Clinical, Cultural and Personal Dimensions of Fashion Modelling as a Basis for Phenomenological and Depth Psychological Exploration of Femininity in Western Societies

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the lived experiences of female international fashion models, a shortcoming within extant literature. An interdisciplinary, pluralistic approach was embraced. Using clinical vignettes, an autoethnographic account and an interpretative phenomenological analysis of qualitative interviews of a group of fashion models, this study overturns the idealised image of the fashion model life within the collective consciousness and shows the embodiment and personality of female fashion models to be socially constructed within a field wherein several forces, illuminated herein, are at play. Intrapsychic forces, interpersonal dynamics and the role of transgenerational trauma are also illuminated. The results show the embodied lived experiences of female fashion models and their performances to epitomise metaphors for the predicaments faced by many females in contemporary Western societies. A hegemonic, normative ideal, that compresses all feminine qualities into an impossible composite icon, is pursued. A specific *persona* holding the characteristics of the *puella* is culturally offered, through media dissemination of models' imagery, as the ultimate signifier of high status and feminine ideal, leaving women with limited external reference to the multiple feminine attributes and roles necessary to express themselves fully and to respond to life situations effectively. The research findings also confirm that subjective embodiment contains relevant information about individuals' challenges, intersubjective dynamics, collective shared experiences and vicissitudes, precious for advances within multiple academic disciplines. According to the researcher, conscious fashion models, engaged on a journey of individuation, supported by an ethical industry and by their striking socialising power, could embody inspirational role models of wholeness, authenticity, interconnectedness and diverse feminine qualities for the larger population.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study explored clinical, cultural and personal dimensions relating to the figure of the fashion model in 21st century Western societies, an area of enquiry which holds cultural relevance as a result of the remarkable social influence exerted on people by fashion models, who convey “symbolic meanings concerning class, nationality, ethnicity, social mobility, self-control, malleability, wealth, power, success and the alleged self-assurance that accompanies them” (Soley-Beltran, 2012, p. 114).

This introductory chapter outlines the topic, context, focus and scope of this thesis, as well as the research questions, aims, theoretical framework, relevance and gaps in the field, concluding with a brief synopsis of each chapter.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The fashion industry is a dynamic arena, undergoing continuous change determined by macro-environmental factors, political, social, technological and economic forces (Gockeln, 2014). It is a vast, creative and lucrative industry exemplifying capitalism at large, which can elicit ambivalent feelings of attraction and repulsion by producing and promoting desirable goods and an ideal lifestyle whilst fostering a consumerism filled with ethical and pernicious implications (Andre, 1994; Orbach, 2009; Thomas, 2018; Wissinger, 2016), as well as “a fantastic idea of womanhood paired with the aspiration to an existence beyond restriction” (Soley-Beltran, 2006, p. 38).

The *Zeitgeist* in contemporary Western societies is remarkably affected and informed by fashion. With its socialising function, fashion defines normative standards whilst shaping, through its visual iconography and linguistic influence, individual and collective identities, aesthetics, social class and gender role behaviour (Butler, 1990; Crane, 2000; Davis, 1992; Riviere, 1929; Salesses & Romain, 2014; Soley-Beltran, 2006; Wasylkiw, Emms, Meuse, & Poirer, 2009). Fashion also acts as a visual manifesto, capturing current societal, cultural, political and psychological undercurrents, visually representing them, whilst adding its own stance. In so doing, it can influence and/or anticipate future change.

Fashion models are employed by the fashion industry to display, promote and advertise their goods and are typically managed by fashion modelling agencies. The first modelling agency, Ford Models, was established in New York in 1946 and set the stage for the world of fashion modelling as we know it today. Model agencies manage models and act as intermediaries between models and clients. For their services, agencies retain a percentage of the models' and clients' income. Bookers are people designated to promote fashion models and secure them jobs (Mears, 2011).

Fashion models' imagery, produced by the fashion and cosmetic industries, is subsequently disseminated by mass media, setting the standards of references for feminine normative identity, especially within Western middle and upper middle classes (Soley-Beltran, 2006). Over time, "models' hegemonic beauty" has become a "mechanism defining and regulating the normative standards for acceptable identity" (Soley-Beltran, 2006, p. 40).

Using women's images is not new. For example, "[f]ollowing the scientific trend of the 19th century, the French physician Jean-Martin Charcot used photography – at that time photography was seen as the scientist's "true retina" – to create a typology of human beings" (Borges Florsheim, 2016, p. 404). Photography, "amidst all the various clinical and experimental procedures", was deployed by Charcot to study and understand females, and eventually be used to develop and demonstrate the notion of hysteria within Freud's psychoanalytic framework. Photography enabled the crystallisation and visual representation of the embodiment of delirium (Didi-Huberman, 1982/2003, p. xi). A series of images[1] remains of those times, alongside, discording perspectives about the notion of hysteria (Didi-Huberman, 1982/2003).

Females are also used within the fashion industry to portray ideas of beauty and to determine distinction and taste (Bourdieu, 1984/2010). Whilst it is outside the scope of this study to delve in great depths of what constitutes beauty in Western societies as well as cross-culturally, a study in its own right, it is worth exploring some dimensions relevant to this work. The feminine beauty ideal can be understood as being "the socially constructed notion that physical attractiveness is one of women's most important assets, and something all women should strive to achieve and maintain" (Baker-Sperry & Grauerholz, 2003, p. 711). Evolutionary theories suggest, and is confirmed by the fashion tastemakers' depictions of beauty and by the modelling

[1] *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* (1876-80): "This collection of texts and photographs represents the female patients of Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot at the Salpêtrière hospital and asylum during the years of his tenure as director. The patients, diagnosed primarily with hysteria or epilepsy, were treated at the asylum even as they acted as experimental subjects for Charcot's development of the hysteria diagnosis. This collection represents a transformative moment in the history of the diagnosis, treatment, and representation of mental illness". "Freud was the disoriented witness of the immensity of hysteria *in camera* and the manufacturing of images. His disorientation was not with- out bearing on the beginnings of psychoanalysis" (p. xii).

ideal selective criteria, that human beings are attracted to child-like features and symmetry: “large eyes and mouth set against a small nose” (Lemma, 2010) – a thesis offering a compelling additional elucidation as to why models are required to be child looking – holding symmetric face and body features, large eyes (especially standing out when the girl is ultra-thin, this perhaps being another reason for such a requirement), a small nose and, ideally, plump and harmonious lips. On the contrary, ugliness has been largely depicted to be evil or bad, thus, culturally portrayed as something that cannot be integrated within the perception of the self (Lemma, 2010) which needs to remain split off, as in the notion of the shadow (Jung, 1959/1968, 1959/1969).

A specific type of asymmetry and even ugliness at times, as will be seen in Chapters Two, Five and Seven, has however been exalted within high-fashion since the 1990s, epitomising the ultimate object of desire and signifier of high status. This may represent an unwitting invitation to integrate the shadow, to externalise “[w]hat is monstrous” (Lemma, 2010, p. 51) – as opposed to keeping the unwanted aspects of the self hidden from consciousness and defensively projected onto others. Projective processes often take place, for example, even within the context of the primary mother-child relationship, which may result in the shaping of the offspring’s embodiment (Chodorow, 1978/1999; Lemma, 2010). The process of integration of the shadow, as discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, instead represents a vital necessity for the individual to attain self-knowledge, self-acceptance and wholeness (Jung, 1959/1968, 1959/1969).

“We are beings who are looked at in the spectacle of the world” (Lacan, 1977, p. 75); as a result, preoccupations with appearance and looks are inevitable symptoms of the

human experience (Pacteau, 1994), especially for females, since beauty has historically represented a significant dimension within feminine identity. Several cross-cultural ideals of feminine beauty and body image exist and have existed historically. Females' adherence to such ideals within their cultural context often determine their social status, thereby prompting efforts towards body modification, historically ranging from, for example, the ancient tradition of foot-binding[2] in China (eventually abandoned in the early 1900s), to the contemporary phenomenon of rampant cosmetic surgery, especially popular in specific countries.

A study revealed that Korean females tend to place "greater importance on appearance, [are] more critical of their bodies, and [show] lower self-esteem than U.S. women" (Jung & Lee, 2006, p. 350). Another study explored Singaporean and Taiwanese fashion and beauty magazines finding them to focus on facial cosmetic procedures, whilst the focus in the US was more on clothes and the body (Frith, Shaw & Cheng, 2006). Symmetry, especially in faces, has cross-culturally and historically been taken as representing beauty. Asian cultures generally praise fair skin, pretty, westernised faces and slenderness, in Middle Eastern and African cultures the ideal of beauty is more curvaceous, suggesting fertility, good health and prosperity, whilst the Western world's normative feminine identity is generally ultra-thinness and youthfulness, as further discussed in the next chapters.

[2] Body modification is not a novel practice: examples exist of body scarification, tattooing and/or decoration within African tribes', as well as the extreme upper-class tradition of foot-binding amongst female Chinese children during the Song dynasty (10th century) to produce "Lotus feet" that were understood to bestow graceful movements on women (Ebrey, 2003) and secure prestigious marriages (Gates, 2014). This practice was subsequently extended to all Chinese social classes and continued until the early 20th century, signifying high status and elitism.

Although models are not the only representatives of what is culturally considered as being contemporary iconic beauty (dancers, athletes, musicians and actresses, for example, embody alternative references of normative feminine identity for the masses), this thesis focuses on the lived experience of fashion models within Western societies, in particular within the past three decades.

Beauty standards within Western societies, including within fashion modelling, have evolved in time, from the more curvaceous feminine look of the 1940s/1950s, especially within the acting field, epitomised for example by actress Marilyn Monroe, to the more recent androgynous and largely de-feminised and anonymous look. Typically, fashion models' criteria have always encompassed slenderness and tallness, although the ultra-thin, androgynous and pubescent look only appeared with supermodels Dame Lesley Lawson, known as Twiggy, and Vera Gottliebe Anna Gräfin von Lehndorff-Steinort, known as Veruschka, in the 1960s/1970s, later being replaced by the more curvaceous supermodels of the 1980s and early 1990s, such as Claudia Schiffer and Cindy Crawford (Connor, 2017; Steele, 1997).

The androgynous, ultra-thin look resumed and was extremised further in the 1990s, as epitomised by Kate Moss. Specifically, in Britain, the 1990s were filled with discontent and a high rate of unemployment; young people often expressed their dissatisfaction through raves and fashion creators wished to express this reality in their production. The mania of luxury so characteristic of the 1980s was replaced by grunge style, conveying more authenticity about that specific population cluster, in turn setting a fashion trend (Evans, 2003; Steele, 1997; Tredre, 1993). Such trends led to the birth of a new movement, the "heroin chic" look, propelled in the mid-1990s by

photographers Nan Goldin, Terry Richardson, Craig McDean, Juergen Teller, David Sims and Davide Sorrenti.

Photographer Corinne Day, whose mother had run a brothel (Horwell, 2010), often depicted fashion models as prostitutes. Her 1993 photos of Kate Moss in *British Vogue* caused tumult, being accused of promoting eating disorders and perverse child pornography (Tredre, 1993). Photographer Davide Sorrenti's death, aged 20, as a result of complications linked to drug addiction, initiated a movement for change in this destructive trend (Spindler, 1997). Nonetheless, the "heroin chic" aesthetic cult continued for over two decades – and is still partially present – overturning the sleek look of the 80s and early 90s (Evans, 2003).

The supermodels of the 80s and the 90s acquired enormous power in the fashion world and were elevated as goddesses in the collective consciousness, to the point of detracting attention away from the clothes. Furthermore, these iconic models became excessively demanding and pretentious for the tastemakers, who slowly reclaimed their power by shifting the trend by employing anonymous girls, hence ending the supermodel era, especially from the 2010s (Pollo, 2015; for an overview of the tastemakers' perspective, see Mears, 2011). Contemporary modelling is largely characterised by androgyny, anonymity, pre-pubescence/pubescence and extreme slenderness, with the occasional example of models that stand out for periods of time. The turnover amongst contemporary models is extreme, reflecting a "throwaway" culture (Pollo, 2015).

Fashion modelling is divided into two broad circuits: the editorial/high-fashion, and the commercial (Entwistle, 2009; Mears, 2011). Editorial, high-fashion imagery overlaps

with art[3] and can thus be understood as a liminal form (Wilson, 1985/2007). The high-fashion industry defines new aesthetic – or breaks down pre-existing – norms through the use of high-fashion models' imagery. Within the high-fashion circuit, the nihilistic "heroin chic" style is still present at the time of writing. However, a more recent "porn chic" trend is also observed, fostered by the work of photographers such as Terry Richardson.[4] In 1999, the "return of the sexy model" occurred (Walker, 2009), characterised by a plastic, flawless and opulent look, epitomised by supermodel Gisele Bündchen, wherein sexuality is split-off from the body and body parts – which are fetishized – and reattached to the product/s (Orbach, 2005, p. 15; Soley-Beltran, 2006). The editorial, high-fashion model must be extremely slender, tall and androgynous looking.[5] She represents edginess and evokes gender confusion.

The fashion and modelling industries also contribute to definitions of social class (as seen in Chapter Two). High-editorial fashion communicates brand identity and evokes ideas of luxury lifestyle; it speaks to/of the "elite" class, promoting the dream of an exclusive lifestyle (Mears, 2011; Ruggerone, 2006); by owning the goods promoted

[3] Although modern – and contemporary – art appears to deal with issues of the aesthetic, it does perform "a work of psychological education on the public by breaking down and destroying previous aesthetic views of what is beautiful in form and meaningful in content" (Jung, 1957, para. 584). Such is one of the effects of editorial high-fashion imagery on people.

[4] Worldwide renowned fashion photographer Terry Richardson was banned by Conde Nast publications in 2017 (Riley-Smith & Allen, 2017). The news was disseminated by the press on my birthday – a small matter, but perhaps a "meaningful coincidence" (Jung, 1952, para. 827) – which prompted, a few months later, the launch of a "code of conduct" by Conde Nast International (Vogue, 2018). Richardson was accused of having sexually harassed and/or abused young fashion model girls since – at least – 2001 (Ellis-Petersen, 2017), under the complicit protection of the fashion industry's leading "tastemakers" (Franklin, 2017; Mears, 2011, p. 121) who made him a celebrity and have also been, and likely still are, concealing countless other inappropriate behaviours perpetrated against fashion model girls who to date still largely remain unprotected (Smith, 2017; Teather, 2017). Such news was particularly relevant to me because of my first-hand experience of many instances of sexual harassment perpetrated by fashion tastemakers, predominantly photographers, and being witness to other fashion models' similar experiences throughout my fashion modelling journey and my involvement in the field, but also because of a deep personal sense of uneasiness related to Richardson's photographic style, disseminating through the media to the masses a highly undermining, humiliating and sexually objectifying idea of females.

[5] Generally, these models have very little breast and may be mistaken for males.

by high-fashion models, consumers mark their distinction (Bourdieu, 1984/2010). High-fashion models rarely smile and appear aloof on the catwalk or in photographs, thereby conveying implicit messages of distance, superiority, but also prestige, dominance and thus high social status (Ketelaar et al., 2012). Marketing strategies entice the masses towards luxury consumption with the prospect that they would thereby acquire higher, even elite, social status and class (Veblen, 2007). Commercial models, on the contrary, are used to "target and relate to consumers" (Mears, 2011, p. 177) so as to sell merchandise to the masses. The safe looks vary within the commercial circuit, depending on the social class being targeted, so as to entice lower-, middle- and upper-middle-class mass markets to consume.

Images enticing anorexia, recreational drug consumption, women's sexual objectification, paedophilia, rape and gang rape, among others, are relentlessly bombarding the wider population. Bookers have been found scouting for new faces outside eating disorder mental health hospitals (Murray, 2013). In promoting a body ideal of extreme slenderness by widely employing clinically underweight girls or fostering the ultra-slender ideal, the high-fashion industry generates a toxic environment, facilitating the development of eating and body image disorders (Preti, Usai, Miotto, Petretto, & Masala, 2008; Swami & Szmigielska, 2013; Usai et al., 2004).

Furthermore, models', and consequently females' bodies', "are judged against a cultural norm that equates sexuality with youthfulness and presents older bodies as inadequate, flawed or failed" (Twigg, 2013, p. 88). Youth is associated with high social standing and hegemonic gendered appearance, for which models act as a guiding reference, compounding social norms which demand that female bodies should not appear to age, as further discussed in Chapters Two and Seven and as emerging

through Chapters Four to Six (Bordo, 2003; Schippers, 2007; Wolf, 1991). Girls are sexualised at an ever-younger age; youth has become idealised (American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007). The use of prepubescent/pubescent girls sets the cultural standard for the ultimate object of – sexual – desire. Such a standard directly clashes with societal norms of conduct, generating a double-bind (Bateson, Jackson, Haley, & Weakland, 1956) and a cognitive dissonance (further discussed in Chapters Two, Seven and Eight) as well as concerns regarding relevant industries'[6] unethical exploitation of underage girls' sexuality, as well as the fostering and normalisation of paedophilia (as further discussed in Chapter Seven).

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The primary goal of this study is to explore, in-depth, the lived experience of fashion models (herein also referred as models). The "second-tier"[7] (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 103) question posed concerns what depth psychology, psychosocial, feminist and cultural studies – as well as the larger population – can learn from fashion models' lived experiences, especially regarding feminine identity in contemporary Western societies. To achieve this goal, both theoretical and empirical qualitative methodologies and a pluralistic approach to qualitative research were adopted.

It is believed that fashion models' lived experience can offer relevant insights into – and enable the understanding of – some of the issues faced by the female population

[6] Especially the marketing, fashion, fashion-modelling, cosmetic, entertainment and media industries.
[7] The "first-tier" question in this study explored the lived experience of fashion modelling; the "second-tier" question opened up "a dialogue with extant theory" and was "answered at the discussion stage" (Chapter Seven) (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 103).

in Western societies and that such understanding could provide further insights for – and elicit reflexivity in – the larger population, offering the opportunity to move back and forth between the idiographic and the nomothetic, whereby the hidden meaning can have the opportunity of surfacing through the in-depth reflection stemming from the hermeneutic approach (Ponterotto, 2005; Schwandt, 2000; Sciarra, 1999), thereby enabling a holistic perspective.

Because of the focus on the lived experience of fashion modelling, phenomenological inquiry, in particular interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), was believed to be the most suited qualitative methodology for this research, since it offers "a philosophical approach to the study of experience", enabling the examination of "what the experience of being human is like" (J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 11). IPA was therefore deployed herein as the main qualitative research methodology (Chapter Five).

Autoethnography (AE), understood to be "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739), was herein embraced as a secondary empirical methodology. The personal account (Chapter Four) – relying chiefly on diaries rather than memory[8] to avoid potential fallacies and ensure the validity of the accounts – added further depth, authenticity and meaning to the thesis; sensitive information, which may not have had the opportunity to surface through the use of any other qualitative methodology, emerged. The personal experience also enabled to shed a deeper light on "the culture under study" and to explore the "self-other

[8] Indeed, "recalled memories are reconstructions … that alter according to the circumstances and conditions at the time of recall" (Hauke, 2005, p. 131).

interactions" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). Clinical vignettes stemming from my work with female fashion models provide further depth and perspective to the thesis, including the developmental dimension (Chapter Six).

GAP IN THE LITERATURE AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FIELD

Whilst many influential clusters exist in Western contemporary societies (actors, musicians and athletes epitomise other examples of culturally influential groups exerting a socialising function through their bodily performances or appearances), research into the lived experience of models is extremely limited and completely absent within the field of depth psychological studies, despite models' recognised socialising function in the world and the adverse impact of their imagery on the larger population. This gap in literature is intended to be filled by this study, as, unlike earlier work in the field, the focus herein is mainly on the person of the fashion model and on her lived experience. In so doing, microcosmic aspects of a larger macrocosm emerge, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

An improved awareness about the lived experience of models could foster understanding and meaning-making for the larger population of both the phenomena under investigation and personal corresponding experiences with greater depth, insight and clarity. It could also facilitate, it is hoped, a progressive shift towards authenticity and wholeness, especially for the female population. Furthermore, it is propose that by giving fashion models, herein conceived as an historically objectified and silenced feminine cluster for whom others speak (in the media, for example), a voice, this could potentially redeem their status and enable them to embody a more enlightened type of role model for the larger population, facilitating their deliberate and

conscious use of the iconic status for ends redolent of social and economic justice. Shedding light on this subject matter could also facilitate women's moves away from the pursuit of unrealistic ideals, false myths, stereotypical feminine identity and gender role behaviour, thereby helping to soften those new forms of psychopathologies related to the fixations around body image (Orbach, 2009) observed in postmodern Western societies and facilitate more connected relationships.

Since the thesis seeks to bring awareness to issues related to eating disorders, embodiment,[9] body image, feminine identity, self-esteem, gender role behaviour, power, status, exploitation, objectification and control as well as interpersonal and intrapsychic dimensions, it could be a useful reading for therapists working with fashion models, for people aspiring to work as fashion models, for parents of children wanting to embark on such a profession, for people, especially females, struggling with body image discontent, self-esteem and identity issues, and for the population at large for it can increase awareness and provide a deeper and wider perspective around the explored phenomena. These are, of course, concerns at the human level, which are directly fuelled by sociocultural dimensions of experience, as outlined above.

SYNOPSIS OF THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS

Chapter Two defines my theoretical conceptual framework, analyses the existing literature in the field within the corpus of fashion, feminist, cultural, theoretical and

[9] Embodiment is defined as a "tangible or visible form of an idea, quality, or feeling" (Lexico, 2020).

depth psychological studies and describes where and how I position myself within the relevant existing literature.

In Chapter Three, after a concise description of the overall aim of my study, I outline the procedure and my analytic plan for the pluralistic empirical research section of this study (defining the designated strategies of empirical inquiry, a rationale for the choice of the selected methodologies, some associated background information, the research procedures and the targeted outcome). The approach to the research is then discussed, followed by a depiction of the selected group of participants and the rationale for choosing such a group. Subsequently, I outline my data collection tools, my procedures and my data analysis methods where consideration is be given to ethics, trustworthiness and potential research bias. I conclude by highlighting the limitations of the research.

Chapter Four comprises a brief personal narrative. Chapter Five presents the IPA processes of data collection and data analysis and the findings emerging from two in-depth interviews with six participants. In Chapter Six, I present four compressed, fictionalised vignettes of my clinical work with numerous fashion models. Chapter Seven presents a systematic analysis and discussion of all the findings emerging from the empirical research (Chapters Four to Six), their relevance and meaning. Chapter Eight discusses the contribution and implications of the findings, whilst acknowledging the study limitations, recommendation for further research and suggested actions to facilitate a change to the *status quo*.

Now we proceed to Chapter Two, critical literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis explored the in-depth lived experience of fashion models. In so doing, the underpinning forces discerned by diverse academic disciplines emerged. It became clear that fashion models, who enter modelling carrying their own pre-existing developmental wounds, intrapsychic constellation and emerging interpersonal patterns, are further shaped in their embodiments,[10] personalities and psychologies by the modelling and fashion fields. The fashion and modelling fields are characterised by a complex sociocultural, political and economic system of forces. Such forces and dynamics that shape fashion models are examined herein, through the critical review of relevant fashion, fashion modelling, cultural, feminist, psychosocial, theoretical and depth psychological literature, and further discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, contributing to a fuller understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

FASHION AND FASHION MODELS' STUDIES

Fashion models' lived experience

Whilst fashion models represent a very influential cluster in contemporary culture, holding a relevant socialising function for masses (Field, Camargo, Taylor, Berkey, & Colditz, 1999; Garner & Garfinkel, 1980; Grogan & Wainwright, 1996; Macklin, 1990; Martin & Gentry, 1997; Nichter & Vuckovic, 1994; Stein & Reichert, 1990), their in-depth, embodied lived experiences have been largely overlooked in literature, with only one interpretative phenomenological study published as a journal article (Carr &

[10] Embodiment is defined as a "tangible or visible form of an idea, quality, or feeling" (Lexico, 2020).

Mercer, 2017), which partially fills a gap within the scope of psychological studies, but whose results remain limited and generic. The study, in fact, does not delve into the depth psychological dimensions of fashion models, nor, contrary to this study, does it explore forces resulting from other disciplines. The relatively small and broad sample includes female and male models, whereas this study focuses on female models. The authors do not engage with contradictions emerging from their results, thereby appearing to remain chiefly focused on the descriptive dimension in their discussion.

A quantitative study on fashion models by Meyer, Enström, Harstveit, Bowles, and Beevers (2007), embracing a positive psychological framework, concludes that, "despite their high levels of attractiveness" (p. 8), models show greater "personality disorder features" and that they might experience "unfulfilled basic needs" and "less well-being" (p. 2), as confirmed by this study (see chapters Four to Eight). According to the authors, models are "at elevated risk for impaired well-being and personality maladjustment" and highlight the issue of unfulfilled basic psychological needs as a result of the "occupational context" (p. 16). However, the study appears to jump to conclusions with little evidence, speculating that an internal and/or innate predisposition to "urges for admiration, excessive needs for reassurance, and reckless disregard of social norms" may "predispose certain individuals to achieve fame and celebrity status" within the system of stardom (Meyer et al., 2007, p. 15), whereas this study illuminates the complexity underpinning such possible behavioural coping modalities, as further discussed on Chapters Seven and Eight.

Other studies, whose relevant dimensions are further discussed in the next subsection, include aspects of the lived experience of fashion modelling, being more focused on gender role behaviour and feminine identity (Soley-Beltran, 2006;

Entwistle & Mears, 2012; Mears, 2008, 2011), political, economic, labour, cultural and/or sociological dimensions (Entwistle, 2002, 2009; Mears, 2008, 2011; Mears & Finlay, 2005; Mears & Godart, 2009; Parmentier & Fischer, 2007; Wissinger, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012).

The PhD and subsequent book written by sociologist Ashley Mears, a former model who undertook an ethnographic study on "the making of a fashion model" whilst modelling as part of her PhD program, is particularly relevant for this study (2011). In her work, Mears explores multiple dimensions such as gender identity, the economy of employment and the cultural meaning of the ultra-thin ideal as a signifier for high status and class. She illuminates the field praxis in great detail. Mears also provides aspects of the tastemakers' perspective, an area outside the scope of this thesis. Most of her findings are confirmed by this study, however the phenomenology of the lived experience, the depth psychological and psychological dimensions are not within her scope of work, a gap filled by this study which looks into the depth of both intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics, cultural dimensions as well as the embodied lived experience of the employment.

Dimensions of the aforementioned works will be engaged with within Chapters Seven and Eight as part of the discussion of the findings.

Fashion modelling

In addition to Mears' work (2008, 2010, 2011, 2015), Soley-Beltran's contribution (2006) is also relevant for this research. The chief dimensions of their work – which this study draws from, confirms and expands further – will be discussed below, whilst

new insights stemming from this study will be discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight. The remaining cited works within this section are relevant for a fuller understanding of the phenomena under investigation but are not central to this study.

Fashion modelling has been defined as an immaterial (Lazzarato, 1996) and affective (Hardt, 1999) labour requiring emotional involvement. The model is invited to present an affective attitude in front of the camera (e.g., superiority in wearing a garment) or to synchronise with the set's emotional atmosphere and energy (Wissinger, 2007).

As this study confirms (see Chapters Four to Seven), models model chiefly throughout their adolescence[11] and "operate within a culture that is too accepting of abuse, in all of its manifestations" (Edie Campbell, as quoted in Conti, 2017, para. 1). Whilst modelling is not the sole industry that presents issues related to abusive practices, as confirmed, for example, by the #MeToo movement,[12] this thesis' scope is exclusive to fashion models' lived experience.

Abusive practices within modelling are normalised as "simply a part of the job" (Edie Campbell, as quoted in Conti, 2017, para. 1; Entwistle & Mears, 2012), to which the stakeholders "turn a blind eye" (Edie Campbell, as quoted in Conti, 2017, para. 8), thereby enabling and perpetuating the system's culture (Barr, 2018; Conti, 2017).

[11] Adolescence is a "time of life… [r]unning roughly between the ages of twelve and twenty four" (Siegel, p. 1). As will be seen below by the age of twenty five a model is considered "old".

[12] #MeToo is a social movement based on breaking silence against sexual molestation, assault and harassment towards females, especially in workplace. Initially voiced (2006) by the American activist Tarana Burke on social media, the phrase spread virally in 2017 after the exposure of Harvey Weinstein's abusive practices and actress Alyssa Milano's tweet "Suggested by a friend: If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem", followed by many celebrities from the film, media and entertainment industry speaking up (Perkins, 2017), finally breaking the silence.

Continuous and sudden changes in modelling are common, requiring models' limitless professional availability, resulting in blurred boundaries between private and professional life, thus in significant feelings of vulnerability, instability and precariousness: "there is no line between the personal and the professional [thus] it becomes harder to define what is appropriate behavior for the workplace" (model Edie Campbell, as quoted in Conti, 2017, para. 16; see also Fressange, 2002; Mears, 2011; Soley-Beltran, 2006; Wissinger, 2007), as will be seen in Chapters Four to Seven.

The model arrives on the set as a blank canvas, just carrying her body, that which she *is* (Fressange, 2002), entering "into an unspoken contract. For that day, we surrender our bodies and our faces to the photographer, stylist, hairdresser and makeup artist", reveals Edie Campbell (as quoted in Conti, 2017, para. 20). The model's body is then worked upon intensely by fashion tastemakers: "This is what made the job uncomfortable to the majority of French girls. One needs to hold onto his/her personality despite the designer and the style of the fashion house, they thought" (Fressange, 2002, p. 117). Indeed, tastemakers are generally oblivious to models' predicaments, as models are commodities for them that must serve their function (see also Chapter Four).

"[T]he *nameless* girls whose careers endure for years are the chameleons who lose their own identities in whatever the fashion of the moment happens to be" (fashion editor quoted in Keenan, 1977, p. 136, emphasis added). Compliance secures a longer duration within modelling, thus the deferral of the feared *burnout* moment, at which point models are, often with no forewarning, dropped like old dolls (Soley-Beltran, 2006). The endless – often void – efforts to meet fashion tastemakers'

demands are aimed at gaining fame in an employment in which models age rapidly (Mears, 2011).

Given females are required to be chameleonic in modelling (Fressange, 2002; Soley-Beltran, 2006), the "emphasis [is] on the self-formation through the body to the exclusion of other attributes" (Craik, 1994 p. 91). The body is experienced "as a sign of personal and social identity" (Soley-Beltran, 2006, p. 25; see also Butler, 1990), a sort of brand. In the case of models, they are simultaneously performers – staging the "collectively defined standards of identity" – and "subjects of performativity", embodying the very standards they perform through strict control over the body, body postures, facial expressions and attitudes (Soley-Beltran, 2006, p. 41). As further seen below, they thereby become sophisticated artificial constructs, and in turn "a reference for prestigious imitation and desirability as if they were attainable and real" (Soley-Beltran, 2006, p. 41; see also Butler, 1990).

The attitude towards perfectionism in self-presentation, further discussed in Chapter Seven and within the next section below, represents a risk factor for the development of personal and interpersonal psychic suffering (Hewitt et al., 2003), such as depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive and eating disorders (Canter, 2003). Such factors represent a relevant personal characteristic within the fields of performing arts and physical exercise (Hill, Robson, & Stamp, 2015), as well as modelling, as seen in Chapters Four to Six. Preoccupations related to appearing perfect are often correlated with symptoms of burnout (Hill & Curran, 2015). In particular, socially prescribed perfectionism presents a stronger relation to psychological difficulties than self-oriented perfectionism (Hill, Hall, & Appleton, 2011). Direct testimonies reveal this obscure – intimate – side of the modelling labour: "I felt bad inside my body and very

rarely splendid"; "I always had the madness of purchasing clothes thinking that I would feel better. As if feeling good in my body came from the external and not from myself" (Fressange, 2002, p. 117, my translation from French), or "It's hard to work on the catwalk … you are surrounded by the forty most beautiful women in the world. You see all your imperfections and none of theirs" (Cindy Crawford, as quoted in Rudolph, 1991, p. 66).

The use of the body as a professional tool induces a sense of humiliation in models, connected to feelings of lack of professionalism (Soley-Beltran, 2006), adversely affecting them, particularly at the "exit" stage of modelling (Mears, 2011). Furthermore, the sense of alienation from self, the sole focus on one's body image, being culturally considered intellectually inept, being an object of envy or of others' desire, being surrounded by harshly competitive peers, represent the other side of the coin of a socially celebrated employment (Fressange, 2002; Soley-Beltran, 2006).

The emphasis on the body as the object upon which one's professional future depends can determine narcissistic stances and obsessions centred on one's physical shape: "one gets reduced to an image. And for the profession, to a surface. One unavoidably becomes egocentric. One permanently looks at one's navel" (Fressange, 2002, my translation from French), as seen in Chapters Four to Six and discussed in Chapter Seven.

Indeed, the widespread internal uneasiness experienced by models, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, is antithetic to the appearance of perfection and happiness models' imagery often conveys to the larger population. In reality, such superficial characteristics are uncorrelated to high status (Ketelaar et al., 2012). The idealised

depictions of models' lives, of their alleged self-confidence and independence, do not match the reality of their lived experiences, which, as seen in Chapters Four to Eight, entail "alienation from their own selves, bodies and emotions; personal insecurity; commodification" and "lack of control over their professional careers" (Soley-Beltran, 2006, p. 115).

