graves?
- Why are some types of clothing used in this way, while others are not?
- What benefits or solutions does this practice deliver?

### 8.4.1 What kind of memorials feature empty clothing?

Empty clothing may be represented on permanent memorials to the dead, incorporated in communal memorials or deposited at spontaneous shrines.

# 8.4.2 Empty clothes in permanent memorials

When dressed figures are depicted on memorials, their clothing serves to define the social identity of the deceased and confirm the episodes and the behaviours that should be remembered. There is a very clear example of this on the Cenotaph at Rawtenstall in Lancashire, where a series of uniformed figures acknowledge the contribution of the armed services and reserved occupations to the war effort (Figure 89).



Figure 89: Rawtenstall Cenotaph<sup>177</sup>

In some memorials, empty clothing picks up this function of confirming the heroic deeds and honourable identities of the dead. This is seen in the memorial to police and firemen in Sheffield Cathedral (Figure 90) and also in the firefighters' monument in St George's Field Leeds (Figure 91) where the helmet worn in the line of duty is displayed as a symbol of an heroic life and a sacrificial death.

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<sup>177</sup> Image by Marguerite Rami (<a href="http://www.writers.warpoetry.co.uk/readers/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/image60.jpg">http://www.writers.warpoetry.co.uk/readers/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/image60.jpg</a>, accessed 8 April 2019)



Figure 90: Police and Firemen's memorial, Sheffield Cathedral<sup>178</sup>



Figure 91: Firefighter Memorial St George's Field<sup>179</sup>

<sup>178</sup> Image by Glass Angel on Flickr, http://www.flickr.com/photos/47859152@N05/31051493277/in/pool-565935@N22/accessed 7 April 2019

<sup>179</sup> Image from <a href="http://www.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=1ca38165-ace6-4460-bb87-bce953dae176">http://www.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=1ca38165-ace6-4460-bb87-bce953dae176</a> accessed 8 April 2018

In other memorials, however, sundered garments speak of the same dismantling of personhood that Boltanski's art suggests. The Littleton Memorial in Christchurch Cathedral Oxford, uses discarded armour to create precisely this effect.

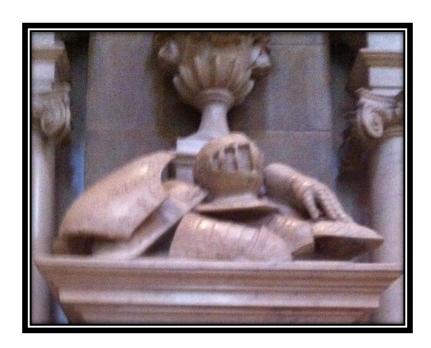


Figure 92: The Littleton Memorial, Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford<sup>180</sup>

In memorials to the dead of the Second World War, empty clothing is often an ambivalent signifier. Following the precedent of clothing displays in churches these garments clearly reference exemplary behaviour – but they also refer (just as clothing in contemporary art refers) to the destruction of the person and to the way the individual is both created and condemned by the roles and hierarchies that clothing creates.

The Royal Artillery monument in Hyde Park, London (Figure 93); where the soldier's coat is no longer worn, but laid on top of his body like a pall, and where his hat rests upon his chest as it will later rest on his coffin; acknowledges the nobility of sacrifice, but balances this with the tragedy of loss, suggesting (perhaps) that the outcome could have been, should have been different. This vibrant and troubling representation of the sacrificial

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> Image Cressida Ryan (2014), <a href="https://www.weekendnotes.co.uk/christ-church-cathedral/">https://www.weekendnotes.co.uk/christ-church-cathedral/</a> accessed 7 September 2019



Figure 93: Royal Artillery Monument, Hyde Park, London<sup>181</sup>

181 Image from the Council for Archaeology, <a href="http://new.archaeologyuk.org/sites-of-memory-westminsters-war-memorials">http://new.archaeologyuk.org/sites-of-memory-westminsters-war-memorials</a> accessed 7 April 2019



Figure 94: Guards Memorial London<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Image by Jeff Keenan on Flickr (<a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/135924873@N02/28142862121/in/photostream/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/135924873@N02/28142862121/in/photostream/</a>) accessed 7 April 2019



Figure 95: Memorial to women who served in World War II, London<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> mage by Michael Summers August 2009 http://www.flickr.com/photos/canonsnapper/3818299238/sizes/m/in/photostream/

death is achieved through the juxtaposition of contradictory signifiers; power/death, loss/pride, presence/absence. A similar effect is achieved by one of the panels of the Guard's memorial in London (Figure 94), which depicts an army greatcoat, helmet and dog-tags. These are displayed with weapons and laurel which signify war and victory, but the emptiness of the coat and the bullet hole in the helmet speak of pain, death and absence.

The empty clothing depicted in permanent memorials thus draws attention to absent bodies, to mortality, but also points to the mystery that lies at the heart of the Christian faith; the idea that salvation depends upon both the sacrificial death of another and upon personal willingness to abnegate one's own self. While this use of oppositional clothing signifiers in twentieth century memorials effectively connotes religious mystery, it also evokes concern for the vanished individuals and an awareness of the damage that may be inflicted on persons by the classificatory roles that clothing denotes. The empty coats depicted in the memorial to the women who served in World War II in Whitehall (Figure 95) deliver a particularly complex symbolic message. They claim a place for women in a history that normally marginalises them, confirming that they were (once) members of the military; part of a hegemonic and heroic group. Yet the empty garments also prompt questions. Questions about whether these women are dead or simply returned to obscurity; questions about whether war and sacrifice are ultimately worth it; questions about why the point at which individuals are most perfectly aligned with cultural ideals also seems to represent the endpoint of their story.

#### 8.4.3 Clothes in communal memorials

Communal memorials sit between the formal, commissioned memorials installed by hegemonic groups and the spontaneous memorials that arise from the un-coordinated actions of individuals. Communal memorials are created by groups – often protest groups or charities – whose activity is coordinated but uncommissioned and often unfunded. Occasionally commercial images which resonate strongly with the public and are widely saved and shared also function as communal memorials. Examples include the many tributes to Hillsborough victims in and the cover of the Boston Magazine which marked deaths at the Boston Marathon (Figure 96, Figure 97, Figure 104).

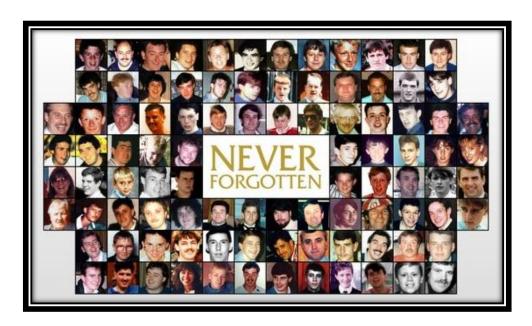


Figure 96: Commemorative image of Hillsborough victims published by Nerve Media, 2016<sup>184</sup>

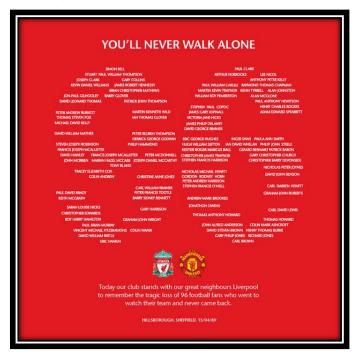


Figure 97: Manchester United's tribute to the Hillsborough Dead<sup>185</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>184</sup> Image from <a href="https://nervemedia.org.uk/news/justice-finally-served-for-hillsborough-victims-and-families/">https://nervemedia.org.uk/news/justice-finally-served-for-hillsborough-victims-and-families/</a> accessed 9 August 2019

<sup>185</sup> Image from Manchester Evening News <a href="https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/sport/football/football-news/youll-never-walk-alone-manchester-2597626">https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/sport/football/football-news/youll-never-walk-alone-manchester-2597626</a> accessed 9 August 2019

Communal memorials focus the attention of the community on specific individuals; individuals who may be identified by their name (Figure 97), their image (Figure 96), or by a significant item of clothing – often by a pair of shoes (Figure 98). When clothing is incorporated, a series of clear principles can be extrapolated:

- 1. individual garments represent dead individuals
- 1. an accumulation of similar garments attests the unity of the group
- 2. the garments challenge hegemonic histories and protest the death event
- 3. empty garments evoke empathy for the dead

In 2011 an American charity placed empty shoes (one pair for each deceased individual) in front of the Law Enforcement Memorial in Spokane County to draw attention to the number of murders taking place in the area (The Spokesman Review, 2011). The victims were not newsworthy, and their deaths had aroused little concern. The display of shoes was intended to generate the missing empathy, to demonstrate that these deaths were of consequence and the victims deserved justice.

In 2018, a similar act of protest and commemoration saw one pair of shoes laid on Capitol Hill for each child killed through gun violence since the Sandy Hook massacre in 2012 (Figure 98). The symbolism of this action was articulated by Tom Mauser, the father of one victim, in an interview with Willa Frej (2018) for Huffington Post.

I'll be traveling to D.C. literally wearing my son Daniel's shoes, the ones he wore the day he died at Columbine...this kind of event with shoes offers a very powerful metaphor both for how we miss the victims who once filled those shoes, and also for how we see ourselves wanting to walk in their place, seeking change, so that others don't have to walk this painful journey.

Even without the testimony of participants, the purpose of this commemorative display was clear; it was intended to move and shock the viewer to the extent that they would use their personal and political power to lobby for change to America's gun laws.



Figure 98: Empty shoes outside the White House, March 2018<sup>186</sup>

The Aids Quilt (Figure 99); which incorporated the clothing of the dead in many of its panels (Sturken, 1997) also deployed the symbolic potency of empty clothing to evoke specific emotional (and perhaps political) responses in the viewer. These clothes were used to form collages which conveyed the character of the deceased and evoked happy memories even while referencing the loss of "the body that once filled them" (ibid). These biographical tributes to affirm the value, virtue and uniqueness of the dead. And to counter the defamatory narratives which presented AIDS victims as contagious and immoral "others" (Krouse, 1994, Kastenbaum, 1998)<sup>187</sup>.

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<sup>187</sup> However, it should also be noted that the Aids Quilt, unlike many communal memorials, is designed to last and thus might also be considered an expression of the continuing bonds between the living and the dead, a declaration that the individuals commemorated still hold a place in the community that remembers them



Figure 99: Panels from the Aids Quilt, the lower one having a pair of flip-flops attached<sup>188</sup>

<sup>188</sup> Photo credit, Ted Eytan on Flickr: (https://www.flickr.com/people/22526649@N03)

# 8.4.4 Clothes in spontaneous memorials

As noted at 8.1.1, spontaneous memorials are a specific type of communal memorial constructed entirely of "tributes" deposited by visitors. Only a small proportion of spontaneous memorials include clothing and most, but not all, of these are built by sporting communities.

The simplest type of clothing memorial takes a single item of clothing and uses it as the focus for a memorial display, often with tributes written on the fabric. Figure 100 shows a small display left at the site where a council workman was killed by a falling telegraph pole. The deceased is commemorated by his yellow high-vis jacket; an item that evoked his work role and thus symbolised, not only his missing body, but the connection between the deceased and the colleagues who mourned him.



Figure 100: Memorial to bin-man killed by falling telegraph pole, Beeston, Leeds April 2010<sup>189</sup>

<sup>189</sup> Photograph, Judith Simpson

There is irony as well as pathos in the empty jacket, for this was supposed to ensure his safety and failed: the memorial thus carries a powerful memento mori effect, demonstrating the precarious nature of life despite precautions.

Figure 101 and Figure 102 show rugby shirts laid at commemorative sites to honour Ronan Costello, a young player who collapsed and died during a match. The shirt with writing on explicitly references his death ("RIP Ronan"), while the carefully folded shirt laid by the memorial stone<sup>190</sup> speaks poignantly of the absence of its owner and also of the passing into history of Huddersfield's number 13 shirt which was retired after Ronan's death (Shaw, 2016). The use of a sports shirt to commemorate a dead youngster has the effect of visibly binding him to a community (the team and their fans) which is often envisaged as immortal, but also of underlining the unpredictability of death. Just as the hi-vis jacket did not save the dustbin man, youth and athleticism did not save Ronan. The combination of these semiotic effects is likely to arouse the same combination of empathy and ontological insecurity which empty clothing in art was noted to evoke.

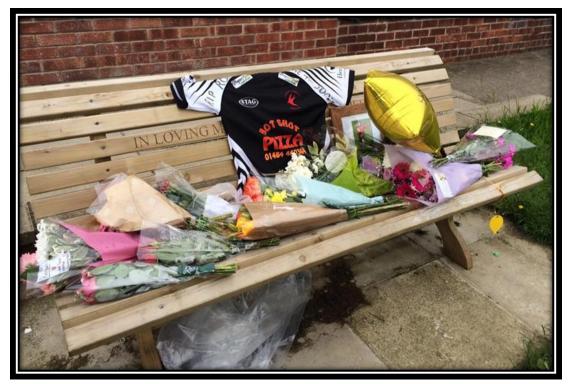


Figure 101: Memorial bench with shirt dedicated to Ronan Costello

<sup>190</sup> This stone is not a grave marker but a display item in a memorial garden by the entrance to the John Smith stadium in Huddersfield.



Figure 102: Rugby shirt at memorial to Ronan Costello<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Image from <a href="https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/gallery/unveiling-memorial-ronan-costello-john-12236901">https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/gallery/unveiling-memorial-ronan-costello-john-12236901</a>, accessed 23 January 2019

The practice of leaving a single clothing item at a symbolic site to commemorate the death of an individual is also seen at Leeds United's Elland Road stadium, where the Billy Bremner statue has become a focus for clothing tributes and other memorials to dead fans (Figure 103). There is a parallel here (in practice and in the effect achieved) between the clothing offerings left at Clootie wells to evidence a pilgrimage and request a blessing, and the scarves and shirts deposited by stadium visitors. This poses a question, which will be more closely considered later; how could the early practice have given rise to the contemporary? It can, of course, be argued that the deposition of commemorative items at the Bremner statue simply represent attempts to provide, for the personally known dead, something approximating the lavish memorialisation afforded to football's famous dead (see Figure 111). This this does not quite resolve the question however, for it leaves open the possibility that elements of ancient ritual may have been incorporated in commemorative rites for the famous, and copied from here into more personal rituals.



Figure 103: Scarves and a t-shirt commemorating dead fans attached to the statue of Billy Bremner at Leeds United's home ground<sup>192</sup>

<sup>192</sup> Image Judith Simpson

# 8.4.4.1 Why does clothing appear in some spontaneous shrines and not in others?

As noted at 8.1.1, the spontaneous memorials created in the wake of Dunblane and the death of Princess Diana included flowers, cards and toys, it was only after the tragedy at Hillsborough that clothing appeared in memorials. However, clothing does not appear in all memorials: shrine-builders adopt one of two distinct "templates", but what directs their choice?

In April 2013 bombers killed 3 spectators at the Boston Marathon, in May 2017 a bomber killed 22 concert goers at the Manchester Arena; after both events a shocked public responded by creating spontaneous memorials. The memorials in Boston contained a large amount of clothing, primarily running shoes, but also t-shirts and hats (Figure 105); in Manchester there were no significant amounts of clothing (Figure 106). While it may be relevant that these two events happened on opposite sides of the Atlantic, this thesis argues that the distinction lies elsewhere. The condition that must be met for clothing to assume a prominent place in commemoration is that the bereaved community must have a shared identity which is articulated through those clothing items.

The Boston memorial drew upon the shared identity of the running community. A commemorative magazine cover featuring empty running shoes arranged in a heart shape around the slogan "we will finish the race" clearly demonstrates how the empty shoe as a symbol of loss was balanced against the sporting shoe as a symbol of self-discipline, endurance and team spirit, in order to generate a sense of hope, solidarity and communal pride and to call upon an imagined community of runners and sports enthusiasts to unite in the face of terror and death.

At the time of the bombing, the people of Manchester had no clear communal identity to draw upon, and thus their memorial contained no clothing items. In the weeks that followed, however, such an identity began to emerge as mourners started to wear clothing featuring the bee logo<sup>193</sup> and the dialect slogan "stay strong our kid!" which had been popularised by spontaneous memorials (Figure 107)).

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<sup>193</sup> The bee, has been used as a symbol for Manchester for over 150 years, and is licensed to the city council as a trademark (Manchester City Council 2019)

The shared identity which clothing evokes may be based upon an imagined community (the running community) or on a geographical community which has the power to evoke topophilia (Boston). This helps to explain the prominence of clothing in sporting memorials, for fan groups are imagined communities grounded in loyalty to team and town and these loyalties are explicitly displayed in team shirts and scarves.

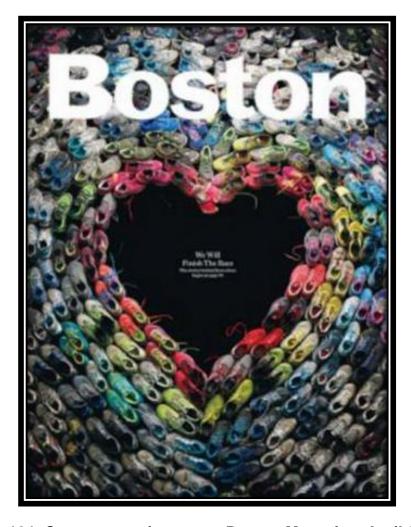


Figure 104: Commemorative cover, Boston Magazine, April 2013<sup>194</sup>

<sup>194</sup> Image from http://edition.cnn.com/2013/04/16/us/boston-marathon-victims-profiles accessed 27 April 2013



Figure 105: Memorials to the victims of the Boston bombing<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Image credits, clockwise from top left:

<sup>1. &</sup>lt;u>http://www.bradenton.com/2013/04/22/4494079/moment-of-silence-for-boston-marathon.html</u> accessed 27 April 2013

<sup>2.</sup> Kevork Djansezian/Getty Images

<sup>3. &</sup>lt;a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/17/boston-marathon-bombing-chinese-victim-lu-lingzi">http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/17/boston-marathon-bombing-chinese-victim-lu-lingzi</a> accessed 27 April 2013

<sup>4.</sup> Jakarta Globe, accessed 27 April 2013

<sup>5. &</sup>lt;a href="http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/lookout/national-high-five-day-rally-boston-210209578.html">http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/lookout/national-high-five-day-rally-boston-210209578.html</a> accessed 27 April 2013



Figure 106: Memorial to the Manchester bombing victims<sup>196</sup>



Figure 107: Manchester's bee logo, from shrine to t-shirt<sup>197</sup>

<sup>196</sup> Getty images, published at <a href="https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/amazing-lasting-tribute-planned-flowers-10591532">https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/amazing-lasting-tribute-planned-flowers-10591532</a>, accessed 2 February 2019

<sup>197</sup> Photo on left by Kirsty Wigglesworth/AP. Published at <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/may/23/i-heart-manchester-thousands-gather-at-attack-vigil">https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/may/23/i-heart-manchester-thousands-gather-at-attack-vigil</a>. Photo on right from <a href="https://www.nme.com/blogs/one-love-manchester-ariana-fans-2084050">https://www.nme.com/blogs/one-love-manchester-ariana-fans-2084050</a> both accessed 3 February 2019

# 8.4.4.2 Why is clothing left at memorial sites but not at graves?

While clothing is frequently deposited at sites associated with commemoration, it is rarely found at grave-sites in Britain, despite both a growing tendency to decorate graves, and a strong European tradition of leaving shoes on graves (Figure 108). This may be partly due to the way in



Figure 108: Ballet shoes left at the tomb of Sophie Karsten in Montmartre Cemetery, France<sup>198</sup>

which cemetery operators regulate grave decoration, but it is argued here that clothing is not placed at grave-sites because the intended audience for clothing displays is not present. When clothes appear in memorials they articulate messages about communal reputation, pride and solidarity. This promotion of the community "brand" requires an audience beyond the bereaved community; by contrast, the decoration of gravesites is a private

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<sup>198</sup> Image from <a href="http://www.peter-pho2.com/2010/12/montmartre-cemetery-dancers.html">http://www.peter-pho2.com/2010/12/montmartre-cemetery-dancers.html</a>, accessed 30 January 2019

articulation of continuing bonds. The political, triumphal and topophilic messages of spontaneous memorials have no place in the graveyard.

# 8.4.4.3 Why are some types of clothing used in this way and others are not?

The types of clothing left at spontaneous memorials are a relatively narrow and consistent range of garments: scarves, hats, t-shirts, sports tops and shoes. Underwear or socks never appear in this (or any other) form of commemorative practice: less obviously, trousers, dresses and coats are also absent. The items deposited appear to be distinguished by several characteristics:

- They are clothes associated with preferred, idealised or ancestral identities.
- The identities referred to are public and communal rather than private or individualistic. They may be associated with topophilia and are invariably linked to pride in a collective identity.
- They often proclaim membership of a community that consciously includes past (or deceased) members.
- The clothing may refer to the activity during which death occurred
- Clothes on which mourners can write their own tributes are particularly favoured

This combination of factors makes it possible for the clothing displayed at a memorial site to acknowledge, lament and sometimes even describe the death event, while simultaneously "overcoming" death by insisting that the deceased will remain part of an immortal, intergenerational community and become a revered and idealised ancestor.

The memorial built to students killed when a bonfire collapsed on the campus of Texas A&M University in 1999 described the death event through a display of "grodes" and "pots", the dirty clothing and hard hats (Grider, 2001: 5) used while making the bonfire (Figure 109). However, it also used the clothing associated with studentship; t-shirts and caps in university colours, college rings; and pledges of remembrance, to confirm that the dead would remain members of the group.



Figure 109: Tributes to the victims of the 1999 Texas A&M University bonfire collapse, featuring "pots" and class rings<sup>199</sup>.

199 Top and bottom images are from Dustbowl community blog, photo credit McNeill (<a href="http://agflight85.tripod.com/db1999/1999overview">http://agflight85.tripod.com/db1999/1999overview</a> bonfire.htm).

Centre image, theeagle.com,

 $\frac{https://bloximages.chicago2.vip.townnews.com/theeagle.com/content/tncms/assets/v3/editorial/6/28/628cd74f-1627-5508-8cdd-$ 

b683730152be/5629389f28042.image.jpg. Accessed 24 November 2017

The use of running shoes to commemorate those killed by a terrorist bomb while watching the Boston Marathon in 2013 worked in a similar way. The empty running shoes spoke of the death of individuals, but the display of *many* shoes along with flags, balloons and imprecations to "stay strong" spoke of the undiminished vigour of the group to which these individuals *still* belonged (Figure 105).

The elements of topophilia in clothing displays – the declarations of allegiance to a campus or town – complete an act of symbolic buttressing through which the identity of the deceased individual is held in place and, perhaps, rendered immortal. Not only is personal identity subsumed in a communal identity that reaches backwards and forwards through time, it is also bound to a place which is imagined as timeless and unchanging. The transience of the individual is thus countered by the invocation of an eternal community, their absence denied by identifying them with a place.

It may also be significant that some of the garments deposited in footballing memorials are of relatively high value, not only in terms of their original purchase price, but also in terms of sentimental value and "collectability"; their deposition thus serves as a sacrifice, a declaration of the high social worth of the deceased and a way of connecting them to both the values and the sacred history of the group.

#### 8.4.4.4 What solutions or benefits does this practice deliver?

The practice of placing clothing in memorials appears to serve a variety of functions

- It can transform the reputation of the deceased
- It can translate them from peer to ancestor
- It creates sacred sites, totemic images and routines of mnemonic practice which shape and sustain communal memory
- It enhances the reputation of the surviving group
- It facilitates an articulation of shared values that instruct and inspire the living, giving them a reason to go on.

### 8.4.4.4.1 Transforming the reputation of the dead

As noted at 8.4.3, memorials featuring clothing are often used to insist upon the good reputation of the deceased or to counter condemnatory discourses. The memorials built to murdered Leeds united fans Christopher Loftus and Kevin Speight clearly demonstrate this concern.



Figure 110: Memorials to Speight and Loftus<sup>200</sup>

<sup>200</sup> Top: April 2000. Photograph by Ian Day, published in The Guardian Sports blog, https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2009/nov/24/leeds-istanbul-chrisloftus-kevin-speight accessed 17 September 2017

Bottom left: "In Memoriam Chris and Kev 5.4.2000" by Rob Atkinson,

https://roblufc.org/2015/04/05/leeds-united-remembers-chris-and-kev-always-in-our-thoughts-by-rob-atkinson/ accessed 24 September 2017

Bottom right: image from Facebook page R.I.P Christopher Loftus & Kevin Speight - Never Forgotten, accessed 17 September 2017.

https://www.facebook.com/110335995714440/photos/a.110351209046252.18454.1 10335995714440/1023971437684220/?type=3&theater

Loftus and Speight travelled to Turkey in November 2000 to watch a match between Leeds United and Galatasary: they died in a violent clash between rival fans (BBC News, 2000, Bagchi, 2009). As soon as their deaths were reported, football shirts appeared suspended from vertical surfaces outside Leeds United's Elland Road stadium; inscribed with statements such as "R.I.P"; "Why?", "A friend for ever" (Figure 110). The accumulation of team shirts stridently articulated the team identity, its "brand" and values while the insertion of the dead men's names into this honorific display proclaimed them heroes. This limited the ways in which their deaths might be interpreted. Heroes might die in battle or be slain by evil opponents, but they do not die in drunken brawls, or as a result of their own ignoble behaviour<sup>201</sup> as some of the news coverage implied. The reputation of the football club was used to redeem the reputation of individuals; an attack on those individuals countered by a display of collective strength.

### 8.4.4.4.2 Transforming the status of the dead

Memorials which include clothing also serve to translate the dead into exemplary ancestors and/or install them as members of an imagined community which is held to be immortal. Thus, in Van Gennep's phrase, they constitute rites of passage or rites of inclusion for the dead.

The memorial built at Elland Road following the suicide of former Leeds player Gary Speed, used clothing inscribed with testimonials to translate Speed into an exemplary ancestor. His virtues were praised (he was "a model, an inspiration, a gentleman a hero" and a "sensational captain"). He was described as joining the team's other notable dead, as "upstairs now

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>201</sup> There was speculation in the media that the fans had been killed after insulting the Turkish flag (BBC News, 2000b)



Figure 111: Memorial to Gary Speed, Elland Road, Leeds, 2011 (photo by Ian J Simpson)



Figure 112: Gary Speed Memorial, Elland Road, November 2011<sup>202</sup>

<sup>202</sup> Photographs by Ian J Simpson

with Billy and Don"<sup>203</sup>. However, as well as conferring a new identity on the deceased and identifying an imaginal location for him, the community also enumerated the ways in which bonds would be sustained. Fans recounted the many ways in which he had been, and would continue to be, part of their lives. Mourners described Speed as "my first crush", "my first hero" and "the reason we pulled on our Leeds shirts every week to come to Elland Road". Moreover, in laying down *their own clothing* to create a surrogate body for the deceased, mourners demonstrated how collective memory practices (the aggregation of multiple scraps of private recall, storytelling and the display of totemic souvenirs) would keep the presence of the dead vibrant at carefully chosen locations.

Even the footballing dead who cannot be easily translated into exemplary ancestors are ritually installed in an intergenerational and immortal community of fans. Scarves and shirts deposited in their memory outside football grounds link their names to the values and identity of the team: they may be hailed as a "*true* fan" or "number 1 fan" or simply as one of "ours" (Figure 113). Future as well as past relationships are referred to, through phrases such as "always with us", "never forgotten" and, in Leeds, "Marching on Together"<sup>204</sup>. Thus items of clothing left at football grounds to commemorate the local dead serve three functions: they confer membership of a sacred and immortal community upon those who have died, they present tangible evidence of continuing bonds between the living and the dead and they identify a place where those who have died will be remembered forever.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>203</sup> Billy Bremner played for Leeds United between 1959 and 1976 when Leeds was at its most successful. He was captain for most of this time. Don Revie was the team's manager from 1961-74. Both men are commemorated by bronze statues at Elland Road.

<sup>204</sup> The Leeds anthem "Marching on Together" (Reed and Mason, 1972) has the words "We've been through it all together, and we've had our ups and downs. We're gonna stay with you forever, at least until the world stops going round" This is evoked by the acronym M.O.T in memorials.



Figure 113: Tributes to the local dead at Elland Road (Sept 2014)<sup>205</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Photographs by Judith Simpson

#### 8.4.4.4.3 Creating mnemonic sites and practices

Mourners who lay down clothing in memory of the dead are usually concerned to ritually address one particular death event. However, memorial sites frequently become sites of sustained pilgrimage, where offerings will be laid in memory of a wide range of individuals. The evolution of footballing memorials since Hillsborough can be used to illustrate this point. Thirty years after the Hillsborough disaster, scarves and shirts are still being left at Liverpool's Anfield stadium in memory of the dead and commemorative gates and landscaping have been added. In a similar way, the statue of Billy Bremner at Elland Road, having been used as a memorial site following high profile deaths, has become a site where the local dead are commemorated. Fans established a tradition of leaving scarves, shirts, photographs and flowers in memory of their own loved ones<sup>206</sup> and in 2018 Leeds United responded by creating "Bremner Square" a landscaped area of inscribed granite tiles. Fans were invited to purchase a tile and become "part of our history and future" 207. In this way, informal practices of memorialisation gave rise to a formal celebration of communal strength and cohesion, although the informal deposition of flowers and clothing with messages has not ceased.

#### 8.4.4.4.4 Enhancing the reputation of the group

The inclusion of clothes in spontaneous memorials enhances the reputation of the bereaved community as well as that of the deceased. This is seen particularly in football memorials, where the strident display of pride in team and place draws the eye and attracts the media. The clothing itself speaks of pride in team, its deposition at a memorial site implies both that the fans are team-spirited and respectful of the dead and that the dead are worthy of that respect. When these three ideas – the proud team, the noble mourner and the virtuous dead – are brought together, the result is a narrative which promotes the surviving group and counters threats to group identity, whether these come from social conflict, defamatory narratives or death itself.

207 https://www.leedsunited.com/news/club-news/22591/bremner-square-launched

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> The proximity of Elland Road to the local crematorium has perhaps encouraged the practice of leaving funeral flowers at Bremner's feet.



Figure 114: Tributes to the dead in Bremner Square (April 2019)<sup>208</sup>

<sup>208</sup> Photographs Judith Simpson

#### 8.4.4.4.5 Consoling, instructing and inspiring the living

Spontaneous memorials offer a range of comforts to the living. They create sites where fans can gather and console each other, either by physical interaction or by leaving tributes and offerings. Mourners are reassured that the dead are not forgotten, and satisfied that their own homage or offering has helped sustain their memory. Equally by adding a scarf or shirt to a memorial, mourners claim their own place in the imagined community that the dead inhabit and which the deposited clothing makes visible. In this sense, memorialisation is a way of both expressing and experiencing continuing bonds with the dead. However, moral and inspirational narratives are also articulated: the same inscriptions that declare the deceased to be an exemplary ancestor also instruct the survivors how they should live.

To summarise, it is argued here that placing clothing in memorials benefits bereaved groups by

- emphasising the bonds which connect the bereaved group in order to facilitate mutual support;
- 2. sustaining the social presence of the dead within that group
- 3. reaffirming the values of the group, in a way that anthropologists have associated with the regeneration of social life and also with totemic rituals which lead to the experience of transcendence.
- 4. connecting the group to ancestors, to histories and, often, to a distinct geographic location; thereby buttressing the community against loss, transience and the kind of ontological insecurity that death can evoke.

## 8.5 Identifying key categories

Once again, reviewing a wide tranche of clothing data has revealed several recurrent themes or "categories"; these can be both evaluated and connected by asking what advantages a pattern of behaviour might deliver to specific stakeholders.

When clothing is placed in memorials, the stakeholder to derive the clearest benefit is "the community". However, while the historical use of clothing in memorials served the needs of a local, embodied, community shaken by the loss of a personally known individual, the recent phenomenon of placing clothing in spontaneous memorials addresses the need of imagined communities to empathise with the losses of others and mourn the demise of people they only felt they knew.

A variety of needs, experienced principally at group level, are addressed by these commemorative practices; the longing for (collective) immortality; the need to find an acceptable explanation for death events and a new way to relate to the deceased; the need to strengthen the bereaved community and the desire to enhance the reputation of that community.

These needs are addressed through a variety of strategies (Figure 115). The wish for immortality is addressed most directly by the use of clothing to translate the dead into ancestral figures with whom continuous bonds are sustained. However fear of extinction is also addressed by practices which give material form to memory; which bind the deceased to specific locations and inscribe their stories on sites and artefacts, thereby turning these places and things into what Nora (1989) referred to as lieux de memoire – sites of memory. The fear that the dead may be forgotten is also countered by the use of empty garments to evoke the presence/absence of the dead, a device which vibrantly demonstrates that the dead retain affective power.

The deposition of clothing in memorials also facilitates communal meaning-making. By collaborating in creative acts, and through sharing memories and stories, bereaved communities find ways to describe the death event that render it comprehensible and align it with the group's core beliefs and values. It was through such a process that the deaths of Christopher Loftus and Kevin Speight became heroic (good deaths, rather than the bad deaths traditionally associated with murder victims).

Finally, the clothing deposited in spontaneous memorials constitutes a display of the totems of the group. This symbolic reaffirmation of identity and values both reinvigorates the bereaved community and enhances its reputation by presenting a vision of a proud and united group with a glorious past and a hopeful future.

To summarise, when clothing is used in, or as, memorials it addresses the needs of the bereaved community through seven, interconnected strategies:

- The (idealised) representation of the deceased
- Ancestor creation
- Continuing bonds
- The refreshment of collective identity
- The reaffirmation of the principles and norms of group life
- The binding of people to places
- The evocation of presence absence.

These strategies can be seen at play in many church monuments, but they are brought sharply into focus in the spontaneous memorials built by sporting or educational communities in the last 30 years.

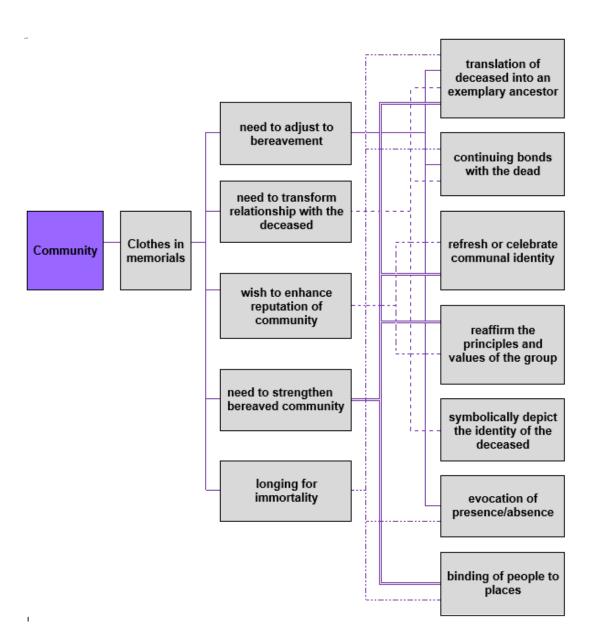


Figure 115: Category map for clothing in memorials

## 8.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has argued that when clothing appears in memorials it uses a visual language, which echoes both ancient traditions and recent artistic practice, to evoke the presence/absence of the dead, to translate them into ancestral figures and to stimulate specific responses in the viewer. While the research questions have largely been addressed in the text, it is useful to summarise those answers here.

# 8.6.1 How do people of the twenty first century use clothing in memorials?

It has become relatively common for people to deposit their own clothing in spontaneous memorials. They do this to protest and lament the death, for empty clothes signify absent bodies. However, the same action also creates a connection between the donor, the deceased, the group to which both belong and the memorial site, which may be considered sacred. The fact that high value items are sometimes deposited may mean that the deposition of clothing constitutes a sacrifice of some kind, but costly offerings also signify the high social worth of the deceased, the devotion of the donor and the value of the community "brand".

## 8.6.2 What are the historic origins of these behaviours?

Historically, when clothing appeared in memorials it was intended to demonstrate the exemplary reputation of the deceased in order to reaffirm the core values of the community. This is reproduced in contemporary memorials. However, conventional semiotic statements may be subordinated to attempts to operationalise the "magical" powers traditionally associated with clothing. Clothing has long been understood to connect people and places and to channel power from one to the other. Thus the act of leaving a scarf at a football memorial may be implicated in acts of sacrifice, blessing and binding.

Despite the parallels between the spontaneous memorials of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and ancient clothing practices, it is hard to see how the new may have evolved from the old. It is credible however, to argue that the semiotic power (and affective valence) of empty clothing draws upon two kinds of referent. First, those things that clothing has historically signified and *still* signifies – rank, status, respectability, virtue, age, affiliation – a range of attributes that might together be coded as "social worth". Second, those

things that clothing once signified, and which persist as echoes in the communal psyche; offerings, blessings, the transfer of personal power. This gives clothing a power which seems mysterious, which goes beyond everyday understandings, which is, in Wilson's (1985: 1) words, uncanny, "only half understood". The sense that garments constitute powerful, polysemous and preternatural symbols, makes them valuable resources in meaning-making activities.

# 8.6.3 How do people experience these interactions with clothing?

Data collected for this thesis offered no direct access to the experience of building shrines. However, media coverage of such events indicates that people find it emotionally moving<sup>209</sup>. Consideration of the semiotic and mnemonic power of shrines that include clothing, suggests that they are likely to generate strong feelings of communal loyalty, but also a vibrant sense of presence-absence. It is also worth considering Brennan's (2003) contention that people use public memorials to mourn their own losses. Clothing is so closely associated with the body, and changing fashions index time-periods so accurately, that the sight of empty clothing almost inevitably triggers memories of past times and lost individuals. Thus visitors to memorials built for strangers may be immersed in a bittersweet nostalgia through which they lament both *their* loved ones who have died and the happy times now passed.

# 8.6.4 Do these behaviours address needs or are they simply relics of ancient practice?

The appearance of memorials that contain significant quantities of clothing is a relatively new phenomenon; it thus makes much more sense to explain them as behaviours that yield benefits or address needs than as relics of ancient practice. As noted at 8.4.4.4, placing clothes in a spontaneous memorial may help the bereaved come to terms with and make sense of the death, but the practice also refreshes the shared identity and the reputation of the bereaved group.

However, there are parallels between the old and the new that require explanation. Historically clothes belonging to the dead were used to keep

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>209</sup> This is borne out by the experience of visiting the Gary Speed memorial, where strangers were hugging and consoling one another.

them in thought and prayer; present-day memorial builders use their own clothing to make visible the ties that (still) bind the dead to the community that remembers them. What connects these temporally distant practices is the ability of clothing to bind individuals together. While this capacity is easy to overlook, once noticed it is everywhere (in clothing which is gifted or inherited, in the wedding ring, the class ring, the his-and-hers jumper, the uniform, the team shirt). It is the increasing importance of bonds between individuals who are separated by time, space or death (a new situation resulting from the rise of imagined communities and the practice of continuing bonds with the dead) that has given new prominence to the role of clothing as connective devices.

# 8.6.5 What causes clothing behaviours to change in this context?

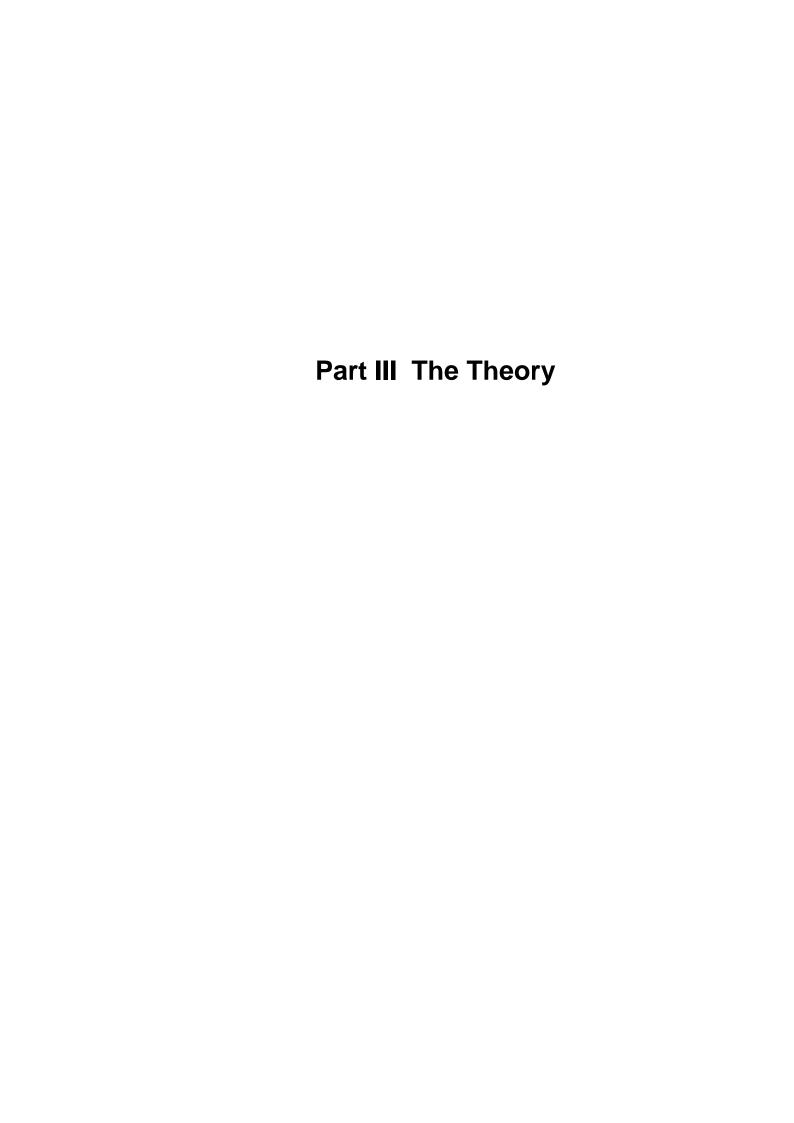
The variables that account for significant change in this context are the nature of "community", the power relations which shape it, and the way in which death is understood.