Influence on the larger population of exposure to fashion models' imagery

Fashion models have often been held accountable for the adverse impact of their body image on the female population (Dwyer, 2004, 2006; Etcoff, 1999; Garner & Garfinkel, 1980; Garner, Garfinkel, Schwartz, & Thompson, 1980; Giroux, 1998; Gustafson, Tomsen, & Popovich, 1999; Morris, Cooper, & Cooper, 1989; Ring, 2000; Rintala & Mustajoki, 1992; Thompson & Heinberg, 1999; Thomsen, McCoy, & Williams, 2001; Wiseman, Gray, Mosimann, & Ahrens, 1992) and viewed as exerting an oppressive and distorting influence over female's body image and self-esteem (Bower, 2001; Cattarin, Thompson, Thomas, & Williams, 2000; David, Morrison, Johnson, & Ross, 2002; Irving, 1990, 2001; Katzman, 1997; Martin & Gentry, 1997; Richins, 1991; Thornton & Maurice, 1997) or even as indecent, in some cases (Dzikite & Mashiba, 2015). The ideal, embodied by fashion models through their – deemed – "disorderly figure[s]", has been theorised as being at the root of many psychological conditions requiring clinical intervention within the female population (Dwyer, 2006, p. 5).

"[M]odels' hegemonic beauty" can be understood to be a "mechanism defining and regulating the normative standards for acceptable identity" (Soley-Beltran, 2006, p. 40). As seen in Chapters Four to Six, in carrying messages of how to be a female in the world – which can easily become internalised through the socialising process

(Costanzo, 1992; Mair, 2018), thereby acting as persecutory references of unattainable identities – fashion models' imagery influences females at multiple levels, including identity, gender role behaviour, body image, use and modification (Crane, 2000; Lemma, 2010; Orbach, 2009; Soley-Beltran, 2006).

The model labour produces images further circulated into the social world, which become embraced within consumers lives, disciplining and moulding their embodiments and beliefs in turn. (Entwistle & Slater, 2012, p. 21). Whilst not all females are similarly affected by fashion models' imagery – mostly airbrushed and deliberately constructed by a pool of professionals (Cusumano & Thompson, 1997; Hayes & Tantleff-Dunn, 2010; Muñoz & Ferguson, 2012; Orbach, 2009; Soley-Beltran, 2006; Tiggemann, 2006; Yamamiya, Cash, Melnyk, Posavac, & Posavac, 2005), and while some studies argue that the impact of media images on females' body dissatisfaction is overstated (see Holmstrum, 2004), the general consensus is that exposure to such imagery adversely impacts females' psychological, behavioural and psychosocial dimensions, particularly mood, self-esteem, body image, weight control and eating behaviour (Orbach, 2009; Tiggemann, 2003, 2006; Thomsen, 2002; Waller, Hamilton, & Shaw, 1992; Wasylkiw et al., 2009; see Levine & Murnen, 2009, for a review).

Some studies argue that the higher the exposure to media images of fashion models, the greater the challenge faced by the female population around body dissatisfaction, eating issues and weight control (Ahern, Bennet, & Kelly, 2011; Clay, Vignoles, & Dittmar, 2005; Dittmar, 2005; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004; Halliwell, Dittmar, & Howe, 2005; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2003; Harrison & Cantor, 1997; Nasser, 2009; Stice et al., 1994), and that even acute short-term exposure significantly impacts the

observer by increasing body discontent (Groesz et al., 2002; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004; Halliwell et al., 2005; Ogden & Mundary, 1996). The majority of females incur feelings of body dissatisfaction and low mood (Tiggemann, Polivy, & Hargreaves, 2009), and such feelings often develop at a very young age, even during infancy (Bian & Foxall, 2014). Preadolescent and adolescent clusters, who are still at the impressionable age of forming a sense of self, are particularly at risk (Dwyer, 2006; Harris, 2004; Orbach, 2009; Pollay, 1986; Shaw, 1995), to the extent that recent action has been taken to persuade fashion tastemakers to work solely with models who comply with prescribed weight standards (McLaughlin & Amiel, 2015) as a means of preventing further negative body image and eating disorder conditioning on the greater population.

Contemporary fashion tastemakers foster a feminine thin ideal (Mair, 2018). They employ clinically underweight girls – or induce them to lose weight (Dauxerre, 2017) – generating a toxic environment that fosters body image and eating disorders (Swami & Szmigielska, 2013) through pressure exerted – more or less directly – by professional requirements (Preti et al., 2008). As a result, and as further discussed below and in Chapter Seven, thinness is pursued by females as a psychological and cultural ideal, associated with high status, happiness and desirability (Orbach, 2009; Soley-Beltran, 2006; Tiggemann, 2002), an issue indirectly reinforced by male expectations and their evaluations of female appearance, stemming from their repeated exposure to thin-ideal images in the media (Hargreaves & Tiggeman, 2003), which in turn, I suggest, adversely affects human relationships, as further discussed in Chapter Seven. It has also been proposed that the perception of the increasing gap between the ideal body size and the average body size presented by the larger population determines a disinvestment from the ultra-thin ideal, corroborated by the

general increase in body weight in the larger population (Heiman, Lowengart, & Shapira, 2015).

Some authors contend that women's personality traits influence the degree of adverse impact, with females who score highly in neuroticism appearing more suggestible, thus vulnerable to media images (Roberts & Good, 2010, p. 214). Others claim that "what is lacking is an understanding of how the internalisation of media images happens", rejecting both Orbach's "imitation" and Butler's "repetition processes" as the answers to this question (Entwistle & Slater, 2012, p. 20). According to the writer, conditioning is inevitable, especially within the context of incessant repetition within an image saturated culture.

I suggest that females' propensity towards extreme competitiveness, territorialism and relentless comparison hinders sisterhood, being problematic insofar as it perpetrates patriarchal dominance. A link could be drawn with evolutionary psychological perspectives, with female intrasexual competition affecting body image responses to media images and body dissatisfaction. The evolutionary thesis argues that females compete for status and compare themselves to highly desirable women as a drive to secure mates (Faer, Hendriks, Abed, & Figueredo, 2005; Ferguson, Winegard, & Winegard, 2011). Further relevant variables include the degree of internalisation of the thin-ideal (Cattarin et al., 2000; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004) and the process of social comparison (Heinberg & Thompson, 1992; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). Furthermore, the normative body ideal to which women are pressured to conform may further contribute to females' intragroup competition, as well as to the fear of ageing and the development of body hatred and obsessional thinking through

the cultural promotion of the ultra-thin ideal fostering in turn eating disorders (Mair, 2018; Wolf, 1991).

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEPTH PSYCHOLOGICAL[13] PERSPECTIVES

Within the realm of depth psychological studies, I will be drawing from some of the work of Jung,[14] Jensen (2009), Griessel (2013), Gosling (2009) and Schwartz[15] (2009) for they resonated with me and illuminated the phenomena under investigation in the most effective manner. Some psychoanalytic ideas stemming from the work of Klein,[16] Lacan[17] (1977), Kohut (Kohut & Wolf, 1978) and Lemma (2010, 2015) are helpful in so far as they illuminate some of the intrapsychic and intersubjective dimensions experienced by fashion models.

Albeit less central to this specific study, ideas stemming from the work of Frederickson and Roberts (1997), Bartky (1990), Neumann (1994) and Orbach – in particular on the body – (2005, 2009) as well as several other theorists – as mentioned below – will also be integrated, for they do illuminate interesting angles or details, enabling a deeper overall understanding.

The fashion model as the object of desire – or dread

[13] I refer to "depth psychology" as being an over-arching term encompassing psychoanalysis and Jungian analytical psychology and their various traditions, as well as other schools of psychotherapy which, whilst not psychodynamic in the traditional sense, work with notions of "depth".
[14] Especially the notions of Self, the archetypes (e.g. *puer/puella*, *senex*, *persona*, *animus* and *anima*) and individuation (1952/1960, 1960, 1953/1966, 1959/1968, 1959/1969, 1957/1970, 1971).
[15] On the *puella* and the provisional life.
[16] In particular on envy (1946/1997c, 1952/1997a, 1955/1997, 1957/1997d, 1975/1997b, 1975/1998b, 1940/1998c).
[17] Especially the notion of the object of desire.

The model's body is constantly exposed to the trespassing gaze and scrutiny of others (Fressange, 2002), as seen in Chapters Four to Seven. Models' awareness of the continuous gaze upon them by others represents a potential psychopathogen, inducing a type of socialisation through which this gaze is expected, resulting in the internalisation and consequent adoption of the observer's perspective, and thus in self-objectification (Bartky, 1990; Berger, 1972; de Beauvoir, 1949/1997; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Ross, 2013). As confirmed by this study, such internalisation of the other's gaze can produce intense feelings of shame (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), for rarely can one match expectations. Compliance with objectification practices requires a high degree of personal processing which, in some cases, can result in experiences of derealisation ("I am an optical illusion", model Clotilde, as quoted in Lakoff & Scherr, 1984, p. 111). Furthermore, the resulting social anxiety to which models are exposed determines a strong fear of others' negative judgement, which can lead to the development of ruminating processes (Brown, 2011).

"Objectification theory" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 173) is relevant for this study and accurately elucidates models' lived experience and some of the outcomes they may endure, which, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, are likely to increase with ageing:

> [G]irls and women are typically accultured to internalize an observer's perspective as a primary view of their physical selves. This perspective on self can lead to habitual body monitoring, which, in turn, can increase women's opportunities for shame and anxiety, reduce opportunities for peak motivational states, and diminish awareness of internal bodily states. Accumulations of such experiences may help account for an array of mental health risks that disproportionately affect women: unipolar depression, sexual dysfunction, and eating disorders. (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 173)

This study suggests that in addition to developmental, intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics, social and cultural dimensions also play a relevant part in the development or perpetration of discontent in models – and females. In agreement with Bartky, through the objectifying process, "a person's body parts or sexual functions [become separated out] from the rest of her identity and [become reduced] to the status of mere instruments or regarding them as if they were capable of representing her" (Bartky, 1990, p. 26). In other words, as stated by Orbach, the "sexuality of women's bodies [in models' media images, particularly within the commercial circuit, has indeed been exploited, having been] split off and reattached to a whole host of commodities reflective of a consumer culture" (Orbach, 2005, p. 15), endorsing the values of consumerism and resulting in females' sexual objectification (Bartky, 1990; Soley-Beltran, 2006).

The manner in which a model is depicted frequently involves a disassembling of her body into "part-objects"[18] (Klein, 1952/1997a, p. 62). Both the model's iconic stance and her part-objects are the site for unconscious projections of all kinds: ideations, phantasies and aspects of the individual and collective unconscious.[19] A model's body

[18] As a result of such a disassembling, the fashion model can be experienced by others, and can experience herself, as an assembly of part objects, an aspect contributing to the fashion model's "psychic alienation" from "essential attributes of personhood" as a result of cultural domination, stereotyping and sexual objectification, which in turn facilitates an internalised sense of inferiority that has led women to oppress themselves (Bartky, 1990, p. 30; Soley-Beltran, 2006).

[19] The individual unconscious is, for Jung, "that from which the individual must differentiate himself as well as a repository of all that may have been at some time individually expressed, adapted or influenced", in contrast to the "collective unconscious" which is the "opposite of the individual" and represents the "repository of man's psychic heritage and possibilities" (Samuels, Shorter, & Plaut, 1986/2013, p. 32). From the idealised "all good" position, the object often disappoints, thus falls into the "all bad" stance. It can be psychically destroyed (Klein, 1935/1998a) or discarded, whilst the longing once more drives the quest for a new, idealised object, pathologically perpetrating future idealisations or nostalgic longings for the past (Akhtar, 1996). The subject does not recognise the futility of this endless repetition. Such is the use that some men often make of the fashion model within romantic relationships; that consumers can make of the humanised branded good promoted by the objectified fashion model within consumer culture; that females can make of their bodies – or parts of their bodies

and/or part-objects can be fetishized[20] and consumed at the level of phantasy in a repetitive compulsion by the observer/consumer. The individual's split parts are illusorily perceived as holding the potential for gratification (Klein, 1946/1997c). Consequently, the model – whether as a look or as a part-object – is often utilised by marketing professionals and fashion tastemakers as a highly effective visual tool capable of engendering limitless desires and cravings for objects of consumption in the consumer.

Lacan showed that the "mother's departure … cause[s] … a *Spaltung*[21] in the subject" (Lacan, 1973/1981, p. 63), whereby "a small part of the subject … detaches itself from him while still remaining his". This "lack of being"[22] produces desire while the "lack of object" produces a craving for an object (Akhtar, 2009, p. 157; Evans, 1996, p. 98; Lacan, 1978/1988, 1981/1993). A "repetition compulsion" can then occur in the attempt to obtain the *petit a*, herein understood as the "repetition of the mother's departure" enacted through "the alternating game, *fort-da*, which is a *here or there*" (Freud, 1920/2015; Lacan, 1973/1981, p. 62). Once obtained, the *object a* is inevitably

– through body modification. To resolve the conflicts resulting from the fragmented perception of the other, characterised by paranoid and splitting psychic processes, the shift to a depressive position[19] needs to ensue; its resolution enables the part objects to be restored, leading to a "whole object" relations through a mourning process (Klein, 1975/1997b). Emerging attitudes of humbleness, love and gratitude – characterised by an acknowledgement that the individual both hurts others and receives goodness from others – confirm the successful transition to a depressive position and the subsequent shift to a whole person stance, whereby the subject can now repair and love (Klein, 1975/1998b). This process is ongoing and cannot be resolved in one isolated occurrence, for people are vulnerable to relapse into "paranoid positions" throughout life (Akhtar, 2009; Klein, 1975/1998b).

[20] Fetishism refers to "something to which a person is obsessively devoted" (Waite, 2012, p. 263), as can be the case with the fashion model's body or body parts. Sexual fetishism refers to a sexual deviation whereby the subject uses inanimate objects or parts of the body as the sole way to engender sexual intercourse, orgasm or sexual arousal, and is believed to be underpinned by castration anxiety (Akhtar, 2009; Freud, 1964/2008).

[21] German term for "splitting".

[22] According to Lacan, "[d]esire is a relation of being to lack. This lack is the lack of being properly speaking. It isn't the lack of this or that, but lack of being whereby the being exists" (Lacan, 1978/1988, p. 223).

disappointing, when the subject recognises that it has failed to quench the underlying yearning or desire.

Indeed, the fashion model can be experienced by the larger population – and can experience herself – as an object[23] of desire[24] (or dread, see below), occurring particularly "at the level of the scoptophilic[25] [*sic*] drive" (as will be discussed in the section dedicated to the gaze below), wherein "the subject is captive of the function of desire" (Lacan, 1974/1990, p. 86). In this sense, the fashion model can be viewed, or the model/female herself could be viewing the ideal modelling embodiment (Lemma, 2010), as an "*Object petit a*", or the inaccessible "cause of desire" stemming from the "lack of being" (Evans, 1996, pp. 38, 98; Lacan, 1978/1988). "Lacan thus points out that at the core of human being is an exhibitionistic impulse: in order for us to see ourselves, we must be seen" (see for e.g. Chapter Four), interestingly comparing "this visual mediation to photography", thus the person represents a photograph for the other, being perceived through the gaze (Lemma, 2010, p. 28).

This point reveals an intrinsic dimension of human existence: our fundamental dependency on the other, specifically occurring at a voyeuristic-exhibitionistic intrapsychic and interpersonal level (Lacan, 1977; Lemma, 2010), as epitomised by the fashion model lived experience. As will be seen throughout this work, models, and females within contemporary Western societies, are deeply entangled in this

[23] The term Object herein refers to the target of an individual's longing, whereby the object is viewed as a thing – or person – that holds the potential to satisfy a libidinal impulse or desire.
[24] An unconscious process, "desire is neither the appetite for satisfaction, nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second" (Lacan, 1966/2001, p. 318); in other words, desire is a "relation to a LACK" (original emphasis) (Evans, 1996, p. 38).
[25] Scopophilia refers to the sexual pleasure derived from looking, or voyeurism (Akhtar, 2009; Freud, 1905/2001b).

conundrum, with resulting feelings of enslavement, which they often seek to resolve through body modification (Lemma, 2010).

The model/female/subject comes into being by virtue of the other's gaze, as Winnicott (1967) and Kohut (Kohut & Wolf 1978) observed, through the eyes of the mother and her mirroring function. In optimal conditions, the gaze is loving and benevolent. However, the primary caregiver's gaze – and others' gaze – can be filled with hate, sexualisation or objectification (thus shaming), as further discussed below and in Chapter Seven. Within the fashion model experience, tastemakers hold the most relevant gaze, however being generally objectifying it produces, in time, adverse consequences for the model's sense of self, as will be seen in the following chapters.

The experience of representing an object of desire for the other holds a paradox. On the one hand, the model/female may experience the other's desire as enslaving and she may even feel destructively introjected, devoured and sucked dry by the other's greed, robbed, spoiled or destroyed by the other's envy (Klein, 1957/1997d); on the other, the model/female is seeking to establish a desirable body-self, especially as a result of environmental requirements, perhaps an attitude accentuated by injuries of self-objects needs within the developmental age, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven (Kohut & Wolf, 1978). Developmentally, the experience of being able to arouse in the object of desire "an acknowledgement of the necessity of the self to the other as proof of the self's desirability" is indeed vital (Lemma, 2010, p.26). As such the model/female may yearn to exist as "the cause of [the other's] desire" (Lacan, 1977, p. 81), for example to become famous and even as a result to enable sexual objectification (as often required by the industry or by some people in her field), but may simultaneously dread such a stance for she may feel persecuted, frightened,

oppressed and even damaged by it (see for example Chapter Four). The drive to remain the object of the other's desire may represent one of the reasons underpinning the difficulties models experience at the end of their modelling journey in their transition toward new endeavours.

As will be seen in Chapters Four to Eight, this study confirms Lemma's extension to Lacan's idea (2010), insofar as for females and models in particular, the "requirement" to occupy the position of "the cause of desire" "is felt acutely at the level of the body self and can be discerned in [females'] attempts to mould the body according to a physical form that is imagined to guarantee… a privileged, exclusive access, and control over the other" (p. 27).

Supermodel Gisele Bündchen recently confessed, "[m]ost people know me only as an image. An object. A blank canvas on which they can project their own stories, or dreams, or fantasies … an image without a voice … [however] nothing feels stranger than to be the object of someone else's projections" (Bündchen, 2018, p. 13). In reality, this is the very experience of everyone, however it is precisely staged by fashion models' experiences. The way the other perceives us is always a projection, a distorted reality filtered through their own past experiences, feelings and phantasies, that cannot be controlled by the subject being perceived (Lemma, 2010). This is, according to the writer, a very specific tension that the model not only experiences and grapples with, but that she is implicitly called to resolve in order to survive modelling, as will be seen in Chapter Four.

A model's internal wounds, sense of worthlessness and position of scapegoat, often stemming from early maternal or sibling jealousy (as discussed below and in Chapter

Seven), make the fashion model, especially if successful in the employment, a particularly apt container for all negative and "positive projective identification" (Hamilton, 1986). This can lead her to identify with and become controlled by the projected negative material (see below and Chapters Three to Six) (Klein, 1946/1997c). Such behaviour stems from feelings of envy: "the imputably privileged, enviable person, created in part by projective identification, is felt to possess attributes that the envious person thinks should rightly be his; thus *he feels himself impaired*" (Britton, 2008, p. 127). As such, projective identification can be understood as simultaneously creating the fashion model's idealised iconic status and destroying it/her.

"If the other is perceived to possess the wholeness or unity of which the self feels deprived, then envy may be mobilised" (Lemma, 2010, p. 30). According to Klein,[26] envy is a type of feeling that has a "constitutional basis", present since birth, revealing an innate "expression of destructive impulses" (Freud, 1920/2015; Klein, 1957/1997d, p. 176, 181), relating to the life and "death instinct" (Freud, 1920/2015)[27] and the repetitive compulsive "desire to spoil the mother's possessions" (Klein, 1957/1997d, p. 181; Steiner, 2008, p. 137). Whilst it is outside the scope of this work to delve in depths into the Kleinian notion of envy, whether it is constitutional and when it first emerges, this notion is relevant for this study as it represents a recurring theme in the

[26] Melanie Klein "attributed fundamental importance to the infant's first object relation – the relation to the mother's breast and to the mother". According to Klein, innate traits as well as the quality of this pivotal first relation, "which is introjected", determine the quality of the subject's progressive ego strengthening and cohesion (Klein, 1957/1997d, p. 178). The optimal (m)other/relevant caregiver, is able to provide the necessary holding and attunement to the baby.

[27] Originally coined by Freud in 1920 (1920/2015), this notion is herein understood through a Kleinian framework.

modelling experience. Whether experienced by models or by females comparing themselves to models, envy stands out from the accounts.

Envious impulses can be directed externally onto the other through attempts to sadistically destroy her by projecting onto her all the bad aspects of the self, leading to "rash judgment, calumny, detraction, hatred and to rejoicing at another's ill-fortune" (Hart, 1916 as cited in Britton, 2008, p. 126). Disavowed envious feelings can also be projected defensively to evoke the very feeling or thought that is projected in the other. In light of this, the future model may unconsciously seek status and fame within modelling as a way to rid herself of the unbearable feeling of envy whilst forcing others to feel it on her behalf. This intrapsychic dynamic could represent a further underlying reason underpinning models' reluctancy to leave modelling and transition onto alternative endeavours: by relinquishing the status of the envied object, envy could no longer be projected outwardly.

Destructive impulses may represent a defence against envy of all the power, status, money, attractiveness and appealing mates in the world. Indeed, as confirmed by this study, comparison practices and habits trigger feelings of worthlessness, failure and loss. The fragile ego could respond to a perceived sense of deprivation, in this case the deprivation of the position of the object of desire in the world and of the other's admiring gaze, experiencing anger related to the other (the competitor) possessing that which is desired and wishing in turn to spoil it for them. Deep feelings of envy can also underpin yearnings to "become the ideal". Such efforts to become like the envied other often drive body modification practices in the hope of achieving "imitative identification", thus the phantasmagorical "appropriation of the other through imitation" (Lemma, 2015, p. 27).

Envy undermines "feelings of love and gratitude at their core" (Klein, 1957/1997d, p. 176). The process of maturation and an effective transition has to entail mourning and loss before a new reality can be borne (Klein, 1940/1998c), however it would ideally need to be mediated by an external object that provides a reparative experience – e.g. a therapist – for the model to exit the vicious circle of envy, sense of failure and self-loathing. Gratitude and appreciation would represent a useful antidote, as argued by Klein (1957/1997d), however, models struggle to appreciate or even recognise any of their positive attributes as a result of cultural diktats and developmental dynamics, as well as the unrelenting critical environment they operate within which drives them to focus solely on their shortcomings and the desire to perfect, as confirmed by the participants (see chapters Four to Six). A habit of focusing on what is lacking or imperfect arises, alongside a feverishness about what one does not have, resulting in chronic discontent.

Models can also represent objects of dread – even in the eyes of another perhaps less "successful" model, as will be seen in chapters Four to Six – because in some individuals they can elicit potent feelings of envy[28] that prompt efforts to attain (e.g. by shaping the body to match that of the "successful" model) in a bid to acquire her "good" characteristics (Klein, 1975/1997b). Models can also be perceived as unattainable entities, thus eliciting powerful feelings of inferiority, body hatred and/or terror in the other. This may lead to avoidance of the model and may engender feelings of social exclusion and loneliness in the model herself, in turn resulting in her pairing with

[28] Envy herein is not understood in the Freudian sense – of "penis envy" – as stemming from a patriarchal stance, but rather within the Kleinian theoretical framework, thus as the greatest defence to the depressive position (Klein, 1975/1997b). It is also seen as a "feeling of sadness, uneasiness, or discontent excited at the sight of another's superiority or success … because we fancy our merit to be lessened thereby" (Hart, 1916, pp. 364–365 as cited in Britton, 2008, p. 126).

individuals prone to exploiting her, who display her as a trophy (see also below and Chapter Seven).

Developmental aspects of the future fashion model

All schools of depth psychology hold that females' psychological development within Western societies is complex, for it occurs within environments characterised by a dominant patriarchal culture and extreme female "intrasexual competition", especially "with respect [but not limited] to attractiveness", as seen above and as shown by research within the field of evolutionary psychology (Buss, 2016, p. 343; Campbell, 2004; Faer et al., 2005; Ferguson et al., 2011; Ferguson, Muñoz, Contreras & Velasquez, 2011; Fisher, 2004, p. S283; Vaillancourt, 2013).

As seen in Chapters Four to Seven, the model develops within a specific culture and environment which moulds her psyche and body. Clinical (Chapter Six) and autoethnographic (Chapter Four) accounts reveal patterns of envy and intra-sexual competitiveness displayed by females towards (the future model) girls within or outside the nuclear and/or extended family of origin (Buss, 2016; Campbell, 2004). Such negative patterns of behaviour,[29] as seen in Chapters Four to Six, contribute to the likelihood that she will be exposed to physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect throughout her development, which can impair her self-esteem and relationship with her body and increase the prospect that she will embark on – and

[29] Within the developmental environment, the connection with the relevant caregivers [may] not [have been] secure and the power [may] not [have been] used "benignly, with respect for [the] child's emotions". As a result, [the future fashion model] child may have felt "powerless and obliterated by shame" (DeYoung, 2015, pp. 85–86) – which on some occasions may be compounded by various degrees of incestuous behaviour on behalf of one parent (typically the father), by parent/s presenting narcissistic traits or personality disorders, and by envious mothers (Chernin, 1994a; Grose, 2010; McBride, 2013) and/or siblings.

persevere in[30] – modelling in a subjugated manner, wherein she may endure further abuse and neglect (DeYoung, 2015; Etherington, 2003; Mears, 2011).

Having been "[p]rimed with cortisol on a regular basis [during the developmental age], [the future model may be] biologically and psychologically readied to seek out stress" (Orbach, 2009, p. 42). "Many traumatized people expose themselves, seemingly compulsively, to situations reminiscent of the original trauma. These behavioral reenactments are rarely consciously understood to be related to earlier life experiences" (van der Kolk, 1989, p. 389) and may be reiterated and reinforced within the modelling system, which rarely provides reparative relational experiences but may rather deliver an uncannily familiar abusive environment for the girl, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, thus perpetrating negative relational patterns and deepening the original wounds/trauma.

"Self-trust, self-love, and self-knowledge can be taught to a daughter only by a mother who possesses those qualities herself" (McBride, 2013, p. 37). A lacking primary relationship, wherein the daughter's needs are not met effectively throughout the developmental age, hinders the girl's – and future woman's – capacity for "self-care" and "self-protection" (Ciccolini & Ippolito, 2002, p. 111, my translation). Femininity itself can then be experienced with rage, hatred and devaluation (Ciccolini & Ippolito, 2002). A failure in the pre-oedipal relationship with the mother and in the father's facilitation of the girl's process of identification and separation, thus individuation, can

[30] Despite the employment's disadvantages, as discussed in the previous chapter, often fashion models persevere in the hope of attaining some level of success, however, only a very limited number of girls/women actually achieve significant success, capital and power.

result in the girl's idealisation of the father and her subsequent vulnerability to becoming an "object of seduction" (Ciccolini & Ippolito, 2002, p. 111, my translation).

Furthermore, the future model, raised in an image-saturated culture, permeated by body-perfection and by a wounded mother, who may be unresolved or immature, may bring forth "parts of … herself that suit the mother" or that the "mother is able to accept, recognise and acknowledge" (Orbach, 2009, pp. 67) wherein the daughter's personality becomes shaped relationally. The development of the fullness of her potential self may become hindered with her personality in turn being shaped by the adjustments necessary to fit into the given relational dynamic. Relevant aspects of the self and the personality may thus remain hidden in the shadow. These relational patterns are then replicated within the fashion-modelling system, as seen in Chapters Four to Six and further discussed in Chapter Seven, and a fusion with a *persona* may result. Orbach illuminates these relational dynamics and outcomes through the Winnicottian notion of the "false self" (Orbach, 2009, pp. 66). A defensive psychic organisation develops in response to misattunements[31] (Winnicott, 1965/1990) whereby the development of the "potential self" is obstructed (Orbach, 2009, pp. 67).

Indeed, the cultural environment fosters women's inability to attune to their daughters by distracting and drawing them towards fatuous goals, such as perfecting the body (Chernin, 1982, 1994b; Duncan, 1994; McRobbie, 1997; Orbach, 2005, 2009; Wolf, 1991). The cultural idealisation of youth produces and reproduces a "developmentally retarded" collective psyche (Jensen, 2009, p. 9; Orbach, 2009; von Franz, 1970/2000). P*uella* mothers (as further discussed below) are indistinguishable from their

[31] Winnicott defined such misattunement as "impingements", failures to respond adequately to the infant's needs (Winnicott, 1965/1990, pp. 34).

adolescent daughters and cannot respond to their developmental needs, consumed as they are by compliance with societal feminine gender role norms. Furthermore, relentless depictions of sexualised pubescent/prepubescent girls foster the sexualised gaze of men towards young girls, and, potentially, of fathers towards their daughters. The repressed erotic feelings elicited by sexualised images of tweens and young adolescents – at times children – can become enacted – generally secretively. Paedophilia appears to be culturally normalised or enticed by the media's invitation to lust after young girls, placing people in a double-bind. Such are often the developmental environmental circumstances within which the future models grow up, as further seen in Chapters Five and Six.

Even when circumstances within the developmental environment have been more favourable for the future model, the mother-daughter relationship deeply shapes her psyche and body, for "both daughter and mother experience this relationship intensely, such that it contributes in profound ways to the creation and experience of the self" (Chodorow, 1978/1999, p. xii). "Women experience a sense of self in relation", wherein "the core psychological and interpersonal experiences for women can be understood in terms of this internal mother-daughter lineage" (Chodorow, 1978/1999, p. viii). Unconscious messages are passed on and progressively constitute the girl's identity (Ciccolini & Ippolito, 2002). Furthermore, "during the very early life … [the girl's] physicality is … shaped and coaxed in ways which will create … her actual physicality and inner sense of … her own body", through "living-body-to-living-body communication" (Appel-Opper, 2008a, 2009, 2015), resulting in the internalisation of "imprints of her mother's feelings about her own body" (Orbach, 2009, pp. 57–58) and in cultural reproduction of femininity and gender role behaviour (Chernin, 1982, 1994b;

Chodorow, 1978/1999; Ciccolini & Ippolito, 2002; Dinnerstein, 1976/1999; Orbach, 2009).

Cultural identity is transmitted between parents and their babies through routine interactions and practices – often gendered within binary male-female constructs (Butler, 1990), wherein "gender certainty"[32] is fostered (Samuels, 1989, p. 83). This leads to culturally situated and performed constructs, transmitted from one generation to the next, representing "the essence of the child's experience of his or her own body", whereby "embodiment [is] constitutive of [one's] sense of self" (Butler, 1990; Orbach, 2009, p. 8). Thus, girls' "[b]odies are first formed in infancy and shaped and structured according to the treatment received [and received subsequently from their mothers] and what [they] observe" (Orbach, 2009, p. 39). Such body moulding occurs in accordance to the "social and individual customs of the families [bodies] are born into, so that they reflect the kinds of bodies that are suited to the lives they will need to live" (Orbach, 2009, pp. 8–9).

Research also shows that females are generally less nurtured from infancy, leading to reduced feelings of entitlement to being nurtured and to the reproduction of gendered bodies and practices (Orbach, 2009). As a result of the "transgenerational transmission of anxious embodiment" from mother to daughter (Orbach, 2009, p. 10), breeding "body insecurity" (Orbach, 2005, p. 51), it has been argued by Susie Orbach that daughters develop a "false body", filled with shame; according to Orbach, such a false body has "created itself in the absence of any relation to a potential or 'true' body,

[32] Indeed, as discussed in the previous chapter, "[w]omen have suffered enormously from narrow definitions of what it means to be female, from the requirement that they be unaggressive and selfless creatures who relate, who are responsive to the needs of others, who react but do not act. Here psychological illness may even be regarded as a kind of protest about such requirement" (Samuels, 1989, p. 85).

which … [makes the future woman's] bodily existence fragile" (2005, 2009, p. 69). Indeed, rearing relationships create "particular and personal neural pathways which affect and structure biology in ways that are more explicit than any genetic predisposition" (Cozolino, 2014; Ogden et al., 2006; Orbach, 2009, p. 140; Schore, 2016). This moulding, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, is then re-enacted and reinforced within the modelling system. The symptomatic body, epitomised by models' embodiment, is developmentally and culturally shaped through relentless modification "to produce what is perceived as an acceptable body", yet is filled with feelings of shame and body-hatred. This phenomenon can indeed be understood as a societal "signal of a body that is struggling to express itself and its needs, or even to exist" (Orbach, 2009, pp. 76, 82).

The fashion model embodiment

The future fashion model is typically a very slim, tall, and androgynous, adolescent girl, who may even be misidentified as a boy (Fressange, 2002; Mears, 2011). As a result of such an androgynous embodiment, she may at times despise her body (as seen in Chapters Four to Six). As she approaches pubescence, her body's developing sensuality begins to become progressively more apparent to the outer world. She soon realises the peculiar power she holds, however linked to seduction and sexuality, and thus to the sexualised appearance of her body, which she perceives as capital, as asserted by model Cameron Russell in her Ted Talk (Russell, 2012, TED 2.45 minutes–2.47 minutes), "I won a genetic lottery". As the world responds to her developing body with admiration and near-worship, the future model may experience herself as coming into existence by virtue of her sensuality and may begin to experience her body as the predominant, or exclusive, site of self-worth, potentially

developing – and fusing with – a specific *persona*[33] (the specific fashion model *persona* is discussed further below and in Chapter Seven) (Jung, 1959/1969). She may simultaneously grapple with feelings of ambivalence, confusion, guilt and self-loathing – particularly if the father's gaze was sexualised thus sexually objectifying,[34] and if the mother's/sisters' attitudes and interactions with her are envy and hate-filled.

Typically, as further seen in Chapters Four to Seven, models are scouted in their childhood or early adolescence. "Puberty is a particularly stressful and complex time for children" (Kegerreis, 2010, p. 56). High-fashion models are typically pubescent or even prepubescent girls; whilst they may have "adult-like bodies … inside there is still a quite small child struggling reluctantly with the new feelings and urges and the different reactions and expectations from others" (Kegerreis, 2010, p. 56), that, within the fashion industry, veer mainly towards precocious sexualisation.[35] The shift into adulthood can be too fast and unbalanced, leaving little time for the girl to make sense of what is happening or even to mourn the loss of her childhood (Kegerreis, 2010).

As a result of the potent feelings of envy she may involuntarily induce in other females, as discussed above, below and in Chapter Seven, the girl can be viewed by the mother/sister as a competitor, rather than as a vulnerable person needing protection

[33] Understood as "that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is", or the conformity archetype, "the individual's system of adaptation to … the world (Jung, 1959/1969, para. 221), which develops in the early developmental stages from the wish to conform to parental, teachers' and peers' expectations. Undesirable aspects thus become relegated to the unconscious, or the shadow. The latter is a "living [disowned] part of the personality", and can be constituted by both positive and negative aspects of the personality which are not welcomed by relevant others (Jung, 1959/1969, para. 44). Furthermore, the shadow can possess opposing qualities to those possessed by the *persona*. The denied shadow may be projected onto others.
[34] An issue more common than expected, often compounded by the girl's unconscious incestuous desire for the father, which may underpin, when the father's gaze response is sensualised/sexualised, body dysmorphic disorder (Pavia, 2002).
[35] The consequences of the sexualisation of the child/adolescent's body, or body parts, is discussed herein and in Chapters Two and Seven.

and support (Kegerreis, 2010, p. 38; McBride, 2013). In turn, the girl's femininity can begin to be perceived as concurrently powerful and perilous, for it attracts the other – albeit only sexually – and may draw retaliation from other females, engendering a double-bind.

Once girls embark on modelling, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, they ''sell [their] desirability. That is the job description — be as desirable as possible… [However, their] success and [their] financial security are dependent on those more powerful than [them]. The power imbalance is huge" (model Edie Campbell's words in an open letter to the fashion industry, as cited in Conti, 2017, para. 20). This dynamic – compounded by the sexualised gaze girls tend to attract – may potentially lead models to, more or less consciously, hold themselves accountable for the exceedingly frequent unwanted sexual harassment and assaults experienced within the modelling field (Bordo, 2003).

Extreme thinness, in particular, is a phenomenon of epidemic proportions in contemporary culture (Sobral, 2002), indeed being epitomised – and promoted – by models' embodiment. The ultra-thin ideal is one of the key symptoms of body instability in our culture (Orbach, 2009) and can be further conceptualised in multiple ways, as outlined below.

Extreme thinness has been understood as a "graphic metaphor for our time", a "complex personal response to a set of interpersonal, intrapsychic, social and political phenomena" (Orbach, 2005, p. 173, 2009), developing within the context of the feminine psychology of the "mother-daughter relationship" (Orbach, 2005, p. xxvii). It has been understood as a "crystallization of culture" (Bordo, 1988), a culturally induced

disease (Hesse-Biber et al., 2006), a “hunger strike” to rebel against oppression and traditional gender role behaviour (Orbach, 2005).

In extreme thinness, the subject experiments with near-death experiences that could be elucidated by Freud’s death drive notion (1920/2015) and the unconscious drive to extinction and self-destruction, particularly in a time of – relative – peace within Western societies: Thanatos is not collectively acted out in mass destruction but rather is enacted at the subjective level. Indeed, extreme thinness could be seen as a defence mechanism against feelings of worthlessness and lack of control (Freud, 1936/2018; Kalsched, 1996), or, as seen above, as an attempt to achieve autonomy from societies’ contradictory gender role behaviour demands (Bordo, 2003; Chernin, 1994a; Orbach, 2005).

The pursuit of extreme thinness could express an unconscious wish “to be highly selective, to be able to control the food that [one] require[s], thereby doing away with the materiality of the body” and its desires (Orbach, 2009, p. 94). It could be understood as a “struggle for identity”, as well as a quest for a new identity, freed from societal norms (Chernin, 1994a, p. xix; Friedan, 1963), a way to separate from one’s – engulfing, absent or not “good-enough” – mother – or relevant primary caregiver – and to individuate and re-own one’s body (Lemma, 2015; Mahler, 1969; Sobral, 2002; Winnicott, 1965/1990, p. 9), or as an attempt to nullify unconscious Oedipal desire for the father, which he incestuously reciprocates (Pavia, 2002).

Extreme thinness has been seen as a high status marker, as discussed in the previous chapter, and may produce a sense of achievement and strength of character in the context of a world constellated by food abundance, wherein slenderness is seen as a

symbol of sophistication, wealth, social elitism, status and self-control (F. Davis, 1992; Mears, 2011; Soley-Beltran, 2006; Stevens & Price, 2000). I posit that it could also reflect an unconscious wish to control desirability by embodying the forever-prepubescent girl who could menstruate at any moment for the first time, given the cultural emphasis on youth as the ultimate status symbol (Bordo, 2003; Orbach, 2009).

Extreme thinness could be pursued to control cultural gender role diktats (Bordo, 1990; Chernin, 1994a; Foucault, 1977), whereby amenorrhea[36] could be understood, or unconsciously utilised, as a natural contraceptive, capable of freeing the female from reproductive demands, thus enabling her to focus – with no or a lesser sense of guilt – on a professional career and subjective desires (Stevens & Price, 2000; Wasser & Barash, 1993). It could also reflect an adaptive attempt to control, thus suppress, reproduction where environmental conditions are perceived as unfavourable (Faer et al., 2005; Surbey, 1987; Voland & Voland, 1989; Wasser & Barash, 1993), or attempts to suppress reproduction from unconscious fears of being, I posit, mentally unfit for the purpose – or unready for reasons of lacking a perceived optimal partner, personal and/or external conditions (Stevens & Price, 2000) – with more or less conscious fantasies of being dangerous to one's self and/or others or unable to perform such a role effectively (Stevens & Price, 2000; Wasser & Barash, 1993), or even as an evolutionary thrust to compete for mates against high-quality female rivals (Faer et al., 2005).

The quest for extreme thinness could further be understood as a need to punish oneself through asceticism, by purifying, atoning and propitiating one's sinful being, in

[36] The absence of menstruation.

an attempt to make oneself a “better person” (Simpson, 2018), or as a form of asceticism enacted as a countercultural response to the sexualised and objectified body and Western societies’ secular values of power, possession and sex (Miles, 1981). Often, it is observed as reflecting an aspiration to need nothing and no one (Stolorow & Atwood, 2002), a form of asceticism practiced by Gnostics aimed at transcending and escaping the world (de Groot, 1994, p. 127; Lemma, 2010). It could have a religious dimension, as a route to pleasure or as a way of expressing and developing a self (Miles, 1981).

Extreme thinness – whereby the body is desexualised and degendered – could also act as a defence against a femininity perceived as being dangerous (Bordo, 2003; Orbach, 2005, p. 68). Finally, and this is the chief stance embraced in this study as further discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, extreme thinness could be viewed as an attempt to remain as the *puella aeterna* and identify with the fashion model iconic *persona* (as further discussed below) and its correlates in archetypal structures (Jensen, 2009, p. 9; Jung, 1959/1969) or as the model’s compliance to the fashion tastemakers’ demands to remain in the position of the *puella aeterna* – according to which she is tied up in the father complex, remains dependant and could either develop homosexuality or as a female “Don Juan” (von Franz, 1970/2000, p. 7).

As seen in Chapters Four to Six and further discussed in Chapter Seven, exploring Jungian ideas, the 21st-century fashion model icon has the semblance of the *puella aeterna* (Griessel, 2013; Schwartz, 2009). “Images deriving from archetypal structures involve us in a search for correspondence in the environment” (Samuels, 2013, p. 27); models’ depictions in the media provide the larger population with such correspondence. Models are, in fact, generally prepubescent/pubescent girls – or

must look as such – symbolising the *puella aeterna*'s emotional and physiological arrest, the latter epitomised by amenorrhea. Her development into femaleness and adulthood is thus obstructed and interrupted. "For the eternal *puella*, the pressure to be perfect means that unacceptable feelings must be hidden at all cost" (Schwartz, 2009, p. 212); she cannot afford to be herself as she cannot accept herself as she is. "On outer appearances, [she is] often regarded by others as a successful [performer] and [achiever] who '[has] set [herself] free' whilst [her] inner life is often in turmoil" (Griessel, 2013, p. 1). The internal dialogue is harsh and hyper-critical. She suffers from a narcissism that relates to self-hatred (Schwartz-Salant, 1982). Ageing is her biggest fear, paralleled by a culturally driven obsession with youth, in contrast to the exponential increase in the geriatric population. As a result, the "standardised body promoted and which we then endeavour to create individually is not a stable body" (Orbach, 2009, p. 140).

A perpetual, or protracted, adolescent stance (Gosling, 2009, p. 137) takes hold of the person, characterised – and reinforced – by the provisional life, or "the strange attitude and feeling that one is not *yet* in real life" (Delaney, 2009, p. 215; von Franz, 1970/2000, p. 8), typifying fashion modelling (a nomadic and unstable lifestyle and employment), which, over time, becomes chronic, often resulting in difficulties with relationships and settling down, attitudes of perpetually starting anew, issues related to impatience, idealism and dislike of routine, whereby desires for freedom and independence reign and restrictions, limits and boundaries are experienced as unbearable, and are thus to be escaped from for fear of "being pinned down, of entering space and time completely", wherein fantasies reign that "sometime in the future the real thing will come about" (von Franz, 1970/2000, p. 8), be it a job, a man, or a stable life (Carr & Mercer, 2017, p. 51; Delaney, 2009, p. 215; Samuels et al.,

2013; Sharp, 1991). Thus, the fashion model lifestyle could be understood as epitomising a "provisional life" (Delaney, 2009, p. 215; Jung, 1973, n.d.), which has in turn been understood as "the modern European disease of the merely imaginary life" (Jung, 1973, p. 85), contributing to the false-self (Hollis, 1996).

As seen in Chapters Four to Six, the provisional lifestyle may deepen the challenges experienced by models – their isolation and subsequent vulnerability to negative encounters – whereby the development of supportive and nurturing relationships with significant others and an effective support system become hindered, despite modern technology. The *puella aeterna* is incapable of intimacy and reciprocity, and does not want to be known intimately, instead just wishing to excel, be seen and be adored. Her relationships, like other aspects of her life, are transient. She fantasises that one day she will become the ideal self she has in mind; she is terrified of showing her real self, living an "inauthentic existence" (Schwartz, 2009, p. 212), engaging in a relentless "search for the ideal rather than the real" (Schwartz, 2009, p. 212). She overcompensates, seeking external validation, often experiencing feelings of grandiosity, while simultaneously holding "grandiose personal expectations" (Delaney, 2009, p. 215) yet unable to "use her talents as she holds some internally imposed ideal" (Schwartz, 2009, p. 212), often engaging in relationships with the *puer aeternus* or neglecting/abusive immature men, because she fundamentally holds a "punishing core of 'I don't deserve'" originating from "narcissistic wounds" (Schwartz, 2009, p. 212). Such appears to be the model's predicament and, in parallel, the pandemic within contemporary Western societies.

The *puella aeterna*[37] stance becomes the sole way by which to maintain employability within modelling. Furthermore, it is a way of living (Carr & Mercer, 2017) whereby, in time, the model may fuse with the fashion model *persona* – wherein many feminine qualities are compressed into an impossible, undifferentiated icon, promoting a delusional “single, correct way of [being in the world and] seeing, corresponding to a single and likewise correct way of representing” (Warwick & Cavallaro, 1998, p. 21) – whilst other aspects of the personality remain underdeveloped.

Different societies require varying degrees and forms of social conformity, people adapting to ensure adequate social functioning. A flexible *persona* can facilitate adaptation. However, in any job that emphasises the *persona*, the danger, as Jung himself stressed (1959/1969), is to become fused with the *persona*. He believed a strong ego to be one capable of relating to the world’s multifaceted demands through a flexible *persona* – a mask one is aware of wearing and as such can let go of, thus making a person able to flow from one role to another flexibly and with ease.

Whilst all the aforementioned challenges endured by models may appear intense, the greatest challenges surface during the “exit” phase of the modelling journey (Mears, 2011), for this is when models are called upon to come to terms with the ephemeral nature of the fashion model *persona* and the outcomes of having invested in just one aspect of their personalities, namely appearance. In losing the *persona*, they may feel annihilated, as if losing *their-selves*, and depression can result (Soley-Beltran, 2006), as seen in Chapters Four to Six. This is the moment in which models may be in need of support the most, as further discussed in Chapter Seven.

[37] See also “the little girl lost” (Schwartz, 2009, p. 203).

Often, openly homosexual tastemakers have predominantly dictated aesthetic standards since the 1980s in the high-fashion editorial domain (A. Davis, 2017; Mears, 2011). It would be reductive and pejorative to elucidate the rise of androgyny in fashion to be *solely* resulting from homosexual tastemakers' ideas of beauty, or deriving from male hatred, envy, fear and resentment of powerful femininity (Greer, 1970/2012; Horney, 1967) exuded by young models at the peak of their biological fertility and symbolic creativity, yet elements of this position may be worth exploring. Androgyny may be in the armoury of all gay or heterosexual men and one could argue that the compulsive depiction of the androgynous look is one of many misogynistic ways of controlling and/or dimming the feminine power (Neumann, 1994).

A further paradox emerges from fashion models' imagery and embodiment: on the one hand, models are presented as objects of desire, as discussed above, on the other, their bodies are systematically de-feminised, suggesting a cultural attack on, or desecration of, the reproductive, maternal body – within the context of a patriarchal *status quo* and an overpopulated planet. The maternal body is portrayed as unfashionable. An idealisation of the child/androgynous body is instead culturally promoted. Such a paradox appears to illuminate a denial of or a revenge against the "basic phenomenon that the human is born of woman and reared by her" (Neumann, 1994, p. 273) and requires further examination, perhaps even a dedicated study. An unconscious fear of the "numinous archetypal Feminine" may also be at play, that is "fundamentally different from the dominant patriarchal values" and thereby frightening (Neumann, 1994, p.273).

In line with classical Jungian terms, the androgyne is the representation of the self and involves true integration of animus and anima: "the syzygies, the paired opposites, where the One is never separated from the Other, its antithesis. It is a field of personal experience which leads directly to the experience of individuation, the attainment of the Self"[38] (Jung, 1959/1969, para. 194). Jung posited, and this study supports this idea, that, through the process of individuation, people can become whole by integrating aspects contained in the shadow whilst recognising the ego's subordinate position to the self (1959/1968, 1959/1969). In light of this, a more optimistic hypothesis could explore whether the fashion industry's insistence on androgynous imagery may also represent an unwitting protest against rigid divisions between masculine and feminine gender and the annexation of oppressive stereotypical gender role behaviour, in an unwitting attempt to liberate men and women from pre-established schemas that hinder authentic self-expression, a stance that would resolve the aforementioned paradox. The androgyne could thus symbolise the individuated female that through love is capable of binding the opposites in turn embracing humanity as a "unity of masculine and feminine aspects of the Self" (Neumann, 1994). The exploration of this hypothesis is outside the scope of this study and would require further research.

FEMINIST[39] THEORIES

Fashion is one of the only industries in which females are rewarded with higher wages than their male counterparts, reflecting the extent to females' value within

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[38] "Jung's Self is the transcendent, unchanging part of ourselves, in stark contrast to our undulating ego, shadow, and complexes … a Self which transcends any identification we might have with our physical bodies" (Schnackenberg, 2016, p. xix).

[39] Feminism refers to the belief, advocacy and activism in equality of rights, opportunities and power between men and women (Watson, 2014).

contemporary Western societies is still largely underpinned by traditional gender identity norms (Fressange, 2002; Mears, 2011; Soley-Beltran, 2006). This stereotypical valuing of females, whilst simultaneously degrading and objectifying,[40] was one of the main prejudices with which second wave feminism[41] grappled. This problem has yet to be resolved, as evidenced by fashion models' imagery and as confirmed by The Model Alliance's recent launch of the Respect Program in a bid to eradicate oppression, body-shame, bullying, demands to slim, sexual harassment and retaliation from the modelling industry (Newbold, 2018).

Indeed, the beautifying and grooming processes undertaken by models – and the female population at large – to comply with normative beauty standards also entails physical suffering, casting the "feminine psyche into a masochistic mold" (Dworkin, 1974, p. 116). Furthermore, by focusing on external appearance, females often neglect other aspects of their personalities, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, including, as argued in this study and by some feminist authors, political and sociocultural issues. Being driven by contemporary culture to be continuously preoccupied with their looks, it has been argued, as confirmed by this study, that women are depleted of the resources that might otherwise be used to battle political injustices or to explore avenues of genuine power (Blood, 2005; Duncan, 1994; McRobbie, 1997; Ross, 2013; Wolf, 1991). Thus, vicious cycles of subordination, dependence on men, low self-confidence and a fragile sense of self can be culturally reproduced, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

[40] Epitomised in 1968 by feminist protests against the Miss America context (Buchanan, 2011).
[41] Second wave feminism emerged after the Second World War and largely pertained to issues related to sex work and pornography.

Females' subordination

To date, feminist analyses of the media have focused on understanding "how images and cultural construction are connected to patterns of inequality, domination and oppression" (Gill, 2007, p. 7). In the 1960s, despite their material comfort, marriages and children, American housewives silently endured a "problem that [had] no name"; media images of womanliness affected females' identities by portraying them, mostly by male editors, as naturally disposed to the role of caretakers, housekeepers, nurturers, wives and mothers (Friedan, 1963, p. 5). Females' anxieties stemmed from their exclusive investment in the institution of marriage within male-dominated societies and the consequent risk of total loss, including of their identity, through divorce should they not comply with the constructed feminine normative roles (Friedan, 1963). In Western societies today, the problem has not been alleviated, but appears, instead, to have shifted towards, or been aggravated by, the need to achieve a slender, youthful and standardised body, as staged by models and confirmed by this study (Bordo, 2003; Chernin, 1983, 1994a, 1994b; Orbach, 2005, 2009; Soley-Beltran, 2006). While education has enabled many women to attain jobs outside the home whilst delegating child-rearing duties to others, the tyranny of normative beauty does drive females to undertake incessant body labour – linked to a "third shift" after work and household chores/childcare (Chernin, 1983; Wolf, 1991).

Full-time work poses the challenge and internal conflict related to instinct and women's biological bodies and capacity to reproduce, which inevitably requires of them, should they embark on reproduction, the dedication of a period of time in their lives to the task of being the primary caregiving "devoted mother", a role that, if a secure attachment is to be ensured, can only be shared with a limited number of other relevant caregivers

after a certain period of the toddler's life (Bowlby, 2005; Salter Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 2015; Winnicott, 1957/1991, p. 10). Maternal unavailability for the infant is problematic, for it sets the ground for self-object unmet needs (Kohut & Wolf, 1978) and attachment disturbance, resulting in insecurities to which females, especially the post-millennials, and fashion models may overcompensate, for example, by seeking attention, approval and validation, as will be seen in Chapters Four to Six and further discussed in Chapter Seven.

In parallel with women's progress, gains and liberation, a backlash against wider second wave feminism has been apparent – and continues to be observed (Faludi, 1991; French, 2003; Wolf, 1991). In particular, it has been argued that fashion – and this thesis argues fashion models' imagery – has been used to hold women in dominated positions, as compliant consumers (Faludi, 1991). Furthermore, females are still largely undermined, both politically and psychologically, by hegemonic culture that values females on appearance (Chernin, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1994a, 1994b; Duncan, 1994; McRobbie, 1997; Orbach, 2005, 2009; Wolf, 1991), a stance confirmed in this thesis (see Chapters Four to Six).

Females' residual social, political and economic oppression is subtle, often undetectable, and systematic. In agreement with Frye (1983), invisible phallocentric forces are still ubiquitous and inescapable, subordinating women and restricting them to limiting gender roles which allow patriarchal structures to endure. Within patriarchal societies, sexism is understood to exist at every level, hindering women's access to education and jobs, as well as being more subtly present within media representations of women, which emphasise appearance and traditional female roles. Sexist forces are "at work through institutional structures, in interpersonal interactions and the

attitudes that are expressed in them, and in the cognitive, linguistic, and emotional processes of individual minds" (Cudd & Jones, 2003, pp. 105–106). These principal forces are also observable within models' lived experience, wherein models are heavily subordinated to the powerful fashion tastemakers. Within this context, women have historically been silenced, particularly within high culture – through marginalisation, as in the church or politics – or by being ridiculed for their allegedly insignificant utterances (Cameron, 1999).

The issue of metaphorical voicelessness mirrors – and is mirrored by – the lived experience of models. Females may in turn silence themselves (Jack, 1991). Consequently, as argued by Spender (1998), women have been unable to pass on a tradition of feminine meanings of – and to – the world. Several attempts have been made to break these patterns by bringing female voices into society (Olsen, 2014; Russ & Crispin, 2018; Showalter, 2009; Spender, 1986, 1989), and include – mainly French authors' – efforts to identify a writing style dedicated to women, so-called *écriture féminine*, which is based on dynamics related to the body. In this sense, this study has deployed as a secondary qualitative methodology AE, defined as an *écriture féminine par excellence*, thus offering a contribution in this sense.

Models' imagery and lived experience show that, despite the conquests of feminist activism and debates, females can still be seen culturally as a deviation from the masculine norm, thereby demeaned as the "second sex", allowing subordination to linger (de Beauvoir, 1949/1997), furthering a "fragile and transient" type of normative femininity (Stacey, 1994, p. 226) and sense of self. Inequality and the degree to which women are considered inferior to men is an issue that often persists and is accurately illustrated by fashion models' accounts, as seen in Chapters Four to Six.

Social construction of gender

Femaleness, as further discussed in Chapter Seven, has traditionally been associated with an embodied set of behaviours and attitudes, many of which are epitomised by modern day models' imagery. According to the Australian transgender sociologist Raewyn Connell (1987), bodies are socially moulded in three stages: cultural stereotypical views and practices accentuate the differences and diminish the similarities between the sexes; in turn, variations in the child's developing environment produce a gendered outcome, ultimately leading to the reinforcement of the original stereotypes (Connell, 1987) and producing gendered bodies (Shilling, 1993/2012).

Drawing from both Rivière's (1929) paper on the feminine masquerade and from Esther Newton's (1979) ethnographic study of "drag queens", feminist philosopher Judith Butler (1990) coined the term "gender performativity" to refer to a set of mannerisms, attitudes and behaviours – such as the use of make-up, body adornment and dress, stereotypical feminine gestures and attitudes – as well as social symbols typically attributed to, and performed by, the female population, which result in the self-perpetuating cycle of gendered bodies, as epitomised by models' practices. Butler (1988, 1990) thus argues that gender distinctions are no longer to be understood as solid but rather as fluid categories, wherein people "do" gender.

The debates abound as to whether femininity, as epitomised by models' imagery, should be seen as biologically defined at birth or as culturally fabricated, with a general consensus towards the latter stance (Butler, 1990; Chodorow, 1978/1999; Dinnerstein, 1976/1999; Oakley, 1972/2016; Orbach, 2005, 2009; Rivière, 1929;

Rubin, 1975), supporting the view that femininity is constructed from birth, as further discussed below (Chodorow, 1978/1999; de Beauvoir, 1949/1997; Dinnerstein, 1976/1999; Orbach, 2005, 2009). It was Simone de Beauvoir's 1940s' work, encapsulated in her renowned quote "[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (1949/1997, p. 295), that first problematised the mainstream viewpoint of femininity as biologically set, inviting reflection on whether femininity, like femaleness, should be seen as biologically defined at birth or culturally fabricated (Chodorow, 1978/1999; Dinnerstein, 1976/1999; Oakley, 1972/2016; Rubin, 1975) and performed by women as a masquerade (Rivière, 1929) in response to a dominant culture (Butler, 1990).

Gayle Rubin and Ann Oakley were the first feminists to assert that most gender differences are not biological but are culturally constructed and distinguished between sex – anatomically – and gender – culturally (Oakley, 1972/2016; Rubin, 1975). Rubin (1975) further argued that women assume socially fabricated feminine identities that enslave them to be objects of men's exchanges, as epitomised by models (as seen in Chapters Five to Seven and as further discussed in Chapters Eight and Nine). The conceptual construct of gender has been seen as fabricated within a patriarchal society to perpetuate female subordination to the point that women themselves enable their own domination, and that the only way to overcome patriarchy and female oppression is to deconstruct the sex-gender system, as proposed by the fashion industry through unremitting androgynous depictions, as seen in Chapters Four to Six and further discussed in Chapter Seven (Millett, 1970).

Butler (1990) is one of the strongest supporters of the view that categories of woman, sex and gender are socially constructed within patriarchal power structures, that sex and gender are intertwined and that there is no such thing as a unified category of

women. She concludes, therefore, that a variety of genders and feminist goals must be accepted and acceptable, as shown by recent trends in fashion models' imagery (see above, Chapters One and Five). The idea of the category of women as a unified cluster could be deconstructed and replaced with a more realistic environment encompassing variances in women's experiences (Butler, 1990), which would also significantly free the female population from the oppression of standardised expectations of body shapes and looks.

Androgyny has been viewed by some feminist authors – in opposing dualistic gender division – as a potential solution for women's liberation (Heilbrun, 1964/1993; Woolf, 1928/2000), an idea subsequently critiqued for its potential to promote pseudo-integrity in women (Daly, 1978). It has instead been proposed that women nurture a sense of selfhood, separate from their comparison to men (Daly, 1978), a stance backed up by this thesis, which advocates the wholeness of the self and an attitude of interdependence between people, as further discussed below, in Chapters Seven and Eight.

The topic of androgyny is also relevant to this study and explored in the following Chapters; seemingly androgynous representations recur in the media, and the latest trend of transgenderism amongst fashion tastemakers may reflect their – more or less conscious – wish to unravel the binary gender conundrum, as discussed in the previous section. Indeed, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, the high-fashion circuit seeks androgynous looking models, an interesting phenomenon which is further explored in Chapter Seven.

Gender role behaviour does indeed constrain individuals, resulting in restrictions to personal freedom; women, viewed as victims of imposed limitations, have been seen as inferior to, and dependent upon, men (Greer, 1970/2012). Models' images represent the "endless reiteration of a heteronormativity, an overarching law or code that 'matters' – which is consequential and produces specific material/bodily form" (Entwistle & Slater, 2012, p. 20). Heteronormativity within patriarchal societies contributes to females' subordination through the conservation of traditional societal gender role expectations, as disseminated through models' imagery (Butler, 1990; Greer, 1970/2012). Despite improvements, many females in contemporary societies still perform the traditional gender role of "sexual object[s] for the use and appreciation of other sexual beings" (Greer, 1970/2012, p. 17). They may "titillate" men by wearing provocative clothes, and from adorning or sculpting their bodies (Greer, 1970/2012, p. 10). This stance is accurately epitomised by many models' lived experiences and imagery as well as experienced by the female population, as seen in Chapters Four to Seven.

This section has highlighted the contradictions and disagreements amongst feminist theorists and activists, but also that the essence of feminism lies in its concern with gender inequality, power and lack of freedom, themes emerging from the lived experience of models, as will be seen in the next chapters.

CULTURAL AND THEORETICAL STUDIES

This sub-section examines theories pertaining to the themes of this thesis within the fields of cultural and theoretical studies, including social science and philosophy. The

most relevant ideas for this study have been drawn from the work of Bourdieu[42] (1986, 1984/2010), Butler (1990) and Foucault[43] (1975, 1988) for they powerfully illuminate some of the emerging themes and dynamics herein. Other authors' ideas such as Baudrillard (1994, 1968/2005, 1970/2017), Bauman (2000, 2007), Veblen – in particular the notion of conspicuous consumption – (1899/2006) shed light on dimensions less central to this study, however still relevant for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Consumer culture, capital and social status

From the time of the industrial revolution to the mid-20th century, paralleled by technological developments, media and propaganda diffusion, a shift occurred in the West, as stated by Bauman (2000), from "solid" to "liquid" modernity, characterised by a sense of uncertainty stemming from a nomadic existence wherein incessant change of jobs, spouses, countries and lifestyles proliferated, as epitomised by the modelling provisional lifestyle (Mears, 2011). Within this context, people have moved from being producers to becoming consumers, and from consumers to becoming objects of consumption (Bauman, 2000). Selves have been converted into commodities, as staged by models.

Consumer society "promotes, encourages or enforces the choice of a consumerist lifestyle strategy" as "the sole unquestionably approved choice" (Bauman, 2007, p. 53) and consumption has increasingly been linked to a subjective sense of identity,

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[42] Especially the notions of field, *habitus*, *hexis*, *doxa*, symbolic violence and the forms of capital related to class and status

[43] In particular the notions of disciplinary power, prison, docile body and panopticism.

resulting in self-commoditisation being the driving force for consumers (Bauman, 2007), and consumption being that for consumer society (Baudrillard, 1968/2005). To be part of the consumer society, models, as well as people, must make "themselves fit for being consumed" (Bauman, 2007, p. 62). In line with this principle, a model needs to "become a commodity first [in order to enter] into the world of consumers" (Bauman, 2007, p. 67).

Once scouted, frequently at a very young age, girls are subjected to what can be understood to be a process of reification[44] (Lukács, 1923/2017; Soley-Beltran, 2006) and, by way of secondary socialisation, they have to rapidly, and at times willingly, adjust to, and internalise, the fashion modelling *habitus*,[45] and understand – and conform to – the fashion world's power structure, seeking to obtain high volumes of financial, social, cultural symbolic capital,[46] all converging into symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986), high status and power, for physical beauty can indeed transform into power for females (Unger, 1979). Through the process of socialisation, "cultural capital"[47] is incorporated and deeply internalised (Bourdieu, 1986, 1984/2010). It could thus be argued that fashion tastemakers act as a socialising agency exerting the

[44] Or the objectification of something subjective and human – a term coined by George Lukács (1923/2017), inspired by Karl Marx's concept of "commodity fetishism".
[45] Bourdieu viewed *habitus* as a socially established system of dispositions organising the way societies are structured, assimilated through a process of mimesis by which members of social groups are socialised and by which the *hexis* are internalised, producing the "field" in which people display and integrate their habitus. In this context, *hexis* is defined as "schemes of perception and thought, extremely general in their application, such as those which divide up the world in accordance with the oppositions between the male and the females", perhaps "in the form of bodily postures and stances" and gestures (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 15, 1984/2010; Clausen, Brim, Inkeles, Lippitt, MacCoby & Brewster Smith, 1968).
[46] Bourdieu (1986) distinguished three forms of capital underpinning social class division: financial, social and cultural. He asserted that these all produce – and ultimately converge into – symbolic capital, epitomised by prestige and honour and understood as "the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17).
[47] Cultural capital is defined as effective embodied competencies acquired with time and valued as resources or power within a given culture.

power of inculcating cultural capital in young models.[48] This socialising process results in cultural and social reproduction, in the continuation of the governing classes (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) and in the reproduction of cultural hegemony, of which taste can be seen as an example that defines and governs the division of social class, as further discussed in Chapter Seven. The process of socialisation is in turn transferred to – and internalised by – the larger population, exposed to the fashion industry *zeitgeist* and models' imagery.

Consumerist culture promises to bestow upon the consumer, who manages to stay "ahead of the style pack", gratification, "high market value", "recognition, approval … inclusion", status and self-identity (Baumann, 2007, p. 83; Goffman, 1959/1990). The fashion system, with its incessant production, epitomises the "*staying* ahead" culture while tastemakers use models' bodies – equally within the commercial and editorial circuits – as display objects for their newest productions (Bauman, 2007, p. 83; Mears, 2011), thus generating false needs that tantalise the target population to consume (Marcuse, 1964/2002), consequently fostering immediate gratification and impulsive behaviour. Models communicate these desires and epitomise the ultimate object of desire to people at multiple levels of social strata, being perceived as a cluster leading an attractive life, kindling curiosity and thus becoming subject to emulation; indeed, marketers exploit these appeals commercially to produce motivated consumers (Wissinger, 2012). Models thereby "model a lifestyle" that is packaged and sold to the consumer as a commodity (Wissinger, 2012, p. 173), as seen in Chapters Four to Six.