Embodied, geographical communities historically placed clothing in memorials to help the dead in the afterlife and to reify existing hierarchies and mores, but the decline of organised religion and of social arrangements based on land-ownership rendered these strategies obsolete. Imagined communities now place clothing in memorials to revitalise the bonds and beliefs of non-hierarchical groups, to problematize hegemonic discourses and to bind people to places – something that would have been a given in a traditional village community. Clearly different types of community exploit the same symbolic resource in entirely different ways, because their needs and priorities differ.

Different clothing strategies are also associated with different relationships with the dead. The deposition of clothing in churches served both to assist the dead in the afterlife and to position them as exemplary ancestors who would instruct and inspire the living. The deposition of clothing in spontaneous memorials has a slightly different effect. The deceased is installed not in Heaven, but in communal memory, or, to put it another way, within an imagined community comprising both the living and the dead; a process which may, as Sanders (2008) claims, also replace physical burial in the local church yard.

There is a historical gap between the old practices of placing clothing in churches, which largely ceased in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the appearance of clothing in new types of memorial in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although this gap is wider than the period associated with modern approaches to death there does seem to be some link between the emergence of the new practices and the renewal of interest in continuing bonds with the dead.

Based on these observations it seems reasonable to assume that future changes in memorial practice will be associated either with changes to the kind of communities that people invest in (perhaps a renewed appreciation of the neighbourhood or the extended family), or with changes to the way in which death and the dead are understood.



## Chapter 9 A theory of clothing in death response

This study has advanced understanding of the role played by clothing in British death practice. It has done this by examining how the dead body is dressed, what mourners wear, what happens to the clothes that the dead leave behind, and the way in which clothing features in memorials to the dead. In each context "clothing strategies" have been identified which address the particular problems arising from death. This chapter draws together the findings to produce what (Glaser 2002: 24) referred to as a "parsimonious theory" which explains the *key* elements of the phenomenon being studied, and which casts light on some puzzling issues, specifically:

- 2. why bodies which will not be viewed may still be dressed
- 3. why charitable donation is such a popular way of disposing of the clothes the dead leave behind
- 4. why *some* items of clothing are deposited in *some* spontaneous memorials

The first stage of theory generation involved identifying the most significant clothing strategies employed in the context of bereavement. Concentrating only on these made it possible to replace the category map derived by simply integrating the maps from each chapter (Figure 116), with something much more focussed (Table 6, Page 298). The second stage of theory generation involved mapping the relationships between these strategies to create a theoretical description of the field of study. This preliminary theory was then critiqued and refined.

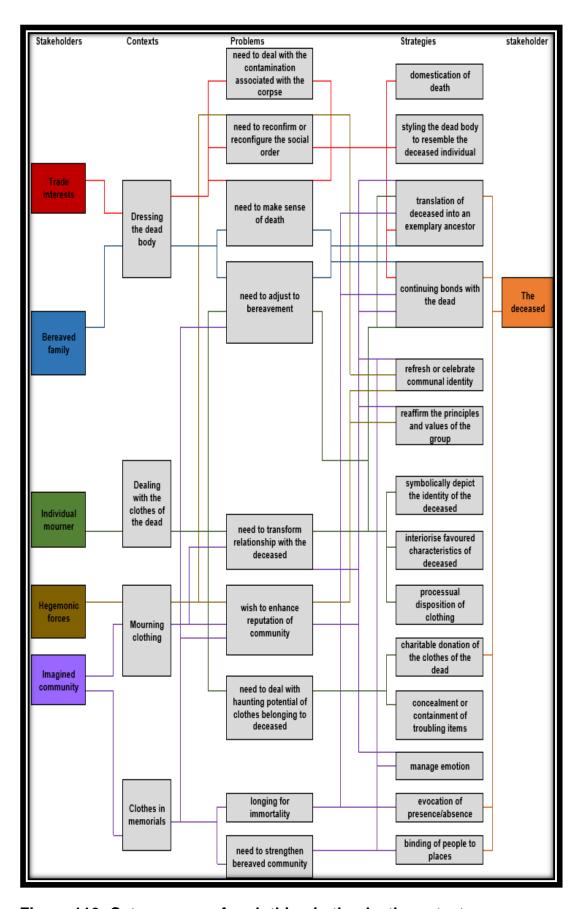


Figure 116: Category map for clothing in the death context

## 9.1 Identifying Key Strategies

The data on dressing the dead body revealed several significant clothing strategies. Survey responses from the public indicated that clothing choices were a way of shaping or curating memory to bring positive recollections of the deceased to the fore. Survey data from funeral directors, meanwhile, drew attention to the way in which clothing was used to domesticate death, so that the deceased might be encountered as a familiar individual and not a contaminating "other". Domestication strategies included using clothing to conceal or contain disturbing evidence of death and decay and to present the deceased as a facsimile of their living self. The material in the cultural archive, however, suggested that the corpse is styled in a way which theatrically articulates both communal values and the identity of the deceased individual, aligning the two so that the aspects of the deceased which will be emphasised and remembered constitute an ancestral identity which is idealised, exemplary and totemic. In summary then, the clothing strategies which emerged most forcefully from the data on dressing the dead were:

- the curation of memory
- the domestication of death
- concealment and containment
- sustaining the personhood of the deceased
- ancestor-creation

The data on the clothing left behind by the dead indicated that such clothing was experienced as affective material, capable of generating sensations and emotions in the living. The bereaved respond to this affective power by treating the clothing of the dead in a cautious and predictable manner: an approach shaped by three strategic aims: preventing the personhood of the deceased from being damaged or erased, curating their memory so that they can be recalled as an exemplary ancestor and attempting to make something good come out of the death – a practice which Cheal (1988) would describe as a ritual of resource management.

This approach, which is graphically depicted at Figure 35, involves the prompt disposition of any item deemed inconsistent with the public persona – or "best self" – of the deceased and the concealment or containment of items which are too difficult to bear. Items which are positively charged with mnemonic or relational significance are then distributed to close kin who use

them to commemorate the dead, sustain continuing bonds with them or interiorise treasured aspects of their persona. Less highly-charged items are subjected to disposition rituals (laundering, storing, relocating) and then donated (to a person or cause) who can make use of, or sell, the item: again there is an interest in making something good come out of the death. Selling for profit and disposal as "rubbish" are avoided wherever possible. Thus the clothing strategies that emerge most strongly from the data on disposition might be listed as

- processual disposition
- concealment and containment
- sustaining the personhood of the deceased
- the curation of memory
- ancestor-creation
- continuing bonds
- rituals of resource management

The historical data on mourning clothing suggested that it originally fulfilled a range of functions which, together, ensured the survival and wellbeing of the bereaved community. Mourning clothes revealed and reproduced social structures and social principles; they helped manage emotion, thereby sustaining the morale and the reputation of the community; they also supported rites of passage which installed the deceased as an exemplary ancestor. Finally, mourning clothes played a role in helping the dead on their afterlife journey and facilitating communion with them.

In a post-modern society, mourning clothes no longer excise the deceased from society through rites of passage, but now serve to confirm the place of both the deceased and the mourner in an immortal (imagined) community. Special clothing is used to indicate the high social worth of the person who has died and to dictate which elements of their person will be recalled. Such commemorative clothing tends to articulate emotions of loyalty, pride and communal feeling rather than sadness and loss. Sadness is less appropriate because, in this new construction of death, the deceased is not truly lost. However, the community's confidence may have been shaken by the death, making the opportunity to refresh collective identity very welcome.

New forms of complimentary mourning (charity ribbons, commemorative shirts) are also related to the growing role of imagined communities in the mourning context, for these clothing signifiers permit members to project a

mourning identity and to recognise fellow mourners with whom they are not personally acquainted. Other forms of mourning clothing – such as ash jewellery, or clothing that originally belonged to the deceased – offer a point of contact with the deceased and represent a way of making continuing bonds visible.

The clothing strategies which can most clearly be seen in this context are

- ancestor creation
- curation of memory
- the refreshment of collective identity
- reaffirmation of the principles of society
- the management of emotion
- articulation of a mourning identity
- continuing bonds

Primary research on the clothing items deposited at footballing memorials indicated that such items contributed to both the creation of exemplary ancestors and to the installation of the "ordinary" dead as members of an immortal affective community. Clothes in memorials draw upon a symbolic language informed by both the history of clothing practice and the use of empty clothing in contemporary art. This rich semiotic vocabulary allows memorial builders to describe the death, to protest it and to mourn, but also to claim that the power of death is negated by the persistence of communal life. The clothing placed in spontaneous memorials may evoke the absent body of the deceased, but it also reaffirms the ties that continue to bind them to the group, and to the enduring values and totems of that group. Clothing in memorials also contributes to mnemonic practice at group level, both shaping what is remembered and establishing geographic and temporal spaces for mourning. In summary then, the strategies which emerge most strongly from this data are

- ancestor creation
- the refreshment of collective identity
- continuing bonds
- the management of emotion
- curation of memory

Dressing the dead body	Disposition of clothing	Mourning clothing	Clothes in memorials			
curation of memory						
domestication of death						
concealment	and containment					
sustaining the perso	onhood of the deceased					
ancestor creation						
	processual disposition					
		continuing bonds				
	rituals of resource management					
		refreshment of collective identity				
		reaffirmation of the principles of society				
		management of emotion				
		mourning identity				

Table 6: overview of clothing strategies

When the key strategies for each clothing context are presented in tabular form (Table 6) it can be seen that twelve strategies have been identified: two of these – ancestor creation and curation of memory – appear in every context, while continuing bonds feature in three. Following Grounded Theory methodology these strategies (or "categories") were described and related, first to the data, and then to each other.

## 9.2 The strategies defined

While the twelve strategies identified are all what Grounded Theory would term "categories", they are not the same kind of categories, nor do they have equal importance. Some categories are the means to an end described by a different category: concealment and containment, for example, constitute a type of censorship which supports both the domestication of death and the curation of memory; the curation of memory, in turn, supports ancestor creation. In describing the categories, those which feed into others are discussed first, and, where possible, closely related items placed together.

#### 9.2.1 Concealment and containment

When the dead body is styled, clothing is used to conceal and contain any evidence of death, damage or decay. This makes both death and the dead more familiar and less frightening. Strategies of concealment and containment are also applied to the clothing the dead leave behind: items likely to cause distress being stowed away in boxes or cupboards. Both of these clothing strategies are intended to limit pain and fear, but their effects are rather different. When concealment is applied to the dead body it helps to domesticate death; when the clothes of the dead are themselves concealed this contributes to the management of emotion.

#### 9.2.2 Domestication of death

The domestication of death is observed most clearly in the dressing of the dead body. Domestication has several aspects. By making the deceased look like their "best self" it works to reduce the horror and fear that death evokes and to blur the line between life and death so that relationships with the dead can be sustained. However, it also privileges a specific kind of "normality" that is based on traditional, romanticised notions of the cosy home, the loving couple and the harmonious family; in this way domestication helps to reaffirm the principles of society.

### 9.2.3 Management of emotion

Emotion is managed in order to support the wellbeing of either the bereaved or the wider community; to ensure that life can continue as normally as possible. Clothing strategies manage emotional response in three ways; by reducing or tempering grief, by regulating where and when grief might be expressed, and by stimulating specific pro-social emotional responses in the viewer.

As noted above, the funeral director attempts to manage the emotional responses of mourners by concealing damage and normalising the appearance of the deceased; equally mourners may manage their own emotional responses by hiding items that evoke distressing memories. Some clothing practices soften the emotional blow of loss by stimulating positive emotions. Themed funerals and quirky clothing on the corpse use humour or whimsy to dispel misery: costumed funeral parades and placing garments in memorials temper grief by directing attention towards those things that death cannot erase, the enduring principles of communal life.

Overt forms of mourning clothing – from the black armband to the commemorative t-shirt – serve to regulate emotion at group level, telling mourners what kind of emotional display is appropriate and where, when and with whom, they might share their memories of the dead. The themed funeral creates a safe space for the expression of grief as well as providing the consolatory images which serve to reduce distress.

While, in the public domain, clothing strategies serve to engage viewers with the totems of the group (offering them the sense of transcendence and social solidarity that flows from totemic ritual), in the private domain, mourning tokens such as ash jewellery, or mementos saved from the wardrobes of the dead may be used to stimulate a different kind of emotion; emotion that supports communion with the dead.

## 9.2.4 Articulation of a mourning identity

Mourning identities are called into being when people wear clothing that marks them as mourners, or deposit clothing which is recognisably theirs in spontaneous memorials. Mourning identities articulate both allegiance to the dead and loyal membership of a group of like-minded individuals. Because mourning clothing – and the collective practices it supports – tend to valorise the bereaved group and their shared values, this strategy may give access to the pleasures of totemic ritual; thus the adoption of a mourning identity

may feed into the refreshment of collective identity and the reaffirmation of the principles of society.

### 9.2.5 Curation of memory

The curation of memory includes both private and communal memory practices. At a personal level, memory-curation involves idealising the deceased and allowing pleasant and positive memories to displace distressing ones. This is clearly demonstrated by the processual disposition of clothing, where anything evoking bad memories is disposed of promptly and items with positive mnemonic value are distributed as mementos.

At a group level, curation of memory describes those practices which ensure specific stories and images persist in collective memory: it involves both the stipulation of what should be remembered and strategies to mediate and sustain the selected images. The curation of memory turns places or objects into what Nora (1989) called lieux de memoire, sites of memory. A garment can become a site of memory when displayed as an historic artefact or used as a prop in story-telling, while clothing deposited in memorials in order to link the deceased to a specific location creates a (geographic) site of memory. The curation of memory also supports other strategies – most particularly ancestor creation and the reaffirmation of communal principles.

### 9.2.6 Processual disposition

As indicated above, the processual disposition of the clothing the dead leave behind ensures that the deceased is remembered in a way that sustains communal ideals and reduces emotional pain. It does more than this however, for it also seeks to protect the personhood of the deceased by safeguarding the items implicated in selfhood, and to make something good come out of the death through the charitable donation of clothing. The strategy of processual disposition thus connects to the management of emotion, the curation of memory, sustaining the personhood of the deceased and rituals of resource management.

#### 9.2.7 Rituals of resource management

According to Cheal (1988) rituals of resource management seek to ameliorate a bad situation through some sort of practical action.

Amelioration usually involves transforming bad (meaningless) deaths into good (heroic, sacrificial) deaths, enhancing the reputation of the deceased,

or trying to prevent other, similar deaths. The charitable donation of the clothing of the dead is a ritual of resource management; so is the use of clothing in fundraising activities. The use of clothing items to protest the death of individuals or manage their reputation through spontaneous memorialisation also falls into this category. Rituals of resource management are important to mourners who need to regain a sense of control in the wake of bereavement, but that control tends to be exercised in a way that also reaffirms the principles of communal life.

## 9.2.8 Sustaining the personhood of the deceased

Several clothing behaviours serve to sustain the personhood of the deceased. Clothes may be understood as the extended body of the deceased, or even as a replacement body for them, and thus the sale or destruction of clothing may be avoided for fear of injuring them. These same clothes also present opportunities for interaction with the deceased: the garments sustain the affective presence of the deceased in the present, perhaps by stimulating immersive memory experiences, by becoming sites of memory, or by providing the means through which the bereaved can interiorise treasured aspects of the deceased's personality.

Clothing in memorials sustains the social and affective presence of the deceased in the public domain, while, in the private domain, the dressing of the dead body sustains personhood until the point at which the coffin is closed. Such strategies facilitate both ancestor creation and continuing bonds.

### 9.2.9 Refreshment of collective identity

The costumed funeral parade has, for centuries, served to remind mourners of who they are and what they stand for, while advertising to outsiders the strength and stability of the group. The knights' achievements and maidens' crants displayed in churches did the same thing. Themed funerals now perform this function, as do commemorative shirts and spontaneous memorials. In order to refresh collective identity through funerary practice, the deceased is aligned with the values and the totems of the group and mourners encouraged to identify with both. Often, the same practices which refresh collective identity also install the dead as ancestors.

# 9.2.10 Reaffirmation of the principles of society

The refreshment of collective identity frequently involves reaffirming the principles of society, where principles include not only the distinctive value system, but also the operating principles, the structures, the hierarchies and the institutions of the group. Historically mourning clothing and the choreographed funeral parade made these principles apparent, but they are now reaffirmed through the styling of the dead body and through the ancestral identities conferred on the dead.

#### 9.2.11 Ancestor creation

The translation of the ordinary dead into exemplary ancestors by aligning them with the values of the group achieves three things; it avoids the loss/erasure of loved ones, it overwrites troubling memories with positive ones and it ensures that the group's traditions and principles are sustained. Processes which confer ancestral identities on the dead can be observed in the styling of the dead body; in the themed funeral and in t-shirts which commemorate and valorise the dead; in the processual disposition of the clothes the dead leave behind and, finally, in the deposition of clothing at memorial sites. As noted above, strategies of ancestor creation, co-exist with and complement strategies which refresh collective identity and reaffirm the principles of communal life.

#### 9.2.12 Continuing bonds

Continuing bonds normally refer to relationships that living individuals sustain with the personally known dead. It is suggested here, however, that in addition to facilitating these dyadic bonds (through the domestication of death and the use of garments as linking objects), clothing binds both the dead and the living to imagined communities and, often, to places. Themed funerals offer clear evidence of these communal bonds; garments in memorials evidence the connection of people to places. Continuing bonds of this type afford a kind of immortality to the dead, but they also strengthen the living community by grounding it in history and attaching it to a specific geographic location. Moreover, imagined communities which comprise both the living and the dead emerge as the foremost spaces in which mourning is encouraged and facilitated in Postmodern Britain.

# 9.3 Mapping the strategies

The strategies defined above can me mapped in two, complementary, ways. First, the relationships between strategies can be defined, second, the strategies can be demonstrated to address some of the problems which death creates. Both approaches indicate that three of the strategies are distinct from the others in that, together, they appear to represent the intended goal of all the clothing behaviours considered. That is to say, all the clothing behaviours considered point towards the reaffirmation of the principles of collective life and/or the translation of the personally known dead into ancestral figures with whom continuing bonds can be maintained.

Mapping the relationships between strategies (Figure 117) creates a hierarchical diagram in which these ultimate categories can be seen to be generated through the interaction of the others. For example, concealment and containment contributes to the domestication of death and helps sustain the personhood of the deceased, both of which facilitate continuing bonds with the dead. Equally, processual disposition engages the management of emotion, the curation of memory and rituals of resource management in the ultimate project of translating the dead into ancestors and reaffirming the principles of communal life.

When clothing strategies are mapped against problems (Figure 118), it becomes clear that these practices address four areas of concern. First there are the ontological issues arising from death: what does it mean? How can people and groups who feel themselves to be immortal come to an end? Second there is the need to cope with the fears that arise from this unknown situation, but which attach themselves to the material realm and are experienced as contamination and haunting. In third place there is the need for individuals to adapt to and recover from loss; in fourth, the parallel requirement for recovery at the level of the group.

Questions about the meaning of death are addressed by trying to prevent the unique self of the deceased from being erased (by sustaining their personhood, rendering them ancestral and fostering continuing bonds) and also through rites of resource management which, by bringing something good out of tragedy, seek to incorporate this death into communal structures of meaning. The horror and contamination associated with death – and what has earlier been referred to as the haunting potential of clothing – are delimited by strategies of concealment and domestication, and by sustaining

the personhood of the deceased in order to prevent them from becoming other.