[48] According to Bourdieu, the two main socialising agencies responsible for inculcating embodied cultural capital are family and school (Holroyd, 2002).

Through "conspicuous consumption", or the purchase possession and display of – branded – goods, people attempt to increase their social status (Bauman, 2007; Veblen, 1899/2006); consumers purchase the humanised goods promoted by models; simultaneously, as seen in Chapters Five to Seven, men wish to "possess" the latest model to be displayed as a trophy, a signifier of high status. This high status icon is currently epitomised in Western culture by the ultra-slender, androgynous and pubescent model (Baudrillard, 1970/2017; Bordo, 2003; Mears, 2011); the more editorial the model, the higher the status the man acquires by being seen in her presence, as further seen in Chapters Five to Seven.

The "bookers",[49] in conjunction with their customers (both herein termed fashion tastemakers), define the value and status of a model's look. Based on the customers' requirements, bookers produce, categorise and price their marketable commodities – the models – to be sold to diverse markets of differing levels of commerciality (Mears, 2011). Fashion tastemakers hold high volumes of symbolic capital, thus hold the power of judgment to determine distinction and taste (Bourdieu, 1986, 1998, 1984/2010). The models preferred by authoritative tastemakers become, by default, aesthetically interesting, inspiring or beautiful and are thus rendered persons of power and high social, financial, physical and symbolic capital (as seen in Chapters Five to Seven) (Bourdieu, 1986, 1998, 1984/2010; Unger, 1979). The discrimination and assignment of models to different degrees of the commercial or editorial markets, by distinctions based on taste, engenders the production, establishment and maintenance of social class strata in contemporary Western societies (Bourdieu, 1984/2010; Mears, 2011). It could thus be argued that models' imagery participates in

[49] Fashion models' agents (Mears, 2011).

the establishment (by proposing looks and lifestyles) and maintenance (where people adopt their propositions) of differentiation in social class and inequality, and that by modifying their bodies, appearances and lifestyles to the fashion system's proposed standards, people, especially females, can increase their cultural and symbolic capital, and even climb the social ladder, as seen in Chapters Four to Six and further discussed in Chapter Seven.

In turn, models' efforts to develop "social capital"[50] (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.119) can increase their cultural and economic capital, and hence their symbolic capital, by securing prestigious jobs, such is the ultimate goal of fashion models. As the findings presented in Chapters Four to Six show, this often entails them having to socialise, from a very young age, in nightclubs, partaking in gatherings, often centred around drug and/or alcohol consumption and promiscuous sexual interactions, and/or the bestowing of sexual favours (Bourdieu, 1986; Mears, 2011). Given the young age of most models, the frequent lack of a relevant support system, ethical, caring and/or competent adults' guidance, their personal agency is significantly reduced, making them exceedingly vulnerable targets, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, and further discussed in Chapter Seven.

It has been argued that models' "looks" can be conceptualised as brands, as "event and as interface", "an entity … dispersed across a broad social field", thus as "complex objects" "whose meanings are actively constituted in multiple locations" (Lury, 2004, 2009 as cited in Entwistle & Slater, 2012, p. 17). Western consumerist culture

[50] "[S]ocial capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing *a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships* of mutual acquaintance and recognition." (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119).

demands “to be constantly in flux” (Wissinger, 2015, p. 278), “to be *someone else*” and to relentlessly create “new and improved looks” (Bauman, 2007, pp. 100–101). Constructed normative bodies have become “sites of display” of “power, prestige and status” offered up to the insatiable gaze of others (Finkelstein, 1991, p. 4; Orbach, 2009, p. 73; see also Bordo, 2003). Models, mirrored by Millennials and Post-Millennials, epitomise this *status quo*, as observed in their relentless endeavours to construct flawless depictions of themselves as brands disseminated through social media, constructing hyperreal lives that comprise of the “real without origin or reality” (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 1). They are thus simultaneously the commodities and their promoters, engaging in tasks set to adjust their appearance to the expectations of consumer society and to draw others’ attention onto themselves in order to accumulate accolades (Bauman, 2007). The aim of both these endeavours is to construct highly marketable and valuable selves as commodities, securing access to social capital in the form of prestigious employments, marriages and personal relationships, as well as financial rewards (Bourdieu, 1986). This process is also embedded in the market value system, as recent trends within modelling demonstrate, whereby today’s bookers regularly upload images of the latest models to their social media profiles in order to accrue public approval. This, in turn, enables the fashion tastemakers – by counting the numbers of “likes” a given girl has collected – to evaluate her market value, and secure her jobs (Bauman, 2000, 2007; Orbach, 2009).

Within self-referential capitalist Western societies, a system of values underpins objects[51] (Baudrillard, 1970/2017). Sign value is based on the object signifier;[52] fashion models can be understood to be the finest of all consumer objects, thus

[51] He identifies four types: exchange, functional, symbolic and sign value (Baudrillard, 1968/2005).
[52] What an object communicates to others about social class, status and prestige.

holding high sign value (Baudrillard, 1968/2005, 1970/2017, p. 148). Like any other consumer good, they hold social significance and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and just as branded goods signify high social standing (Baudrillard, 1968/2005), models seek to construct a prestigious brand of themselves to acquire capital and high status, as seen above and as seen in Chapters Four to Six. In Chapter Seven, the topic of models relying on their bodies as the main source of their perceived self-worth is discussed. Their object significance can often be placed exclusively on the body, simultaneously represented "as capital and as fetish (or consumer object)" (Baudrillard, 1970/2017, p. 148). A new category of capital could consequently be added, being that of "bodily capital" (Bourdieu, 2010), or physical capital (Entwistle & Slater, 2012; Shilling, 1993/2012, p. 135; Wissinger, 2015), upon which a narcissistic economic and physical investment is operated, "orchestrated as a mystique of liberation and accomplishment", albeit "always simultaneously an investment of an efficient, competitive, economic type" (Baudrillard, 1970/2017, p. 150). The same process is observed among females within Western societies.

Models' images, or signs,[53] are fused with mythological meaning – the signifier or ideologies attached to and hidden within them; through their fusion, the mythological content comes to be taken at face value by the recipient, facilitating a biased perception of universal validity and the reinforcement of prejudices (Barthes, 1972). As seen in Chapters Four to Six, models and their imagery are constructed in such a way as to fill them with ideological meaning; models can thus be understood to be signs signifying the myths – or value systems – to which they are culturally fused, or as "examples of the falsely obvious" (Barthes, 1972, p. 11).

[53] Anything that carries meaning, such as visual images and photographs (Barthes, 1972).

Bodies in consumer culture

"[T]he body is in the social world, but the social world is also in the body" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 190).

The body, having previously been largely neglected by, or marginalised from, Western philosophical, cultural, political, traditional psychoanalytic (Hauke, 2003, p. 181) and even feminist discourses,[54] has gained progressive relevance within Western societies' high culture, supported by the efforts of cultural theorists. As a result, it has begun to be understood as meaningful – insofar as it contains and conveys precious information, knowledge and wisdom about the subject and their needs – and as a becoming entity, holding the potential for the progressive expansion of personal consciousness and transformation (Etherington, 2004; Grosz, 1994; Orbach, 2005, 2009).

The general contemporary consensus across several disciplines[55] moves away from the traditional Cartesian dualism, towards the understanding that body and mind are inextricably intertwined, for indeed "'[t]here is no mind without a body and no body without a mind', and the healing of this apparent split is of paramount importance" (as quoted in Biddulph, 2007, p. 9). Today, it is recognised that the body connects us "with our feelings and thoughts, consciously or unconsciously, in a dynamic dance between body and mind that might have as much to do with our past history as it does with the

[54] In contrast to Eastern theories and practices, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Daoism and Confucianism.
[55] For example, the adoption of the biopsychosocial model within the field of illness and wellbeing (Engel, 1977) and studies in the field of embodied experience within the psychological, philosophical and social arenas.

present" (Etherington, 2004, p. 212; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; van der Kolk, 2015). Nonetheless, as further discussed in Chapter Seven, dominant culture has maintained the propensity towards binary splitting into opposite clusters, for it indeed provides a – albeit illusory – sense of control over existential uncertainty. Within this trend, females have complied – and mostly continue to do so – with the dominant *zeitgeist* and gender role behaviour within the context of patriarchal dominance, thus having largely over-identified with their bodies and/or faces as the sole site of their self-worth, in turn voluntarily self-objectifying and self-silencing to adjust to the demands of consumer society and to fit in socially with cultural pre-established trajectories and expectations (Gill, 2003).

"Late capitalism has catapulted us out of centuries-old bodily practices which were centred on survival, procreation, the provision of shelter and the satisfaction of hunger … [F]rom being the means of production [as, for instance, in the performance of physical labour, the body has become] the production itself" (Orbach, 2009, pp. 5–6), and is manipulated as "one of the many signifiers of social status" (Baudrillard, 1970/2017, p. 150; Bourdieu, 1984/2010; Shilling, 1993/2012). Within this context, females have often resorted to treating their bodies as malleable substances to be shaped through body work (Evans et al., 2010; Soley-Beltran, 2006; Wissinger, 2007, 2015), as evidenced by the explosion of the fashion, food, style, diet, anti-ageing, fitness, pharmaceutical, and cosmetic surgery industries (Orbach, 2009). Through such practices, the sense of selfhood and self-identity – particularly within affluent Western cultures – is defined and expressed (Chrisler & Johnston-Robledo, 2018; Giddens, 1991; Holroyd, 2002; Orbach, 2009; Shilling, 1993/2012; Wissinger, 2007, 2015).

As seen, models' economic, social and symbolic capital is developed through "body work"[56] (Holroyd, 2002), and converges into bodily capital (Bourdieu, 1978; Mears, 2015). Such "glamour labor"[57] entails a strictly disciplined "way of life" (similar to that undertaken by athletes) to mould the body into normative looks and to ensure it performs as requested (Carr & Mercer, 2017, p. 51; Wissinger, 2015, p. 272). Whilst adaptive balanced discipline can indeed facilitate one's sense of freedom[58] (de Spinoza, 1677/1996), the model's traineeship and continued practice to control the body – facial expressions, appearance, physical embodiment, body shape, attitudes, mannerisms and posture – is rarely a discipline directed towards acquiring adaptive long term life skills and habits, but rather to "produce subjected and practised bodies" that fit into the consumer *zeitgeist*, exemplifying a "disciplinary power" – or "a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour" – which induces "modes of behaviour and the acquisition [or maintenance] of skills [which are] inextricably linked with the establishment of power relations" (Foucault, 1975, pp. 138, 294–295). Thus, models – as people in general do – live in a system that has "taken control of both the body and life or that has … taken control of life in general" (Foucault, 1976/2004, p. 253).

Bodies today are controlled from within. The Victorian corset (Wolf, 1991) was internalised alongside the external – critical/controlling – gaze. Foucauldian biopolitics has highlighted the further evolution of finer techniques of mass control: bodies are surveyed through sophisticated technologies generating productive surveillance, as

[56] The construction of their looks, performed set of mannerisms and attitudes, thus residing chiefly within their embodied performances and bodies (Holroyd, 2002).
[57] "something that can be worked on to increase its value" (Wissinger, 2015, p. 272).
[58] The freedom, for example, resulting from the attainment – as a result of disciplined practice – of effective ego functioning, or identity (Freud, 1923), with no attachment to any identification through the process of "individuation", or the realisation of the self (Jung, 1959/1980, para. 490).

epitomised by the Panopticon[59] (Foucault, 1975), wherein the person eagerly self-monitors to fit in. Since the 1950s, it has been observed that control has no longer been exerted through repression, but rather through stimulation (Foucault, 2008). Individuals' souls, rather than their flesh, are disciplined, through the control of their internal desires, behaviours and habits to construct human resources capable of producing higher returns and profits in the form of "human capital" (Foucault, 1979/2008, p. 226) "so that [bodies] … may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines" (Foucault, 1975, p. 138). Docile, capable bodies and "submissive subjects" are as such produced (Foucault, 1975, p. 295), for an untamed body is – and has been historically – seen as sinful (Bordo, 2003). Models can be understood to represent the epitomisation of such practices and as seductive influencers alluring masses towards such stances.

Within this context, models and females survey themselves from the perspective of the external observer and adjust according to established social conventions, thus continuously engaging in "reflexive projects of self" and self-surveillance as epitomised by models' adjustments to others' expectations of their roles (as seen in Chapters Four to Six). Furthermore, they are generally over-stimulated by the modelling environment and enticed into looking slim, young, fit and toned (Foucault, 1988; Giddens, 1991, p. 100), which may explain why for many females and models in contemporary Western societies – as confirmed by clinical observations, phenomenological, ethnographic and autoethnographic observations and as seen in Chapters Four to Six – the body

[59] A prison structure designed by philosopher Jeremy Bentham during prison reform which ensured that the prisoners' every movement could be controlled from a central tower such that the prisoners could develop an awareness of their behaviour from the surveyor's perspective, tame their behaviour as a result and eventually be rehabilitated.

can become experienced as an oppressive prison, rather than a safe place from which to live.[60]

A successful socialising process makes "individuals *wish* to do what is *needed* to enable the system to reproduce itself" (Bauman, 2007, p. 68). Consumers' active and eager adoption of aesthetic conventions, perceived as opportunities to enhance their lives and social status – rather than constrictions imposed by a social system governed by the powerful few – represents the subtlest form of power control and constitutes "symbolic violence"[61] within cultural dominant ideologies (Bourdieu, 1992; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Foucault, 1975; Giddens, 1991). Models are unwitting targets of symbolic violence within the broadly naturalised fashion system *status quo*: the dominant group – fashion tastemakers – impose behaviours, criteria, opinions and choices on the dominated group – models. Models understand this *praxis* to be normal and thus they actively surrender to the system, thereby enabling its subsistence (Bourdieu, 1992; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), as seen in Chapters Four to Six. The same occurs for the female population within contemporary visual culture. Recent trends show a tentative inversion in this deep-seated toxic system's dynamic, due to vigorous activism from organisations such as The Model Alliance and the progressive increase in individual awareness, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

The discussion of the adopted empirical qualitative methodologies is the subject of the next chapter.

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[60] Prison is defined by Foucault as "an apparatus for transforming individuals" into domesticated, useful bodies through the controlling, permanent gaze (1977, p. 233).
[61] Symbolic violence is understood as the imposition of power and meanings as legitimate and which conceals the power relations underpinning their symbolic force (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990)

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH PARADIGM, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I present a background and selected literature pertaining to the methodologies and empirical approach embraced by this study, the rationale for such a choice, the research procedures and the targeted outcomes.

The approach to the research is then discussed, followed by a depiction of the selected group of participants and the rationale for choosing such a group. Subsequently, I outline the data collection tools, procedures and data analysis methods. Consideration is given to ethics, trustworthiness and potential research bias.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Any research is underpinned by the researcher's philosophical assumptions. When undertaking a qualitative study, those assumptions include:

> beliefs about ontology[62] (the nature of reality), epistemology (what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified), axiology[63] (the role of

[62] "Ontology is the study of being and existence in the world. It is the attempt to discover the fundamental categories of what exists in the world" (Burr, 2015, p. 104), and refers to "what there is to know in the world out there" (Harper, 2012, p. 87), and to how we can understand existence. Epistemology can be understood as "the study of the nature of knowledge and how we come to know the world of things" (Burr, 2015, p. 104), and thus refers to what can be known (Harper, 2012, p. 87).

[63] "[R]esearch is value-laden and the biases are present" (Creswell, 2013, p. 21). The role of the researcher's personal lived experience, ethics and values within the scientific process (axiology) cannot thus be separated from the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative research is characterised by the axiological assumption that "researchers make their values known in a study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). I herein seek to "actively report [my] values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered from the field" (Creswell, 2013, p. 20) and to commit to ethical practice (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 157) throughout the process (as further discussed below).

values in research) and methodology[64] (the process of research). (Creswell, 2013, p. 20)

Furthermore, whether consciously or inadvertently, researchers bring sets of beliefs and philosophical assumptions into their research, which guide the selected theories, ultimately shaping the research design and its results (Creswell, 2013, p. 15). It can therefore be argued that "[a]ll research is interpretive" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 19).

I am interested in how individuals "subjectively experience the world" (Harper, 2012, p. 89) and make sense of their past experiences; I am also interested in the personal and emotional aspects involved within their experiences (Finlay, 2006) and in the "nature of subjective experience" (Harper, 2012, p. 89). I believe that such information can generate rich depictions of subjective lived experience. Specifically, the focus and goal of this research incorporates the detailed exploration of participants' lived experiences and meaning-making of their social and personal worlds (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53). The main research question guided and oriented the methodological choice of the principal methodology herein deployed, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), and was combined with the autoethnographic (AE) narrative and composite vignettes of my longstanding clinical work with numerous models. These methodologies were incorporated herein into one research, resulting in a pluralistic approach to qualitative inquiry.

[64] Researchers adopt one or more methodologies to investigate, thus to get to know about, a particular phenomenon of interest. Indeed, the choice of methodology is informed by their ontological, epistemological and axiological stances. Methodology is thus concerned with the question of "[h]ow we know the world, or gain knowledge of it", wherein our beliefs and value systems guide the choice of the methodology/ies in a given research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 19).

Indeed, “the longer researchers stay in the ‘field’ or get to know the participants, the more they ‘know what they know’ from firsthand [*sic*] information” (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). This affirmation highlights the relevance of autoethnographic accounts – such as my account herein concerning my long-standing experience within the field of fashion (as seen in Chapter One) – for the purpose of theoretical and practicing advancements within any given discipline. Furthermore, as the researcher, I sought to get as close to the participants as possible, allowing “knowledge to be known” through their subjective lived experience (Creswell, 2013, p. 20), given this is the epistemological meaning of undertaking qualitative research (Creswell, 2013).

Although IPA and AE only capture specific experiences of particular people (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 16), such detail can also bring us closer to relevant features of the general (J. A. Smith & Eatough, 2015, p. 54), as is apparent in Chapters Five to Seven and further discussed in Chapter Seven, wherein aspects of the nomothetic arise. By connecting with the participants’ unique lives, we also connect with a “shared humanity”, given that we all can, at some level, relate to aspects of subjective meaning and experience that may appear entirely diverse and separate from our own personal experience at first glance (J. A. Smith & Eatough, 2015, p. 54).

It is thus believed herein that from the analysis of idiographic – microcosmic – individual accounts, it is possible to learn about the nomothetic, macrocosmic aspects of existence and society at large, through an “hermeneutic circle[65] of understanding”, which indeed also underpins IPA, as understood by Gadamer (1975, 1977,

[65] The hermeneutic circle can be defined as an iterative process enabling the researcher to move “back and forth through a range of different ways of thinking about the data” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 28), facilitating the emergence of new understandings.

1981,1996), in turn inspired by Heidegger's work (Ricoeur, 1981; J. A. Smith et al., 2009; Schwandt, 2000, p.194), and as elucidated by Schwandt (2000):

> [i]n order to understand the part (the specific sentence, utterance, or act), the inquirer must grasp the whole (the complex of intentions, beliefs, and desires or the text, institutional context, practice, form of life, language, game, and so on), and vice versa. (Schwandt, 2000, p. 193)

A PLURALISTIC METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

A pluralistic theoretical framework

The theoretical paradigm[66] embraced herein is pluralistic, underpinned by a "constructivist-interpretive" and hermeneutic structure (as seen below) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 20), assuming "a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent cocreate [*sic*] understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 21).

Often referenced, within psychological research, as the mixing of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies (Barker & Pistrang, 2005; Todd, Nerlich, McKeon, & Clarke, 2004), pluralism was embraced in this thesis to collect, use and compare different types of qualitative data (Harper, 2012, p. 93). The research strategies[67] utilised were IPA, AE, and clinical vignettes, with IPA deployed as the

[66] The research paradigm is a "basic set of [ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological] beliefs that guides action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17).
[67] The research strategies herein are understood to be the "strategies of inquiry a researcher may use", which involve "the research question, the purposes of the study, 'what information most

primary methodology. The pluralistic feature of this project implies this to be an open, not methodologically rigid, IPA study. Thus, the study moved away from the application of prescribed modalities, instead embracing insights coming from other quarters to enrich and deepen the results stemming from the primary methodology. The selected methods for data collection and analysis were interviews, transcripts (for IPA), diary entries (for AE), introspection, subjective lived experiences, self-narrative (for AE) and case notes (for the clinical vignettes), all of which depict routine as well as challenging moments and meanings in the presented participants' lives during their modelling journeys (Creswell, 2013, p. 21; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3).

Although a pluralistic approach[68] to research can present challenges – for example, relevant distinctions between epistemological assumptions for each methodology may be overlooked, an aspect further discussed in the sections dedicated to IPA and AE – (Nolas, 2011, p. 121), each method presents the opportunity to illuminate deeper and multiple layers of the explored phenomenon, facilitating a broader understanding by offering a range of materials, interpretations and readings to examine (Harper, 2012, p. 93; Nolas, 2011, p. 121).

Pluralism in research is therefore grounded in an "epistemology of complexity", which makes most sense to me as it reflects accurately the actuality of existence and the

appropriately will answer the specific research questions, and which strategies are most effective for obtaining it'" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 30 as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 21; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

[68] The pluralistic approach, also referred to as "bricolage", recognises (Nolas, 2011, p. 122) "the dialectical nature of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary relationship and promotes a synergistic interaction between the two concepts. In this context, the bricolage is concerned not only with divergent methods of inquiry but with diverse theoretical and philosophical understandings of the various elements encountered in the act of research" (Nolas, 2011, p. 122).

human lived experience, “the complexity of the lived world and the complications of power”, promoting flexibility (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 317).

Furthermore, disciplinary boundaries can hinder “the understanding of the complexity of the social world” (Kincheloe, 2001; Nolas, 2011, p. 122). Instead, a pluralistic approach enables the exploration of covert material, often inaccessible to the ethnographic observation or through the use of a single methodology, in turn enabling that which is “ontologically complex” and that which “can’t be described as an encapsulated entity” to be captured (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 319), because any object of inquiry is inevitably situated in specific, historic and cultural contexts and is embedded in or composed of complex, multifaceted processes (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 319).

By employing a plurality of methods, the range, depth and breadth of the inquiry expanded significantly: the findings could be corroborated, engaging creatively with the tensions of “conceptual dichotomies”, trying to think “outside the box” (Bryman, 2006; Mason, 2006; Nolas, 2011, p. 122), complementing, and indeed enriching, the results stemming from the critical literature review and theoretical research (see Chapter Two), the IPA interviews (see Chapters Five and Six), the AE account (see Chapter Four) and the subsequent insights deriving from the vignettes of my clinical work with fashion models and the female population (see Chapters One and Seven). This strategy, which combined “multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers” added “rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth” to this inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 5).

It is inevitable that something can be lost when not pursuing any one method as deeply as would have been possible had it been the only method used. In this case the loss was the richness of a comprehensive autoethnographic account. My autoethnographic voice herein is only one of the accounts, utilised as a comparative data set and for illustrative purposes. However, such an approach to AE also mitigated the risks of perceived self-absorption (Etherington, 2004), for which autoethnographic studies are often critiqued (as discussed further in the sub-section below explaining why I chose to undertake AE).

A postmodernist philosophy of science

> The core of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory, any discourse or genre, or any tradition or novelty has a universal and general claim as the 'right' or privileged form of authoritative knowledge. (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 961)

Different "theoretical paradigms", "perspectives" and "interpretive frameworks"[69] (Creswell, 2013, p. 17; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 20) were herein brought together within a pluralistic approach to research. The exponential expansion, especially within Western societies, of "information and communication technologies, the decline of heavy industry and the advent of service and knowledge economies" result in social changes producing inevitable ramifications on the way people understand themselves and others, and the way they relate to one another (Nolas, 2011, p. 123). In the

[69] The interpretive frameworks are scientific methods to research that focus on gathering information, rather than on proving hypotheses, since "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3; Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

postmodern era, the challenge is represented by the holding of a “both/and” approach, informed by pluralism (Milton, 2010), a relativist ontology based on a phenomenological view, a subjectivist epistemology and a naturalistic set of methodologies.

Furthermore, pre-existing conditioning and macro notions such as language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity influence the way in which we filter our experiences. Any observation is subjective, socially situated, hence “[n]o single method can grasp all of the subtle variations on ongoing human experience” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 19). Suitably, the postmodernist approach “is concerned with issues of language, discourse, identity and culture” (Nolas, 2011, p. 123). The person is seen as a continuously becoming entity, progressively transforming through fluctuating multiple and fragmented processes (Nolas, 2011, p. 123).

Within the postmodernist approach to research, the tensions of lived experiences and the contradictions, complexities and ambiguities that relate to real life and the realness of human beings can be contemplated (Hauke, 2003, p. 8), for such an approach brings together epistemologies that are generally considered discordant or conflicting (Nolas, 2011, p. 123). As such, a postmodernist approach to inquiry can facilitate a broader vision and understanding of any given phenomena.

Reflexivity

Within the context of a pluralistic approach to qualitative research, it is pivotal that the researcher remains reflexive on the appropriateness of utilising such an approach to overcome the possible risks involved (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015, p. 63): I

sought to remain mindful and critical of the implications of my subjectivity within the context of this research and in relation to it, of my pre-existing knowledge and assumptions about the phenomena explored, whilst striving to remain aware of, sensitive to and engaged with the social and cultural aspects of the themes emerging throughout the entire writing process (Nolas, 2011, p. 123). I herein discuss openly how my values and assumptions may have shaped the research, including my interpretations alongside those of the participants, simultaneously remaining open to question them, thus allowing myself to be changed by the research process (Creswell, 2013, p. 21).

I found myself engaged in two levels of reflexivity: on one level, I truthfully explored my motivations for and assumptions about the study – and continued to do so as I progressed in the writing process –, holding in mind my “gender, sociocultural and economic positioning vis-à-vis the research [I was] conducting” and my participants; on another level, I engaged in reflection upon the “tension and incongruities” such a combination of approaches inevitably generated (Nolas, 2011, p. 123).

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY (AE)

About AE

My autoethnographic account (see Chapter Four) is presented as an autobiographical prelude to the IPA material (see Chapter Five) and has two very important functions. Firstly, it elucidates from where this research has emerged, confessing the subjective dimensions of the project in ways beyond those which are possible within the deployment of a pure IPA project. Secondly, by embracing AE, I sought to use my

subjective experience of modelling "to generalise to a larger group or culture" and to "enter and document the moment-to-moment, concrete details of a life", accessing "an important way of knowing" (Ellis, 2004, p. xvii).

AE acknowledges and accommodates chaos, emotions, uncertainty, and messiness, the specific quality of life itself (Adams et al., 2015, p. 2). By embracing AE and merging it with an additional research methodology, I sought to produce nuanced, inside out, transparent material about my particular lived experience and meaning-making of modelling and of the relationships therein, such that the reader could be offered a deep, authentic and complex portrayal of feelings, thoughts, beliefs, practices, behaviours, relationships and identities of a particularly misconstrued and unknown field, a profoundly reflective and sincere data set which could add complexity and depth to the entire study, as further discussed in the next sub-section (Adams et al., 2015, pp. 21–22).

Although a precise definition of AE within academic discourse is difficult to grasp, given that its applications and meanings have evolved significantly in recent times (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008, p. 449), AE is widely understood to be a writing about the self, as a way of exploring the convergences between self and culture (Etherington, 2004, p. 140). It is a qualitative method of research and writing that connects the subjective, personal experiences and stories to the wider political, cultural, historical context (Ellis, 2004, p. xix), wherein personal experiences are used to examine and/or critique cultural dynamics and patterns (Holman Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013, p. 22). In essence, autoethnographers "study and write culture from the perspective of the self" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 46).

Furthermore, AE can be defined as the quintessential “écriture feminine”, for it “contravenes structures of power” (Ettorre, 2017, p. 113; Jones, 1981). It is a feminist methodology that enables the “doing [of] feminism in society”, claiming multiplicity of truths, generating valuable ways of producing knowledge about people, collective activity and the inner semantics of emotional wounds and vulnerability which, in effect, epitomise high quality AE, wherein individuals’ understandings of their positions in society, cultural restrictions and freedom encountered generate knowledge (Ettorre, 2017, pp. 1–2). AE enabled me herein to explore the habitual beliefs, relational practices, and shared experiences of models for the purpose of better understanding myself and this cluster through the empirical method of *fieldwork* based on observation and experience (Adams et al., 2015, p. 50), for it is believed that “the basic unit of culture is individuals who can actively interpret their social surroundings” (Chang, 2016, p. 44).

The opportunity to write and share a self-reflexive narrative enabled me to describe the cultural dynamics which I encountered within the context of modelling (Ettorre, 2017, pp. 1–2; Reed-Danahay, 1997 as cited in Ettorre, 2017). I was able to use my lived experience to describe – and appraise where applicable – experiences, cultural practices and beliefs within the field (Adams et al., 2015). In writing Chapter Four, I sought to embrace careful and profound self-reflection “to name and interrogate the intersections between self and society, the particular and the general, the personal and the political”, to show my personal experience in the process of grappling with complexity, life challenges and making sense of my struggles, whilst simultaneously striving to balance “intellectual and methodological rigor, emotion, and creativity” (Adams et al., 2015, p. 2). Indeed, the moral intent is to strive for “social justice and to make life better” (Adams et al., 2015, p. 2).

Why undertake an AE project?

AE has been extensively critiqued as a "self-indulgent, solipsistic and narcissistic" methodology, and there are indeed inherent risks

> if the researcher approaches the methodology without understanding its purposes sufficiently, their own motivations or without the skills to ensure that the outcome is of aesthetic, personal, social and academic value. (Etherington, 2004, p. 141)

AE is, however, regarded as an "ethical and politically sound approach" (Etherington, 2004, p. 141). Some authors have suggested that a balance between turning inward, to expose the self purposefully, and turning outward "into the fuller realm of shared language" – herein achieved through the inclusion of participants' interviews and clinical vignettes, wherein my voice is only one of several accounts – enables the research to avoid such criticisms (Etherington, 2004, p. 31). The purposeful exposure of the self is thus pursued in the service of knowledge and sound research.

I was primarily drawn to AE to produce deeper accounts, from "a desire to do meaningful work" (Bochner, 2013, p. 53) and because I am interested in "full human being[s]" and the meaning-making of their lived experiences (Gergen & Gergen, 2002, p. 14). As the researcher in AE, I found it refreshing not to have to suppress my subjectivity (Bochner, 2013, p. 53). Furthermore, this enables the reader to gain a sense of the writer as a whole human being (Gergen & Gergen, 2002, p. 14). AE is thus a method which facilitates a "human and humanizing" practice, "where all parts of [the self] – emotional, spiritual, intellectual, embodied, and moral – can be voiced

and integrated" within the research process (Bochner, 2013, p. 53), in line with my holistic approach to life, research and clinical practice and my view of human beings. In turn, AE offers the researcher a "non-alienating" social science inquiry as a "response to an existential crisis" (Bochner, 2013, p. 53), and an avenue to engage with something meaningful for both the world and the researcher. It offers, as I certainly experienced, the researcher the opportunity to understand himself/herself in deeper ways. In turn, when we understand ourselves, we can better understand others (Ellis, 2004, p. xviii).

Whilst AE may be very uncomfortable, given the researcher is exposed to inevitable appraisal and possible criticism (Ellis, 2004, p. 34), judgment and even being pathologised (Etherington, 2004, p. 142) over his/her life choices , it enabled me to embrace my vulnerability purposefully, as a way to "understand emotions and improve social life", to "describe, understand and challenge cultural practices and beliefs" within the – often misrepresented – field of modelling, such that the reader can have an opportunity to understand, and possibly relate to, the experiences described and the emotions generated, for I believe that by embracing such vulnerability in the research, I effectively committed to improving not only my life but also the lives of others (Adams et al., 2015, pp. 36, 38–39; Holman Jones et al., p. 24). As such, vulnerability was herein embraced with *purpose* (Adams, 2009; Ellis, 2004, p. 34).

In designing this AE project, I focused on some key points whilst recognising the limits of what can be known, especially about lives, relationships or identities (Adams et al., 2015, p. 25; Holman Jones et al., 2013). Furthermore, being interested in the creation of complex, nuanced and detailed accounts of cultural and personal experiences (Adams et al., 2015, p. 25), I felt that my *insider* knowledge, experience and insights

of fashion modelling, connected to the wider context ("relational, cultural, political"), conventions and conversations on the subject matter, could reveal much about "*outside* forces", practices and ways of living (as already in part seen in Chapter Two) which severely and adversely affect people, but especially the female population, at macrocosmic levels – also as seen in Chapter Two – (Adams et al., 2015, pp. 25, 27, 31), in turn offering relevant depth and value to the research as a whole and to better answer the research questions.

In writing this account, I was also able "to reclaim voice" around events and contexts that silenced me, thereby "bearing witness or giving testimony" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 46; Etherington, 2004, p. 146) to fill a relevant experiential gap in existing research (as seen in Chapter Two) (Adams et al., 2015), breaking the silence around sensitive, underexamined, covert topics, thus disrupting dominant practices and beliefs (Adams et al., 2015, p. 41), creating in turn opportunities for awareness, transformation, and a more adaptive future (Etherington, 2004, p. 147).