Personal adjustment to death is supported by a wide range of strategies. Rites of resource management support meaning-making and restore a sense of control; garments may be used as linking objects, points of contact with the dead, or as ways of interiorising the treasured characteristics of the deceased. The adoption of a mourning identity and the processual disposition of the wardrobe of the deceased, meanwhile, present ways in which the bereaved individual might avoid the most intense pain-stimuli, find sympathetic others and curate their memories of the deceased so that reasons for hope will ultimately outweigh the reasons for despair.

Adjustment to loss at societal level is supported by the translation of dead peers into exemplary ancestors, the refreshment of collective identities, the curation of (collective) memory and the careful management of emotion. Clothing strategies inhibit expressions of grief which jeopardise collective life (or at least restrict them to the domestic interior), but they also encourage the expression of pride and affection towards both the values of the community and the dead who embody these. Most particularly, clothing strategies make visible the imagined communities which constitute the culturally approved space for mourning, as well as the place where the dead may be (re)encountered.

While these maps are useful in understanding the way in which clothing supports strategic attempts to diminish the power of death, they have a major weakness. In focusing on goal-directed action they ignore a factor that should not be ignored; the ability of clothing to function as affective material which has the potential to disrupt meaning-making activity, to disturb and to haunt. In order to comprehensively theorise the role of clothing in the bereavement context the unwilled effects of clothing must be considered alongside the willed.

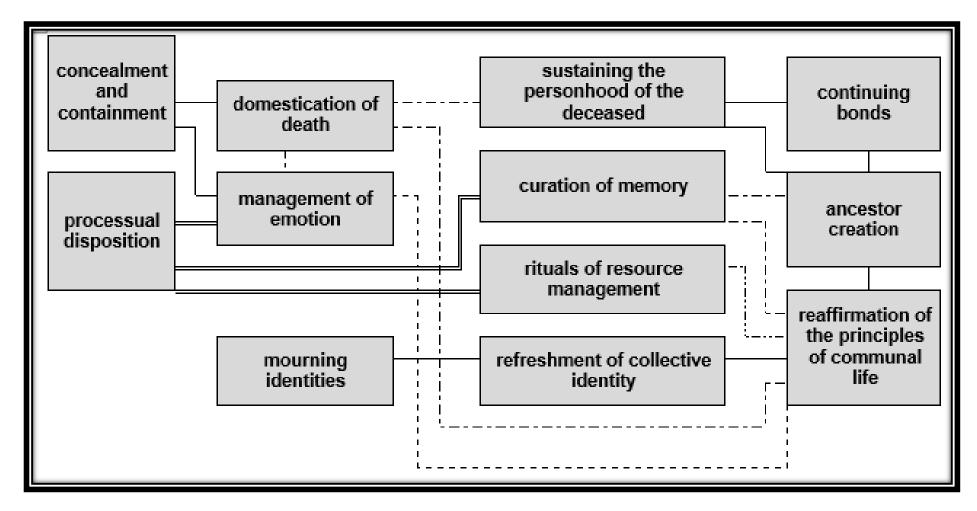


Figure 117: relationships between clothing strategies

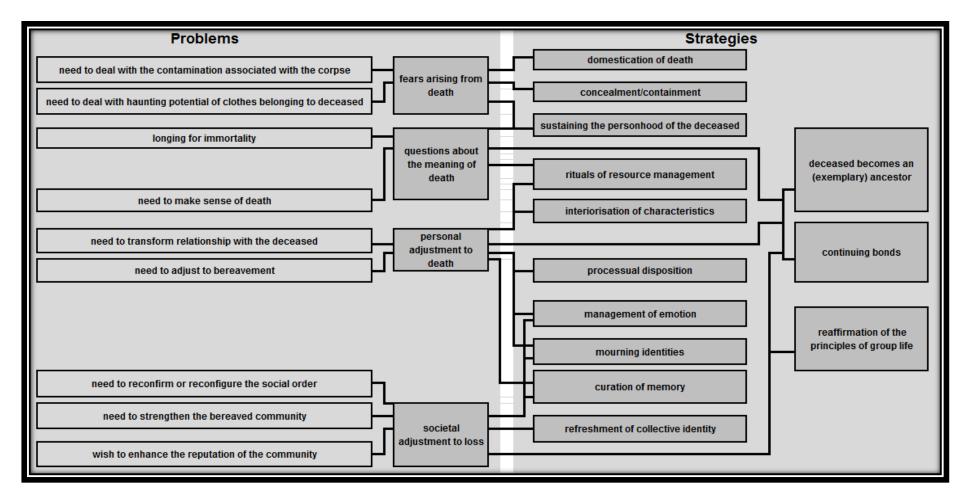


Figure 118: Problems and strategies

# 9.4 **Generating Theory**

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967: 28ff) having described, compared and categorised the data, and considered how the categories which emerge are related, the researcher should use the patterns detected in the data to generate theory. In the section that follows, therefore, the strategies outlined above are contextualised within the literature reviewed and condensed into a theoretical proposition.

The theory which emerges from the data suggests that bereaved communities, and bereaved individuals, use clothing strategies to mitigate the effects of loss. The community experiences death as a threat to power, identity and reputation. The individual experiences death as a threat to those bonds which connect them to beloved individuals and also to the social group. Despite these different agendas, the same recuperative strategies tend to be adopted at group, and at individual, level. These strategies change over time as a result of changes in life-style, death-experience and belief systems, but in the twenty-first century the key strategies are:

- a. the imaginal alignment of the dead with cultural ideals in order to transform them into exemplary ancestors
- b. the domestication of death in order to facilitate ongoing relationships with these ancestral figures
- c. the reaffirmation of the forms, norms and values of communal life.
- d. the creation of spaces for mourning within imagined communities made visible through clothing.

The literature reviewed implies that the power of clothing to support recuperative strategies derives from its symbolic and cultural associations. Clothing provides a symbolic code which combines the authority of ancient tradition with a semiotic pliancy which makes clothing a useful material for thinking with. Clothing confers as well as expresses identity and it marks and sustains boundaries (between the public and the private, the pure and the abject; between the revered and the reviled, the living and the dead). Clothing gives material form to the bonds between people, places and totems and it supports rituals through which symbolic actions are able to transform the world. As Pajaczkowska (2005: 233) puts it, clothing "literally

and metaphorically envelops the body and the self, within the orbit of meaning" and is a primary manifestation of "the human impulse to control, order and classify, to tame the wilderness" (ibid: 234).

This thesis argues that bereaved people use clothing strategies to repair or reinstate the classificatory principles that death has breached. It also contends, however, that because clothing may trigger (uncontrolled) memory, because it may be associated with the abject and because it participates in personhood it can also undercut recuperative projects by bringing back both "the wilderness" and the dead. When clothing functions as affective material; its power to transform the world can be turned back against the mourner so that they do not so much act as find themselves acted upon.

In addition to the cultural meanings which have been inscribed upon it over time, clothing derives affective valence from the strong appeal of textile to the senses and from fashion's ability to index time. Together these factors make clothing a conduit of the kind of memory that Aristotle termed mneme: the echoes of past experience in the psyche (Till, 2006). Clothing can remind the living of relationships and obligations long past and garments can stimulate immersive ("Proustian") memory experiences, inserting past times and dead people into present circumstance. This can create blissful or horrific encounters. The bereaved may thus find themselves caught up in what feels like a highly charged struggle with clothing itself: the more they try to (re)impose order and meaning on their fractured world using clothing strategies, the more they find themselves haunted and disturbed by the alterity of clothing. Against the mourner's strategies of memory curation, their efforts to sustain the personhood of the dead, to refresh collective identity and reinstate social forms and norms, are ranged the disruptive forces of the abject, the uncanny, uncontrolled memory, the extended body of the deceased and the evidence of their simultaneous presence and absence (Figure 119). This situation is worsened by contemporary assumptions that clothing is trivial and disposable: mourners know that it is not, but this knowledge only serves to call into question the rest of their assumptive world and to make it impossible to explain their experiences to others.

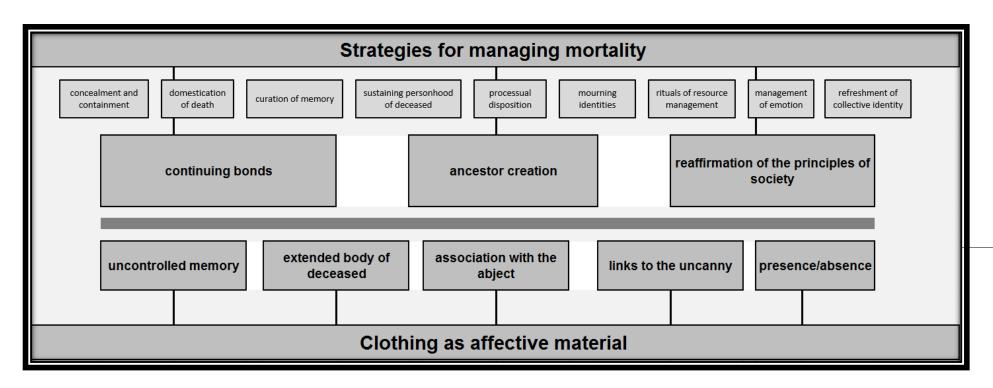


Figure 119: The oppositional forces of clothing in the death context

In summary, it is argued that clothing in the bereavement context is charged with volatile power. Although clothing strategies help and comfort many mourners, and contribute to the reproduction and repair of social life, clothing can also accentuate pain and generate frightening encounters. This volatility suggests that therapists should hesitate to recommend particular clothing strategies to bereaved clients. Therapists might usefully reassure mourners that the power they sense in clothing is real (a cultural and mnemonic effect, rather than a delusion) but the clothing rituals which are helpful are those devised by mourners themselves, not those which are recommended or imposed.

# 9.5 Critiquing the theory

In seeking to extrapolate the *key* findings in a complex field, the theoretical model outlined above may have over-simplified the situation, omitted detail that should have been preserved, conflated the interests of different stakeholder groups, implied a static situation when change is pervasive and failed to present an appropriately polyvocal account of a complex phenomenon. However, in a Grounded Theory study the process of theory generation is, ongoing, with theory "an ever developing entity, not [a] perfected product" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 32). This imperfect theory can thus be developed and clarified by posing a series of questions: questions about ontology, about stakeholders, about agency and intention, about those categories which are too complex for the model to capture. Questions about the way in which behaviour differs in the public and private domain and, finally, questions about why practice changes over time.

## 9.5.1 **Ontology**

While the idea that the strategic actions of bereaved people are thwarted by the affective nature of clothing emerged quite forcefully from the data, it creates an ontological problem, for it accepts a definition of personhood based upon Maslow's problem-solving animal for the living, but understands the dead in a way that has more in common with Actor Network Theory (see page 11). The easiest way to resolve this difficulty is to allow that the living believe themselves to be, and behave as if they are, actors in a passive world: problem-solving animals. The fact that they are (also) caught up in interactive networks that include the non-human and the suprahuman

accounts for the way in which their strategic activities may be resisted or subverted and in which they may perceive themselves to be "haunted".

#### 9.5.2 Stakeholders

The difficulties with ontology spill over into the task of defining shareholders. The project began with the assumption that a stakeholder would be a person or a group who used the clothing strategies associated with death in order to advance their own interests; to solve problems or obtain benefits. It was assumed at this point that stakeholders would include the bereaved individual, the family, trade interests and the cultural group or "community". However, the identification of stakeholders proved problematic. The cultural group itself could only be identified by shared practices and discourses, not by any shared religious or ethnic identity. Defining and labelling sub-groups also proved difficult. For example, while the family (as a pre-existent entity) sometimes shaped or operationalised clothing strategies (choosing clothes for the deceased and instructing mourners what to wear) in other situations clothing strategies (such as the distribution of wearable mementos) served to define who was counted as family and who was not. This constructed family might also be conflated at times with another category; that of the imagined community. Imagined communities connected by shared knowledge of the deceased, by religious belief, by nationality, by hobby or fandom, make significant use of clothing strategies in times of loss, but they are hard to place within any theoretical structure. This is partly because they cannot always be identified prior to the clothing behaviours (the themed funeral, the spontaneous memorial) that announce their presence, partly because they are not only stakeholders, they are also a recuperative strategy and a "space" wherein mourning is facilitated.

The fact that the communities who use (and are defined by) clothing strategies could not be reliably identified from external indicators was originally taken to be a flaw in research design, but it is now possible to argue that some of the clothing practices associated with loss confer group membership and bring imagined or affective communities into being. This implies that these clothing behaviours are not the traits or traditions of specific cultural groups but are negotiated, communicative and sometimes world-changing behaviours.

The final difficulty in identifying stakeholders, was the question as to whether the deceased themselves should be included. The dead certainly appear to

participate in, or benefit from, some clothing strategies even though both Protestant beliefs and modern rationalism dismiss such possibilities. The disposition of the clothing of the dead, and the wearing of commemorative clothing by mourners may constitute or facilitate charitable action on behalf of the deceased: equally, placing clothing in spontaneous memorials binds the deceased to people and to places in a way that both sustains their social presence and implicates them in currents of affection and power which appear to flow from the dead as well as towards them. However, to argue that the deceased have agency – that they participate in relationships or stimulate action – is not the same as arguing that they possess consciousness or intention; thus the dead cannot be the stakeholders or beneficiaries with which Grounded Theory normally concerns itself. Indeed the role of the dead is analogous to that of clothing itself, they are part of an experiential world that constrains and directs the mourner's behaviour sometimes in unexpected ways. Nonetheless, the idea that clothing behaviours are the result of *negotiation* between shareholders can usefully be extended in order to argue that outcomes are shaped not only by the interaction of human parties but also by nonhuman forces.

# 9.5.3 Complex categories

Some of the themes and categories identified in this study are hard to align with a model which describes a conflict between strategies to limit the destructive power of death and affective "forces" which resist these strategies. Presence absence, for example appears to be both an intended outcome of strategic action and a disruptive factor. When empty clothing appears in memorials (or in art), presence absence is an intentional effect. It may be evoked to protest the death, to call somebody to account or to challenge the assumption that life and death, presence and absence are binary opposites (for if this can be refuted then perhaps the dead aren't lost). However, presence absence is also part of the haunting quality of clothing which evokes fear and must therefore be controlled.

Such categories become a little less troubling when it is acknowledged that the affective power of clothing is never simply positive or negative; even aversive states (pain, fear, knowledge of absence) are sometimes deliberately stimulated to attain a secondary end. In addition to the examples cited above, mourning clothing was historically expected to stimulate discomfort and fear in the bereaved to enable them to prepare for their own death.

## 9.5.4 The public and private domain

A final difficulty with the proposed model is that – in seeking simplicity – it has glossed over what appears to be significant variation in clothing practice between the public and the private domain. To distinguish between public and private behaviours involves looking at the behaviours of groups separately to those of individuals and also considering why some behaviours are displayed and others are hidden. Thus continuing bonds with the dead as an individual activity might be contrasted with reaffirming the principles of communal life which is a collective activity; equally, activities which are associated with pride and respectability (placing clothing in a memorial) might be contrasted with activities which are concealed and may be associated with shame, embarrassment or contamination (using clothing as comfort objects or wearing the clothes of the dead).

The boundary between the public and private domain is also worthy of consideration, for – in the clothing practices associated with loss – this appears to map onto the boundary between life and death and also that between the pure and the abject. In life clothing projects the public identity of the deceased and hides their private self. In death clothing reconstructs the public identity and hides the (private, shameful, dirty)<sup>210</sup> fact of death.

These considerations suggest that the distinction between the public and the private domain should perhaps be one of the organising principles of the category maps used to generate theory (Figure 120). Arranging the categories in this way, reveals that private strategies are focussed on sustaining dyadic bonds with the dead, while public strategies aim to reaffirm the principles of communal life.

"Mr Doe".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>210</sup> Both Howarth (1996) and Turner and Edgely (1975) note that the deceased is considered as neither human nor alive when being worked upon in the privacy of the mortician's back room, but when (re)presented to the family they are once more

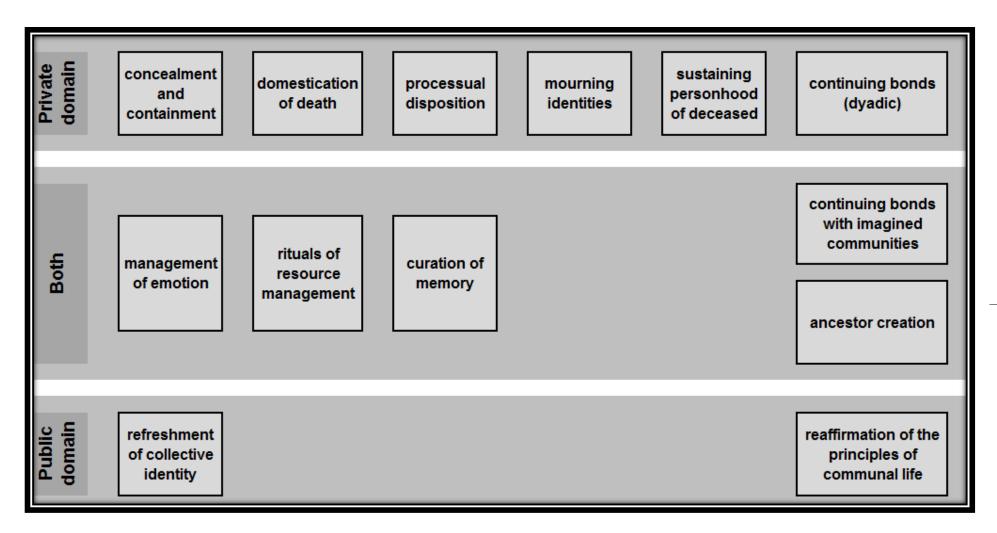


Figure 120: Clothing strategies sorted by public and private domain

## 9.5.5 **Drivers of change**

The final question that needs to be considered is how, and why, clothing behaviours change over time. The model outlined above is synchronic; representing a particular set of behaviours at a particular point in time. However, the project as a whole has offered a diachronic picture, looking at the development of practice over time. Grounded Theory has a special interest in historical change, maintaining that if one can expose what causes an observed behaviour to change, the aspirations or needs which drive the behaviour will also be revealed.

In taking a historical view of clothing practice, this project has examined several instances of change. Change in the public domain has included:

- The adoption of a standard burial garment and its later disappearance
- The popularity of mourning clothing at certain times and its suppression at others
- The emergence of new clothing practices wearing in memory and placing clothing in memorials.

When these change-contexts are compared, they can be seen to share several characteristics. New behaviours are often the result of strategies which advance the interests of the group (or the hegemony) being imposed on individual members. Thus the emergence of the standard burial garment was largely the result of economic and cultural aspirations (the wish to boost both the woollen trade and book production) but also constituted an attempt to limit social mobility by reinforcing the critical differences between the classes that retained dressed burial (the nobility and the clerics) and the commoners in their shrouds. In a similar way, mourners have been required to hide their grief in situations where visible mourning may compromise either the vigour or the reputation of the group. New clothing practices such as the deposition of clothing in spontaneous memorials and the themed funeral also serve to enhance the vitality and status of a community, although the community in question is now an imagined community. The proud display of team colours in the memorials built by football communities provides the paradigmatic example of a community restating its values, reaffirming bonds, proclaiming its identity and defending its reputation.

Established clothing behaviours wane for one of three reasons; either because the activity is no longer beneficial to the group, because it is no longer achievable or because the garment has lost its symbolic efficacy.

These three principles can all be illustrated with reference to the disappearance of "widows weeds". The value of mourning wear intended to make puritanical and patriarchal values tangible was called into question when religious doubt or dissent became more acceptable, and when early feminists began to rail against a practice they saw as "a mild form of suttee" (Buck, 1968: 37); however, the elaborate mourning practices of widowhood also became harder to sustain as more women entered the workplace. Finally, as black ceased to be the colour of sorrow and subordination and became fashionable for evening dress, the widow's outfit lost its capacity to denote bereaved status. Attempts to reinforce the symbolic power of the outfit by developing accessories that were explicitly for mourning (the mourning fan, the black-edged handkerchief, elaborate and explicit jewellery) served only to make mourning dress more fashionable and less symbolic (Hollander, 1993).

In summary, it is argued that new clothing behaviours associated with mourning are driven by the community's wish to (re)assert their sense of power and identity when these are threatened by death. However, these will only be sustained as long as they fit with the habits, routines and discourses of the social environment. It follows, then, that changes to habits, routines and discourses will also change mourning practice. Some changes are more influential than others, with changes to ideas about how life should be lived and what it means to die being, predictably, significant. In the public domain, the shift from investment in local embodied communities to investment in imagined communities has been influential, contributing to the rise of spontaneous memorialisation, the themed funeral and (some) practices of wearing in memory. In the private domain, changes in the relationship between the dead and the living have given rise to changes in practice, with the replacement of decathexis by continuing bonds giving rise to increased interest in "caring" for the dead body and, using the clothes of the dead as linking objects. .