Another major reason for including an autoethnographic narrative in this study was that, by incorporating a detailed and transparent account, which included some examples of abusive or exploitative incidents (Adams et al., 2015, p. 26), I wished to offer the opportunity to capture data which may have otherwise been deemed "*too sensitive*" to share in interviews or empirical research, allowing observation of experiences which cannot be replicated in laboratory conditions or experiments and cannot be observed directly, for they "occur in their own time" (Adams et al., 2015, pp. 31–32; Egeli, 2017; Vickers, 2002, emphasis added).

Meaning-making is relevant within AE, as it is in IPA (as discussed in the next sub-section) and for clinical work (Adams et al., 2015; Boylorn, 2014; Foster, 2010). My AE narrative offers insight into how I made, and have been making, sense of my lived experience – a way which, of course, is not the *only* way – in the field of modelling, offering in turn “complex, insider accounts of *sense-making*” (original emphasis), providing perspectives that readers can relate to and which facilitate meaning-making of analogous experiences (Adams et al., 2015, p. 27). Furthermore, it reveals ways in which the challenging experiences – or “epiphanies” (Adams et al., 2015, p. 47) – impacted and transformed me.

In conclusion, throughout my autoethnographic account, I sought to use my personal experience to intentionally “create *nuanced, complex* and *comprehensive* accounts of cultural norms, experiences, and practices” within the modelling industry (Adams et al., 2015, p. 33, original emphasis), encouraging readers to problematise their assumptions about a given phenomenon, its norms and practices, to open up to new and more complex understandings and perspectives; in essence, to produce a “critical autoethnography”[70] strongly advocating cultural change (Madison, 2012; Thomas, 1993).

Epistemology in AE

As seen above, AE’s viewpoint is subjective and epistemologically interpretative. It offers an “epistemology of insiderness” (Reinhartz, 1992, p. 260), wherein “commonly

[70] Critical autoethnography can be defined as a qualitative method that enables “social consciousness and societal change”, supporting “emancipatory goals”, rejecting “repressive” cultural influences; it therefore has a “political purpose” (Thomas, 1993, p. 4).

held” assumptions can be dismantled and replaced by highly complex perspectives and intimate, nuanced and meaningful understandings and insights of any given phenomenon and lived emotions that may be missed or discouraged by other methods (Adams et al., 2015, p. 31).

Data collection

To collect data for my AE account, I found Professor Carolyn Ellis’s (2004) approach appealing and helpful: I asked myself the same question I asked my participants during the IPA interviews on what was their fashion modelling lived experience. I was mindful of my physical sensations, thoughts, feelings and emotions, I adopted a “systematic sociological introspection” and the technique of emotional recall to explore the experiences I wished to share (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 737). I referred to several volumes of my diaries which contained daily journals at the time, retrieving memories and experiences in the most faithful manner possible. I then wrote the account as a story, “in first-person voice” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). The end result is an evocative “short story”, wherein “concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness [is] featured … affected by history, social structure, and culture” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). Through the exploration of the specific times of my fashion modelling experience, the goal was to understand the fashion modelling way of life more accurately (Ellis, 2004, p. xvii).

Generally, recollection is the core process from which to collect data for an autoethnographic project, however, in this case I had the benefit of being able to refer to extensive diary entries written during my fashion modelling experience. This enabled me not to simply rely on recollection, but to kindle recollection of material

which otherwise may have been obscured from memory and also to overcome possible biases resulting from the otherwise inevitable challenge posed by interpretations being made from one's current position (Ellis, 2004).

The advantage of writing about these experiences up to twenty eight years after they occurred is that I have had the time and opportunity to fully process the experiences, thus make it easier to analyse them from a distance, "from a cultural perspective" (Chatham-Carpenter, 2010; Ellis, 2004, p. 71, 118).

"The self-questioning autoethnography demands is extremely difficult" (Ellis, 2004, p. xviii). AE requires the researcher to be observant of worldly events, to be introspective about one's motives, feelings or the incongruities experienced, to question oneself, and go through the self-doubt, concerns, emotional discomfort and fears emerging from honest disclosures, the willingness to write something that cannot subsequently be retracted, knowing that critics will be judging one's life and the work (Ellis, 2004, p. xviii).

Interpretation and analysis

As aforementioned, the short personal narrative was herein deployed as a prelude to the IPA material, chiefly for illustrative and anecdotal purposes. Because this is not an autoethnographic study, limits apply to the use of the methodology, one being the impossibility of presenting an extended account and in-depth conventional analysis. Nonetheless, the autoethnographic data presented herein is qualitatively different from the other material presented in this thesis in two important ways: firstly, I am simultaneously the researcher and the person researched; secondly, as a

psychotherapist with extensive experience and someone who has been reflecting deeply on this problem, area, and issue for over two decades, including in the context of personal therapy, I have had the opportunity to process my experience of modelling more deeply than any participant would have been able to by merely being presented with these questions. As such, the material has already been deeply analysed, thus adding further depth to the entire body of work. The emerging themes have been compared and contrasted with the material emerging from the IPA research and the clinical vignettes, where interesting connections and parallels were drawn between my material and the other participants'. The results reinforce, deepen and in some cases highlight differences with the material stemming from IPA and clinical vignettes. As such, the autoethnographic material has indeed been analysed, but in an unconventional way and not by deploying the IPA method of analysis.

Reflexivity in AE

"[O]ften characterized by contrasting and differing perspectives" within academic discourse, being an "omnipresent theoretical concept and methodological strategy diverse in meaning and practice – as distinctive as the cultural life ethnographers represent", reflexivity is essential to autoethnography (Berry & Clair, 2011, p. 95).

AE can be seen as an "ethnography of the self" (Ellis, 2004, p. 32; Van Maanen, 1995). Indeed, "when we do autoethnography, we study and write culture from the perspective of the self", looking inwards and outwards, producing research from the "inside-out", taking the reader "back and forth, inside and out" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 46). We all "are, at our core, ethnographic selves uniquely crafting stories about culture, a creative process intrinsically connected to the multidimensional call of

ethnographic reflexivity. We are storied selves entangled with others' stories (those of our participants, characters and fellow ethnographers), our understandings of their stories, and their understandings of ours" (Berry & Clair, 2011, p. 95).

Reflexivity essentially consists of the consideration of how our identities, experiences, relationships, and our unconscious processes, may influence our work, whilst explicitly acknowledging "our research in relation to power" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 28). Writing reflexively also entails recognising that personal experiences and perspectives are tied to one's own living conditions and personal background, culture and knowledge (Adams et al., 2015; Berry, 2013, p. 212).

Rather than disguising or silencing the – inevitable – personal – more or less conscious – motives that lead a researcher to choose a specific research subject, I find it refreshing that autoethnographers leverage on their subjectivities and personal experiences to design their research (Adams et al., 2015, p. 26), given that we all have a "personal stake in the interpretive process of experience" (Berry, 2013, p. 212). As such, AE is inevitably partial, thus problematic (Goodall, 2000, p. 55).

INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS (IPA)

As described earlier, I wished to explore how particular individuals perceive and make sense of the specific situations they face or have encountered, their social world and personal domain (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 55), how they understand and voice their concerns, whilst simultaneously contextualising and making sense of those concerns from a wider, interdisciplinary and depth psychological perspective (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006, p. 102). As such, I chose IPA to be the most suitable primary

methodology for this study for it examines human lived experience and meaning-making in great detail (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008; Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012, p. 362; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 32).

Whilst standing in someone else's shoes is never completely possible, it was my effort herein to gain an empathic "insider's perspective" whilst simultaneously looking at the phenomenon under investigation from different perspectives, analysing, puzzling and making sense of what was shared by the participant (Conrad, 1987; Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012, p. 362; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 36).

In this subsection, I introduce the three philosophical stances underpinning IPA (phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography), clarify how IPA draws on them and explain the procedures for data collection and analysis as well as the assessment of validity and the role of reflexivity.

Phenomenology

Being phenomenological means actively and consciously reflecting on our "seeing, thinking, remembering and wishing" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 13). All phenomenologists share the same interest "in the experience of being human" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 11). My interest, in particular, lies in the examination and comprehension of the "lived experience" and meaning-making (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 11). In IPA, as discussed below, the phenomenological endeavour is both singular and pluralist, drawing from the work of the key phenomenological philosophers: Heidegger, Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-

Ponty (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 12).

IPA draws on Heideggerian notions, concluding that the "interpretation of people's meaning-making activities is central to phenomenological inquiry" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 18), as discussed in the hermeneutic section below. Like Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty emphasises the "situated and interpretative quality of our knowledge about the world" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 18). To this notion he adds the pivotal idea of "embodiment". "It is through my body that I understand other people", he asserts (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 186). As such, bodies are no longer viewed as mere objects in the world. Instead, they become conceived as our primary "means of communication" with the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 106), as "body-subjects" in the world whose perceptual and physical "affordances" are more significant than any theoretical or rational ones (Anderson, 2003; Gibson, 1979, p. 127; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 18).

This is a crucial notion for this thesis (as well as in IPA), for modelling brings to the fore the themes of embodiment through the experience of disembodiment, as seen in Chapters Two, Three and Eight, revolving around – and epitomising – both constructed bodies and performativity. Furthermore, it is believed herein that the embodied lived experience is primary to any logical, intellectual understanding of existence. Merleau-Ponty stresses that, whilst for the subject "situations are lived through", for the receiver "they are displayed", hence driving the relevance and inevitability of the experience of the body-in-the-world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 415; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 19).

Hermeneutics

As a result of the emphasis on the interpretative stance, hermeneutics is pivotal to IPA (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Hermeneutics can be defined as the "theory of interpretation" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 21). IPA is essentially an interpretative methodology; IPA researchers attempt to understand individuals' processes of meaning-making within the context of their worldly existence; such attempts are always interpretative and focus on people's efforts to make sense of their lived experiences (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Three of the most significant hermeneutic thinkers, Heidegger, Schleiermacher and Gadamer, have influenced IPA (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 22). I briefly discuss their contribution to this research methodology below.

In IPA the researcher engages in "micro-analysis and synthesis", simultaneously examining the phenomenon under investigation through complementary activities, as it perceptually appears. Through critical thinking – logos – he/she attempts to unearth what may be disguised or latent (Heidegger, 1927/1962; J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

According to Gadamer, the "phenomenon, the thing itself, influences the interpretation which in turn can influence the fore-structure, which can then itself influence the interpretation" (Gadamer, 1975; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 26), resulting in a circular and dynamic sense making process.

Hermeneutic circle

In IPA research, the researcher-participant relationship produces deep reflection, such that hidden meaning can be uncovered (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Ponterotto, 1995; Schwandt, 2000; Sciarra, 1999). The researcher's role is active and reflexive within a dynamic double hermeneutic[71] process and relationship between the whole and the part, which reflects the equally non-linear, dynamic, thinking process (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 28), reflective of "an intersubjective system of reciprocal mutual influence" (Stolorow, Brandcharf, & Atwood, 1987, p. 42), which is at the core of a "reciprocal mutual influence" or "a two-person psychology", wherein I stand as a clinical practitioner, forming a "relational exchange where neither party can be considered to be entirely separate from the other" (Gilbert & Orlans, 2011, p. 156).

To understanding a part, one needs to comprehend the whole and vice versa (Schwandt, 2000; J. A. Smith et al., 2009). The notion of the hermeneutic circle is central to this thesis for it explores what can be learned from a single incident, experience or event about life (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 28). Whilst the participant was engaged in making sense of her own experience, I sought to decipher her meaning-making of the experience/s she described in the interviews and what such experiences, events or activities were like for her, whilst attempting to unearth, where possible, meanings of which she may not have previously been aware (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008). Through her "interpretative activity [I endeavoured to] make meaning comprehendible by translating it" (Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012, p. 362).

In conclusion, hermeneutics – and the hermeneutic circle – could be understood as being "the very nature of being-in-the-world" and not just a method, wherein one's

[71] In the double hermeneutic research process, the "researcher is making sense of the participant, who is making sense of *x*" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 35).

inevitable understanding of the world and experience is always filtered through pre-existing knowledge resulting from experience, thus an attitude of reflective and open minded meaning-making can produce new understandings (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, pp. 180–181; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Idiography

Idiography is concerned with specific, subjective, unique, contingent – frequently cultural – experience; IPA commits to the particular, ensuring in-depth, thorough and systematic examination of individual cases – hence the inevitability of small participant samples –, analysing individual experiences within unique contexts; each and every case is explored in great depth before any general statement is or can be produced (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012, p. 363).

When we explore the particular, we find that we – paradoxically – are taken closer to the universal. The uniquely subjective life can connect us with a shared humanity (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 183). Thus, single cases are used in IPA research to move from subjective experiences to “more general statements” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 32), as such the “route to universal laws and structures is an idiographic – nomothetic one” (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 183), wherein, through step by step micro-analysis, “universal structures” are reached (Harré, 1979, p. 137 as cited in Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008), as seen in Chapter Seven.

Sampling and recruiting process

In IPA studies, breadth is sacrificed in the name of depth; the aim is to explore a specific group and to engage in microcosmic case-by-case analysis, which is time consuming, hence necessitates small sample sizes (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, pp. 55–56).

The sample for this thesis totalled six participants,[72] all interviewed twice within a maximum of four weeks between the interviews. The second interview was conducted to encourage participants' reflexivity and the emergence of deeper accounts (Larkin & Thompson, 2012) as well as to have the opportunity to explore further themes that emerged in the first interview, where necessary. As such, twelve in-depth interviews, each with a minimum duration of one hour (Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008) and a maximum of two hours, were collected for analysis.

The purposive sample was fairly homogeneous (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 56). The criteria for inclusion for this research were as follows: female fashion models, or female former fashion models, aged between 25 and 40, who are – or have been – engaged full time in international fashion modelling in the chief editorial and relevant commercial fashion cities (Paris, New York City, Milan, London) for at least five consecutive years.

The selection criteria described above were used as it is believed that a model who engages occasionally and only domestically in modelling will not have the necessary international experience and cannot be regarded as a professional fashion model, for

[72] A total of three participants in IPA is viewed as "an extremely useful number for the sample", allowing "sufficient in-depth engagement with each individual case but also allow[ing] a detailed examination of similarity and difference, convergence and divergence" (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 57).

professional modelling requires models to be internationally mobile. Furthermore, relevant editorial modelling castings and jobs occur in the main fashion cities.[73] Commercial fashion jobs may also take models further afield,[74] however, the fashion jobs producing imagery later disseminated globally through media usually take place within the major fashion cities. Professional models are required to move/live between relevant fashion cities and travel for specific jobs. Those who do not engage in international fashion modelling within the chief fashion cities will not generally have the opportunity to win the prestigious/relevant/lucrative modelling jobs and, as a result, will not feature in the media images disseminated globally (Mears, 2011).

Furthermore, as seen in Chapter Two and from the insider's experience of the researcher, and as further seen in Chapters Five to Seven, time and commitment to the employment as a principal occupation is required for the girl to be progressively and significantly shaped by the modelling industry in ways that lead her to epitomise the fashion model metaphor – and discontent – as discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Eight.

The recruiting process for the study began as soon as ethical approval was granted by the Essex University Ethics Committee and required over six months to complete. Fashion models were invited to take part in this study directly – through social media ("Facebook") – or indirectly (through five fashion-modelling agencies). No fashion-modelling agency provided support/collaboration, despite my historic relationship with the decision makers. Over 500 fashion models were contacted directly through Facebook. Circa 75 models were sent the invitation and the advertisement approved

[73] Presently considered to be Paris, Milan, New York and London.
[74] To countries which include Germany, Japan, China and Australia.

by the Essex University Ethical Committee (see Appendix A for the advertisement and Appendix B for the message sent in support of the advertisement). The vast majority of invited fashion models, or former models, ignored or dismissed the invitation. Two asked for compensation, five indicated that they were time constrained. Approximately twelve expressed an interest in participating and were provided with the Essex University Participant Information Sheet (Appendix C), approved by the Essex University Ethics Committee (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 56). Five models did not follow up. The final six models selected were the first six who committed to taking part by signing the consent form (see Appendix D). One potential candidate was excluded because she did not fit the criteria for inclusion.

The scale of the lack of engagement illustrates a striking resistance – both from fashion-modelling agencies and models or former models – to voice and/or open up to and about the modelling world and experience, possibly illustrating continuing covert colluding behaviour, co-creation, neglect, fear and/or denial.

Data collection, confidentiality and storage

Three methods of data collection were adopted, honouring a pluralistic approach to qualitative research. Firstly, as discussed in the previous sub-section, a brief autoethnographic account in the form of a short personal narrative was presented (Chapter Four). Personal diary[75] entries were included therein. Secondly, a semi-structured[76] interview (see Appendix E) was designed and utilised to collect dialogical

[75] A method of data collection encouraged by J. A. Smith, who advocates pluralism (2004, 2005).
[76] The semi-structured interview format holds several advantages: "[i]t facilitates rapport/empathy, allows a greater flexibility of coverage and allows the interview to go into novel areas, and it tends to produce richer data. On the debt side, this form of interviewing reduces the control the investigator

data from a small,[77] purposive[78] and adequately homogeneous sample of fashion models (Creswell, 2013; Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008). Thirdly, through the consultation of case notes, my therapeutic work with many of my fashion models clients was condensed and compressed into four clinical vignettes (Chapter Seven). The process of data collection for the autoethnographic research is described in the previous section. The process of data collection for the IPA interviews in Chapter Five and the storage process for all collected data is described below.

All collected data are stored in secure locations and assigned security codes for computerised record. Interview recordings are secured in a separate location and access is restricted, with identifiable information limited only to the researcher and the supervisor. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the process. All identifiable information (such as names, cities, agencies' names) were encrypted, removed or obscured from any collected data, document or transcript. All data collection instruments used study codes with each participant being assigned a study ID. Each participant data document only indicated the participant's unique study ID and identifiers. Several techniques were adopted to encrypt and de-identify depending on the case: use of pseudonyms; changes to the person's demographic information; construction of composite characters (compressing several characters into one); and fictionalisation of part of the narratives. In situations where the identity of a participant or a person emerging from a narrative could not be protected and where consent was

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has over the situation, takes longer to carry out, and is harder to analyse" (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 59).

[77] Any number of participants between one and 15 is considered appropriate in IPA research (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008; Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005).

[78] In contrast to randomised sampling, purposive sampling represents the selective choice of participants able to offer relevant insights into the phenomenon under investigation, participants sharing common experiences.

not granted (such as family members of in the autoethnographic narrative), such people and their input – or any information related to them – were omitted from the narrative and do not appear in the text and data.

Data analysis

Meaning is central to IPA research. However, since it is not always clearly available, my role as the researcher was to understand the complexity and content of meaning by embracing a hermeneutic circle and an “interpretative relationship with the transcript”, leveraging on my “fore-knowledge” of the phenomenon, on existing literature and on my psychotherapeutic skills, in order to determine a balanced perspective from which to approach the phenomenon (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2013, p. 167; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 66).

For the analysis, I consulted the transcripts and considered appropriate theories in order to find the most suitable viewpoint for the analysis, largely embracing psychosocial, depth psychological, feminist and cultural studies (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2013, p. 167; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008).

The detailed sequence adopted for data analysis is presented in Chapter Five.

CLINICAL VIGNETTES

Chapter Six presents composite clinical vignettes of my therapeutic work with a number of fashion models, providing the reader with further illustration of the themes under investigation. Through the use of composite clinical vignettes, sensitive areas

of inquiry, which may otherwise have been lost, present the opportunity to emerge, such that the phenomena under investigation can be understood in greater depth.

For some time, before I wrote this chapter, I grappled with my internal discomfort resulting from a sense of conflict of interest between the scientific need to provide deep and genuine accounts for this research alongside the necessity to protect my patients' privacy. To resolve my conundrum, I condensed my clinical work with numerous former clients with whom my therapeutic/mentoring work had ended at least two years prior to writing this chapter and, in agreement with Gabbard's (2000) stance, I carefully disguised their identities and compressed the accounts, presenting similar features in four separate cases to obtain simultaneously an ethical stance and trustworthiness. All identifiable data has been removed or modified in ways that alter neither the meaning nor the significance of the presented accounts.

ASSESSING QUALITY

> Researchers have many practices from which to choose and ought not be constrained by habits of somebody else's mind. (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 964)

The validation of accounts and "by whose standards" they should be governed are complex and controversial matters within contemporary academic debates (Creswell, 2013, p. 243; J. A. Smith et al., 2009; Spencer & Ritchie, 2012; Yardley, 2000). Whilst, indeed, it is not possible to apply prescriptive standards or rules to evaluate qualitative research (Spencer & Ritchie, 2012), recognising that an excessive focus on appraisal

or “methodolatry”[79] could hinder the researcher’s capacity to innovate (Barbour, 2001; Chamberlain, 2000; Coyle, 2015), it is nonetheless sensible to evaluate qualitative research by applying appropriate, tailored guiding principles (Beck, 1993; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mays & Pope, 2000; Popay, Rogers, & Williams, 1998).

Despite debate, scholars generally concur on certain core principles, equally applicable to quantitative research methodologies, such as appropriateness of method, “contribution to knowledge”, “respect for participants” and “clarity of presentation” (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999, p. 220). Further guiding criteria specific to evaluation of qualitative research methods could be added or clarified, such as the meaning of “contribution” in qualitative studies, research “credibility” and “rigour”, topics discussed below (Spencer & Ritchie, 2012, p. 229).

Indeed, some standards are more generic (such as the “transparency about the research decisions and analysis procedures” – for this thesis; see above for a discussion on research decisions and analysis procedures), some perspectives embrace a methodological evaluation process[80] (Howe & Eisenhardt, 1990), whilst others embrace an interpretive standpoint[81] (Etherington, 2004, p. 148; Richardson, 2000; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). “[M]ethod-specific” evaluation criteria are also of relevance (Spencer & Ritchie, 2012, p. 228), for example, in evocative AE the

[79] An excessive devotion to a method (Chamberlain, 2000; Coyle, 2015).
[80] Howe and Eisenhardt (1990) recommend five principles for the assessment of both quantitative and qualitative research, specifically: “the fit between research questions and data collection and analysis techniques”; “the effective application of specific data collection and analysis techniques”; “alertness and coherence of background assumptions”; “overall warrant”, wherein researchers make their assumptions explicit; “value constraint”, which entails that the study must inform and improve practice (pp. 5–6).
[81] The criteria utilised by Richardson (2000) and by Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) “when reviewing papers or monographs submitted for social scientific publications” are: “substantive contribution”; “aesthetic merit”; “reflexivity”; “impact” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 964).

aesthetic merit[82] and impact[83] of the account matter (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Validity in AE is evaluated by assessing whether the experiences described come across to the readers as credible and lifelike, helping readers "communicate with others different from themselves" or offering ways to improve the lives of the readers, participants and researchers (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 751) (see the AE dedicated section above for a discussion).

The researcher's reflexivity has a pivotal role in ensuring the quality of qualitative research accounts (Etherington, 2004; Richardson, 2000). As researchers, we have to make ourselves visible, acknowledging how our "own experiences and contexts … inform the process and outcomes of inquiry", remaining aware of

> how our own thoughts, feelings, culture, environment and social and personal history inform us as we dialogue with participants, transcribe their conversations with us and write our representations of the work, then perhaps we can come close to the rigour that is required of good qualitative research. (Etherington, 2004, pp. 31–32)

Some of the crucial features required within the researcher's reflexivity, thus quality and trustworthiness of work, are presented here. Transparency about how the information is collated is shown above and in Chapter Five. I have reflexively discussed any unnoticed moral dilemma above, in Chapters Five and below (Clinical Vignettes section). Evidence showing that the intricacies of ethical challenges have

[82] Aesthetic merit refers to whether the text is "artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring" and whether it includes the use of "creative analytical practices [to] open up the text and invite interpretive responses" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 964 as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 257).
[83] "Impact" refers to whether the "piece affects me emotionally or intellectually", "generate[s] new questions or move[s] me to write", "try new research practices or move[s] me to action" (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 964 as cited in Creswell, 2013, p. 257).

been understood and earnestly addressed are presented in this chapter. Evidence of self-awareness and self-exposure whilst I interpret my own interpretations, evaluate my own viewpoints and turn a critical eye onto my own influence as an author and interpreter are presented in particular in this chapter and in Chapters Six and Eight (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, p. vii; Etherington, 2004, pp. 32, 148; Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Richardson, 2000; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 964).

Generalisability is continuously verified by readers, insofar as they establish whether they can relate to a given story with their own experiences, those of people they know – or do not know – or insofar as they can experience the experiences they read about vicariously (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 751). In fact, whilst our lives are indeed "particular", they also are generalisable and nomothetic, since we all "participate in a limited number of cultures and institutions" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 751), as discussed in Chapter Seven.

As to the contribution (discussed in Chapter Nine), this research fills a relevant gap in literature, whilst offering an in-depth, authentic account of social, cultural, subjective or shared sense of what is real and a nuanced image of the way models, within fashion modelling, experience, discuss and construct their "micro-social world[s]", offering the reader an immersion into truthful lived experiences (Etherington, 2004, p. 148; Spencer & Ritchie, 2012, p. 229). Accordingly, it can be argued that it offers a "substantive contribution"[84] to theory, to practice and to "the lives and circumstances of individuals", whilst enhancing the existing understanding "of social life" and the

[84] Contribution, one of the guiding principles to assess the validity and quality of qualitative research, can be understood as "the value and relevance of research evidence" (Spencer & Ritchie, 2012, p. 229).

phenomena under investigation (Creswell, 2013, p. 257; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; Spencer & Ritchie, 2012, p. 229).

J. A. Smith et al. (2009) draw from Yardley's (2000, p. 219) four principles[85] to ascertain the validity of an IPA study. The present study demonstrates "sensitivity to context"[86] in several ways: through the "awareness of existing literature" (whether theoretical or substantive – as reviewed in Chapters Two and Three); through a commitment to the particular and the idiographic emerging from participants' – seen as crucial gatekeepers of knowledge – specific lived experiences; through the careful attention to the interview process and the recognition of its interactional essence (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, pp. 180–181).

Furthermore, within the context of "[m]aking sense of how the participant is making sense of their experience" – hermeneutic circle – sensitivity to context is shown (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 18). A high-quality IPA research presents sufficient excerpts of the original transcript from participants to construct a credible case and enables the participants to have their voices heard (as seen in Chapters Four to Six) (Coyle, 2015; J. A. Smith & Eatough, 2015, pp. 64–65; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 180, 182), in turn revealing the process of interpretation transparently. Detailed focus on a particular topic (as already thoroughly discussed above, and in Chapters One and Two), the

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[85] Yardley's four principles are: "Sensitivity to context Theoretical; relevant literature; empirical data; sociocultural setting; participants' perspectives; ethical issues.
Commitment and rigour In-depth engagement with topic; methodological competence/skill; thorough data collection; depth/breadth of analysis.
Transparency and coherence Clarity and power of description/argument; transparent methods and data presentation; fit between theory and method; reflexivity.
Impact and importance Theoretical (enriching understanding); sociocultural; practical (for community, policy makers, health workers)" (2000, p. 219).
[86] Sensitivity to context: Theoretical; relevant literature; empirical data; sociocultural setting; participants' perspectives; ethical issues (Yardley, 2000, p. 219).

ability of the researcher to obtain and present “high quality data”, an interpretative analysis, and a well written and engaging research piece also contribute to the final evaluation of high quality IPA research (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008).

Rigour was attained through careful attention to the participants during the interview process, ensuring that they were comfortable whilst attending closely to what was being said, and through the conscientiousness with which each case was analysed (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 181). The thoroughness of the study further demonstrates its rigour; the research question was appropriate to the sample, accordingly, the participants were cautiously and homogeneously selected, the interviews were of high quality and the analysis of the in-depth interviews was comprehensive, thorough and systematic, moving from a “description of what is there to [the] interpretation of what it means”, thus informing the reader of “something important about the particular individual participants as well as something important about the themes they share” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, pp. 181–182).

Transparency herein was achieved by clearly describing the stages of the research process, “how participants were selected, how the interview schedule was constructed and the interview conducted, and what steps were used in analysis” (see above, Chapter Five, Seven, and Appendices) (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 182). Further important characteristics of a good IPA are coherence with the research undertaken and the “underlying principles of IPA” (as discussed above, in the IPA philosophy section), “coherence of argument” and a sound analysis of the inevitable ambiguities and contradictions. Indeed, the final test of the research’s validity, impact and importance lies in “whether it tells the reader something interesting, important or useful” (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 183).

ETHICS

Since this research involves human participants, ethical approval for AE, IPA and clinical vignettes was required and was granted by the University of Essex's Ethics Committee in December 2018 (see Appendix F). Only after receiving such approval did the empirical research commence.

The "basic ethical principles and guidelines for conducting research, as delineated by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subject's Belmont Report" (Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1979), outline the fundamental ethical guidelines and principles for conducting research (Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1979). They include "respect for persons", "beneficence" and "justice"[87] (Adams et al., 2015, pp. 56–57).

Herein, all identifying particulars such as ethnicity, gender, names, titles or roles, race and age were changed; in certain circumstances, composite characters based on actual details were generated (Chang, 2016, p. 68). Narratives were, in part, fictionalised to protect the privacy of auxiliary participants (Adams et al., 2015, pp. 60–61), depending on what each "data set" required to achieve the highest ethical standards of research practice (Chang, 2016, p. 116).

[87] "Respect for persons" entails treating each research participant as an "autonomous person" and gaining their – or their guardian's – consent to take part in the research; "beneficence" entails ensuring protection of a participant's identity, a commitment to doing no harm whilst maximising the benefits of taking part in the research; "justice" entails the researcher's commitment to "fair[ness] and [the] distribution of research benefits and burdens" (Adams et al., 2015, pp. 56–57; Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1979).

As for the autoethnographic section of this thesis, although the meaning-making of my own lived experience of modelling was the "primary focus of inquiry", "writing about the self always involves writing about others" (Adams, 2006, p. 720). Others were herein involved only in ancillary relationships to my experiences (Chang, 2016, p. 65). However, because my identity is revealed, effective strategies were adopted to protect the identity of those in any way connected to my account, as described above (Adams et al., 2015; Chang, 2016, p. 56; Tullis, 2013).

Indeed, care of the self in AE is as important as the protection of the people implicated in the story (Chatham-Carpenter, 2010, p. 1). To ensure no harm was done to the self, "risks and benefits", "positive and negative costs"[88] were carefully considered (Tullis, 2013, p. 249). I may be challenged, questioned and critiqued about the motives for my methodological choice (Tullis, 2013). The accounts may also pose challenges to future tenure and employment, for disclosing intimate accounts about my life may modify the way others view me, thus potentially fostering prejudice and stigma toward me (Goffman, 1963; Tullis, 2013, p. 252). These are all aspects that I considered at length before engaging in self-disclosure.

As the autoethnographic "wounded researcher", I bared my soul – and unconscious – to the reader, in so doing, producing an authentic account (Romanyshyn, 2013). Furthermore, my brief narrative herein required me to revisit, and essentially relive, difficult experiences or "traumatic events"; indeed, this engendered some discomfort, emotions that necessitated further consideration (Chatham-Carpenter, 2010; Tullis, 2013, p. 251). Once the journey begins, it is not possible "to leave the field" until the

[88] That is to say, the possible risks to the researcher's personal safety, reputation, relationships, positions (Adams et al., 2015, p. 40).

work is complete (Adams et al., 2015, pp. 63–64; Tullis, 2013), and I embarked on much self-reflection and internal process.

With regard to professional risk, recognising that "traditionally, psychoanalytical and psychodynamic therapists do not disclose themselves to their clients, except perhaps in terms of transference or counter-transference",[89] individuals "trained in humanistic approaches would see self-disclosure as part of being more present in the real relationship with their clients, characterised by congruence" (Etherington, 2004, p. 141); I hold the latter stance, for I have been observing in my consulting room that some degree of – deliberate and purposeful – self-disclosure can be therapeutically relevant where appropriate, balancing disparities of power within the therapeutic setting whilst facilitating a "relational theory of mind" – a "two persons" psychology' (Aron, 1990, p. 475), wherein a "person-to-person … real meeting in the here and now between two people" can take place, being an encounter between "two human beings" (Gilbert & Orlans, 2011, p. 134).

Finally, "the afterlife of a published narrative" (Tullis, 2013, p. 257) has not been underestimated, minding the risk once the piece is published; in the eyes of the reader, I may become the story I write, thus "stuck/bound to the published text, unable to account for the ways [I have] since changed", for the portrayal of the self "is edified in print" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 65). I asked myself whether I was prepared to be typecast by the reader, but I was also aware that this is an inevitable process that occurs in

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[89] Reflecting "a one-person psychology … monadic theory of mind" for indeed, historically, within psychoanalytic theories "[t]ransference was not conceptualized as an interpersonal event occurring between two people but was rather understood as a process occurring within the mind of the analysand" (Aron, 1990, p. 475).

everyday life and I was unconcerned, for what matters to me is to know who I am, which may be very different from what others may think I am.

We shall now proceed to the AE narrative.