# 9.6 **Refining theory**

The discussion above suggests that the provisional theory first advanced might be improved by starting, not with stakeholders, but with clothing itself; mapping the properties of clothing which affect bereaved people; sometimes causing distress, sometimes inviting recuperative action; and considering

how these clothing "impacts" operate differently in the public and private domain. The theory might thus be framed this way:

The cultural history of clothing has given garments the ability to

- confer and express identity
- mark social and symbolic boundaries
- support ritual
- provide a language with which to explore and express ideas
- give material form to the bonds which connect people, places and ideals.

The synaesthetic properties of cloth, meanwhile, and the capacity of clothing to trigger immersive memory experiences, mean that garments can also give imaginal access to past times and absent people. These properties lead bereaved people to approach clothing with a mixture of hope and fear, for while clothing can support recuperative strategies it can also shape or constrain behaviour in a way that is not willed, and stimulate aversive as well as pleasant emotions.

In the private sphere, a series of clothing strategies are used to minimise personal pain and transform the relationship with the deceased. The styling of the corpse is used to domesticate death, while the disposition of their clothing presents a way of curating memories of the deceased so that they are translated into an idealised ancestor with whom continuing bonds can be sustained. Clothing strategies are also used to bring specific deaths within the framework of cultural meanings: a death can be presented as timely or peaceful by dressing the corpse to imply that they have fulfilled cultural expectations and are now peacefully asleep, or it can be presented as exemplary or sacrificial through a themed funeral or the charitable donation of their clothing. The clothing practices of the private domain change when experiences or understandings of death change.

In the public domain, clothing strategies are used to reaffirm the structures, the values and the totems of communal life and also to sustain the morale and the reputation of the group. The forms, norms and ideals of collective life are reaffirmed by translating the dead into exemplary ancestors (sometimes achieved in the media through descriptions of their dead body). The morale and reputation of the group are maintained by using the clothing of mourners to ensure that only positive emotions are displayed in public and by using funerals, spontaneous memorials and some forms of wearing in

memory as means of refreshing collective identity. Change in the public domain occurs when new ways of assuring the survival and wellbeing of the group are found, or when established practices become unsustainable.

# 9.7 **Validity**

The theoretical description presented above, falls short of presenting a hypothesis which might be tested through further study. It is therefore necessary to test its validity using the criteria defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Glaser and Strauss argued that for validity to be determined a theory must fit the data closely, and be demonstrated using triangulation. That is to say, there should be more than one reason to believe each assertion. Thus the fact that the same conclusions emerged repeatedly from the individual thematic chapters constitutes a strong case for validity. In this study, the sense that clothing provides a way of rendering the dead ancestral by aligning them with cultural archetypes emerged strongly from the data on dressing the dead body, on clothing in memorials and on the "filtering" of the clothes the dead leave behind; it therefore appears to be valid. In a similar way, the idea that clothing can give material form to continuing bonds emerges strongly from the data on the clothes the dead leave behind and from that on mourning jewellery.

The other validity criteria set by Glaser and Strauss are that the theory should be comprehensible by a layman and should have explanatory and predictive power. There is nothing in the hypothesis proposed that would challenge the understanding of a layman, and it does offer an explanation of why bereaved people attach unusual importance to clothing and use it in predictable ways. It has to be admitted, however, that the predictive power of this project derives from its descriptive rather than its explanatory elements. Because many people have been found to dress the dead body as their "best self" and keep or gift the clothing items that recall this persona, it can safely be predicted that many others will do so in future; the argument that this is a process of memory curation and ancestor creation does little to enhance its predictive power.

One area in which theoretical interpretation may support prediction is in the assertion that the clothing practices of the private domain change when the experience and understanding of death changes. Taking the dressing of the dead body as an example, it can be argued that presenting the corpse as a

perfected image of the deceased individual is associated with a wish to domesticate death, and blur the line between the living and the dead. This presentation was favoured by the Victorians, who had strong bonds with the dead and liked to think of them awaiting reunion in Heaven. It fell out of favour when modern rationalists promoted decathexis, but came back into favour when interest in continuing bonds with the dead was rekindled towards the end of the twentieth century. The well-dressed corpse may be particularly consoling to mourners who are inclined to identify the "self" of the deceased with their body rather than their soul and who have witnessed an erosion of this self over a long, medicalised, dying trajectory. From here it might be predicted that the dead may be dressed in some other way if one of the following conditions is met in future:

- 1. If decathexis becomes the preferred response to loss once again
- 2. If there is a resurgence of religious discourses which conflate self with an immortal soul
- 3. If medical policy shifts away from perpetual intervention in order to sustain life and towards assisted dying.

It is certainly possible to predict – on a more general level – that death response will continue to be characterised by distinctive clothing behaviours, but that the precise form of clothing practice will shift in response to societal change.

# 9.8 Relationship to prior research

In asserting that the cultural associations of clothing make it a powerful device for managing the impact of death, while its synaesthetic properties can make it affective or haunting material, this study draws upon two distinct research traditions. The thesis accepts the arguments made by Berger and Luckman (1971) and Bauman (1992) that human culture is essentially a project of meaning-making, and agrees with Kuchler and Miller (2005) and with Pajaczkowska (2005)that clothing enculturates the individual, drawing them into the structures of meaning which are favoured by their group. It also accepts the assertions of historians such as Taylor (1983), Laquer (1983), and Gittings (1984) that clothing practice is used to repair such frameworks when they are threatened by death. However, the study also takes seriously the insistence of Latour (2005) that behaviour and experience often result from the interaction of forces beyond conscious

control, and agrees with Bissell (2009) that this gives clothing the capacity to create an emotional response and a sense of obligation.

In seeking to combine these two analytical perspectives and suggesting that garments both shape experience and provide materials for negotiating loss, the thesis takes a position which parallels that of several other studies. It endorses Wilson's (1985) claim that clothing can be used to rehearse new attitudes and responses, Turkle's (2007) insistence that objects serve to externalise and articulate thought, and Hallam and Hockey's (2000) assertion that objects give material form to memory.

In claiming that clothing supports three key adaptive strategies, the study develops the ideas of several earlier writers. In arguing that clothing supports continuing bonds with the dead, the thesis draws not only upon Klass's (1993c, 1996) articulation of continuing bonds but also Stallybrass's (1999) insistence that garments can create a point of connection between the living and the dead. In arguing that clothing has a tribal, totemic aspect which can help to restore morale in the aftermath of loss, the thesis draws upon studies of the clothing symbolism employed by subcultures and fan groups (Hebdige, 1979, Morris, 1981, Barnard, 1996: Chapter 2, Hodkinson, 2002). Finally, in arguing that clothing practice translates deceased relatives and friends into exemplary (but accessible) ancestors, the thesis picks up several disparate strands of thought, drawn from the work of archaeologists such as Williams (2006) and Gilchrist (2009), from anthropologists Miller and Parrot (2009), from sociologists Turner and Edgely (1975) and from the psychologist of religion, Dennis Klass (Klass, 2015). It is argued here that the strength of this thesis lies in the combination of diverse academic insights to produce an original perspective on the role of clothing in the context of death and bereavement.

# 9.9 Contribution to knowledge

This study advances knowledge in both clothing theory and death studies by demonstrating that the clothing practices associated with death are anything but superficial and by formulating a theoretical model to account for them. It has also addressed some specific gaps in knowledge. It has explained the strange phenomenon of the careful dressing of dead bodies that will not be viewed as a recuperative strategy which imaginatively translates the personally known dead into exemplary ancestors. It has offered a

theoretical framework for developments in mourning garments since the second world war; arguing that the black clothing, which once marked the "damage" death inflicted on embodied and co-located communities and helped to perpetuate the social order, has been replaced by clothing which reaffirms the bonds which continue to bind the dead to imagined communities. It has explained the charitable donation of the clothing left behind by the dead as a "ritual of resource management" (Cheal, 1988) which seeks to do bring something good out of a tragic situation and incorporate the death event within the framework of collective meanings. It has also drawn attention to the practice of including clothing in memorials – a practice which has received almost no attention in previous literature – and explained this in terms of ancestor creation and the reaffirmation of collective identity. Finally, it has suggested that while traditional approaches to death sought to contain personal mourning within the domestic interior, and modern approaches to death questioned whether mourning served any purpose, postmodern approaches use imagined communities which include the living and the dead as "spaces" for mourning – and access to these spaces is often negotiated through wearing or displaying clothing.

The study takes ideas which are well established (often in different academic disciplines) and combines them in an innovative way. Clothing theory, for example, takes it as read that clothes mark out social and political structures, while sociology and anthropology stress that funerary and commemorative practice serves to reinstate the forms and norms of collective life. Nonetheless, connecting these two concepts to argue that clothing is a critical element of recuperative practice following a death represents an innovative approach. Equally, the role played by clothing in ritual and magic is well recognised by historians while psychologists recognise that death is connected to both ritual and the uncanny, but this thesis is unusual in focussing on the ritual and transformative elements of the clothing practices associated with loss. Finally, this study draws the (unfashionable) idea of ancestor-creation to the fore. Although the idea that the personally known dead are imaginatively translated into exemplary ancestors is common-place in archaeology, and has been raised in connection to contemporary death practice by Miller and Parrot (2009: 506) and Klass (2015: 102) it has not previously been used as a way of understanding the clothing practices associated with bereavement.

In taking an interdisciplinary approach the study problematises some (discipline or context-specific) practices and assumptions. It questions, for example, rationalistic, detail-oriented and myth-busting approaches to the past; arguing that ancestral identities are crucial to the regeneration of communal life and stories that stories are often more useful, more restorative than *his*tories. The alignment of the dead with cultural ideals inevitably moves them away from their own particular biography, but in doing so makes them serviceable to the surviving group. In a similar vein, the thesis questions the wisdom of popular attitudes towards material objects, of narratives which prioritise "decluttering", "moving on" and disposing of objects which have no use-value. Not only do these discourses arise from modern approaches to death (which are already passing into history), material from bereavement narratives demonstrated them to be damaging to mourners. They exert unnecessary pressure on people who are already suffering and they advocate patterns of behaviour which may be disadvantageous. Bereavement writers described shifting relationships with mnemonic objects: implying that things they feared in the early stages of grief might become valuable later. Finally, this thesis highlights that much of the advice given to mourners about dealing with the clothing of the dead is based on the model of an active mourner in a passive world; this fails to take account of the unpredictable affective properties of clothing and the reported experience of many bereaved people.

# 9.10 Implications for further study

This study raises several interesting possibilities for further research; specifically

- 1. Could more be done with the data collected?
- 2. Would additional sorts of data change the outcome?
- 3. Would different data collection strategies yield different results?
- 4. What would testing the claims of the thesis reveal?

### 9.10.1 Could more be done with the data collected?

One of the key principles of Grounded Theory is that the researcher should allow categories to emerge from the data, but then focus upon those which have the greatest explanatory power; however in choosing to focus on specific categories one inevitably loses sight of other factors which may still be important. Although many categories could – theoretically – be moved to

centre-stage in order to see if this significantly affected the findings, one specific category presents itself as something that *ought* to be explored: this is the "kind of dying" that gave rise to the clothing behaviours.

Funeral directors indicated that the age of the deceased was often a factor in determining how the body was dressed, while evidence from the cultural archive suggested that those who died young were more likely to be given a themed funeral. Equally there is evidence, both in the literature reviewed (see, for example, Layne, 2000) and the data collected, that the treatment of clothing bought for children who died before or close to birth may present a special case – being used as traces, evidence of a life that never was. This thesis has argued that clothing behaviours are intensified when a death is shocking and problematizes communal structures of meaning, but sorting the evidence collected according to type of death might yield additional insights.

Behaviours might also be analysed with a focus on the time elapsed since bereavement, although there are some conceptual difficulties here, arising from conflicts between the "public time" that dictates mourning periods and marks anniversaries and the "private" often non-linear time that characterises recovery from loss.

#### 9.10.2 Would additional sorts of data change the outcome?

There is also scope to examine the contention that clothing plays a *special* role in the negotiation of loss. Gibson (2008: 4) suggested that both clothing and photographs were of particular importance to mourners, and there is an implication in the literature that such items become mementos because they are both portable and able to function as icons of the deceased (see 3.3.2.4.2). Miller (2008: 91), however, notes that a wide variety of possessions provide "strong support....at times of loss", while Miller and Parrot (2009) and Turley and O'Donohoe (2012) discuss the ability of various mundane items – bowls, tables, notebooks – to function as evocative objects, linking objects and memento mori in the period following a death. Questions thus arise about how, and why, clothing might be different. This area could usefully be explored through case studies of individuals who treasure the clothing of the dead alongside other kinds of evocative object.

# 9.10.3 Would different data collection strategies yield different results?

Although a number of methodological approaches were used to determine the role of clothing in death practice, using different approaches may still yield additional insights. Comparing specific clothing behaviours between different cultural or social groups seems likely to produce interesting results. There is some evidence that the transition from a standard burial garment to dressing the dead in their own clothes encountered resistance in the Catholic community even as it was welcomed by Protestants. Equally, a chance conversation at a conference revealed that the disposition of the clothing of the dead follows different processes in different cultures. While in Britain clothing is usually inherited by members of the nuclear family, the exact opposite happens in Nigeria where the clothes of the deceased are passed to the most distant relations. Such contrasts offer an exciting opportunity to explore the Grounded Theory claim that contrasting the responses of different communities in analogous situations, will expose the behavioural drivers (Glaser, 1992: 4).

There is also scope for researching the clothing experiences of bereaved people using interviews or focus groups. This study avoided this approach due to logistical and ethical concerns. However, with appropriate resources, safeguards against experimenter effect, and the opportunity to refer participants to suitable support if necessary, this may present a valuable complementary approach. Gibson (2008) and Miller and Parrot (2009) generated useful insights by talking to bereaved people about their use of objects that previously belonged to the dead, while Banim and Guy (2001) successfully used "wardrobe interviews" to explore women's attitudes to the clothes they wore and those they simply stored. These precedents imply that semi-structured, object-based interviews might yield a rich seam of evidence. Specifically, re-interviewing the same subjects after a period of around two years would give valuable data on the way attitudes to objects change over time.

There may also have been untapped potential in the Q-methodological studies. Online sorting was chosen for logistical reasons, but if participants had been seen individually they could have been asked about the thought processes behind their sorts and the extent to which they felt the result represented their viewpoint. Combining manual Q-sorting with a semi-

structured interview technique commends itself as a potentially valuable approach for an adequately resourced research project.

## 9.10.4 What would testing the claims of the thesis reveal?

The study made several distinctive claims, each one of which might provide a departure point for further research. Specifically it claimed that

- 1. Imagined communities which are identified and united by clothing give access to mourning identities and provide "space" for mourning
- 2. The inclusion of clothing in spontaneous memorials is a practice of ancestor creation.
- 3. charitable donation of the clothing left behind by the dead is a "ritual of resource management"

The first two principles might be tested and explored within fan communities: through interviews or focus groups with fans who had participated in commemorative rituals, or through a mixed methods study of the commemoration of a specific death within a sporting community. The third principle might be explored through interviews with bereaved people who had donated clothing to charity.

The experience of compiling the data for this project also revealed an absence of research in some tangentially connected areas, including the nature of afterlife belief in contemporary Britain, the phenomenological aspects of continuing bonds and the extent to which ordinary people embrace the notion of extended bodies. Questions such as "where do bereaved people imagine their loved ones to be?" and "what does contact with the dead feel like?" recommend themselves as departure points for further research.

# 9.11 Implications for practice

The material collected for this project has implications for the practice of funeral directors, bereavement therapists and the charities who receive the clothes that formerly belonged to the dead.

Funeral directors may find that they can reduce some of the anxiety experienced by mourners, by offering some kind of theoretical context for dressing the dead body. It matters less *what* is said about the practice than that some explanation is offered. A statement such as "even though the body may not be viewed, many families like to provide clothing that

represents their fondest memories of the deceased" may be preferable to, the bald question "what do you want them to wear?" which bereavement writers found confusing and distressing.

Equally, the positive reactions reported in relation to themed funerals suggest that funeral directors should discuss this possibility with clients. While personalised funerals create space for mourning at the time of the funeral, themed funerals which connect the deceased to an imagined community give mourners access to a more enduring space where their wish to talk about the deceased, install them in communal memory and lament their loss will be facilitated by sympathetic others for an extended period of time.

Bereavement therapists, meanwhile, should reconsider their advocacy of "decluttering", "moving on" and disposing of the garments left behind by the dead. As noted at 9.9, data from bereavement narratives made it clear that mourners' attitudes towards individual garments changed over time; what was clung to may be rejected and what was avoided may later be treasured. It therefore makes sense to consider the clothes of the dead to be charged with *potential* recuperative energy; the ability to become future mnemonic or connecting objects. On these grounds storing clothing out of sight appears to be a strategy with much to recommend it.

Charities receiving the clothing of the dead may also want to reflect on their practice. The bereavement literature studied revealed that although mourners cherished the idea that through charitable giving they could transform their loss, they found the act of donating embarrassing and feared seeing the garments on a stranger. It seems reasonable to assume that charities would attract more (and more valuable) donations from bereaved people if they could respond to this particular emotional context. Charities may, for example, be able to enhance the experience of performing an act of charity on behalf of the deceased either by letting the bereaved know how much money had been raised or by including the name of the deceased in an honorific register of donors. They may also be able to offset the fear of aversive or haunting experiences by offering a collection service and guaranteeing that the goods would not be sold locally. There may be some value in testing these assumptions in collaborative research with a charity partner.

# A personal conclusion

So did I, having learnt all this, understand what I had been doing when I wore my sister's clothes and kept the best of my father's? To some extent I did. Nonetheless, elements of my behaviour with, and my experience of, these clothes are hard to theorise because they are riddled with contradictions; positive and negative, public and private, all at the same time.

I wore my sister's clothes in order to create situations in which I could talk about her, and because I wanted to incorporate something of the person she had been into my own self. Once the need to talk had subsided and I could recognise Jen's legacy in my life I felt able to relinquish her clothes. This, however, was not the whole story. Two years after Jen died, and sometime after I had last worn her clothes, I packed them up and took them to a local charity shop. I regretted it terribly. I even returned to try and buy them back, but they were gone. A year later, I encountered her Monsoon dress and her green wool coat again. I went to midnight mass on Christmas Eve and saw them both on a young woman with long hair and small children; she looked like Jen had looked as a young mother, amazingly so. This comforted me greatly: I had no idea who this woman was, but she was carrying the essence of Jen-ness into the future. Clearly then, I had not only wanted to internalise the elements of Jen's person that I most treasured, I had also wanted them to be sustained "out there" in the public domain.

My behaviour with my father's clothes, I now recognise, was part of the project of imaginatively replacing the father I had watched die with his respectable and competent predecessor: an intensely personal act of ancestor creation. This was effective. I think of my father daily, I base many decisions on my knowledge of what he would have done, the dementia years are all but forgotten. His turkey-carving jumper remains in my office at work. It is on its way to the Yorkshire Fashion Archive I think, but I am not quite ready to surrender it. Some comfort remains in seeing it there; it evokes happy memories and reassures me that I can cope with whatever life throws at me because the wise, strong man who raised me remains faintly present. On the other hand I prefer not to touch it; there is something repugnant about its spongy mass; whether this distaste arises from the unpleasant texture of the nylon fibres or whether it relates to the sense that

traces of my father, now six years dead, remain caught in the knit, I simply cannot say. The jumper is in limbo, rendered both valuable and dreadful by conflicting connotations.



Figure 121: Jack (1919-2011) and jumper (1979-present)



#### **A.1** Survey for general public

Throughout history communities have dressed their dead in ways that seem to be highly significant - we think of Egyptian mummies, the rich warrior graves of the Iron Age and more recently of kings and bishops laid to rest in their finest robes - but when someone dies today how do we choose the final outfit?

This questionnaire is part of the groundwork for a study of funeral practices in 21st century Britain. I appreciate you taking the time to answer a few short questions.
1. Have you ever attended a funeral where the coffin was open, or been to pay your respects to a deceased friend or relative at a funeral parlour? (Yes/No)
2. If you answered 'yes' to question 1, could you describe your memories of this experience?
3. Have you ever been in a position where you had to choose clothes for someone who had died? (Yes/No)
4. If you have had to choose funeral clothes for the deceased please
describe the clothes you chose and the reason for this decision. I would be interested to know if there was an 'obvious choice' or if this was a difficult decision.
5. A surprising number of people choose to take photographs of their

dead relatives.	What is	your opinion	of this	practice?