CHAPTER FOUR: A BRIEF PERSONAL NARRATIVE

A brief personal narrative of my modelling experience follows, which has been deployed as a catalyst to explore, understand and discuss larger sociological frameworks and trends. To write this account, I relied heavily on my numerous diaries handwritten during my modelling journey and on my meaning-making of my experience of modelling. My experience is recounted in first-person. Diary entries relevant to the points raised are accurately translated from Italian and quoted between double speech marks. Due to word count constraints and given the use of AE is a secondary methodology in this project, this account has been limited in length.

MY EXPERIENCE OF FASHION MODELLING

From the age of fourteen, numerous people in my hometown began to insist I could become a fashion model, suggesting I investigate ways to pursue such an opportunity. I felt incredulous and confused, but also enthused. I began to look at my reflection in the mirror and compare my body and look to that of supermodels I saw in the media. I was unsure whether my body matched the bodies of those women, indeed I was puzzled and doubtful, as if I could not see it objectively or benevolently. My focus shifted more and more towards my appearance, albeit I continued to study conscientiously.

I was very insecure. “Everybody tells me I can be a fashion model but I am convinced I am a monster” I wrote in my diary at age fifteen. A classmate told me: “are you not happy to be this way?”; I felt teased by people’s comments, for I simply could not see

myself as a pretty girl. As a young teenager, I was very skinny, I felt unfeminine as I compared myself to my peers. I felt "absolutely monstrous". In contrast, a part of me was very driven, determined and "utterly obsessed" about wanting to become a "top model in New York, Milan and Paris", mainly as a result, as I realised much later, of the idealised image of the fashion model lifestyle portrayed in the media. Furthermore, I wished to achieve economic independence to be able to escape the repetitive abuse and neglect from some family members throughout my developmental years.

The inability to see myself objectively and with benevolent eyes stemmed from impingements during the developmental age, wherein a relevant caregiver's gaze reflected an image laced with envy and hatred, resulting in a compromised integrity of the self. My punitive introject controlled me from within through fear (I was frightened of letting any goodness in for that would trigger the introject's wrath), shame (I identified with the projected badness/ugliness) and guilt (I had an invisible loyalty towards the introject and felt guilty anytime I did something different from what that part expected me to do).

When I reached puberty, I began to attract a lot of attention, albeit – as I realised much later by processing my lived experience – through a sexualised gaze. As a result, my experience was one of coming into being in the world as a sexual object, an "object of the Other's desire". As I modelled, I began to believe – unconsciously – that being an object of the other – sexual – desire equated to who I was as a person.

At the age of fifteen, I submitted an application to compete in a national beauty contest, an opportunity I found in a fashion magazine. I was shortlisted for the finals by two representatives of the reputable fashion-modelling agency which organised the

contest. In preparation for the national finals, I was requested to try on several swimsuits for the tastemakers to decide which best suited me. I was forced to change in front of them backstage. I felt a great sense of exposure, violation and discomfort, but I quietly complied, filled with embarrassment for even having tried to use a changing room. I had to do as I was told, there was no choice.

From that moment onwards, if I wanted to be a fashion model, there was no option but to allow my body to be fully at the fashion tastemakers' disposal. It was clearly one of the rules of the game. This, in turn, required that I ignore, brush-off and numb any feeling and perception that something was not quite right. I progressively began to doubt the authenticity or appropriateness of my feelings and perceptions further and further, for they were mostly deemed to be foolish or irrelevant by the relevant power brokers within the industry. I didn't have any other sounding board or interlocutor. This was the world to which I now belonged. I progressively internalised the rules of the game and conformed. My body became an instrument. That is indeed how it was perceived by the tastemakers. Eventually, exposing my body became habitual, until I could no longer do it, as will be seen later.

At the age of sixteen, I informed my peers that I was moving to Paris to work as a model. This decision drew a lot of attention, admiration but also envy, the latter triggering feelings of fear, confusion and discomfort. Beauty was indeed a tremendous power, albeit I was not able to recognise it within myself, but it came without an instruction manual and, as is the case with any excessive energy, it could become very destructive if misused, as I learned later.

From the age of sixteen to eighteen, I occasionally undertook modelling jobs during school holidays or by taking leave from school, until I completed high school. Upon college completion, my school report recommended further University education in Psychology, for, it was written, I showed a natural disposition and passion for the subject. However, I needed to be financially self-reliant, given my personal situation, and I had the opportunity to embark in full-time modelling, so I chose the latter, which required undivided availability and international mobility.

In my first casting since embarking on modelling full time, I was offered an economically conspicuous contract with an Asian fashion-modelling agency to take part in the Fashion Week and live there for three months. The financial rewards were significant for me. I felt excited, disbelieving but relieved, for I had struggled until then to make a living and even to buy myself food to survive in Paris. I accepted the contract and flew there. I went from casting to casting for three weeks before winning my first job. Thereafter, I literally worked seven full days a week. I extended my stay for more than eighteen months. I was idealised by people because of my looks and it was easy to fall into the trap of feeling superior or entitled. I was earning a lot of money, but I was spending a lot too on shopping and living. Furthermore, much of my earnings vanished in mysterious expenses on the agency's account. The rhythms were too intense. I began to feel exhausted and towards the end, to collapse.

I had arrived in Asia with the freshness of an innocent, adolescent girl and I left feeling completely depleted, burnt-out and robbed of my own soul. I felt all of my life force had been sucked out of me. The agents representing me turned from being very friendly and respectful – referring to me as a friend or a family member – to becoming belittling and critical, eventually literally discarding me when they felt there was no more use to

be made of me. This shift occurred within the span of just over one year. As a result of their management style, which was based on high quantities of excessively commercial jobs rather than quality, of a lack of competent and caring guidance from my mother agency,[90] my professional image was "burnt" by the time I was age twenty-one.

I flew back to Paris and visited my mother agency. My booker had just resigned, and we met for a coffee. She shared that she could no longer tolerate the industry practices. She did not go into much detail, but she did mention the ruthless exploitation of young girls who were manipulated by being promised a dream. I also learned that Asia was an extremely commercial market and that before moving there, a prestigious agency in New York had requested to represent me, but my mother agency had rejected the offer on my behalf without informing me of the opportunity, possibly for fear of losing a steady income to the other network. Instead they chose to send me to Asia to secure them with a steady passive income.

Their decision jeopardised relevant opportunities within the high-fashion circuit during my peak modelling years: 18-21. As my booker left, my mother agency assigned me to a new booker,[91] once again readily pointing me towards a very low commercial market for easy and steady profit. This news was both disappointing and illuminating.

[90] A mother agency in fashion modelling is generally the first modelling agency a model engages with and subsequently that which oversees all operations and international movements in return for a fee from any other worldwide agency on the fashion model's turnover. They should theoretically provide protection, guidance and advice in the best interests of the fashion model.

[91] A fashion-modelling agency's internal organisational structure, which fashion models are not made aware of but which in my case I learned later in my modelling employment, is such that each booker manages different work divisions and groups of fashion models, thus the girl's modelling direction is generally pre-established at the onset by the agency – usually a collaborative decision between the agency director and powerful bookers. Whether she's destined for a commercial or editorial route could be easily decided by the booker to whom the girl is assigned. In many cases, particularly as my experience occurred prior to the onset of social media, agents simply threw the girl into the market to test it and see whether she 'stuck', as happened to me later in New York City.

I was not a businessperson. As a young female in my early twenties operating within an industry driven by adults this was all new to me. By then, it was clear that my mother agency did not have my best interests at heart.

I joined another prestigious mother agency which had a worldwide network. The two people running it appeared reliable and professional. I was twenty-two years old at this stage. I still wished to embark on high-fashion modelling jobs, a circuit I enjoyed much more,[92] which could provide the opportunity to achieve conspicuous earnings and fame, facilitating creative self-expression in a far more artistic manner, which to me were the relevant reasons for pursuing this employment. However, I was now already considered somewhat old for the industry,[93] which made competing for the most prestigious jobs more challenging. This engendered anxieties about age and ageing.

Between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-seven, I managed to win better jobs and felt fairly valued as a model within the high-fashion industry. I enjoyed working with creative and talented fashion tastemakers. It was a way "to become aware of and express aspects of myself", as I wrote in my diary. It was somewhat therapeutic, liberating and transformational. If I wanted to work with those tastemakers, I had no choice but to allow the emergence of the unexpected. However, there were also several occasions where I sabotaged relevant professional opportunities.

The vehemence of such acting outs – usually of a self-sabotaging/self-excluding nature – was directly proportional to the quality of the opportunity. For example, I once

[92] I experienced the commercial circuit as soul depleting and much more objectifying.
[93] High-fashion tastemakers' preferred girls generally aged between fourteen – or less – and nineteen.

met a very notable female fashion photographer at a casting for an editorial[94] for one of the world's most prestigious high-fashion magazines. She said I had not yet been photographed properly, to which I silently agreed.[95] She was keen to confirm me for the job however she needed the agreement of the editor-in-chief. She therefore arranged a second meeting. I arrived at the second meeting transpiring through my embodiment a deterring sense of worthlessness that likely led to their decision to book someone else. I had lost the opportunity, furthermore, they ruled me out from any future opportunity.[96] Similar situations occurred on a regular basis. Such a self-excluding embodied response would not happen during non-prestigious opportunities, on the contrary on those occasions I exuded confidence, which was precisely the attitude required for high-fashion opportunities.[97]

As I testify in my diary, on one occasion, towards the end of my modelling journey, I went for a casting and a famous photographer told me: "I never understood why you didn't become a supermodel. You are by far the most beautiful Italian model we have". I was aware of my internal self-sabotaging dynamic and I felt powerless over it. I felt like I had spoiled multiple opportunities and somehow, I was unable to forgive myself for it. However, the very person making that comment was renowned for his decadent lifestyle and sexual exploitation of young girls in exchange for relevant jobs, something I found unappealing and also frightening.

[94] A fashion editorial is a series of generally 6 or 8 images or more, based on a story or a specific theme.
[95] What she meant and what I agreed with, was that only a few photographers (and this is generally why they are particularly famous in the industry) are capable of unleashing the deepest potential of a model and have also the technical, creative and aesthetic skills to capture outstanding images. Until that moment, I had yet to work with a photographer of that calibre.
[96] Typically once these powerful tastemakers form an idea about a model, it is very hard to change it.
[97] Models have to exude high self-esteem and a sense of pride and superiority to appeal to tastemakers, for tastemakers will expect such qualities will be transferred to the goods or the lifestyle they wish to promote.

There were unconscious secondary gains resulting from my self-sabotaging/self-excluding patterns, of course, as I acknowledged much later: firstly, by remaining in the Cinderella position, I could still somehow belong to my family system without interfering with its status quo; secondly, I could remain safe, avoiding the wrath, attacks and retaliation of envious relevant others.[98] Furthermore, by sabotaging relevant modelling jobs, I could remain out of the fashion and modelling industries lifestyle, thereby I would protect myself from the adverse psychological, emotional and physical impact of such a lifestyle and the possibility of losing myself in it (which I will further discuss below).

High-fashion modelling required navigating in truly challenging and fast paced waters, and I was on my own. Furthermore, it was fiercely competitive. Its criteria were specific: youth, extroversion, aesthetic symmetry, androgyny, tallness, public relation skills and extreme slenderness were paramount to succeed. I had to unleash all of my resources to endure the field and to optimise opportunities. However, in my experience, sustaining success in modelling entailed accepting and complying with all its rules, essentially "marrying" the system, sometimes literally. This frightened me, as there was a dissolute side to it, with a great focus on recreational drugs and alcohol consumption and even, in relation to heterosexual tastemakers, on sexual harassment, sexual assault and compromising politics. The outcome was that I was neither fully in nor fully out of the system. Success for me was not to be achieved at all costs. I wished to achieve it under my conditions, by simultaneously preserving my

[98] A female family member was exceedingly envious and proceeded to defame me – making up and disseminating defamatory stories – with decision makers involved in the relevant jobs I sought. Despite not knowing the relevant stakeholders, she spent time and effort to find ways of disrupting my relationship with them.

wellbeing, dignity and principles. I stayed out of that lifestyle, aware that this would entail missing out on relevant job and "success"[99] opportunities. I grappled with this conundrum for many years.

I had been unable to express overtly, even with a therapist, the fear of losing myself in that lifestyle. During the years of my modelling, denial about sexual harassment and corrupt political dynamics dominated culture. As such, I did not recognise the albeit significant issue, chiefly due to cultural normalisation. Being easy going and wanting to have fun – in that way – was a much appreciated attitude in the industry. I was unable to embrace such a stance.

The experience of attending castings was one of incessant examination and was extremely anxiety provoking. My body was inspected and comments – at times derogatory – were at times made in front of me, as if I were not there. I didn't look sufficiently androgynous because I had breasts. I began to dislike them to the point that I was always concealing and squashing them. Having been a swimmer growing up, my arms showed mild muscle profiling and my shoulders were relatively broad. This was also a hindrance to securing high-fashion jobs. As one photographer put it: "your body looks too healthy". The way I tried to fit in was by trying to lose more weight and refrain from exercise. However, certain attributes like shoulder bones could not be changed, leaving me with a sense of failure, powerlessness and defectiveness.

The high-fashion circuit was exceedingly political and competitive. When it came to important castings, powerful tastemakers such as bookers or casting directors, as well

[99] Success is here referred to as winning prestigious modelling jobs and securing fame and high wages.

as photographers, had a relevant role in influencing the client. Each booker managed a vast number of girls and had very little time for each of us. Some girls appeared to be able to secure their attention somehow, or to establish fruitful professional relationships with dependable bookers who could relate to models as human beings, as was my case for a few years. Others garnered privileged treatment by dating them or by becoming close friends, sharing the same lifestyle. Others attempted to date/marry the director of the agency himself.

I recall sitting for hours at a time next to my bookers in both Paris and NYC waiting for them to have a minute to talk with me, to share how things were going and whether I had secured any job option[100] or confirmation. On one occasion, I recall being shocked to hear my booker verbally demolishing the reputation of a famous fashion model he represented over the phone saying she was "game over", instead pushing another model,[101] and eventually convincing the client to confirm the alternative. That was truly revelatory of how a model's trajectory was completely controlled by powerful tastemakers and added to my experience and feelings of powerlessness in the field. The power imbalance between a young model and an adult powerful tastemaker was enormous.

The fashion and modelling industries were largely dominated by females and homosexual males whilst a minority comprised of heterosexual males. Several of the latter were often attracted to the industry because of the access to young girls and the relatively easy and conspicuous profits. These individuals were accustomed to

[100] An option in fashion modelling is a job penciled-in but not yet confirmed. It signifies that more than one model is optioned for the same job and tastemakers are still deciding who is the model to be confirmed for the job.
[101] She was being pushed for some – possibly political – reason unbeknown to me. I never found out.

harassing models sexually or to requiring sexual favours from them, more or less overtly, in exchange for prestigious jobs or privileged treatment, or sometimes only promises. For example, at the age of twenty-three, I received a phone call from the owner of one of the most powerful and prestigious photographers' agents in the world, one who could turn a girl into a supermodel. Somehow, he had been provided with my handphone number and, mysteriously, he was aware that I had secured many options for some of the most prestigious high-fashion magazines and high-fashion campaigns in the industry. I had only met him once before at the only networking event I had ever been persuaded to attend by my mother agency, a prestigious gala dinner filled with powerful fashion tastemakers, where he was sitting next to me, flirting all night and sharing that he wanted to be my boyfriend, despite being married with children. In the phone call, he said: "I see you are doing really well. It would be a shame to lose these options, wouldn't it? I am sure you know how powerful I am, delicious Giotta...". I was appalled. I replied without hesitation "I don't care about your power" and hung up the phone. Of course, by this point I knew that my modelling trajectory depended on the powerful tastemakers' decisions, and a part of me did want to succeed, however in that moment I was too shocked to find any better way of dealing with the situation and I was not prepared to enter such a game. I thought it must take two to tango, so to say, and possibly some of my colleagues would have eagerly conformed at the prospect of conspicuous material gain. Soon after this incident, coincidentally, all my options for significant high-fashion jobs evaporated. I wondered whether there was a correlation.

Between age twenty-two and twenty-four, many more similar incidents took place. For example, the owner of one of the biggest fashion houses in the industry invited me to show up at the shooting for his campaign in exchange for sex with him the night before.

I knew that being on that campaign would open up the opportunity to become a real supermodel, but I simply could not do it. In another example, the photographer, on the first night of a five-day trip for an editorial photographic shooting, banged insistently and forcefully on my hotel room door for what felt like an eternity. I have very little memory of how I felt at the time. I believe I dissociated to cope. I could not open the door. I could not bring myself to comply. He retaliated on the rest of the trip by cutting my head out of the images or only taking pictures of my back, reducing the number of pictures of me, whilst increasing those of the other model.

On another occasion in Paris, during one of the common instances where I was sitting and waiting next to my booker, a girl, who soon after became an iconic supermodel, entered and all bookers greeted her with extreme friendliness. She came across as outgoing, approachable, sociable, extrovert, happy, always smiling and effervescent. I was aware that was how models were expected to be at all times, essentially feeling good in their skin. Seeing her enter the room was a reminder of my most persistent inner challenge: self-exclusion/self-sabotage. She and I were competing the previous season against one another for the most prestigious fashion show castings. My internal anxiety peaked to such a degree that I pulled out from the competition altogether soon after the start. The end result was self-exclusion for which I struggled to forgive myself. Indeed, escaping enabled me to unconsciously achieve the above-mentioned secondary gains, but also left me with a sense of regret. She remained in the competition with enthusiasm, won most of the jobs and set herself in the field as the new supermodel.

In hindsight, there was something even more profoundly hidden from my consciousness underpinning my self-sabotaging bevaviour, about which I only gained

awareness recently, whilst writing this narrative. Essentially, I had an idealised image of modelling which reflected the idealised image pervading culture constructed by media. Idealised modelling entailed high status, capital and the elite lifestyle, in essence capitalistic values that result in internalised capitalism, wherein a person may believe they desire that which is culturally portrayed as being desirable. In truth, I did not enjoy modelling for what it actually was and entailed, other than its creative aspects. Being seen and treated like a sexual object or a trophy was not appealing. Sabotaging opportunities were unconscious attempts to avoid such a stance in the world whilst making space for opportunities to enter my authentic desire.

I typically felt very deflated and low in the evenings, after returning home from my castings, yet I didn't feel I could show these true feelings and self to others. Furthermore, I was ashamed and felt out of control for not being able to change them or rid myself of them, for not being that friendly, happy girl the fashion industry required. I only felt good about myself when I secured a job and even the type of job made a great difference on my mood, self-perception or feelings of self-worth. Thus, my life had become constellated by emotional ups and downs, all driven by job options, cancellations and confirmations. I had become that which the fashion industry defined. A good job confirmation inflated my self-esteem and perception of self. A cancellation, or – even worse – no movement at all, annihilated me. I was totally dependent on the unpredictable choices of others, opinions, decisions, likes and dislikes. I felt I existed only when I was in the media, on a relevant set or catwalk, as a sheet of torn magazine paper in my portfolio, unidimensional, with no voice; otherwise I felt I did not exist at all.

As I began modelling, I was always travelling, a requirement which engendered instability and isolation. I lived between hotel rooms and residential apartments. As a result, nurturing friendships was problematic. Because of my appearance, I was habitually stigmatised as incompetent, superficial, easy going, sexually promiscuous and/or stupid. It was a very oppressive and discriminating stigma to bear. I was generally not allowed an opinion or a thought in the industry, nor did tastemakers care about my internal world: In their eyes I was just a product or a tool. Furthermore, I seemed to attract – and not be able to protect myself from – exploitative or envious people, a pattern worsened by priming and wounds originating in my developmental age. The fashion industry and the modelling stance certainly abounded with such relational opportunities.

The discipline required steady maintenance of my body within specifically requested technical criteria[102] and entailed a 24/7 commitment to food and lifestyle management, in a similar manner to an athlete. On set, generally we would begin very early in the mornings, sometimes as early as 4:00am, and finish fifteen or sixteen hours later. On photographic trips, the team would typically try to achieve as many "stories" as possible in the limited time we had to maximise the return against costs. Shooting in very minimal and provocative lingerie with people passing by was common: "I am tired of showing my body in front of everyone, I feel like I'm prostituting myself. I feel humiliated" as I wrote in my diary.

On my twenty-fifth birthday I went to my agency in NYC, as I was required to do daily. On that day, all the bookers were unusually warm and cheerful with me, probably

[102] As per the composite card, the requested measurements of bust, waist and hips, in addition to good hair and skin quality.

having witnessed with other models what was about to occur to me. They all warmly wished me happy birthday, then my booker sat me down. He was a powerful and intimidating fashion tastemaker. He told me, very pragmatically, that I was now too old for the high-fashion market, and that we had to take advantage of my remaining qualities to capitalise financially, such as my smile, teeth, hands, feet and my body for lingerie jobs. This came as a surprise. I felt shocked and reduced to an assembly of body parts. Being a veteran of the Asian experience, I was disturbed at the thought of taking part in further low and middle range commercial jobs. I simply couldn't bring myself to do it. I found it too objectifying, sexually-objectifying and de-humanising. Furthermore, I felt it was too soon for me to give up on the idea of securing high-fashion jobs. However, my booker told me that when girls reach age twenty-five, they can no longer lie about their age (as they are encouraged to do by their agents until then), because they can no longer enjoy the transportation discounts of those under twenty-five, thus all clients would automatically know the real age of the girl when booking her and therefore reject her. I could not bring myself to accept what he was saying to me. I left the agency feeling betrayed, hurt and humiliated.

In hindsight, I wished someone had prepared me over the preceding years for that moment, such that I could be psychologically ready, aware of what to expect and the timings of my modelling demise. Instead, at that point, I felt so disheartened that I simply wished to give up. If this was the state of affairs, I thought the best decision for me was to embark on University, studying psychology. I secured a place at one of the best Universities in Italy where thousands of students competed for a few dozen spaces, but I didn't pursue studies at that stage, having been advised by a relevant other, whom I deeply trusted, that quitting modelling to pursue University studies was just another alibi and a resistance to thrive in my life. So, I dropped out of University.

However, from that moment, modelling became an uphill battle. I kept pursuing ways to win high-fashion jobs, but I was "swimming against the tide", with an enormous amount of effort which ultimately burnt me out. In hindsight the advice I had received was unwise yet I did not trust myself enough at that stage to follow my intuition, rather I delegated my decisions to relevant others and dismissed my perceptions, deeming them as worthless, a common pattern among models.

Ageing and maintaining body discipline and body weight from that moment onward became tormenting. My body began to lose its pubescent attributes, naturally pushing to become more womanly. If I wanted to secure high-fashion jobs, I thought I had to weigh below 50 kg. Tellingly, I wrote in my diary: "The secret is to be skinny". I began to struggle with issues of body image and weight. The relevant other I trusted believed I was still self-sabotaging and mentioned that I could simply skip a meal. As a result, I began to track my caloric intake, which soon became obsessional. I was sent to see an endocrinologist. I persuaded him to prescribe me amphetamines.[103] I weighed 53 kilograms and felt compelled to drop below 50 kilograms to secure high-fashion jobs. This harmed my metabolic system and made me ever more anxious and jittery.

Indeed, I was trying to control my body in an attempt to control the professional outcomes, for I was unable to authorise myself to follow what felt right for me, and thus leave the industry. I was literalising a psychic conundrum, thereby controlling my body as a way to remain detached from difficult feelings and postpone the transition, alongside its complex feelings. I was also complying with the relevant other's demands, for I believed him to be right about the suggestion that I was still sabotaging

[103] A drug prescribed to help with attention deficit disorder symptoms and for overweight people to shed weight. In my case, I was looking to use it as an appetite suppressant.

opportunities to win relevant modelling jobs. In hindsight, this was no longer the case, for relevant opportunities progressively cease to manifest once a model turns 25 years of age, at the latest.

At that point, I knew nothing else. I had been modelling since the age of sixteen. I believed this was the way the world went. At the time of grappling with this complexity and perceived failure, with relentless attempts to break through in a system that could not be changed, I was sharing an apartment with a man who worked outside the industry. The general perception I received from outsiders such as him, but often also from those within the industry, was that I did nothing all day other than be called to idly walk on a catwalk or stand in front of a camera and be paid a lot of money, just for how I looked. The daily and incessant 24/7 efforts modelling required were rarely recognised externally. This made matters more complex, for I internalised the bias and identified with it, resulting in an increased inner critic, unrelenting standards (I began to believe myself I was not doing much work), sense of incompetency, failure and worthlessness.

I was mostly penniless, especially from age twenty-five onwards, despite earning relatively well.[104] "I look at my balance sheet at the agency and I have debts! Why? Because I see they charge me unsustainable expenses all the time. One thousand pounds here, three hundred pounds there, endless bikes to take my book around! Statements are incomprehensible and items are all minus here and minus there. If you ask them something, they freeze". I had no choice but to sit, hope and wait for something interesting to happen in my modelling journey, as my mother agent, whom

[104] A range between £5,000 and 25,000 per month.

I trusted, advised: “just be available and composed. Don’t say: ‘I want to do this or the other type of job’. You need to make them understand that you also want to make money. And then you have to be tranquil, do your public relations, be there and wait”. I tried but that led to a sense of misery, feelings of powerlessness, being out of control and to filling the waiting time by obsessing about how I looked and what I could do to perfect my body and personality to match the slippery and everchanging wishes, likes and requirements of the fashion tastemakers. Only later I realised that such passive waiting was one of the most problematic dimensions of modelling, since nothing else could be pursued, even education, for I had to be permanently available (castings were assigned – and jobs were often booked – the day before).

Waiting entailed no alternative endeavour could be pursued actively and progressively developed, no foundations could be established and solidified. With time, the risk was that such a passive attitude could become a lifestyle and a mindset. That passive waiting resulted in the progressive weakening of the self and the progressive increase in precariousness and dependency from others and their wishes. Waiting was the master route to becoming lost, disempowered and extremely vulnerable. Waiting leading to a compromised identity and the loss of dignity.

At the age of twenty-seven, I wanted “to make things happen”, as I frequently wrote in my diaries, i.e. I wanted to have more agency over my professional destiny in modelling. On reflection, the recurring statement of wishing to make things happen was an unconscious desire to retrieve personal agency and a sense of self-efficacy (in contrast to the “waiting” stance), albeit in the absence of competent guidance, I pursued a maladaptive path, i.e. implementing further control over my body shape and

look. In hindsight to “make things happen”, I just needed to fully accept the *status quo* and either leave the industry and begin a new life or fully comply with its politics.

After the London fashion week, which entailed me maintaining an austere, continuous, corporeal and behavioural discipline (including an average intake of 500kcal per day within the context of a highly active lifestyle), having secured a few shows, albeit no high-fashion brands, I wished to attempt the NYC fashion week again and I wrote a letter to my former booker, who had previously told me on my twenty-fifth birthday that I was too old. My mother agent informed me of his answer to my letter, as noted in my diary: “Greg found your letter complicated. He basically said they don’t care about what’s happening inside you, they only care about what can be seen externally. What clients want is very technical. He doesn’t want you there”. I was not going to change the system and I was setting myself for failure, repetitively.

As Christmas holidays approached, aged twenty-eight, I stationed myself in my flat for one month. I felt totally burnt-out, exhausted and my body collapsed. My system could not take the stress, pressure and instability any longer. I could not bring myself to travel further. I sought the help of an alternative medicine practitioner, who encouraged me to eat more. I had been underweight for at least seven years by this point, having needed to perform for the modelling jobs in a very reliable, strictly controlled and disciplined manner. My body had been starved to such a degree that, as I followed the practitioner’s advice, it would not stop asking for food. Simultaneously, my body went through a phase of awakening and turmoil, I began to feel it moving and becoming alive again, a novel experience, but also an exceedingly frightening one. I did not trust my body, fearing that by letting go of discipline, it would not know how to be and would get out of shape. My cravings for food continued for at least four years.

I gained three kilograms, which at the time seemed enormous. I began to despise my body and wrote: “I have a great problem now with my image. It feels like a relentless battle between how I am and how I wished I was”. The way I looked meant to me how and who I was as a person. An idealised image of myself haunted me, possibly resulting from all the years modelling. I was confused, felt like a failure and couldn’t find a voice. I didn’t acknowledge my needs. Standing up for myself was unconceivable, for it required me to feel deserving, which I didn’t. Modelling jobs progressively began to decrease, and I struggled to make a living. I wrote in my diary: “I haven’t had a job for two months. I believe it’s the longest time ever”. My agony levels kept increasing.

I began to look for alternative employment, however, I had no *curriculum vitae*. When I shared with the owner of a notable fashion house, whom I knew personally, that I was looking for a job, he asked me what I could do, and I froze. I had no answer and felt very embarrassed. I felt ashamed at the idea of starting University at age twenty-eight, for I felt old. I felt worthless: “I am a piece of junk. My quest for thinness was an attempt to build an unassailable image of inhuman perfection, such that no one could find defects nor could or would wish to go beyond the glossy facade, the shiny shell, such that no one could find out that in effect inside I am inept and unworthy”. I fell into depression.

I eventually embarked on University, in my late twenties, studying Psychology, after also finding competent support to help me authorise myself to be in my authentic desire. I closed the modelling chapter at age thirty, after which I took a job as a shop assistant, whilst continuing to study. All attempts to secure a better employment failed

until much later, when I recovered from my low self-esteem. Ending modelling had been very difficult. The hardest aspect was to accept the reality *versus* the idealised fantasy of modelling. Success within the industry without accepting and complying with all its politics was impossible. At this stage, I was also tired of having to look like a young girl. "A woman must be a woman, dressed as a woman, thinking, behaving and feeling as a woman. I have had enough of this myth of the androgynous", I wrote in my diary.

I was invited to join a prestigious acting agency as an actress, however, that was a field that I perceived as being even more perilous than modelling. I tried for a couple of months, however I did not like the environment at all. I never wished to feel sexually objectified, powerless and dependent on others' wishes ever again. I never wanted to continue the focus on the body, the look and beauty. I never again wished to feel the pressure of suffering sexual harassment or having to bestow sexual favours to win jobs. I had avoided such circumstances in modelling, and I felt that within modelling there were still ways to achieve some scope of success without having to go that way. The film industry, instead, was mostly dominated by heterosexual men and I did not want to have any further experience like those I experienced in modelling. I was not going to marry that system and, most probably, I suspected I would not get very far as a result. Furthermore, acting was a lifelong commitment under such a *praxis* and not just, like modelling, a life parenthesis. I was not prepared to live that way any longer.

The modelling lifestyle engendered great relational, financial, geographical and psychological instability, which added to my previous adverse developmental wounds and intrapsychic challenges. The sense of incompetency and failure I experienced during the closing process of my modelling journey manifested as an unrealistic

conviction about, and an intense preoccupation with, life, personal but particularly professional competency, a great sense of dependency on selected – mostly exploitative – others and their opinions, significant avoidant behaviour patterns around triggering situations such as taking initiative, job searches, and the inability to acknowledge my needs, evaluate myself objectively, nor thus to express my value and skill based competency to any interlocutor.

Modelling appeared to be, at least initially, the perfect employment. It could provide high status, fame, capital and admiration. However, given the tastemakers' gaze being mostly objectifying, critical – especially during castings, which represent the majority of my modelling reality – and/or sexualising, paradoxically the internal wound of the primary lack of a loving, caring and benevolent gaze was only deepened. Indeed, my modelling journey and experience would have been very different had I had caring others to support and protect me, setting boundaries on my behalf, especially during the early years, and a healthier developmental experience, thus a stronger ego. Most probably even the tastemakers would have perceived me differently and been more careful and respectful in their interactions with me.

A dimension that I enjoyed, and which particularly struck me about modelling, was the seemingly relational dimension of the self as manifestied through photographs, particularly observed within high-fashion. Specifically, I noticed that, depending on the photographer, I looked different in each photographic shooting and this was not solely due to make up, the different looks or my ability to being chameleonic. There was something more. I was curious to understand this intriguing phenomenon, in the hope to bring to light, transform and master my intrapsychic dynamics as well as to learn to better navigate interpersonal relationships.

The interpersonal dimension was clear: the camera, but also the photograph emerging from the shooting, were in effect liminal spaces, producing a co-created a unique third[105] resulting from the intersubjective exchange, in a specific moment in time, between the two – each carrying their own intrapsychic constellation – alongside the influence of the rest of the team on set. However, the other's gaze had, as I experienced it, excessive power over my internal world to the point of participating in an instantaneous transmutation of my embodiment, particularly apparent on my face. The influence of the representational relationship[106] was inevitable. This experience always left me with a sense of precariousness and dependency on the other's benevolent gaze, leveraged as a way to appease my internal sense of insufficiency or even monstrousness.

Modelling, as I understood it, was not just about the body. It was impossible to hide the internal world from the camera or the stage. Depending on the photographer, on his/her status and quality of his/her gaze upon me, I noticed that I would transfigure. I recall one photographer sharing with me straightforwardly that once I stepped on the photographic set, I changed. He mentioned that he noticed that my face would deform, and I would become "ugly". It was difficult to hear his words and I felt exposed, albeit believing him to be speaking the truth. The pattern was such that I became "ugly" when I had a significant high-fashion job opportunity.

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[105] Akin to the notion of "intersubjective analytic third" (Ogden, 2017, p. 167).
[106] I here refer to the notion illustrated by Gilbert and Orlans: "the contextual nature of all relationships" (2011, p. 144).