- 6. Have you ever been in a position where you had to dispose of the clothing of someone who had died? (Yes/No)
- 7. If you have had to sort out the clothing of someone has died please tell me what you did with it. Was there anything you decided to keep? Was it difficult to decide what was appropriate?

8. If you have thought about funeral clothes for yourself please tell me
what you plan to wear. If you have not thought about this who would
you expect to make the choice for you?

- 9. Please tick the items in this list that apply to you.
  - I am male
  - I am female
  - I am under 25
  - I am between 25 and 50
  - I am over 50
  - I am religious
  - I am not religious
  - I believe in some kind of afterlife
  - I believe that death is the absolute end

# A.2 Summary of results, survey of general public

1 Have you ever attended a funeral where the coffin was open, or been to pay your respects to a deceased friend or relative at a funeral parlour?

16 (53.3%) answered yes, 14 (46.7%) answered no

2 If you answered 'yes' to question 1, could you describe your memories of this experience?

15 responses, shown below.

Very vivid; really difficult to go and do this (was supporting a brother who'd not been with my dad when he died). Was suprised at what the funeral directors had done to make him look like himself, which was very difficult to how he'd looked when he died.

Upsetting and unreal.

It is traditional with Irish catholics so I found it part of life.

Dissapointing- My mothers hair had not been done- her image was very important to her.

Couldn't do it, had to leave the room as it upset me so much, prefer to keep the last good memory I have of them rather than seen them like that.

good \_ I'd visited the open coffin before the funeral, so not sure if that counts for your survey,

It was a Sikh funeral and, after some apprehension, I allowed myself to quickly glance at my neighbour/friend in her coffin. I can mainly remember her face ('asleep') and didn't pay much attention to her clothes - though for some reason can remember fire-colours - yellow, orange, reds - though don't know if this is real or imagined (reflecting her personality!!)

A bit surreal, yet traditional in my home country. I think what I am reminded of is that the body is more like a shell/husk that is missing its essence (ie. the soul is gone).

I just remember thinking my mums eye lids looked stitched. and how cold he hand was.

I have viewed 4 dead bodies, one from an accident, which looked like it moved in the coffin. One grand parent looked peaceful, the other looked more pained. My father in law looked at peace

Relief that my last memory of this special person was so nice. I expected worse.

It was my Brother, but he'd died almost a month earlier and couldn't be buried due an investigation being held. The Undertaker had the parlor all decorated to make it seem like he showed some care to the situation.

it was my mother and she looked very pale and odd as she wasnt wearing her glasses but had full make up which def wasnt what my mother was like

Very vague as it was 18 years ago in a foreign country, there were a lot of other people there. It was the funeral of a lady I had worked for.

I've viewed a number of people's mortal remains in my role as a church minister. The first time I was apprehensive. After that it was completely natural. I have more than once expected the eyelids to flicker and the deceased to wake up, not in a miraculous way but just because undertakers are good these days at making them look as though they are just sleeping.

3 Have you ever been in a position where you had to choose clothes for someone who had died?

#### 6 (20%) answered yes

4 If you have had to choose funeral clothes for the deceased please describe the clothes you chose and the reason for this decision. I would be interested to know if there was an 'obvious choice' or if this was a difficult decision.

#### 12 responses

I choose clothes for my brother. He wore a shirt tie and suit (grey). He looked very peaceful and I was glad to do it for him

If it was for an open casket I would try to find something that was like they would wear in life and consistent but also trying to make them look at their best. (Personally I wouldn't really want to do this)

My sister picked out the clothes for mother to wear.

For my mother, I choose her favourite dress, it just seemed the obvious choice.

If I had to choose, they would be clothes which (I thought) the person would choose - to reflect their personality, life etc

I have not had to choose, but I think it would be clothing and items that were "favorites" to the deceased.

My choice would be to dress them and do their makeup as close to how they looked in life as possible.

No, but I've been surprised how many families have opted for a rugby or football shirt of a favourite team. I think I used to assume it should be something smart and sombre.

One had religious significance, the other outfit I can only describe as seemingly appropriate and obvious choice ie suit

#### BEST SUIT TO LOOK THEIR BEST

It was an obvoius choice for us as close family - we chose Mum's favourite outfit which she had recently worn to my sister's wedding - we all thought she'd have agreed with our choice!

Best Suit.collar & tie. Obvious choice for my Dad who was always smartly dressed

5 A surprising number of people choose to take photographs of their dead relatives. What is your opinion of this practice?

## 30 responses – mainly negative

Rather morbid; I'd prefer to remember someone as they were alive and there are plenty of photographs of that

#### A BIT GHOULISH

This isn't a memory I would like to have of my relative. I would like to have pictures of them when they were young and happy instead.

Dont think its right. Really dont agree with it an its creepy

Personally I wouldn't like to have photographs of a relative when they are dead - I always like remember them as they were when they were with us.

Would rather have photos when they were alive

I don't have an opinion either way it would up to the individual and their family

I personally wouldn't take photographs

I wouldn't do it personally, but I have no issue with people that want to

Its their choice. We celebrate birthdays with pictures, some prefer to remember funerals in pictures. The human mind remembers pictures easily.

If it helps them deal with death, I am comfortable with it. I personally wouldn't, as the person as far as I see is gone and a body is all that's left.

## A bit ghoulish.

Its OK, we did it with my dad and sent the pictures to relatives in Ukraine where the open coffin custom is the norm

If it makes them happy, so be it - though my instincts are that I'd prefer to see photos of them alive. I suppose it gives some kind of 'closure' to have a photo of them dead.

It is something to remember especially if it is a new born baby so you have something to remember it by.

I have heard of this occuring in some societies, but prefer to remember my relatives when they were alive. I don't judge people for wanting to do this, but I would not be interested in doing this personally.

I don't really feel I would want to do this.

#### It is up to personal choice

Each to their own I suppose but that's never something that I would do! I'm lucky in that nobody I am very close to has passed away, however when the time does come I know I'd rather remember them as they were alive, certainly not how they looked dead!

Seems a bit odd really!

It's a bit weird!

Morbid, memories and pictures of when they were alive are far better

Not for me.

I think it's disgusting and would never do it. But if it helps other to cope, OK.

each to their own

I don't think I would ever feel inclined to do this, as I usually like photographs to remind me of happy times. However when I'm dead people can take whatever pictures they like. I don't really understand why anybody would want to, but each to their own.

Its a bit tasteless and insensitive. I'm not sure I'd like people to take photos of me when I pass away.

I've never heard of it in the UK. I believe that it is a tradition in Estonia, and when an Estonian friend died I took a photo on my camera phone, but didn't dare tell his widow. I have since had that phone stolen too, so that photo could have made its way into anyone's hands!

I,m not sure hat I would want to do this as I think I'd prefer to remember them alive, rather than dead.

Disturbing. However I did have a friend who lost a child at birth and it was a comfort to her to have photos

6 Have you ever been in a position where you had to dispose of the clothing of someone who had died?

7 If you have had to sort out the clothing of someone has died please tell me what you did with it. Was there anything you decided to keep? Was it difficult to decide what was appropriate?

#### 19 responses

Most went to charity shops, though some pieces have been kept for sentimental purposes and other things passed onto close relatives. Very difficult to suggest that clothes passed onto others, but was the case that they'd hardly, if ever been worn, and weren't too obviously personal, eg leather jacket

#### PASSED TO CHARITY SHOP

Again, with Mum's clothing, myself and two sisters each chose a few items to remember her by. E.g. scarf / top etc. Basically things we remember her wearing on happy occasions. It was quite difficult to choose - we wanted to hang on to everything! We then gave the rest of the clothing to charity / to be recycled. Most went to charity shops

Most went to charity shops we asked family first if they wanted anything.

It was difficult because the person didn't have much anad what they had wasn't any good so I had to throw everything away. There were small keepsakes which I gave to people that wanted them.

#### The majority went to charity shops

Asked the neighbour if she wanted first choice of a keepsake, she chose an ornament. All of the clothes went to charity except a Mink, a Sable and a Blue Fox fur. I'm unlikely to wear any, and would be reluctant to let tyhem go as i have fund childhood memories of the textures. (I once went clubbing in the fox fur).

My mother, my sister and I decided to give her clothes to charity bar one or items we decided to keep. We shared her jewellery between us to hand down to her grandchildren.

tried to keep things that I would both use and remember dad by. For me it was hats, but by the time I got to his clothes, my mum had thrown these away first as she always thought them tatty.

When I have to do this, I shall keep certain items as keepsakes - to remind me of the person/personality/maybe certain events they attended in these clothes - happy memories.

Most of the clothing went to charity shops. I kept a few personal possessions.

#### I have not had to do this personally yet (fortunately).

Some thingsli kept that I could wear or family could wear, rest went to charity shops. It was a bit sad at the tme.

When my Gran and then later my aunty died we had to sort out their belongings. I did keep several items from them both. From my gran I kept a couple of full length wool coats - mainly because at the time I was a poor student and it was winter! From my aunty I was more frivolous and kept a fur stole which I am unlikely to wear in public but was an item of clothing from her 'era' and so reminded me of her elegance and glamour.

No nothing was kept, it was a decision what was taken to a charity shop and what was thrown away.

Throw away what's no good, give the rest to the Hospice shop. However, I did keep a jacket that was my brother's.

kept some, gave some to friends..charity shop took the rest. found it hard to deal with things I had known she had worn for a reason like my wedding etc Went to charity. Didn't want to keep anything. Too distressing

8 If you have thought about funeral clothes for yourself please tell me what you plan to wear. If you have not thought about this who would you expect to make the choice for you?

## 28 responses

I have no idea, it's not something I've thought about yet.

## I WISH TO BE CREMATED

Semi-smart (e.g. blouse/shirt), plain black, or as dark colours as I can manage, and nothing too dressy. Also nothing that should too much leg or cleavage.

No not thought about it. My next of kin or partner etc. Unless i think of it later on then i would put it in the funeral plan

Never considered it. I would expect my husband / closest remaining relative to choose probably.

My daughters

I would assume my next of kin would decide.

I would like to let my family know what I would like to wear. Everything will depend on how old I am and my state of health at the time

I don't care, I intend to be cremated. I am a claustrophobic. The idea of accidentally being buried alive (knowing how unlikely and irrational this is) gives me the screaming ab dabs

OMG! Hadnt even given it a thought. I'm not fussed as long as its not a Lime Green Thong - I wont have the body when i'm dead.

Plain white garb

Haven't really thought about it, probably my partner will make the choice for me.

It really does not concern me - its for others to decide

I would like to wear something that reflects the 'happiest' times in my life - eg a glamouress dress worn to a special occasion - plus jewellry and accessories of course!!

There would be no choice.

I've never thought of this in detail. I would expect my partner or parents to make the choice for me. I would like to be dressed in something (a dress?) that made me feel beautiful when I was alive (or wore on an important day (wedding dress, etc.)

I haven't given it a thought. Nobody in particular.

I would wear black clothing appropriate to the season and a hat

I've given this no thought whatsoever! Though I'd certainly want it to be something biodegradeable. My husband would probably choose for me, but it will also depend on when I die - if it's before my parents then I imagine my mum might choose, if it's after them and I have children one day then I guess they would choose.

Whoever's sorting the funeral I guess so presumably my children or husband, depending on when i go...!

Not thought about it but would expect my daughter to decide

## My spouse

My Wife would decide. I hope I'd be dressed normal and not made to look like a clown. At least I'm bald, so my hair won't look like that of a gay horse. not thought about it

I have not thought about this. I expect that as I get older I will think more about my death and come up with some arrangements. I have considered that I would like to give any organs to medicine or science (if they would like them) and I would like to have an environmentally friendly burial. I'm not too concerned at the moment by what I'll wear.

Definitely one of my 'Doctor Who' scarves. Maybe one of the jumpers my wife has made for me. Not too bothered otherwise, it's kind of irrelevant really. I've not thought about it. When I'm dead, I'm dead and it's probably more

important that those left behind are comfortable with what I wear. If I had expensive clothes I think it would be a waste to be buried or interred wearing them. Iwould prefer someone else to have them.

Anything but a shroud

## 9 Who responded to this survey?

8 male, 21 female

3 under 25, 19 between 25 and 50, 8 over 50.

4 religious, 20 not religious

17 believed in some kind of afterlife, 8 believed death to be an absolute end.

# A.3 Survey for funeral directors

1.
I am a postgraduate research student at the University of Leeds.
I am interested in the choices that people make in clothing and 'styling' the dead body and hope to reach some understanding of the reasons behind these choices.
As part of the early-stage data collection I am asking people who have professional connections to the funeral industry for their insights.
I would be very grateful for any information you can provide. Please feel free to omit any questions you prefer not to answer.
Many thanks for taking the time to help me.
In your experience, who normally makes the decision as to how the deceased should be dressed and presented?
2. At your place of work how often is the choice of clothing based on religious belief or tradition?
C Never
C Very rarely
C Somewhere around 25%
C Somewhere around 50%
C Somewhere around 75%
C Almost always
3. Thinking of situations where no religious traditon dictates what should be worn in the coffin, do the bereaved always have an opinion on how the deceased should be dressed?
C They almost always have an opinion
C They often have an opinion
C They rarely have an opinon
4. How frequent is it for the deceased to have left instructions on how they wish to be
dressed?
C Very rare
C Quite rare
C Quite common
C Very common

5. Please tell me how information on how the body should be presented is obtained. (For example, are details taken over the phone, or in a face to face interview, is advice provided if the customer is uncertain?)
6. What would you do if the family were unable or unwilling to give guidance on how the body should be dressed?
<u></u>
7. What are the most common clothing requests for an adult man?
8. What are the most common choices for an adult female?
<u></u>
9. What are the most common clothing choices for young boys?
_
<u>▼</u>
10. What are the most common clothing choices for a young girl?
11. What are the most common clothing choices for an infant?
12. Have you observed any 'trends' or changes over time in the clothing that is chomen?
13. Have you formed any opinions as to why people make the choices that they do?
_
<u></u>
14. What is the most unusual clothing request that you have had?
~ ~

15. Do you ever orde	er products from specialist manufacturers of c	offin clothes for your
clients?		
C Never		
C Rarely		
C Sometimes		
C Often		
16. If you do order s most frequently ord	special coffin clothes please tell me the compar lered products.	nies you use and the
17. Where the berea	aved provide clothing do these items tend to be	part of the dead
erson's establishe	ed wardrobe or are new items bought specially	?
	_	
18 Are necessal item	ms (apart from clothing) ever placed in the coff	in with the deceased?
•		
•		
•		
f so, please give ex	amples.	
f so, please give example from the first from the f	what percentage of bereaved families choose to	o view the deceased in
f so, please give example from the first from the f	amples.	o view the deceased in
f so, please give exa 9. Approximately w he coffin (either wh	what percentage of bereaved families choose to	o view the deceased in
9. Approximately whe coffin (either whomeral)?	what percentage of bereaved families choose to	o view the deceased in
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9. Approximately whee coffin (either whuneral)?  Less than 10% About 10%	what percentage of bereaved families choose to	o view the deceased in
9. Approximately whe coffin (either whuneral)? C Less than 10% About 10% About 20% About 30%	what percentage of bereaved families choose to	o view the deceased in
9. Approximately whe coffin (either whomeral)?  Less than 10%  About 10%  About 30%  About 40%	what percentage of bereaved families choose to	o view the deceased in
9. Approximately whe coffin (either whuneral)?  C Less than 10%  About 10%  About 20%  About 30%  About 40%  About 50%	what percentage of bereaved families choose to	o view the deceased in
9. Approximately whe coffin (either whuneral)? C Less than 10% C About 10% C About 20% C About 30% C About 40% C About 50% C About 60%	what percentage of bereaved families choose to	o view the deceased in an open-coffin
9. Approximately whe coffin (either whomeral)?  C Less than 10%  About 10%  About 20%  About 30%  About 40%  About 50%  About 60%  About 70%	what percentage of bereaved families choose to	o view the deceased in

reason?	body for viewing, would you apply cosmetics? If so, for what
	A
	*
21. Would you reco	nmend the bereaved to view the body, and if so, why is this?
	<u>A</u>
	<u>*</u>
22. In some culture:	and certain geographic areas it is common for the family to take
photographs of the	deceased in their coffin. Have any of your clients expressed a wis
or photographs?	
C Never	
C Very rarely	
Occasionally	
C Quite often	
24. Thank you very stage in this study,	nion of the practice of post-mortem photography?  nuch for your help. If you would be willing to particpate at a later perhaps through email correspondence or a personal interview,
24. Thank you very stage in this study, please leave your c	nuch for your help. If you would be willing to particpate at a later perhaps through email correspondence or a personal interview, entact details below.
24. Thank you very stage in this study, please leave your c	nuch for your help. If you would be willing to particpate at a later perhaps through email correspondence or a personal interview, entact details below.
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24. Thank you very stage in this study, please leave your c (Your contact detail	nuch for your help. If you would be willing to participate at a later perhaps through email correspondence or a personal interview, intact details below.  It will not be passed to anyone else, and opinions or information atted to you with your explicit permission.)

## A.4 Summary of results, survey of funeral directors

1. In your experience, who normally makes the decision as to how the deceased should be dressed and presented?

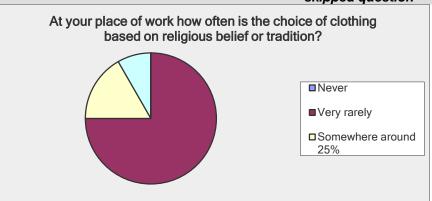
Answer Options		Response Count
		12
	answered question	12
	skipped question	0

Response	Detail
1	The next of kin.
2	the family
3	The family
4	Next of kin. I.E. Husband or Wife
5	The immediate family, or in line with cultural expectations.
6	the deceased's family
7	the next of kin, but also the adult children. Occasionally younger children if its their parent.
8	The family.
9	The family of the deceased
10	Next of kin
11	The immediate family (next-of-kin)
12	Next of kin

2. At your place of work how often is the choice of clothing based on religious belief or tradition?

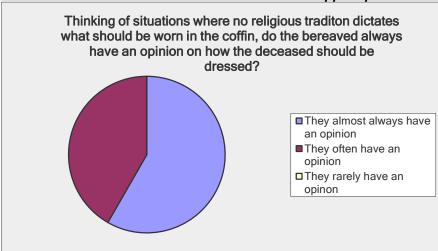
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Never	0.0%	0
Very rarely	75.0%	9
Somewhere around 25%	16.7%	2
Somewhere around 50%	8.3%	1
Somewhere around 75%	0.0%	0
Almost always	0.0%	0

answered question 12 skipped question 0



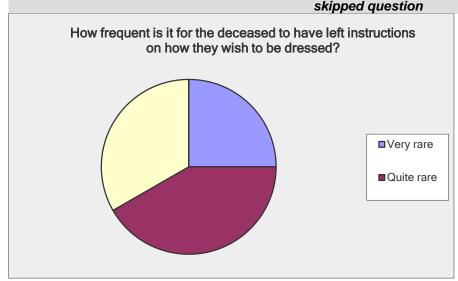
3. Thinking of situations where no religious tradition dictates what should be worn in the coffin, do the bereaved always have an opinion on how the deceased should be dressed?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
They almost always have an opinion	58.3%	7
They often have an opinion	41.7%	5
They rarely have an opinion	0.0%	0
ar	nswered question	12
	skipped question	0



4. How frequent is it for the deceased to have left instructions on how they wish to be dressed?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very rare	25.0%	3
Quite rare	41.7%	5
Quite common	33.3%	4
Very common	0.0%	0
	answered question	12
	akinned augestion	0



5. Please tell me how information on how the body should be presented is obtained. (For example, are details taken over the phone, or in a face to face interview, is advice provided if the customer is uncertain?)

Answer Options	Response Count
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	0

Response	Detail On the second of the se
	We have a policy of presenting the body in as real a way as possible, without any mortuary make up, or embalming. We are always
1	completely honest about what the family can expect to see.
2	face to face interview as part of the funeral arranging
3	face to face and information provided to client
4	Face to face
5	Face to face, advice may be given depending on any manner of things such as age, culture, mode of death. Each case is individually considered.
6	face to face interview
7	Usually at a face to face interview. Information rather than advice is given - what they can and can't do. And maybe ideas - have you thought about?
8	I ask the family if the deceased had a particular outfit that they liked.
0	We always ask the family when we see them to arrange the funeral. We usually do this at the home of the deceased or their relatives as this is a more comfortable environment for them. If they are unsure of what they would like the deceased dressed in we give them time to
9	think.
10	Face to face interview
11	Talking through the options with the client, face-to-face
12	face to face

6. What would you do if the family were unable or unwilling to give guidance on how the body should be dressed?

Answer Options		Response Count
		12
	answered question	12
	skipped question	0

Response	Detail
1	Make suggestions.
2	depends on whether they would like to visit
3	put the decdeased in a gown
4	Use a gown
5	Decide based on historical factors.
6	Leave as is
7	Wrap the body in a soft jute shroud.

8	I would suggest a gown as a last resort, we usually try to encourage the family to bring in some clothes.
9	If they are unsure we give them the opportunity to have a think about it. We explain that even if nobody is coming to see the deceased in the Chapel of Rest it is still important that their dignity is upheld and it is important that they are washed and dressed. If they don't want to pick out some clothes of the deceased to let us have we can provide a gown / shroud for them to wear.
10	We would dress them in a gown provided by ourselves
. •	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
11	Give them all the options then let them make a decision.
12	we would decide

7. What are the most common clothing requests for an adult man?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	0

Response	Detail
1	Comfy trousers. Jumpers.
	anything from his best jacket to his gardening trousers
2	to the britches and long red socks he wore at Christmas
3	a suit or religious dress
4	Shirt and trousers
5	Lounge suit or formal wear.
6	smart casual clothes or a suit
7	Just their normal clothes - often things they were comfortable in. Occasionally a suit. Occasionally linked to football or rugby. We've had a couple of requests for naked - that's how they slept.
	Depends on age. Normally 65+ wear some sort of suit, that could be Royal British Legion, with army medals etc.
8	Under 65 tend to wear a normal suit or comfy casual clothing.
	Gents in their 30's and lower tent to wear casual gear, quite often football tops and trainers etc.
9	Suit or smart casual clothing
10	Suit
11	Shirt (open or with tie) and trousers
12	day clothes/our robe

8. What are the most common choices for an adult female?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	0

Response	Detail
1	Similar
2	anything from party gear to everyday comfortable clothes
3	wedding or favourite and religious dress
4	Dress
5	Day clothes or wedding dress
6	as above
7	Similar principles to the above. In their favourite clothes, favourite colours, with some jewellry. Sometimes something comforting like a blanket.
	We have found that many older ladies tend to wear night dresses, especially if they have been in a residental home for a while.
	Women between 50 and 65 tend to be dressed in what you might call "Sunday best"
8	Women in their 40's and below are more casual. Jeans, nice top etc.
9	smart outfit or a night dress
10	Very often a special occasion outfit
11	No single choice stands out
12	day clothes/Our robe

9. What are the most common clothing choices for young boys?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	10
answered question	10
skipped question	2

Response	Detail
1	everyday clothes
2	football shirt
3	Jeans and t shirt
4	Casual day wear or pyjamas
5	football kit
6	Clothes that are familiar and normal - maybe themed to a favourite team or character.
7	Football kits.
8	probably a favorite outfit they had
9	Jeans and a top
10	day clothes/Our robe

10. What are the most common clothing choices for a young girl?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	10
answered question	10
skipped question	2
Response Detail	

1	Everyday clothes
2	not sure
3	as above
4	Casual day wear or night wear
5	sporty trousers and a top
6	As in 9.
7	It depends on the age. Usually somthing precious to them.
8	probably a favorite outfit they had
9	Favourite outfit
10	day clothes/Our robe

11. What are the most common clothing choices for an infant?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	0
December 19	

Response	Detail
1	Everyday clothes or naked
2	swaddling
3	either jump suit or chirstening gown
4	Depends on age
5	Depends what you mean by "infant", for baby it is usually a baby grow or the like.
6	babygrow
7	Closer wrapping. White often. Could be baby grow, or similar to 'christening' clothes.
8	Baby grow and cap.
9	very hard to answer
10	Favourite outfit or a pretty dress for a little girl
11	baby-grow
12	infant clothing

12. Have you observed any 'trends' or changes over time in the that is chosen?	e clothing
Answer Options	Response Count
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	0
Response Detail	

Response	Detail
1	Dressing in the person's everyday clothes still the most common, followed by wrapped in a sheet or naked.
2	does not have to be the best suit /dress - much more relaxed and imaginative - always within the parameters of natural fibres
3	more people are being dressed rather than using a gown set
4	More people in jeans
5	Not really

6	It's getting more informal
7	I think the clothing has become less formal - rarely the Sunday best.
8	Unfortunatly, more people are leaning towards casual clothes rather than a nice smart suit.
9	It is becoming very rare that we use a shroud, most people have their own clothes. 16 years ago when I first started in the funeral trade more common for a shroud to be used
10	Trends have moved towards more relaxed clothing rather than formal suits
11	More people want the deceased to be dressed in his or her own clothes rather than in a shroud
12	yes change from our robe to own clothes

# 13. Have you formed any opinions as to why people make the choices that they do? Answer Options Response Count 12 answered question 12 skipped question 0

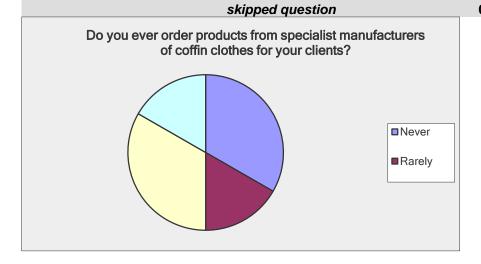
Response	Detail
1	Emotions.
2	the clothes the person who has died liked best / felt most comfortable in
3	they dont like the gown set - to be dressed seems more personal
4	Things the deceased either looked smart or comfortable in
5	Comforting to the bereaved.
6	It's something we talk with them about - we often suggest something the deceased would have liked to wear in life
7	They want to think of the person as being 'comfortable', in something familiar.
8	At the end of the day, it is up to the family, or the deceased if they left instructions.
9	I think people are very led by our advise on what options are available. Alot of people don't relalise that a deceased person can be dressed in their own clothes
10	They feel that the deceased will look more like the person they know if they are dressed in their own clothes
11	Perhaps people are more comfortable with death and therefore want to imagine what someone will look like, even if they are not visiting the person in the chapel of rest
	past experience in viewing deceased
12	Funeral directors used to dictate

14. What is the most unusual clothing request that you have had?		
Answer Options	Respons e Count	<b>;</b>
	9	
answered question	9	9

	skipped question 3
Response	Detail
1	I am currently doing the funeral for a man who performed amongst the crowd at Glastonbury Festival for 16 years as a butler who had lost his master. He is being buried in his full butler's outfit. The top hat has had to have the back cut off, and an extra long cardboard coffin ordered to accommodate it. His coffin has had Willie Nelson spray painted on it by a tattooist. He will be buried with his tray and fake drink.
2	I cant disclose
3	Fancy Dress!!! Elvis
4	West suit (refused due to cremation emmission regulations)
5	Hard to say. Plus fours with bright red socks. Naked.
	You name it, I've seen it.  Santa clause outfits, Clown outfit, with full makeup.
6	I also have been told by my partner that she was asked to dress the deceased in a full Elvis jumpsuit, zipped up the back. This came with a bottle of black hair dye, which the family provided. Unfortunatly, the deceased was bald, so the family insturucted her to "just paint it on, quiff and all"!
7	Bikers leathers (which are not easy to put on, but we always try to carry out any requests)
8	Never had unusual clothing request.
9	no clothes

15. Do you ever order products from specialist manufacturers of coffin clothes for your clients?

Answer Options		Response Percent	Response Count
Never		33.3%	4
Rarely		16.7%	2
Sometimes		33.3%	4
Often		16.7%	2
	answered question	1	2
	skipped question		0



<ol> <li>If you do order special coffin clothes pleas companies you use and the most frequent products.</li> </ol>	
Answer Options	Response Count
	8
answered question	8
skipped question	4

Response	Detail
1	none
2	allsops
	Bradnams
3	Atkinsons
4	Atkinsons, Clark & Strong and any of the shroud manufacturers.
5	Allsops - funeral gowns
6	Depends on what we are after.
7	We use our local supplier who supplies all our coffin handles etc
8	Howgates, Dewsbuty

tend to be part of the dead person's establ wardrobe or are new items bought special	ished
Answer Options	Response Count
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	0

Response	Detail
1	Established wardrobe.
2	mostly part of their wardrobe sometimes bought new
3	can be either
4	Mostly own unless a lot of weight has been lost due to illness
5	Half and half, new (Afro Caribbean families), or from the deceased wardrobe (most other families).
6	usually part of their wardrobe
7	Established wardrobe.
8	50/50.  We quite often see brand new clothes but sadly we find that quite often, they dont fit.
9	usually from their wardrobe, unless its a baby and then families will quite often go out and buy a new outfit.
10	Mainly from their wardrobe, but sometimes the family will buy new clothes
11	Wardrobe items
12	wardrobe

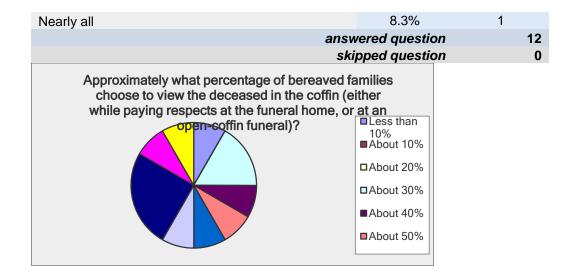
18. Are personal items (apart from clothing) ever placed in
the coffin with the deceased? If so, please give
examples.

Answer Options	Response Count
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	0

Response	Detail
1	Huge amounts. Photographs, keepsakes, pillows, soft toys, cigarettes, joints, drink, letters, ashes, jewellery, stones, crystals, books.
	more for burial eg books, spirit miniatures, photos,
2	soil from their garden etc
3	yes often - photographs, letters, jewellery,
	Yes, All sorts.
4	Photos and poems being the most common.
5	Endless personal items, but the mode of disposal i.e burial or cremation will determine if permissible. For cremation there are specific exclusions re: man made fabrics and shoes.
6	Yes - photos, letters, drawings from the grandchildren, tobacco, alcohol
7	Yes. Jewellry, poetry, alcohol, cigarettes, chocolate, objects that meant something to them, spectacles
8	Very often. Photographs, letters, flowers, cigarettes alcohol (in a placstic container if cremation is applicable)
	Yes - people very often place letters and photo's in the coffin. With burial any items can be placed in the coffin, but with cremation we
9	are limited on what is allowed.
10	Jewellery, photos,
11	Yes. Walking sticks, photos, jewellery, books, cigarette cases
12	pictures, children's drawings

# 19. Approximately what percentage of bereaved families choose to view the deceased in the coffin (either while paying respects at the funeral home, or at an open-coffin funeral)?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 10%	8.3%	1
About 10%	0.0%	0
About 20%	0.0%	0
About 30%	16.7%	2
About 40%	8.3%	1
About 50%	8.3%	1
About 60%	8.3%	1
About 70%	8.3%	1
About 80%	25.0%	3
About 90%	8.3%	1



20. In preparing the body for viewing, would you apply cosmetics? If so, for what reason?	
Answer Options Respons Count	
	12
answered question	12
skipped question	0

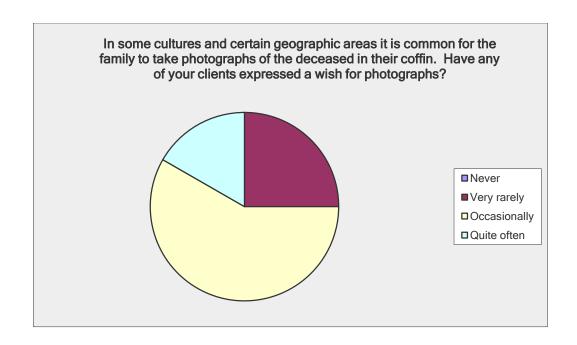
Response	Detail
1	Never.
2	only to cover bruising or a little colour to the lips. Never a lot of make up unless specifically requested
3	yes - to make the deceased as they were when they alive
4	Yes, if asked or necessary due to trauma
5	Only a) if family provide deceaseds own cosmetics and a photograph or b) to enhance or mask, but only in a subtle manner.
6	as little as possible - if you can see it you have put too much on
7	Only lightly if asked for, to make the person a little more how they were in life
8	Unless it really nessescary. Some people after embalming can "grey off" around the mouth and nose. This is usual and can be covered by cosmetics.
9	no we do not as a rule use cosmetics. If a family ask for eg. lipstick to be applied then I will ask them to let me have the ladies own lipstick to apply. Sometimes we have to use cosmetics to cover injuries (ie a car crash victim)
10	Light makeup on ladies if requested.
11	Not unless specifically asked to by the next-of-kin
12	only if asked by NOK

21. Would you recommend the bereaved to view the body, and if so, why is this?		
Answer Options	Response Count	

		12	
	answered question	12	
	skipped question	0	
Response	Detail		
1	Always, if at all possible. The head and to differently, seeing is the beginning of universe we do recommend viewing		
	a) helps to come to terms with the death	/acceptance	
2	b) takes away fear of death		
3	We provide the option - it is the family's belief that it does help them to come to they see that they have passed - they us any peace they have to with them	terms with the b	pereavement -
4	We never recommend we ask if they wo know if all is well	uld like to and	then let them
5	Entirely up to the family, would never pre	essurise either	way.
6	We don't recommend it as such but always	ays give them t	he option
7	Yes. I think it is often helpful in coming to if the circumstances are difficult or the be Research backs up this view. I would enchildren to come too.	ody is not in a	good state.
8	I always tell the family that if they are no fact that if the death was sudden, then s view, remember them as they were, so t been ill for a long time and may have ch somewhat, then after embalming, it may and looking peaceful.	ometimes it ma to speak. If the anged in their a	ay help not to deceased has appearance
9	I would never recommend viewing as thi it is very much an individual choice.	is puts pressure	e on a person,
10	Viewing the deceased is a personal chorecommend it. The person must make to do. I would support whatever they ch I would never recommend it. The decision	heir own decisi ose to do. on is entirely tha	on as to what at of the
11	bereaved. I am happy to tell them what to not for me to recommend.	ine person look	S like, but it is
12	I would inform them of their choice		

22. In some cultures and certain geographic areas it is common for the family to take photographs of the deceased in their coffin. Have any of your clients expressed a wish for photographs?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Never	0.0%	0
Very rarely	25.0%	3
Occasionally	58.3%	7
Quite often	16.7%	2
ansv	vered question	12
sk	ipped question	0



23. What is your opinion of the practice of post-mortem photography?		
Answer Options Respons Count		
	11	
answered question	11	
skipped question	1	

Response	Detail
1	It is a very good thing indeed, and is becoming much more widely practiced. We often suggest it.
	1
2	I think it is very helpful
3	If they family want it then it ups to them - personally I wouldnt of my family
4	Bit uncomfortable about it
5	I do not have a problem with it.
6	If that's what the client wants
7	Fine.
8	Again, if that is what the family would like, then it is up to them.
9	It is not something I would recomend but will carry out the families wish if thats what they want
10	Do you mean photographs of a post-mortem or photographs of someone after death? The question isn't clear.
11	Never

24. Please tell me how long you have worked in the funeral industry and whether, in that time, you have noticed any significant changes in the way the body is presented.

		_	l
Answer Option	ons	Response Count	
		12	
	answered question	12	
	skipped question	0	
Response	Detail		
2	10 years. I think the families we work expect to have their wishes carried out the fd		
3	27 years - the deceased is dressed in embalming process has improved	own clothes mor	e - the
4	18 years.		
5	35 years full time, all my life been con change in presentation in that time (in 35 years. When I started we used to p for viewing but now we don't do this. It small bed with a coverlet over them up display) and a pillow under the head.	my experience) but the deceased nstead they are to their chest (h	in the coffin resting on a ands on
6	of seeing a loved one in death.		io noipiai may
7	10 years. I think already covered in the We very rarely embalm and find that puthe body as it is, so long as it is tidy and them one mother wanted to dress here dead for 3 weeks and his body was no she needed to do. I'm not sure the cha area over that time - maybe acceptance body is increasing, but the cursory going decreasing. We are finding more peop washing and dressing the body (but of always done by the community.	eople are general dependence of reasonably se son even though the tin a good state ages have been se of spending tireng to pay brief reare happy to be course 75 years	ally fine to see cure. But even he had been . It was what great in this me with the espects is be involved in ago this was
8	I have been in the industry since I was I am seeing more people being dresse use gowns anymore, as opposed to wh dressed in gowns, now I would say its 16 years	d in their own clonen I first started	othes. I rarely , 90% were
9	The main change is that not as many be the use of refridgeration.	oodies are emba	lmed due to
10	10 years		
11	25 years - embalming is more accepte produced better results. since 1969	d, more widely c	arried out, and
12	more own clothes used now		

25. If you have noticed changes do you have any 'theories' about the reasons for these?	
Answer Options Respon	
	9
answered question	9

	skipped question 3
Response	Detail
1	we work alongside the family and give them information so that they can make their own choice
2	changes in ethinic makeup of society and the science and education within the embalming industry
3	N/A
4	n/a
5	I think there are people who want to reclaim funerals from the professionals and more involvement is a way of doing this.
	Some funeral companies will charge extra for the deceased to be dressed in their own clothes, and for embalming.
6	We do not. We believe that
7	I feel that death is not such a taboo subject now and people are given more choices. This helps families to grieve and deal with what
7	has happened
8	Better products I guess.
9	answered previously

## A.5 Q sort statements

- 1 I believe in an afterlife.
- 2 I am sure there is no afterlife. Death is the absolute end.
- 3 No contact is possible between the living and the dead.
- The dead are not gone while the living remember them.
- Thinking about people who have died is pointless and upsetting. It is best to focus on the here and now and look after the living.
- 6 The dead can and do contact the living.
- 7 The clothing left behind by those who have died should be distributed among family and friends as mementoes
- The clothing left behind by those who have died should be donated to a charity favoured by the deceased
- 9 The clothing left behind by those who have died should be recycled
- 10 If someone dies leaving designer clothes behind them I would wear those: not chainstore stuff though!
- The clothing left behind by those who have died should be sold for profit. The family should benefit
- Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is distasteful
- Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is unhygienic
- Handling and wearing the clothing left behind by those who have died can be very comforting to the survivors
- If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who died I would just keep items linked to significant life events (eg wedding, graduation, travel)
- The clothing left behind by those who have died might be an important source of information about those people; what they liked and what they believed.
- 17 If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would get rid of everything straight away.
- 18 If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would just keep the things that evoked happy memories of them at their best
- 19 If I were sorting out the clothes of someone who had died I would just keep the stuff that would come in useful for specific people: things that were the right size and nearly new.
- I would want to keep clothes that someone I loved had worn a lot. These would be the ones that evoked most memories
- I think it is a good idea to make craft items (rugs, quilts, cushions) out of the clothing left behind by those who have died.
- Seeing the clothes of someone who has died can be needlessly upsetting

- I would not know what to do with the clothing of someone who had died. I would probably just put it in the loft or something.
- Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person can help you feel close to them
- Dressing and acting like someone who has died is a good way to honour their memory
- 26 Dressing and acting like someone who has died may be a sign of mental illness
- The dead are aware of what the living do. The actions of their family can please or offend them.
- People who are unable to dispose of the clothing belonging to the dead may be suffering from chronic grief
- I would feel uncomfortable selling the clothes of someone who had died for profit.
- Clothing belonging to someone who has died is a connection to the past, to history
- If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who had died I would keep expensive items but nothing mass produced.
- Bereaved people should be warned against disposing of the clothes of someone who has died immediately after the death. They are likely to regret this later.
- 33 It is healthy to put those who have died behind you and concentrate on new relationships.
- The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their personal tastes, habits and quirks
- The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their ties and loyalties (things like football shirts or uniforms)
- 36 It is important to get your money's worth out of clothing
- 37 Clothing today has little value: it is virtually disposable.
- 38 It doesn't matter what clothes are placed on the dead body. No-one will see and on-one will know.
- If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would choose an outfit they had worn on a special day, when they were happy and in their prime
- If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would try and provide an outfit they would have been likely to choose themselves.
- The dressing of the dead body is the family's last opportunity to show care and respect.
- Some clothes and jewellery are best buried with the body because they could never really belong to anyone else.
- 43 It's important to be appropriately dressed for the afterlife.