I recall my struggle to look directly into the camera for many years. The fear that the photograph could set part of my internal reality in stone and then show it to the world was especially daunting and encumbering for me. During relevant opportunities, my embodiment exuded uneasiness, revealing my low self-esteem. I avoided looking into the camera as a way to keep my vulnerabilities hidden. I also overcontrolled my embodiment to fake a sense of confidence, however that would not work for high fashion, which sought spontaneity in the embodiment. Despite my attempts to hide, one photographer was able to capture a truthful aspect of my internal experience (feeling trapped and fraught) during the modelling years, as shown in Figure 1:

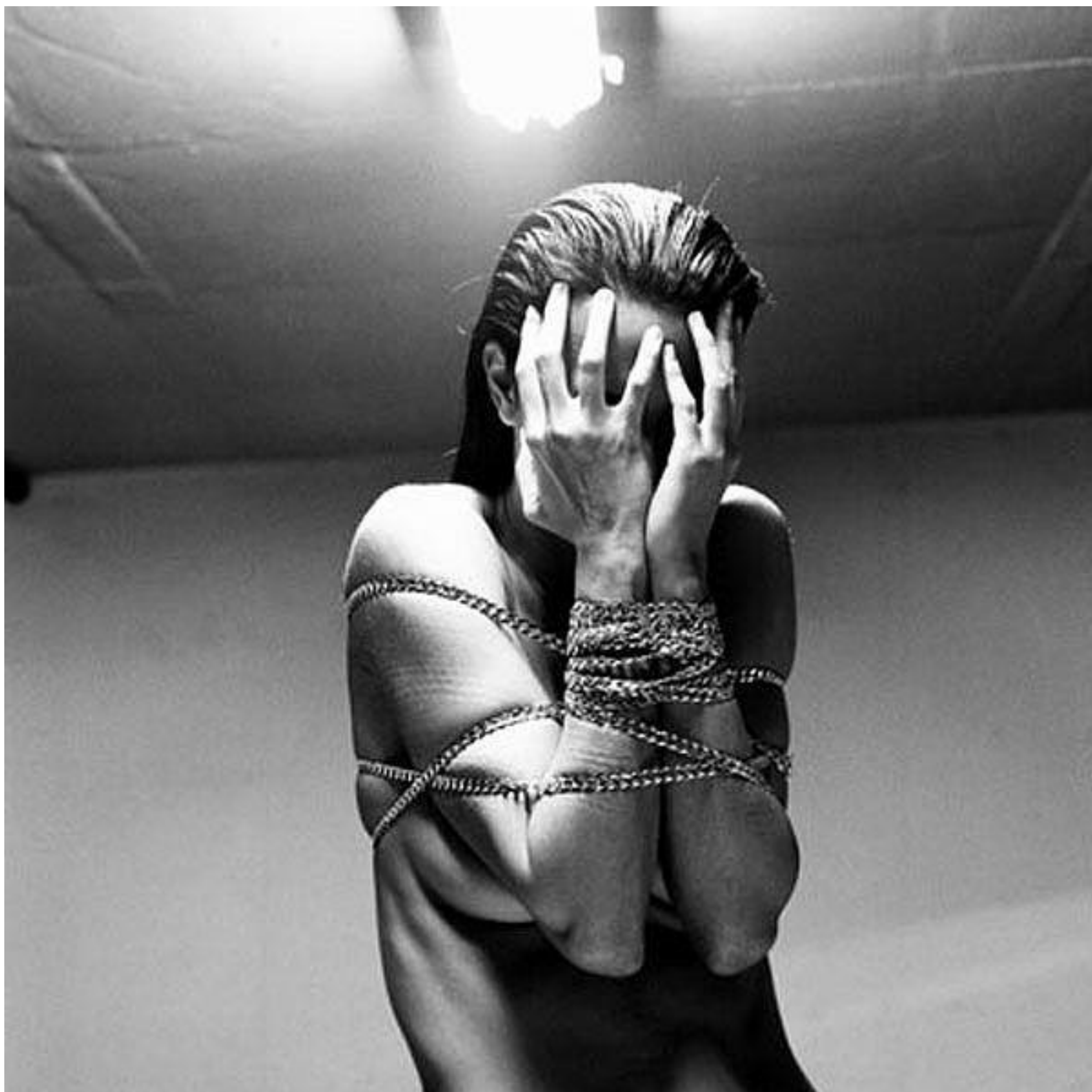

Figure 1: Photographer: Helmut Newton. Jewellery campaign, 2001.

My resistance to show up or to be seen fully resulted in the hindrance of a flowing creative process and in my embodiment appearing rigid in the photograph. Thus, the unconscious, intrapsychic dimensions and structure of the self played a relevant role in the photographic outcome as did the relational processes and the gaze in particular (in this case, the gaze of the photographer).

I learned that I could see myself, or aspects of my unconscious, only through the other's gaze. Also, that by being defenceless, which I was only able to do on rare occasions (for example when I felt safe and when the other's gaze was benevolent), my embodiment manifested in its most flourishing manner. I was aware that many of my colleagues utilised recreational drugs or alcohol to drop their inhibitions and to relax in front of the camera. Perhaps that was one of the reasons for such substances to circulate so heavily in the industry. I never did. I wanted to get there without tricks. I preferred facing my inner challenges in the hope of transforming. That, to me, was a relevant part of the modelling journey: to integrate the unconscious through the help of creative processes, in this case through photography, the camera and the interpersonal relationship between model and photographer. As such, my modelling journey was in a sense also a journey of self-discovery and self-transformation, as if through the photographs I could progressively see, accept and integrate aspects of my unconscious.

The occasions where I felt I was able to show up in my most flourishing manner were infrequent for several years. I recall, for example, being able to look directly in the camera only towards the end of my modelling journey. By this time, I had already

healed many of my internal injuries and strengthened my ego enough to be able to show up. The outcome had been progressive and proportional to the internal healing.

My exit from modelling and the transition into a more “normal” life took several years. I sought to challenge myself to pursue the most effective journey of self-growth. A strong dose of personal motivation, determination and perseverance to face my challenges played a huge role in making the transition and my individuation process both possible and successful. Aside from my personal therapy, embarking on a spiritual journey and processing trauma through body-based work and embodied practices were pivotal. Much effort needed to be placed upon continuing my journey towards individuation throughout the years, rather than succumbing to the temptation of falling into the comfort zone – for example, by becoming an object within a co-dependent marriage. As I learned by walking the personal transformation journey, there was no effective shortcut.

I was twenty years old when I started my personal therapy, which I initially sought to address some core fears. Eventually it hugely helped me to better navigate the challenging modelling environment. Furthermore, if I wanted to stay safe therein (but also in the world, being perceived as an “object of desire” and being a solitary – as models are – world traveller with no caring other/support system, other than my remote personal therapist), I needed to hone some effective skills to measure and understand people and their intentions swiftly, given the fast pace of the employment and life vicissitudes. Personal psychotherapy and the study of the human mind – which I continued independently whilst modelling – helped.

Having felt deeply grateful for the support received by my therapists since age twenty, and having always had a passion for philosophical, spiritual, psychological and depth-psychological studies, I eventually followed my vocation and began practicing and researching, whilst continuing on my spiritual journey. Working as a therapist provided much fulfilment at an existential level, for not only I felt able to serve human beings whilst reciprocating the gifts I had received. Furthermore, I could continue my passion of investigating and continuing to learn about the human mind.

A model with a voice, connected to herself, who can respect and follow her perception and intuition, with a view of the world and a personality of her own was not truly welcomed in the industry during my time, and diversity was inconceivable. Today matters are progressively changing for the better and I believe this is the road to continue to pave to see a change within the modelling and the feminine realms.

CHAPTER FIVE: IPA FINDINGS

The goal of this chapter is to provide an interpretative and phenomenological full narrative of data deriving from the IPA interview analysis of each participant’s account and the related findings, to shed light on the phenomena under investigation, such that the reader is able to make links with a broader context through their own personal and professional experience and fore-knowledge (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008). The Chapter commences with a presentation of the data collection and data analysis processes embraced herein.

DATA COLLECTION

Given the general mobility, busy lifestyle or need to provide availability for last minute modelling jobs, most participants could only confirm their attendance at the interviews very shortly before they took place. Many of them rescheduled the meetings multiple times. These factors made the logistics of the face-to-face encounters challenging but also revealed patterns relating to the provisional nature of fashion models’ lives and dimensions pertaining to interpersonal challenges. As a result, only four out of the twelve interviews occurred face-to-face whilst the remaining interviews took place over video conference calls. The physical interviews had an overall higher quality of realness and human-to-human encounter and also seemed to make the sharing of the more difficult experiences more possible, or slightly less uncomfortable. However, had modern technology not been available, it would not have been possible to conduct all of the interviews and analyse relevant data within a reasonable timeframe. Thus, technology made the data collection more likely to succeed.

The one-to-one IPA interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim (Creswell, 2013; Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012) “at the semantic level [, including] all the words spoken including false starts; significant pauses, laughs and other features” (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 65). “Non-verbal behaviour” was also taken into account and interpreted (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 65). A margin was left on both sides of the transcript, wide enough “to make analytic comments” (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 65).

The IPA interview is a combination of narrative, structure, and participant led process (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 189). Because of the wish, herein, to produce detailed and rich accounts of lived experiences, meaning-making, understanding and perceptions of fashion models (Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012, p. 365; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 55), and to avoid the risk of premature general claims (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 55), the research questions were framed broadly and openly (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 55) (see Appendix E). As a result, the participants had a substantial role in shaping the interview and what was said (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 187).

Whilst a structure in the form of an interview schedule was deployed (see Appendix E), participants were encouraged to express themselves freely, and were probed on issues which arose within the dialogic process; as anticipated, I therefore ultimately moved away from the schedule (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 188; J. A. Smith & Eatough, 2015, p. 58). Such a dynamic process was, in fact, desired in order to “pursue the participant’s narrative” (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 188; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008).

I explored interesting areas, meaningful themes and concerns that arose, whilst following the participants' interests, for the goal was to enter, as much as possible, their social and psychological world, to ensure the new and noteworthy themes raised were embraced, to "accommodate and bring to light the unexpected", whilst simultaneously holding an empathic stance throughout to honour the human-to-human encounter (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 188; Fontana & Frey, 2000; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, pp. 58–59). I encouraged participants "to talk at length" (Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012, p. 365; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008), such that the interviews eventually veered towards an "unstructured format", for the aim was to "emphasize the participants as story-tellers rather than respondents" (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 188; Larkin & Thompson, 2012). I sought to remain totally open throughout the interview process, challenging my insider's foreknowledge and assumptions. The neutral, open-ended enquiries were, as much as possible, free from hidden assumptions (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012, p. 365), framed in a colloquial, jargon-free language, and designed to encourage, rather than direct or lead, the course of the interviews (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Before the interviews took place, the semi-structured interview schedule was memorised (see Appendix E), such that I could completely focus on what the participant was saying, beginning by focusing my efforts on the establishment of a safe space and a trusting connection with the participant (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008). The open questions, whose order indeed differed for each interview to follow the participant, focused on the exploration of "sensory perceptions, mental phenomena (thoughts, memories, associations, fantasies), and specifically individual interpretations" (Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012, p. 365–366). The primary research

question opened the discussion (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 103). This question was framed to be as general as possible (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008). Subsequently, I funnelled down, as necessary, into more specific questions relevant for this study (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 62). Prompts were designed and included in case the participants found the open questions too abstract or general or in the case where they provided short or peripheral replies (Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012, p. 365; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 62). In all cases, participants were encouraged "to speak about the topic with as little prompting from [me] as possible", mostly only encouraged by "a gentle nudge" from my side (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 61) or a simple question such as "anything else?". Silences and pauses were welcomed to facilitate the free surfacing of relevant material.

I had anticipated that participants could have at times struggled to share complex, frightening or shameful experiences, thoughts or feelings, as people do, and/or that they could have at times not wished to self-disclose, which happened to some degree with most participants. Indeed, my counselling and clinical skills and experience assisted me in this process, as well as in building rapport and gaining of the participants' trust,[107] carefully using the ability of active listening, trying to comprehend what was being said, seeking to explore and probe further when I had a sense that matters were becoming too abstract, intellectualised, ambiguous or unclear.

I was aware of the importance of capturing "verbal, non-verbal, and non-behavioural communication" (in the process of data analysis, indeed I seek to interpret the "mental

[107] During the interviews, most participants shared that they felt they could trust me, thus, to my surprise, openness and transparency to sensitive information was observed quickly within the first interview with all participants, which indeed facilitated the collection of truly deep accounts.

and emotional state” from what was said as well as from the implicit communication (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 54)), whilst remaining ethically mindful – and ready to intervene/adjust accordingly – of how the process was “affecting the participant”[108] and whether she was perhaps “avoiding talking about certain issues, … feeling awkward, ashamed or becom[ing] very emotional” (Pietkiewicz & J. A. Smith, 2012, pp. 365–366). Participants who experienced the surfacing of difficult emotions in the interviews confirmed they had a support system in place, including a relationship with a trusted psychotherapist, thus there was no requirement from my side to provide further resources.

DATA ANALYSIS

A traditional iterative and dialectical IPA sequence (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, pp. 79-114), that required extensive time to complete, was adopted to approach the data analysis with the goal of conveying and illuminating the emerging meanings, in line with a hermeneutic “circularity of understanding”, wherein my role as a researcher was to prove the meanings’ relevance (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 187; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2013, p. 168). The methodology required the use of my “fore-knowledge” of the investigated phenomena to establish a suitable perspective with which to approach the participants’ accounts (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2013, p. 167). No qualitative data analysis software was utilised. The entire data analysis process was undertaken manually. Extreme attention to detail was given in order to capture simultaneously nuanced meanings and the bigger picture of each account and the collective.

[108] I remained ready to respond to the participants’ reactions to the process and questions, honouring my ethical responsibilities as researcher, considering in each given circumstance whether I needed to retract, to try “again more gently” or rather assess that it would be better not to “pursue this area with this respondent” (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 64).

I began the analysis with numerous thorough readings of each participant's transcript to achieve a holistic viewpoint. Subsequently, I analysed each transcript, line-by-line and case-by-case, ensuring attention was given to my emotional, embodied and cognitive responses to the accounts[109] and to the participant's non-verbal, implicit communication, examining and noting descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments and noting all significant and interesting aspects. Subsequently, the emerging themes and patterns were identified, initially case-by-case and later across all participants. Attention was given to aspects of convergence and commonality as well as nuanced and divergent characteristics between accounts (the latter unexpectedly being less frequent from the accounts). At that stage, all codes[110] where grouped together according to the theme to which they pertained, with the goal of identifying connections across themes. A folder of excerpts of the original accounts was created, wherein recurrent themes were grouped across participants. The following phase entailed reading and re-reading of the filed excerpts, whilst holding in mind the entire gestalt from the previous stages of the analysis, in order to identify what these extracts were conveying as a whole (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 114). From this point onwards, a more interpretative account transpired, through a dialogue between my foreknowledge of the phenomena under investigation, the theories I drew from and the coded data. As a result of this process, a structure illuminating the relationship between the themes began to emerge. The analysis continued "into the writing up stage" to condense, illustrate and summarise the group-level analysis, which was completed "with a narrative of both participant's and researcher's meaning-

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[109] Referring here to the inevitable emotional, embodied and cognitive responses to the accounts arising within the researcher during the interview and throughout the reading and the analytical process of each account.
[110] Each line or short sentence was summarised and/or assigned a theme which formed a code.

making of the topic under investigation", producing five superordinate themes and several corresponding subordinate themes and a related narrative, honouring the descriptive accounts and the participants' voices through the profuse inclusion of original quotes (see Chapter Five) (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 187; Larkin & Thompson, 2012; J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

The final narrative (presented below) moves "between levels of interpretation: from rich descriptions through to abstract and more conceptual interpretations" and includes tables to capture patterns effectively across participants (Eatough & J. A. Smith, 2008, p. 187; J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 106). Owing to the large sample size, prevailing emphasis was given to themes relevant to the entire group or to most participants (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 106). Supervisory support was utilised for testing the credibility and consistency of the narrative (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 80). The aforementioned process and materials have been organised into a format that enables tracing of the data and process from beginning to end (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 80).

The findings (Chapter Five, alongside Chapters Four and Six) will be employed subsequently (Chapter Seven) to further the dialogue with the existing theory (reviewed in Chapter Two) and to answer "second-tier" questions (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 103). The goal of IPA research is to enable the reader to link the findings with their own experience, whether professional and/or personal, and theories within the existing literature and the presented narrative, therefore a theoretical generalisability is to be sought, in line with good quality IPA (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 56).

IPA FINDINGS

The presentation of the findings is organised primarily by superordinate theme (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Five superordinate themes – organised mainly chronologically – and respective subordinate themes are introduced and examined in succession, as shown in Table 1. Further tables are included with the goal of delivering a visual illustration of the occurrence of subordinate themes across participants. The emerging themes are mostly and evidently interrelated; thus, the reader is invited to approach the text holding in mind the larger holistic picture, in line with a hermeneutic tradition, and the inevitable limitations posed by the need to structure the presentation of the extensive accounts.

As a result of the larger sample size (six participants, two interviews each, indicated in the quotes as I1 and I2), the level of detail in the analysis of each case was condensed and emphasis was given to the central emergent themes for the entire group, with a focus on the recurrent patterns across cases – i.e., themes present in at least half of the participants stemming from in-depth accounts (for a visual illustration of recurrent themes, the reader may refer to Tables 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 106). Specificity of each participant was granted through the inclusion of individual quotes.

Table 1: Superordinate Themes and Associated Subordinate Themes

Superordinate Theme	Subordinate Theme
ORIGINS	▪ Transgenerational transmission of developmental and early relational trauma and internalisation of toxic shame ▪ Culture and gender role behaviour ▪ Disconnection, rejection, dependency and incompetency ▪ The drive to model
FIELD PRAXIS	▪ A world turnaround ▪ Exploitation ▪ Blurred boundaries ▪ Controlling, critical environment ▪ Unattainable beauty and body criteria ▪ The fashion model personality ▪ Provisional life and prolonged adolescence
ON THE PITCH	▪ Envy, rivalry and intrasexual competition ▪ Objectification, sexual-objectification and self-objectification ▪ Politics and sexual harassment ▪ Lack of control ▪ "Expiry date"
COPING STRATEGIES	▪ Overcompensation ▪ Avoidance ▪ Compliance[111] ▪ A turning point and the recourse to adaptive coping strategies
EXIT AND AFTERMATHS	▪ Fall from grace ▪ Depression ▪ Regrets ▪ The challenge of social integration

[111] For an overview of these coping strategies (avoidance, overcompensation and compliance – the latter falling within the surrender mode), see http://www.schematherapy.com/id62.htm

A large number of “transcript extracts” are incorporated in the form of quotations, to facilitate an evocative experience in the reader and to honour the original account, to support the presented claims and for transparency, rigour and accuracy (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Quotes have been sampled equally across participants, providing each voice with equal weight, allowing their respective lived experience to come to the fore. Each extract is labelled with the participant’s pseudonym followed by I1 or I2 to indicate in which of the two interviews the quote appeared. Quotes by one or more participants are often used as illustrations or examples of a theme pertaining to more than one participant. The specific frequency of each topic being presented by the participants is indicated in each paragraph preceding the illustrative quote/s. The remaining narrative represents my detailed analytic interpretation of the accounts (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Although, as a highly experienced psychotherapist, I make sense of, and describe, the world and environment through an implicit psychotherapeutic understanding, the theoretical framework utilised for the interpretation of the accounts was interdisciplinary, thereby encompassing psychosocial, feminist and cultural theories as well as those in the psychological and depth-psychological fields. A psychotherapeutic language – particularly within the first superordinate theme – was adopted to articulate what has emerged from my engagement with all the material, at each stage of the analysis.

The accounts have been presented in a concise and precise manner. Accuracy, specificity, summaries and synthesis were achieved without altering meaning, remaining respectful of the descriptive accounts, the latter being honoured through, as abovementioned, the inclusion of a significant set of quotations. During the second

interview, opportunities arose to explore the participants' experiences in greater depth, further enabling the emergence of profound and insightful findings.

Origins

Table 2: Subordinate Themes Associated to Superordinate Theme 1

Subordinate Theme	Amy	Lily	Katie	Anne	Asia	Magda
Transgenerational transmission of developmental and early relational trauma and internalisation of toxic shame	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Culture and gender role behaviour	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disconnection, rejection, dependency and incompetency	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The drive to model	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Transgenerational[112] transmission of developmental and early relational[113] trauma[114] and internalisation of toxic shame[115]

Although the idiosyncratic specificities may differ, poor relational interactions, inadequate parenting, exposure to wounded and generally misattuned caregivers and an emotionally depriving environment emerged from the analysis of all the participants' accounts.

Developmental trauma and/or neglect was found in all participants to varying degrees. As a result, several core needs throughout the developmental age were unmet, and related attachment issues arose, as disclosed by five participants, which engendered toxic shame and a general sense of rejection and disconnection as well as a subsequent inability to seek and sustain supportive attachment.

All participants therefore entered modelling with pre-existing vulnerabilities in their psyche and self-structure, maladaptive internal objects and coping parts – the latter's function being to support the individual's survival within the given developmental environment. This resulted in maladaptive patterns re-enacted later in life, within the modelling environment.

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[112] Whilst recognising that the term transgenerational can be used in different ways, it is herein utilised to signify that trauma is passed on from one generation to the next, as will be further discussed in Chapter Seven.
[113] Relational trauma is understood herein as resulting from the exposure to an other's wounding behaviour (often of psychological, thus of invisible, nature), often perpetrated by relevant others, during the developmental age (see also DeYoung, 2015, pp. 86–87).
[114] Trauma can be understood as being the result of "adverse life experiences" (for a definition see Chapter Seven) (Shapiro & Silk Forrest, 1997/2016, p. 4) and here is used to encompass also neglect.
[115] Toxic shame is understood herein as being the experience of being "wrong" as a person or defective, flawed, insufficient, inherently unlovable, also understood as "defectiveness schema", directly resulting from developmental neglect and trauma (J. E. Young et al., 2003, pp. 8, 13).

Five participants shared elements of a history of neglect and lack of appropriate nurturing, resulting in feelings of toxic shame. Katie expressed this very directly:

> *I didn't feel good at this [beauty] contest. I think it was linked to my early childhood traumatic experience. I didn't feel good being exposed … not receiving enough love, enough attention, being… neglected …. I went to nursery when I was one and a half years old … they had like thirty children and they didn't really care about us, like I mean we needed to eat and sleep at a certain time but no one was cuddling, no one was take care of your emotional. (Katie, I1)*

The adverse impact of punitive, demanding, neglecting or critical relevant others, or of the caregiver's unwitting acting-out of their own trauma onto the future model, inevitably wounded and shaped her, as testified by all participants to varying degrees. Thus, the caregiver's trauma was passed onto the next generation. Asia, for example, was brought up by a very punitive mother who seemed to take pleasure by hurting and humiliating her. Katie, as another example, was neglected by her primary caregivers and sent to a nursery soon after birth. Magda's mother and grandmother were very abusive to her and her mother showed resentment towards her. Magda's grandmother, was herself very wounded. Magda revealed the following:

> *My grandmother was raped by her grandfather, adopted grandfather, until she was twelve, that was when she got the period. (Magda, I2)*

In Magda's case, becoming sexualised at the age of 12 by virtue of being pushed into modelling by her mother and grandmother, is telling and could indicate, among other

things, a lack of caring and protective relevant caregiving and an invitation to a possible re-enactment of transgenerational developmental trauma and an unconscious thrust to invite a parallel process, in this case, the peril of exposure to sexual objectification and sexual assault during childhood.

Furthermore, the relational dynamics to which the maturing participants were exposed throughout their developmental age, resulted in the re-enactment later in life of old relational patterns, wherein all participants unwittingly sought the familiar relational patterns and developmental trauma experiences, unconsciously associating them with the notions of love and intimate relationships, thus their future lives, whether personal or professional, were shaped accordingly. Such a re-enactment is suggested, for example, in Asia's account:

> *I was in a very long term relationship with a man, a very successful man … and he was also putting me down for me getting older, even if he's older than me, and he likes very young woman (Asia I1)… [he] was very controlling, jealous …. My father was abusive to my mother. Not physical, psychological … [he] would go to work, come back and shout at my mother. Leave to drink with friends, call her in bad names. (Asia I2)*

The profiles of mother figures holding feelings of envy for their daughters emerged from the accounts of three participants (an issue experienced by models and attractive girls in general, as also witnessed within the context of my modelling and clinical experience, as will be discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight). As Magda said of her mother:

[She would] tell me somehow how she was better than me. (Magda I1)

A further example is reported in the extract below, which indicates Asia's mother's compulsion to harm her daughter, possibly driven by envy and the inability to share space. Her mother's punitiveness could also represent an uncontrollable re-enactment of her own unhealed developmental trauma. A threatening, punitive and demanding relevant other resulted in adverse consequences in the participant's subsequent adult life, including an unconscious thrust for re-traumatisation and self-exclusion from opportunities:

My mother was always putting me down, always, even now she finds a way to manipulate me … she is always trying to compare me with others and trying to put me down …. When I was growing up, she would always compare me to others, that others are better … other kids are better … she kind of traumatised me for life … she started to destroy my confidence, I guess. (Asia I2)

Two participants depicted their mothers being ashamed of their daughters, for revealing their mothers' parenting failures by virtue of showing signs of a neglected embodiment. Katie, for example, commented:

I was always skinny and my mother was ashamed. (Katie I2)

To varying extents, five participants shared experiences stemming from demanding, critical or punitive parents or relevant others, progressively becoming internalised by the future model and subsequently acting from within as an internal persecutor,

leading to negative life patterns and to the worsening of toxic shame, as seen in the narrative below. Magda indicated such internalisation when she remarked:

> *My [critical] grandmother, even when she wasn't with me, she was always with me. (Magda I2)*

As a result of conditional love and demanding and punitive parenting styles whilst growing up, all participants experienced a repeat of maladaptive patterns later in life through the enactment of certain coping behaviours. For example, Lily recounted her experience of her mother's punitive and demanding parenting style and, as a result, the effect on her psyche and the over-compensating behaviour she adopted to cope:

> *I had to have the best grades … if I get something worse I was scared, in depression, scared … when [my older sister] got something like not very good, my mum was very pissed off at her … and when I was a kid I was like no I don't want my parents who I love be pissed off with me or screaming or anything … when I made a mistake that's it … [therefore I had] to be the best to have somebody to love me … I never received this kind of punishment or screaming because I never went to the point of receiving it. (Lily I1)*

Culture and gender role behaviour

Magda explicitly described her mother's anxious coping style whereby she obsessed about her own body image, or became engaged in relentless physical activity aimed at moulding and disciplining her body, which was reciprocated by her anxious daughters who became preoccupied with similar concerns and who recurred in turn to

analogous coping strategies later in life, suggesting anxious mothers rear anxious offspring preoccupied with the same concerns:

> *My mum … is doing like six hours of gym every single day, she does not eat sugar for five years now and no carbohydrate for three years now, she is very very skinny. (Magda I1)*

The family values illustrated above, entrenched in hegemonic gender role behaviour, led Magda to invest in aspects of her personality which resulted in fixations, maladaptive conditioning and mind-set limitations, which found fertile ground later within her modelling experience:

> *When I was a model it was just like Magda's in the sky and we are all just down here … Magda is in the sky and Magda's in God's place and God's here on Earth. (Magda I1)*

All participants shared that an overemphasis on the body within and outside the modelling industry provided them with an experience of coming into being as a result of – and being valued only for – their young and sensual bodies, resulting, particularly within the context of contemporary Western societies, in being prized with high status, which reinforced an identity fusion with the youthful and sexualised body, as Magda, for example, described:

> *All the pictures in my home are of me when I was a model … most of the pictures in my mum's Instagram are of me as well being the supermodel earning money and being respected by beauty. (Magda I1)*

Magda further shared that gender role issues occurred for her within a wider cultural context obsessed with body image:

[In my Country of origin] we have a culture of the body. (Magda I1)

Magda added that her mother had covered the stereotypical female role at home, thus being financially and psychologically dependant on her spouse, as illustrated below:

She's never had money of her own. She started Universities a lot, like three or four times, but she could never really finish them because we were always moving as well so was part of us moving to be a family and part of her not really wanting something of her own, as well …. For her the job of women is to get married and be a wife. (Magda I2)

Furthermore, her mother had felt socially and culturally pressured, against her desire, into starting a family, thus marrying early, which resulted in resentment, competitiveness and/or envy towards her daughter and the projection of expectations, utilising her daughter as an extension of the self, wishing to live her life by proxy. This theme emerged from the analysis of the accounts of three participants, including Magda's:

She is trying to compete with me … she buys the same clothes I bought some clothes she looks at them then she eyes exactly the same … my mom was a Miss in my city and then she got pregnant and she had to end her career there and I was the one who actually went to the world. (Magda I1)

The participants who were primed by entrenched gender role behaviour embarked on modelling furthering such predispositions – given the employment typically values features generally appreciated within the domain of the feminine, such as the look and the body. Women are recognised within the fashion industry with high status and wages by virtue of their gender, youth, sensuality and body image, as expressed by all participants. As Magda, for example, put it:

> *It is good to be a girl in this industry, we earn more money. (Magda I1)*

All participants shared that the requirements to secure high wages were not linked to education or intelligence but only to youth, normative beauty, highly disinhibited and extroverted personality types and extreme thinness. Asia reflected:

> *What kind of job without education you can get paid like some people would pay, I don't know, hundreds of thousands of … euros for one job! (Asia I1)*

Disconnection, rejection, dependency and incompetency

Five participants disclosed having felt fundamentally disconnected or rejected at home by one or more relevant others or growing up within an environment providing little space for difficult feelings. Below is an example of Magda's experience of the lack of parental support, of emotional attunement, and a generally invalidating and demanding environment which was subsequently re-enacted within the relationship with relevant fashion tastemakers or agents. Magda internalised it:

If I would tell that those kind of feelings to my … my mom, for example she would go just like you're melancholic, you are always melancholic I don't know why you feel that way! You should just be like this or that that's just garbage why do you think like that she would just question my own feelings, actions. (Magda I1)

Below is another illustrative excerpt from Magda about a pattern of instability which resulted in feelings of disconnection and subsequent struggles to form meaningful human connections:

Until I was ten years old, I lived in plenty of cities, around one year and a half each, that is not time to actually have deep connections; I have friends everywhere, but I never had deep connections with anyone. (Magda I1)

The feelings of isolation, disconnection and loneliness were re-experienced by all participants within the modelling industry as a result of the nature of the field and competitive employment.

For Anne, mother's overprotection resulted in feelings of dependency and incompetency, subsequently re-enacted and reinforced in the modelling field:

I was a child … I was always overprotected, I had always nannies, I always had my grandmother taking care of me. Then my mom was really taking … like I said, very like a well-protected person in general. [Subsequently], the more babysitting the agency was for me, the better was for me because I felt

> *reassured … the agency took care of me and over-protected me and I had like this kind of shield in all of this modelling context. (Anne I2)*

The over-protective environment perpetrated a stance of perpetual adolescence or extended childhood for Anne:

> *I was completely … like not adult for I don't know how long, I mean in my behaviour. (Anne I2)*

Relevant and impactful cultural norms and family values internalised throughout the developmental age also emerged from the accounts, such as the emphasis on beauty as the most valuable feminine attribute, delivering status, fame and financial wealth, resulting in the choice to pursue and remain engaged in fashion-modelling.

With such backgrounds and wounds, the young participants embarked on fashion-modelling with insecurities and pre-existing wounds.

The drive to model

As inferable through the analysis of five participants' accounts, in the absence of a secure base (Bowlby, 2005), the self-structure cannot soundly develop, instead remaining fragile and easily fragmenting, as illustrated by Lily:

> *If you get one comment that is negative, you are like oh my God what's going on … I am bad, I should change, I should change, and … I am affected by what*

people say very much, because I didn't create my … like how do you say it … like a strong base. (Lily I2)

The experience of not being seen was, for the participants, one of not existing at all, as Lily directly expressed:

[I am] what people see. If I'm not on the cover, then people don't see them, then I am not. (Lily I2)

Five participants were thus drawn into modelling led by an unconscious drive to seek recognition, attention and a mirroring Self-object,[116] as Lily described:

[I was drawn to modelling] to be seen … people say that you are beautiful I guess? People admiring you, things that I would not do to myself. (Lily I2)

Participants were also driven to model as a way of overcompensating for emotional deprivation and a lack of self-object needs during the developmental age, as Magda illustrates:

It was awesome to be looked at and be famous. To be the one everybody wants to be friends with, to want to have a little bit of … of me, [to feel wanted] and loved. (Magda I2)

[116] See Chapters Two and Seven for definitions and discussions of the term.