# A.6 Q-methodology, Factor 4

	Fact	or 4
statement	score	rank
The dressing of the dead body is the family's last opportunity to show care and respect.	1.63	1
The clothing left behind by those who have died might be an important source of information about those people; what they liked and what they believed.	1.58	3
The dead are not gone while the living remember them.	1.58	3
Dressing and acting like someone who has died may be a sign of mental illness	1.32	4
Clothing belonging to someone who has died is a connection to the past, to history	1.27	5
Some clothes and jewellery are best buried with the body because they could never really belong to anyone else.	1.22	6
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be donated to a charity favoured by the deceased	1.14	8
If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would just keep the things that evoked happy memories of them at their best	1.14	8
I would feel uncomfortable selling the clothes of someone who had died for profit.	1.09	10
The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their personal tastes, habits and quirks	1.09	10
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be recycled	0.79	11
If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would try and provide an outfit they would have been likely to choose themselves.	0.71	12
Handling and wearing the clothing left behind by those who have died can be very comforting to the survivors	0.66	14
If I were sorting out the clothes of someone who had died I would just keep the stuff that would come in useful for specific people: things that were the right	0.66	14
size & nearly new.		
I would want to keep clothes that someone I loved had worn a lot. These would be the ones that evoked most memories	0.53	15
Bereaved people should be warned against disposing of the clothes of someone who has died immediately after the death. They are likely to regret this later.	0.48	16
If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who died I would just keep items linked to significant life events (eg wedding, graduation, travel)	0.31	18
If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would choose an outfit they had worn on a special day, when they were happy and in their prime	0.31	18
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person can help you feel close to them	0.26	19
I believe in an afterlife.	0.23	20
People who are unable to dispose of the clothing belonging to the dead may be suffering from chronic grief	0.18	21
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be distributed among family and friends as mementoes	0	22
The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their ties and loyalties (things like football shirts or uniforms)	-0.18	23
The dead can and do contact the living	-0.23	24
It doesn't matter what clothes are placed on the dead body. No-one will see and on-one will know.	-0.31	25
I think it is a good idea to make craft items (rugs, quilts, cushions) out of the clothing left behind by those who have died.	-0.36	27
Old people should be encouraged to keep some of the clothing of partners who have died: it helps revive memories of those relationships	-0.36	27
I am sure there is no afterlife. Death is the absolute end.	-0.43	28
If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who had died I would keep expensive items but nothing mass produced.	-0.48	30

Clothing today has little value: it is virtually disposable.	-0.48	30
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is distasteful	-0.61	31
It is healthy to put those who have died behind you and concentrate on new relationships.	-0.66	32
If someone dies leaving designer clothes behind them I would wear those: not chainstore stuff though!	-0.79	34
If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would get rid of everything straight away.	-0.79	34
I would not know what to do with the clothing of someone who had died. I would probably just put it in the loft or something.	-0.84	35
Seeing the clothes of someone who has died can be needlessly upsetting	-1.09	36
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be sold for profit. The family should benefit	-1.14	37
It's important to be appropriately dressed for the afterlife.	-1.22	38
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is unhygienic	-1.27	39
It is important to get your money's worth out of clothing	-1.45	40
Dressing and acting like someone who has died is a good way to honour their memory	-1.63	41
No contact is possible between the living and the dead.	-1.93	43
Thinking about people who have died is pointless and upsetting. It is best to focus on the here and now and look after the living .	-1.93	43

# A.7 Q-methodology, Factor 5

	Fact	or 5
statement	score 5	rank 5
I am sure there is no afterlife. Death is the absolute end.	1.75	3
It is healthy to put those who have died behind you and concentrate on new relationships.	1.75	3
It's important to be appropriately dressed for the afterlife.	1.75	3
Clothing belonging to someone who has died is a connection to the past, to history	1.31	7
Bereaved people should be warned against disposing of the clothes of someone who has died immediately after the death. They are likely to regret this	1.31	7
later.		
If someone dies leaving designer clothes behind them I would wear those: not chainstore stuff though!	1.31	7
It is important to get your money's worth out of clothing	1.31	7
The clothing left behind by those who have died might be an important source of information about those people; what they liked and what they believed.	0.87	12
If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who had died I would keep expensive items but nothing mass produced.	0.87	12
Clothing today has little value: it is virtually disposable.	0.87	12
I would not know what to do with the clothing of someone who had died. I would probably just put it in the loft or something.	0.87	12
No contact is possible between the living and the dead.	0.87	12
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be donated to a charity favoured by the deceased	0.44	18
Handling and wearing the clothing left behind by those who have died can be very comforting to the survivors	0.44	18
If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who died I would just keep items linked to significant life events (eg wedding, graduation, travel)	0.44	18
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person can help you feel close to them	0.44	18
If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would get rid of everything straight away.	0.44	18
Thinking about people who have died is pointless and upsetting. It is best to focus on the here and now and look after the living.	0.44	18
Dressing and acting like someone who has died may be a sign of mental illness	0	25
I would feel uncomfortable selling the clothes of someone who had died for profit.	0	25
The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their personal tastes, habits and quirks	0	25
People who are unable to dispose of the clothing belonging to the dead may be suffering from chronic grief	0	25
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be distributed among family and friends as mementoes	0	25
The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their ties and loyalties (things like football shirts or uniforms)	0	25
Dressing and acting like someone who has died is a good way to honour their memory	0	25
Some clothes and jewellery are best buried with the body because they could never really belong to anyone else.	-0.44	31
If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would just keep the things that evoked happy memories of them at their best	-0.44	31
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be recycled	-0.44	31
If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would try and provide an outfit they would have been likely to choose themselves.	-0.44	31
Seeing the clothes of someone who has died can be needlessly upsetting	-0.44	31
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be sold for profit. The family should benefit	-0.44	31

The dressing of the dead body is the family's last opportunity to show care and respect.	-0.87	36
If I were sorting out the clothes of someone who had died I would just keep the stuff that would come in useful for specific people: things that were the	-0.87	36
right size and nearly new.		
I would want to keep clothes that someone I loved had worn a lot. These would be the ones that evoked most memories	-0.87	36
If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would choose an outfit they had worn on a special day, when they were happy and in their	-0.87	36
prime		
It doesn't matter what clothes are placed on the dead body. No-one will see and on-one will know.	-0.87	36
The dead are not gone while the living remember them.	-1.31	40
I think it is a good idea to make craft items (rugs, quilts, cushions) out of the clothing left behind by those who have died.	-1.31	40
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is distasteful	-1.31	40
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is unhygienic	-1.31	40
I believe in an afterlife.	-1.75	43
The dead can and do contact the living	-1.75	43
Old people should be encouraged to keep some of the clothing of partners who have died: it helps revive memories of those relationships	-1.75	43

# A.8 Q-methodology, Factor 6

	Fa	ctor 6
statement	score 6	rank 6
I believe in an afterlife.	1.8	1
Handling and wearing the clothing left behind by those who have died can be very comforting to the survivors	1.59	2
If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would choose an outfit they had worn on a special day, when they were happy and in their prime	1.44	3
If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would try and provide an outfit they would have been likely to choose themselves.	1.37	4
Clothing belonging to someone who has died is a connection to the past, to history	1.33	5
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person can help you feel close to them	1.19	6
The dead can and do contact the living	1.15	7
I would want to keep clothes that someone I loved had worn a lot. These would be the ones that evoked most memories	1.08	8
The dead are not gone while the living remember them.	1.05	9
The clothing left behind by those who have died might be an important source of information about those people; what they liked and what they believed.	0.9	10
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be distributed among family and friends as mementoes	0.86	11
The dressing of the dead body is the family's last opportunity to show care and respect.	0.86	12
The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their personal tastes, habits and quirks	0.68	13
It is important to get your money's worth out of clothing	0.65	15
I think it is a good idea to make craft items (rugs, quilts, cushions) out of the clothing left behind by those who have died.	0.65	15
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be recycled	0.61	16
Old people should be encouraged to keep some of the clothing of partners who have died: it helps revive memories of those relationships	0.54	17
I would feel uncomfortable selling the clothes of someone who had died for profit.	0.47	18
The clothing left behind by those who have died should be donated to a charity favoured by the deceased	0.4	19
The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their ties and loyalties (things like football shirts or uniforms)	0.04	20
It's important to be appropriately dressed for the afterlife.	0.04	21
If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would just keep the things that evoked happy memories of them at their best	-0.04	22
Bereaved people should be warned against disposing of the clothes of someone who has died immediately after the death. They are likely to regret this later.	-0.07	23
Dressing and acting like someone who has died is a good way to honour their memory	-0.11	24
I would not know what to do with the clothing of someone who had died. I would probably just put it in the loft or something.	-0.14	25
Clothing today has little value: it is virtually disposable.	-0.43	26
Some clothes and jewellery are best buried with the body because they could never really belong to anyone else.	-0.43	27
It is healthy to put those who have died behind you and concentrate on new relationships.	-0.58	28
If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who died I would just keep items linked to significant life events (eg wedding, graduation, travel)	-0.65	29

The clothing left behind by those who have died should be sold for profit. The family should benefit	-0.79	30
It doesn't matter what clothes are placed on the dead body. No-one will see and on-one will know.	-0.79	31
I am sure there is no afterlife. Death is the absolute end.	-0.94	32
If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who had died I would keep expensive items but nothing mass produced.	-0.97	34
If I were sorting out the clothes of someone who had died I would just keep the stuff that would come in useful for specific people: things that were the	-0.97	34
right size and nearly new.		
Dressing and acting like someone who has died may be a sign of mental illness	-1.08	35
Seeing the clothes of someone who has died can be needlessly upsetting	-1.12	36
Thinking about people who have died is pointless and upsetting. It is best to focus on the here and now and look after the living .	-1.23	37
If someone dies leaving designer clothes behind them I would wear those: not chainstore stuff though!	-1.26	38
People who are unable to dispose of the clothing belonging to the dead may be suffering from chronic grief	-1.26	39
No contact is possible between the living and the dead.	-1.37	40
If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would get rid of everything straight away.	-1.48	41
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is distasteful	-1.48	42
Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is unhygienic	-1.51	43

		Facto	or 2
No	statement	score 2	rank 2
29	I would feel uncomfortable selling the clothes of someone who had died for profit.	1.74	1
30	Clothing belonging to someone who has died is a connection to the past, to history	1.63	2
8	The clothing left behind by those who have died should be donated to a charity favoured by the deceased	1.58	3
21	I think it is a good idea to make craft items (rugs, quilts, cushions) out of the clothing left behind by those who have died.	1.52	4
16	The clothing left behind by those who have died might be an important source of information about those people; what they liked and what they believed.	1.36	6
28	People who are unable to dispose of the clothing belonging to the dead may be suffering from chronic grief	1.36	6
36	It is important to get your money's worth out of clothing	1.19	8
9	The clothing left behind by those who have died should be recycled	1.19	8
3	No contact is possible between the living and the dead.	1.09	9
15	If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who died I would just keep items linked to significant life events (eg wedding, graduation, travel)	0.93	10
43	It's important to be appropriately dressed for the afterlife.	0.87	11
35	The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their ties and loyalties (things like football shirts or uniforms)	0.76	12
38	It doesn't matter what clothes are placed on the dead body. No-one will see and on-one will know.	0.7	13
42	Some clothes and jewellery are best buried with the body because they could never really belong to anyone else.	0.6	14
34	The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their personal tastes, habits and quirks	0.49	15
14	Handling and wearing the clothing left behind by those who have died can be very comforting to the survivors	0.38	16
2	I am sure there is no afterlife. Death is the absolute end.	0.32	17
37	Clothing today has little value: it is virtually disposable.	0.27	18
39	If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would choose an outfit they had worn on a special day, when they were happy and in their prime	0.22	19
17	If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would get rid of everything straight away.	0.06	20
33	It is healthy to put those who have died behind you and concentrate on new relationships.	-0.06	21
18	If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would just keep the things that evoked happy memories of them at their best	-0.11	22
7	The clothing left behind by those who have died should be distributed among family and friends as mementoes	-0.27	23
12	Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is distasteful	-0.32	24
24	Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person can help you feel close to them	-0.43	27
22	Seeing the clothes of someone who has died can be needlessly upsetting	-0.43	27
13	Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is unhygienic	-0.43	27
31	If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who had died I would keep expensive items but nothing mass produced.	-0.49	29

25	Dressing and acting like someone who has died is a good way to honour their memory	-0.49	29
6	The dead can and do contact the living	-0.6	31
27	Old people should be encouraged to keep some of the clothing of partners who have died: it helps revive memories of those relationships	-0.6	31
40	If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would try and provide an outfit they would have been likely to choose themselves.	-0.65	33
41	The dressing of the dead body is the family's last opportunity to show care and respect.	-0.65	33
5	Thinking about people who have died is pointless and upsetting. It is best to focus on the here and now and look after the living.	-0.76	34
32	Bereaved people should be warned against disposing of the clothes of someone who has died immediately after the death. They are likely to regret	-0.87	35
	this later.		
4	The dead are not gone while the living remember them.	-1.09	36
19	If I were sorting out the clothes of someone who had died I would just keep the stuff that would come in useful for specific people: things that were the	-1.14	38
	right size and nearly new.		
1	I believe in an afterlife.	-1.14	38
23	I would not know what to do with the clothing of someone who had died. I would probably just put it in the loft or something.	-1.25	39
26	Dressing and acting like someone who has died may be a sign of mental illness	-1.36	40
11	The clothing left behind by those who have died should be sold for profit. The family should benefit	-1.52	41
10	If someone dies leaving designer clothes behind them I would wear those: not chainstore stuff though!	-1.74	42
20	I would want to keep clothes that someone I loved had worn a lot. These would be the ones that evoked most memories	-1.85	43

No	statement	score 7	rank 7
35	The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their ties and loyalties (things like football shirts or uniforms)	1.75	3
4	The dead are not gone while the living remember them.	1.75	3
1	I believe in an afterlife.	1.75	3
16	The clothing left behind by those who have died might be an important source of information about those people; what they liked and what they believed.	1.31	7
18	If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would just keep the things that evoked happy memories of them at their best	1.31	7
32	Bereaved people should be warned against disposing of the clothes of someone who has died immediately after the death. They are likely to regret this later.	1.31	7
11	The clothing left behind by those who have died should be sold for profit. The family should benefit	1.31	7
30	Clothing belonging to someone who has died is a connection to the past, to history	0.87	12
28	People who are unable to dispose of the clothing belonging to the dead may be suffering from chronic grief	0.87	12
36	It is important to get your money's worth out of clothing	0.87	12
15	If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who died I would just keep items linked to significant life events (eg wedding, graduation, travel)	0.87	12
7	The clothing left behind by those who have died should be distributed among family and friends as mementoes	0.87	12
29	I would feel uncomfortable selling the clothes of someone who had died for profit.	0.44	18
8	The clothing left behind by those who have died should be donated to a charity favoured by the deceased	0.44	18
21	I think it is a good idea to make craft items (rugs, quilts, cushions) out of the clothing left behind by those who have died.	0.44	18
14	Handling and wearing the clothing left behind by those who have died can be very comforting to the survivors	0.44	18
24	Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person can help you feel close to them	0.44	18
20	I would want to keep clothes that someone I loved had worn a lot. These would be the ones that evoked most memories	0.44	18
9	The clothing left behind by those who have died should be recycled	0	25
38	It doesn't matter what clothes are placed on the dead body. No-one will see and on-one will know.	0	25
42	Some clothes and jewellery are best buried with the body because they could never really belong to anyone else.	0	25
34	The clothes that are the most effective reminders of someone who has died are those which reflect their personal tastes, habits and quirks	0	25
39	If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would choose an outfit they had worn on a special day, when they were happy and in their prime	0	25
31	If I were sorting out the clothing of someone who had died I would keep expensive items but nothing mass produced.	0	25
41	The dressing of the dead body is the family's last opportunity to show care and respect.	0	25
2	I am sure there is no afterlife. Death is the absolute end.	-0.44	31
37	Clothing today has little value: it is virtually disposable.	-0.44	31
22	Seeing the clothes of someone who has died can be needlessly upsetting	-0.44	31

25	Dressing and acting like someone who has died is a good way to honour their memory	-0.44	31
6	The dead can and do contact the living	-0.44	31
10	If someone dies leaving designer clothes behind them I would wear those: not chainstore stuff though!	-0.44	31
43	It's important to be appropriately dressed for the afterlife.	-0.87	36
13	Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is unhygienic	-0.87	36
40	If I had to choose clothes for a loved one to wear in the coffin I would try and provide an outfit they would have been likely to choose themselves.	-0.87	36
19	If I were sorting out the clothes of someone who had died I would just keep the stuff that would come in useful for specific people: things that were the	-0.87	36
	right size and nearly new.		
23	I would not know what to do with the clothing of someone who had died. I would probably just put it in the loft or something.	-0.87	36
17	If I had to sort out clothes belonging to someone who had died I would get rid of everything straight away.	-1.31	40
12	Wearing clothes that were previously owned by a dead person is distasteful	-1.31	40
5	Thinking about people who have died is pointless and upsetting. It is best to focus on the here and now and look after the living.	-1.31	40
26	Dressing and acting like someone who has died may be a sign of mental illness	-1.31	40
3	No contact is possible between the living and the dead.	-1.75	43
33	It is healthy to put those who have died behind you and concentrate on new relationships.	-1.75	43
27	Old people should be encouraged to keep some of the clothing of partners who have died: it helps revive memories of those relationships	-1.75	43

## A.11 List of Bereavement Narratives considered

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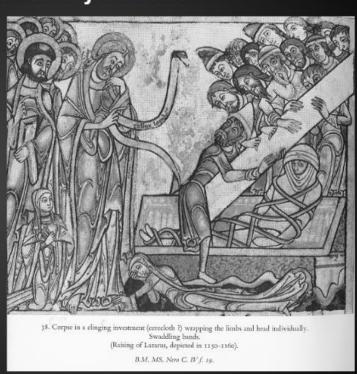
#### A.12 Sample slides from the "dressing the dead" section of the cultural archive

## **12th Century shrouds**

The twelfth century saw some minor amendments to shroud style. The wrapping may be looser, but where a coffin was not to be used then swaddling bands over the wrapping became the norm - probably simply to keep the sheet in place during transportation.

Even quite poor families favoured linen for the inner shroud, and there was often a tougher outer wrapping too.

The image is as published in 'Costume for Births, Marriages and Deaths' (1972) by Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas.



## 1360: St Bees Man

The discovery of St Bees Man, a preserved corpse buried in a lead-lined coffin in the priory of St Bees, Cumbria in the 1360s, has confirmed what is known from medieval illustrations (Fig. 15.1). The man, almost certainly a local knight, Anthony de Lucy, who died of injuries received abroad on a Teutonic knight's crusade, had been transported back to his homeland after preparation for burial. His apertures were blocked with gauze before his naked body was wrapped up in two shrouds, tied on with a mesh of string. The body was then placed inside the lead wrapper, which in turn was encased in an iron-bound wooden coffin. The only 'object' inside the shroud was a tress of hair (not his own) placed on his shoulder (O'Sullivan 1982, Tapp and O'Sullivan 1982, Knüsel et al. 2010).



This information comes from <a href="http://www.stbees.org.uk/history/stbeesman/stbeesman2">http://www.stbees.org.uk/history/stbeesman/stbeesman2</a> todd.html accessed 7 June 2016

## 15th Century: Effigies and Death Masks

When the Sovereign or any person of royal rank deceased, a waxen presentment was immediately made of him as he was seen in life under the influence of sleep. This figure, dressed in the regal robes, was exposed upon the catafalque in the church, instead of the real body—a custom doubtless inspired originally by hygienic motives, for frequently the funeral rites of a king or prince of the blood were prolonged for many days. In Westminster Abbey there are still several of these grim ancient waxen effigies to be seen, by special permission of the Dean, very faded and ghastly, but interesting as likenesses, and for the fragments which time has spared of their once gorgeous attire. This custom lasted with us until the time of William and Mary. In France it disappeared in the middle of the 17th Century, the last mention of it being on the occasion of the death of Anne of Austria; for we read in a curious letter from Guy Patin to his friend Falconet, "The Queen-Mother died to-day [Jan. 21, 1666]. She was immediately embalmed, and by noon her waxen effigy was on view at the Louvre. Thousands are pressing in to see it."

Above, excerpt from 'History of Mourning' Davey 1899:34

Right, detail from the funeral procession of Henry V showing his effigy being carried through the streets, from an engraving published in Davey.

# 1660s and 70s: Shrouds at the expense of the parish

The Victorian periodical 'Notes and Queries' published a partial transcript of a 17th century parish account book from Christ Church, Cork.

The contributor noted 'from this book we learn that it was customary at this period to bury in shrouds, for procuring which the parish was at considerable expense; calico appears to have been the usual material, 3 and a half yards made a shroud for a woman.'

1666, May 2. Pd for a bell rope	0	5	0
Jan. 26. Pd Bridget Pembroke for keeping Margaret Weldon two weekes	0	5	0
Jan. 31. Pd for fower yards of cloath and halfe (being French cloath) to make a			
shroud	0	6	10
Pd for fouer pottles of beare when she was			
buried	0	1	0

1677, 7ber 24. Pd a shroud for Merry Andrew's wife - 0 5 2

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