Another drive to model which was seen in five participants' accounts was one of redemption, to show the external – and the internal – worlds of relevant others, almost compulsively, that one is worthy and not a failure, as Lily described:

> *See? I can do this. See? I did this! (Lily I2)*

Four participants overtly expressed that they sought to escape poverty through modelling:

> *I had to live with this pocket money …, like fifty euros per week …. I remember myself only eating rice and … for maybe three months, because I had no money to buy meat or fish. (Anne I1)*

The participants' longing to be loved, wanted and adored by the relevant other, stemming from misattunements across the developmental age, later turned into a compulsion to fill these voids through a desire for public admiration and worship-like experiences which the modelling industry can bestow or promise. Hence the fall from grace was accompanied by feelings of depression for most participants, as will be seen in the latter part of the chapter, as shared by Lily who refers to the drive to be on the stage:

> *[The] primitive instinct, instinct of being wanted, leads to feeling like the Gods because [one is] admired, because people want to look like them, to be like them, to feel like them …. And in that is their power. (Lily I2)*

Field Praxis

Table 3: Subordinate Themes Associated to Superordinate Theme 2

Subordinate Theme	Amy	Lily	Katie	Anne	Asia	Magda
A world turnaround	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exploitation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blurred boundaries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Controlling, critical environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unattainable beauty and body criteria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The fashion model personality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provisional life and prolonged adolescence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

All participants reported having felt ugly, or not particularly pretty, at school before being scouted, as described by Magda and Lily:

> *I always felt like the ugly duckling at school, like my knees were actually bigger than my thighs. (Magda I1)*

> *I never thought I was beautiful or pretty at school. (Lily I2)*

Three participants reported being mocked at school by peers or experiencing rejection and abandonment as a result of their looks, as shared by Anne:

Boys didn't like me … boyfriends left me. (Anne I2)

All participants expressed that the opportunity to become a model signified a "world turnaround" (quoting Magda, I1), as will be seen in the next section, albeit not always for the best outcome.

A world turnaround

Having experienced derision at school by peers for their looks or having felt they were the "ugly duckling", participants underwent a significant turning point after being scouted, wherein their lives were completely transformed, as, for example, in the case of Anne:

Two men knocking at the door [one was the director of a prestigious international modelling agency and the other was the director of the local main agency] and came in and said: "now you stop doing what you are doing [washing dishes], we travel so far, now you go … to you have a contract in Paris for twenty thousand dollars"…. I was really in the middle of nowhere, I was so surprised because you had to travel four or five hours to get there. … twenty thousand dollars … obviously for a fifteen years old girl ... I worked for fifty dollars per month doing dishes, so obviously [it] was a nice opportunity. (Anne I1)

Three participants reported an experience of revenge or redemption once scouted, whereby the self and body image perception, as well as the sense of exclusion from peer groups, was transformed into an opposing experience. Anne describes this below:

> *Before I would just put very baggy pants very baggy pullovers … just to hide myself behind the clothes, and after … freedom that I can wear as well a dress, and it's okay my legs are not very horrible legs …, their attitude towards me changed … it felt good to be … respected … they start to want to come out with me and it was a pleasant thing for me. (Anne I1)*

The typical age reported by participants at which they were scouted was between twelve and sixteen, with the exception of Lily, who was scouted at the age of ten:

> *I was discovered by my mother agent. Found me in my hometown. I was … like ten years and she already thought I might be a model. (Lily I1)*

All participants reported having been sold a dream during the scouting phase. As Amy put it:

> *I got brainwashed into a dream, as models do. (Amy I1)*

All participants reported becoming obsessed with the thought and dream of becoming a model. As Lily recalled:

I was always very curious and always started dreaming [since age ten when scouted] oh maybe I can do that maybe not. (Lily I1)

All participants quit further education after college to pursue modelling. One participant quit education at the age of twelve. All participants reported that they were encouraged by the model agents or by one or more family members to drop out of school to pursue modelling. Amy expressed this very directly:

Mother agency push girls to quit school … they are selling you this option to earn money … in some cultures it works very well, especially in cultures oriented in making a living. (Amy I1)

Such thrust was driven by the participant's desire for status or as a way to escape poverty or/and trauma, fostering, in turn, adverse consequences for her future mental wellbeing and self-esteem, as will be seen below (in particular within the last two sections of this chapter). Magda indicates parental endorsement of the modelling maladaptive *praxis*:

I stopped school when I was in seventh grade [aged twelve] …. My family was all over it, like you have to be big [supermodel], beautiful, yeah, school gone, you don't have to go to school. (Magda I1)

The scout, whether a professional or not, typically earns a percentage of the girls' worldwide turnover, thus has strong interests in securing them with a mother agency before others. Magda describes her experience of being scouted:

I started receiving a lot of cards from a lot of agencies and he [the neighbour] was like: "maybe it's time, even though she is too young [twelve], maybe it's time because some other agency is going to grab her". (Magda I1)

The interesting choice of the words "mother agency" in the industry could signify these stakeholders giving symbolic birth to – and shaping – the model's body and personality, as well as replacing the relevant caregiver, albeit for utilitaristic goals.

Feelings of omnipotence emerged through the accounts of all participants at the start of successful modelling labour, as indicated by Asia:

When you are eighteen you think you are on the top of the world. (Asia 1)

Participants were launched rapidly into a new world of opportunities and experiences. All participants thus moved on from modest and/or challenging backgrounds into a world of high earning potential and status, as Anne directly shared:

Travel, meeting great people, working in creative environments, so I kind of learned to be open minded, learned to work with different people …. I was making money quite easily. (Anne I1)

Exploitation

Deceitful *praxis*, sexualisation of tweens or young teenagers, exploitation, conning and manipulation patterns emerged from the accounts. Below is an excerpt from Asia's account indicating the lack of professionalism within the modelling industry despite the

young age of girls. Her language indicates significant distress about exposing minors – in this case her own traumatic experience, as will be seen below – to the modelling industry's – often unethical – practices:

> *I admire fashion a lot, I think it's a beautiful industry [but] modelling let's say it's much less professional … because they are dealing with young children, basically … when you are sixteen, now for me sixteen is a child! It's a child! You know? Sixteen years old person you know? (Asia I1)*

From the accounts, as shared by all participants, as exemplified by Magda's words below, and as confirmed by my observations in the field, it is inferred that fashion-modelling agencies can engage in unethical practices, such as manipulating models' identity paperwork, in a drive for profit, in response to the high-fashion tastemakers' demands for extremely young and/or ultra-thin girls, despite the recent implementation of governmental normative regulations in some countries, aimed at protecting models' rights as a way of guaranteeing some degree of safeguard:

> *There were regulations. A [famous high fashion brand] asked me to do that show when I was thirteen but in [that high fashion market] you could only start work as a model when you were fourteen, so my … agent actually changed a little bit my paperwork … even now they have these regulations about how skinny you have to be … there is a lot of corruption so they just buy off some doctors and no one really abides to it. (Magda I2)*

Participants ubiquitously shared that agencies do not have the models' best interests at heart, as exemplified by Amy's words:

Girls expect agency protects them but agency doesn't. I changed many agencies they all use these techniques. They overpromise and under deliver. (Amy I1)

Regarding financial matters, irrespective of how considerate a modelling agency may be – which all participants nonetheless shared to be a rarity – accounts revealed that the industry utilises models as products to sell and generate turnover, inevitably commoditising and objectifying them, often to the point of physical and/or psychological collapse. Below is an illustration from Amy indicating a profit-oriented management style on the part of the model agent, as well as a general lack of competent and caring guidance for the model:

I didn't know to what I should say yes and to what I should say no, because every time I talk to the bookers everything they say yeah you have to take it! But if I think back, no I didn't have to take everything. If you build up a career you don't have to say yes to everything. But this kind of support I didn't have …. [Agencies] try to get as much jobs in and they don't care at all what goes on with the girl or what kind of life she has. (Amy I2)

The exploitative nature of fashion-modelling *praxis* inevitably resulted in highly adverse impacts on participants, irrespective of their circumstances and success in the field, as will be further examined within the last two superordinate themes in this chapter.

Four participants openly shared that often within such context, the financial accounting system, also entirely controlled by the models' agents, generally lacks transparency. When one of the participants attempted to challenge the relevant agency interlocutors, she reported being either silenced, manipulated or gaslighted, resulting in further self-doubt and the questioning of her own perceptions, and even shame. This can be seen as a result of projective identification, whereby feelings such as guilt, shame and self-doubt, are actively projected into the model as a form of psychological control. This is exemplified in Amy's words both here and in the next section:

> *I was always finding things like adding to the accounting and all kind of different expenses which were not even real, and then you start to ask them and then the people start to answer to you in a way that you start to feel ashamed or wrong. (Amy I2)*

Blurred boundaries

Unprompted reports from half of the participants illustrate a common *praxis* within the modelling industry where bookers' and modelling agencies' directors may groom fashion models and their parents from the initial stages of modelling through to her "expiry date", around age twenty-five, by using familial and manipulative language, attitudes and behaviours, as directly expressed by Amy:

> *Deceitful use of family friend language versus business language … like we are friends to girls, which of course begins as a practice from when they are very young … deceit, trap, hoax … don't use business language … if you try you are deemed as annoying model. (Amy I1)*

Three participants made sense of such *praxis* as the agents' way of establishing an emotional connection, thereby gaining unconditional trust from the model and her parents. Amy described the style of language typically utilised by bookers and agency directors:

> *Language is absolutely intimate, it's more like friends, it is more like family, like they actually use this word very much like "we are family, we are family, we are family … and when you went there with question they are like: "oh my God! We are friends, don't you trust me?!". (Amy I2)*

Such a *praxis* was perceived by participants as a form of grooming implemented by model agents to secure the model's loyalty and control over her (such that she would be less likely to be snatched by a competitor), but also possibly to exploit her, leveraging on a type of parental transference. Amy revealed the psychological impact of understanding the game played:

> *I had belief, strong belief, that my agency is protecting my interest, and when I started realising that it is not so … it was like you know being betrayed, it is the same when I think you realise that your parents like they lie to you. (Amy I2)*

Insightfully, a parallel was drawn by Asia between modelling and prostitution:

> *I will go to an extreme, which obviously for example women that go to prostitution. (Asia I2)*

As inferred through the analysis of all the participants' accounts, once such a familiar relationship is established, it is easier for models, at the expense of their own values, to blindly trust and comply throughout their modelling journeys, with awareness only revealing the manipulation when models approach the end, as further discussed in the last section of this chapter. Below is an excerpt from Amy indicating the impact of the modelling socialisation processes on the model's psyche, which in her case led to her moulding to the industry's rules of the game, as was the case for all participants:

> *Sometimes it can be hard to stay true to your true values because this is industry … with its own rules. (Amy I2)*

As the participants approached what the industry considers to be her "expiry date" at the age of twenty-five (or even earlier), as expressed by all participants, attitudes towards them progressively became more malignant, frequently culminating in abusive and humiliating attitudes, behaviour and language. All participants reported this transition to have had a devastating impact on their psyches, which *"takes time to heal"* as shared by Amy, for example (I2), and as will be further shown in the final subsection of this chapter.

Controlling, critical environment

Being for-profit organisations, fashion-modelling agencies' ultimate goal is to maximise revenue, which for them originates from the models they represent (as further discussed in the above subordinate theme titled "exploitation"), as inferred from the accounts.

At the outset, agents invest time and financial resources in the girls – the latter being subsequently deducted from models' income, and often inflated – to facilitate the onset of their employment. As a result of this investment and in order to generate a steady income, they need to secure the girls' loyalty to the agency. Consequently, as emerged through all data analysis, agencies – particularly "mother agencies" – can aim for total control over the represented models. All participants expressed the experience of being pervasively controlled. Katie defined the experience as being "like a kind of soldier … in the army" (Katie, I1). Magda (I2) defined models as "puppets of people around". She added that people were "making all sorts of decisions for me" (Magda I1).

To gain control over models, participants disclosed that agents utilise multiple techniques. Aside from exercising their power dictating the *praxis* and the other strategies presented above (within subordinate theme "blurred boundaries"), participants revealed a *praxis* of control exerted through the induction or the promotion of isolation – from potential romantic partners, colleagues and/or friends – such that models could remain perennially available, dependent and docile, resulting in isolation, as directly shared by Magda:

> *[The agent would say] don't go towards other models, be by yourself … so I didn't have much friends at all because that segregating attitude. (Magda I1)*

Such isolating *praxis* worsens the already structural isolation the model experiences by virtue of often being in a new country, separated from any caring friend or family member, as expressed by all participants, resulting, as Lily shared, in feelings of loneliness:

This feeling of being super lonely. (Lily I1)

Within such context, all participants expressed agents indeed exerting their power overtly, expecting them to provide full and unlimited availability and compliance to their demands. Amy, Katie, Anne and Lily expressed these points very directly:

I have to listen to my agent and do whatever they say. (Lily I1)

Models are expected to put up with things… "Oh everyone does this!". (Amy I1)

I was receiving this sms on my phone or this piece of paper with my castings or jobs, and I just have to do it, that's it. Less questions I ask, better I am. If I ask …, they are like, "oh, you are too complicated! You are too heavy". So I didn't ask. OK I will not ask… (Katie I1)

You can't really do any other thing … the agency may call you … you've got to go to castings. (Anne I2)

It is hard to plan … every second I could be called to do my job. (Katie I2)

I couldn't plan my life, that I had always to … to wait what they gonna sa … tell me, so I dint have control of my life, so I had to sit and wait what they going to tell me and I couldn't chose anything, I have just to do it and wait for the next [job]. And I kind of hated and waited. (Katie I1)

Compliance to others' demands and the unremitting availability progressively intensified the participants' feelings of lack of agency over their lives, dependency over their interlocutors and the modelling employment and an exclusive focus on modelling at the expense of investment in the development of other aspects of their lives and personalities, resulting in a fusion with the role (or *persona* as will be discussed in Chapter Seven) of the model.

Magda reported being surveyed by family members eager for vicarious status, financial capital and fame:

> *[My mother] wanted me to be a supermodel and lots of money and be very famous. (Magda I1)*

She added that this is common among models who are accompanied by a family member, and recounted the experience of a model acquaintance:

> *There was this friend of mine … and her dad would tape her everywhere at every job and then … he's even worse than my … family … he would show her later the day what were her strong suits and what were her defaults [defects]. (Magda I2)*

Thus, all participants reported others closely controlling them, their bodies and their behaviour to maximise their chances of success, with any deviations adversely impacting their ability to secure employment – and profit.

Controlling practices could often veer into sadistic attitudes, as inferred through all accounts. In Magda's experience sadistic behaviour was also experienced from family members:

> *My grandmother … would order a burger for her and a salad for me …. My grandmother even before I was dieting she was … she was already, like: "you should eat this or that", she was already directing me before that. When I had to do the diet, my family was like: "you are fat, you have to be lighter, you know the rules, the rules are very clear from the beginning, you have to have ninety centimetres of hips maximum, sixty centimetres of waist, eighty-something boobs". (Magda I1)*

Unattainable beauty and body criteria

Body criteria are very rigorous and specific in modelling. Model agencies and scouts value height, the overall harmony of measurements and facial traits, slenderness and specific hips, waist and bust measurements (which should not exceed respectively 90-60-90 cm – the lower the better, i.e. 86-60-86 cm – as shown below in a sample of a composite card extracted from the Elite Paris Model Management database, 2019, Figure 2).

***Figure 2*:** A detail of a composite card showing measurements (retrieved from the website of Elite Model Management Paris). This is not a photograph of one of the participants.

High-fashion beauty criteria differ from the commercial circuit. Within high-fashion, as inferred through the analyses of all accounts, agents and tastemakers seek looks that generate gender confusion in the observer, as exemplified by Katie's words:

> *I don't look like a woman, I didn't look like beautiful, sexy, … it was very strong book, very strong fashion book. (Katie I2)*

Generally, within high-fashion, androgynous looking girls are preferred over girls who embody a classical beauty, the latter look being sought within the commercial circuit. Katie's words epitomise the high-fashion look demands:

> *Agency … were taking only the strange looking girls, so it was kind of trend to make ugly of beauty. (Katie I2)*

All accounts inferred powerful tastemakers in high-fashion modelling as overtly disliking feminine body features, as directly observed by Katie:

> *They were wrapping me in a band to reduce my breast, so Mr [designer] would not see my breast because it would irritate him. (Katie I1)*

Preferring, instead, androgynous looks, as exemplified by Anne's words:

> *One very famous stylist … said: "Anne, you will never work if you don't reduce your breast" [surgically]. (Anne I1)*

All participants expressed ultra-thin benchmarks to be renowned within the modelling industry, particularly within high-fashion. The body weight expectations correlating with measurements similar to those shown in Figure 1 above, are in the range of fifty kilograms (48kg–52 kg, depending on the height). Magda, who is 180 centimetres tall, had an ideal body weight during modelling of "fifty-two" kilograms (I1), indicating a significantly underweight Body Mass Index of 16.0.

Whilst indeed models are scouted at the outset also for being naturally slender, they commence their modelling employment in their early adolescence when their bodies are yet to fully develop into womanhood, still holding the pubescent or pre-pubescent features, which are indeed the looks that agents and high-fashion tastemakers seek. As a result, weight issues when girls are below the age of fifteen are infrequent, as inferred by all participants' accounts.

The accounts indicate that the issues of body weight and related eating disorders typically manifest when the body naturally begins to transition into womanhood, thus losing the pre-pubescent attributes, as will be further discussed in the next chapter and as directly shared by Magda:

> *When I was seventeen I got a little bigger in the hips and I have to start working for my own body turning more into a woman body … they wanted me to be the old me, the child, a woman to stay a child, so to say in body. (Magda I1)*

Agencies have been known to manipulate the measurements on the composite cards of "older" models (aged seventeen and above) with high working potential but who do not flawlessly fit the size criteria, as Anne illustrates:

> *[Agency] always reduce a little bit as well because I was, even the height, I was one-eighty-six, they would never put one-eighty-six, they would put one-eighty-one on the comp card and then I was 93-63-93 and they would put 91-61-91. They always reduce of course the size. (Anne I2)*

Indeed, five participants expressed the ultra-thin standards set by the high-fashion tastemakers' to be highly unrealistic, as Anne described:

> *I was booked for [a job] clothes were thirty-four [French size] and I am one-eighty-six [centimetres tall], so it is impossible to get into thirty-four [sized] clothes, so it was a big scandal, drama. (Anne I2)*

Participants reported having little choice but to comply if they wished to secure modelling jobs and, as will be further shown later within the superordinate theme dedicated to coping behaviours, in order to fit into the norms. Participants began their labour of body moulding soon after embarking on modelling, frequently at the expense of their physical and/or mental health. Indeed, they reported having been reminded by their interlocutors, in an incessantly critical manner, as the quote from Amy illustrates, to engage unremittingly in such practices, which posed a serious risk factor for models, particularly given their isolation, tender age and pre-existing psychic vulnerabilities:

> *Girls are always told what's wrong with them and never once they are told what is right with them … [and] continuous criticism and demands to perfect the alleged imperfections. (Amy I1)*

All accounts demonstrate how the defectiveness bias is eventually internalised, fostering identification with body shape and reliance on it to feel worthy, as illustrated by Lily's words:

> *I felt comfortable when I was like a stick, and that's when I was happy, and that's when everything looked good on me. And then when it was changing I*

started not liking it, and then the more I didn't like it, the more weight I was gaining. (Lily I2)

All participants experienced a deeply adverse psychological impact as a result of persistent denial of the self – dehumanisation – and incessant body labour, as Amy described:

[I felt] uncomfortable to be like I am … this beauty standards they penetrate you … they are like the drop of water [Chinese water torture]. (Amy I1)

Data reveals such efforts to perfect the body led participants to develop, or reinforce, a largely unattainable and unrealistic internal representation of the ego ideal, as directly observed by Lily:

If I think that I look good and I really feel that I look good then I enjoy [being looked at], if I think there is something wrong, that there is a little bit bigger, is the most of the issues, then I feel bad, because I am not that thing that I pictured in my head, the perfect look. (Lily I2)

To varying degrees, all participants inferred a sense of toxic shame and feelings of self-disgust through failure to match the impossible body ideals generally expected of the model, as Magda explicitly described:

I was garbage, basically, like I didn't deserve the money I was paid, I should probably just give up being a model … I would feel ashamed and smaller. (Magda I1)

All participants identified with the quest for the unattainable body ideal as the core reason for their failure to appreciate what they have and are, as illustrated by Asia's words:

> *Models they … many of them still think they are not beautiful, you know? Even if they are beautiful. Because fashion is so … so subjective, and often you don't know, you can't explain why someone didn't take you for job. (Asia I1)*

The inability to accept and appreciate their bodies or perceive their bodies objectively is aggravated by the general critical gaze participants are subjected to within the field, as exemplified by Lily's statement:

> *They feel they are less beautiful … than they are … because they are constantly judged, under watch … when you go to agency you are afraid because they may measure you, they may say your clothes is not good. (Lily I2)*

Such an incessant critical gaze leads to its internalisation, to the development/increase of toxic shame, and often to self-harming/self-punitive thoughts/behaviours, as Anne's words illustrate:

> *I go home and like I said, I looked in the mirror many times and I'm like, what's wrong with me? (Anne I1)*

Relentless body/looks comparison also led participants to a distorted view of the self and increased levels of low self-esteem, an example of which is illustrated in Lily's account:

> *I don't think I have ever … felt myself that I am pretty because when you go to the castings you have all the pretty girls around you and you are like, OK, what am I even doing here? (Lily I2)*

Data reveals that models essentially internalise the objectifying industry's stance and begin to self-objectify, as will be explored below, becoming, to comply with *praxis*, solely focused on the fashion model *persona* (for a discussion, see Chapter Seven), overlooking, in turn, other aspects of their personalities, inner worlds and souls.

As a result, participants experienced a further sense of loss of control – since their attempts to perfect their bodies, as seen later, typically fail. Discontent in turn increased progressively, the participants' internal worlds becoming adversely affected, reflecting on their looks, further impeding success in modelling employment, for, as Amy eloquently expressed when referring to her experience of her fall from grace, it's only when one feels good from within that she can look good externally:

> *the inner part makes a big role because if you are down, you are not shining … the shine comes from the inside, so I had this imbalance between inside and outside of myself. (Amy I2)*

The fashion model personality

Unprompted, four participants raised the topic of the personality being required to win jobs in modelling. Participants were encouraged by their agents to express “bubbly”, entertaining, highly extroverted and funny characters to win jobs, as Lily’s words illustrate:

> *Casting directors don’t remember you. You have to go to the casting and you have to be bubbly. (Lily I1)*

All participants reported that an insecure, introverted, intellectual or tentative personality rarely secured jobs in modelling. It therefore became a prerequisite for participants to change/mould their attitudes and personality, to perform with a specific type of character to be able to operate effectively within the industry, as exemplified by some of Anne’s statements:

> *I had to leave this modelling because it was killing me or I had to take another attitude. So I chose another attitude … now I’d be funny, outgoing and funny person you know? And I would tell funny jokes because that would be very … like fake and not natural but at one point … I woke up and said now I will be funny! I was just so like with desperateness it just came up like another person, you know? (Anne I1)*

> *In Paris for six month I didn't work … maybe it was even one year, I would say one year … I had to change … because it was silently killing me. (Anne I1)*

A “reckless”, carefree, sensual and glinting young adolescent character emerged from the accounts of all models, wherein denial of alternative feelings and consequent loss of reality-check ruled instead, as exemplified by Anne’s statement:

> *Like someone is running on antidepressant … there’s no tomorrow, carefree, the only thing let’s just have fun there is only this moment. (Anne I2)*

The fun associated with this narrative is generally not adaptive, rather involving addictive and over-stimulating practices. Furthermore, all participants reported that such a character is not meant to be acculturated or intelligent, as illustrated by Anne:

> *The agency told me to stop saying that you did some studies because we don’t care, we don’t want to hear how clever you are … we want you to be funny. (Anne I2)*

Data analysis thus reveals a fashion and fashion modelling industry *praxis* valuing personality traits such as youth, attractiveness, carefree and small-talking attitudes, as illustrated by the quote from Asia:

> *Many agencies would describe some girls, oh she has a great personality … amazing personality … what is amazing personality? … it is just like outgoing, you just make everything happy. You are not a clown you know? You are a woman! (Asia I1)*

Such traits are stereotypically attributed in contemporary societies to feminine gender role behaviour and sought in particular within a specific type of female role – the *escort*.

By embracing such a stance, the model's values and attitude – thus not just her body – are shaped, with subsequent images of such a femininity type being disseminated to the larger population therefore promoting a hegemonic idea/ideal of womanliness in the world.

All accounts infer that the act of performing a character dissonant with one's internal experience – the latter often being constellated, as seen above, with feelings of loneliness, shame, failure, helplessness, worthlessness and incompetency – can induce a split in the self, as Magda illustrated:

> *I had two personalities. (Magda I1)*

The integration and meaning-making of difficult feelings become hindered and ensue in toxic shame, reinforced through secondary feelings of defectiveness and failure for not naturally matching the character performed. Anne expressed this very directly:

> *Oh my God, I'm too like shy, I'm too silent, I'm not funny enough … I and at one point, I was never suicidal or something, but like just just sad, you know? …. I felt like oh my God I am so stupid, I have not even like, you know, be open minded. (Anne I1)*

Furthermore, it emerges from all accounts that the emphasis on the alleged perfect model character induced participants to focus their attention and efforts on irrelevant or maladaptive goals, becoming distracted from the investment in more adaptive aspects of their personalities, in turn reinforcing the split and negative feelings and generating a perilous vicious circle that, as will be seen in the last section of this

chapter, caused devastating effects when approaching the end of their modelling journeys. Such patterns may result in the inner critical/punitive introject further berating and reinforcing the subject, often in turn leading to varying degrees of self-harming behaviours, as clearly stated by Magda, who was unable to find solace within or outside her home:

> *the [personality] at home very self-punishing and the one outside that was very happy, that was very pretty, very awesome, perfect. (Magda I1)*

The model with the "amazing personality" (Asia I1) is also expected to comply unremittingly with the fashion tastemakers' demands and to accept any behaviour, whether respectful, dignified or abusive, as Katie, for example, shares:

> *All models should be always smiling and like you cannot even say you are tired … you just bubbly, happy … accept whatever, you know? They pull your hair, you … accept it. (Katie I1)*

Katie expressed very directly the experience of needing to perform a specific *persona*:

> *I cannot be myself. (Katie I2)*

Provisional life and prolonged adolescence

The accounts indicate a *praxis* of a provisional lifestyle within modelling, wherein uncertainty and instability reign. Such a *praxis* fostered a pervasive experience of lack

of rootedness and perennial disruption, furthering vulnerabilities and anxieties, as Amy put it:

Models what they are … not even as a tree, they are without roots … and that is very hard. (Amy I1)

Participants reported the need to adjust by learning to live without planning for the future in order to function within the industry, as Anne, for example, recounts:

So I became a someone absolutely … not reckless but … I thought I wouldn't think about really tomorrow. (Anne I2)

The provisional life was accompanied, for four participants, by a developmental arrest at the time of adolescence, or, as three participants expressed, an extension of childhood. Two excerpts illuminate this point:

You are a child … you don't grow up! You don't grow up, as if you stop growing. (Asia I1)

[Modelling] actually delayed my childhood. (Magda I2)

Such an attitude fuelled the sense of dependence and incompetency experienced by all participants, which progressively increased with time and erupted towards the end of modelling, leaving them with additional feelings of being lost, precariousness and worthlessness.

Within the context of a provisional life and developmental arrest, participants, as exemplified in the quote below, experienced intermittent and non-committal relationships, both within the professional domain and the personal sphere, further increasing their isolation and vulnerability:

> *Even the girls were not committing … I remember one girl … oh I have one boyfriend in America, one boyfriend in the UK and another boyfriend Brazil and they never met each other, look how awesome I am I have control of three different men. (Magda I2)*

Five participants reported a general inability to love and/or be loved, as Lily directly expressed:

> *I don't accept all his care that he gives to me, and I cannot give it back. I'm like a broken machine that cannot give back … I don't know how to give, I just take take take …. I have to survive. I don't know whether this person will be with me, but I decide to do this alone, I have to survive if I will be by myself … I think I'm a very egoistic person but I don't love myself … I don't care for myself. (Lily I2)*

As Magda's words illustrate, participants mainly sought to fill an internal void:

> *I never loved any of my partners … [being in a relationship provided] easy ways to fill some kind of gap somehow. (Magda I2)*

All participants shared a general attitude within the modelling industry and among models of sexual promiscuity and a reckless lifestyle, as exemplified in the quote

below. Data analysis reveals that the provisional lifestyle, feelings of loneliness and general isolation are risk factors for models that may induce them towards such a *praxis*:

> *… once I lived with a girl … and she was out all day, all night somewhere … I'm going to bed like at 10 pm and then waking up she is just back from some party with some guy lying on the bed. (Lily I1)*

Participants reported having engaged in relationship from the stance of eternal adolescence or having engaged with eternal *puers*, as the following quote illustrates:

> *[my long term partner] completely abandoned [me] when I got pregnant … he wanted his freedom, so he was just travelling and doing his things. (Asia I1)*

On the pitch

Table 4: Subordinate Themes Associated to Superordinate Theme 3

Subordinate Theme	Amy	Lily	Katie	Anne	Asia	Magda
Envy, rivalry and intrasexual competition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Objectification, sexual-objectification and self-objectification	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Politics and sexual harassment	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Lack of control	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
“Expiry date”	✓		✓	✓	✓	

All participants shared their experience of how unnerving and frightening the early stages of modelling was for them, being young and vulnerable, arriving in a foreign country with a profoundly different environment, surrounded by unfamiliar and often untrustworthy people. Anne expressed this very directly:

> *It was very scary like I think the first travelling without mom, far away from home having maybe fifty dollars in the pocket. (Anne I2)*

Four participants shared that once they arrived in the new fashion city, agencies placed them into “models’ apartments”.[117] These apartments are generally shared by several models and may represent a risk factor for girls, as expressed by five participants, for some models may display unstable or maladaptive behaviour which can adversely impact other girls, as exemplified in the quote below:

> *I was living with other girls, not necessarily very supportive girls … we were eight girls in one apartment … some girls would come back yelling, drinking … it was really like lack of privacy … [feeling] insecure in this apartment with many girls. (Anne I1)*

[117] Flats tenanted or owned by the model agencies from which they also profit.

After overcoming the initial challenges of adjusting to the new environment and *praxis*, which took participants anything between a few weeks to a few months, they became accustomed to the industry, with further patterns emerging, as will be presented below.

Envy, rivalry and intrasexual competition

Participants reported the modelling environment – particularly high-fashion – to be highly competitive, wherein competitiveness is unrelenting and ubiquitous, as illustrated for example in the quotes below:

> *When you are a model it's a very big competition. (Asia I1)*

> *There was a lot of competition. (Magda I1)*

> *It's like a beauty competition. (Asia I2)*

A powerful drive to be the number one emerges from the accounts of five participants, the number one being generally understood as being:

> *The most beautiful, the one who gets the most jobs, the most campaigns, the most fashion shootings. (Magda I2)*

All participants described success as being paired with privileged treatment by the fashion and the modelling industries, leading to the experience of being sought-after and to a sense of superiority. Accounts reveal that by injecting a – false – sense of superiority in high-fashion models, brands secure sales by virtue of obtaining the

desirable attitude from the models on the catwalk or in pictures (further discussed in the next chapter), as illustrated in Amy's statement:

> *Those girls who get in the circle of following the catwalks around the world [experience a] different approach, different energy [, the industry] putting inside you the feeling of like being better than others … you start to believe in something that is not true, that you are better than others, that you are worth more than others, you are just something more than others, so it just gets inside … inside you. (Amy I1)*

All participants reported having felt envied by colleagues when securing prestigious jobs which at times resulted in peer retaliation, as exemplified by Magda's words:

> *I got to do the [renown high-fashion brand] campaign and I was still living in a model apartment and I found, … all our castings came by fax, and I found my fax like shredded on the trash with some ketchup on top. (Magda I1)*

Participants also shared the experience of having felt envious of their colleagues' achievements, as reported by five participants and expressed by Anne:

> *[The] feeling [of] wow I would like to be at her place now, so let's say my neighbour just confirmed the [renown magazine] cover. (Anne I2)*

All participants experienced an incessant quest to attain the “supermodel” status or to maintain very high achievement levels,[118] however they expressed how they could never consider themselves as having arrived or as safely having achieved, instead feeling that fame could be taken away at any given time and replaced with collective oblivion, engendering a sense of precariousness.

Participants reported that friendship was rare, if not impossible, among models as a result of peer competition, as Magda expressed very directly:

> *Even when I have some [friends], it was never actually being friends. Always a competition somehow. (Magda I2)*

Participants experienced a general sense of exclusion even outside the modelling field, highlighting further patterns of females’ intragroup competition. Amy, for example, commented:

> *We don't invite you to the dinner because otherwise everyone will look at you and not us. (Amy I1)*

Four participants expressly shared the need to make themselves less attractive to fit in and be welcomed by other females outside the modelling industry setting. For example, Magda shared:

[118] Similarly to the experiences of athletes, albeit they may experience a larger sense of agency over their performances and career outcomes, whereas models have no control over progresses in their modelling labour, hence why modelling cannot be defined as a career (Mears, 2011).

I try not to put much makeup or dress myself too pretty is because I can see that other women sometimes get … I don't think it's actually jealousy but they, they get wary if someone is too pretty or too sexy is around … having a [engagement] ring around my finger I think it helps not to see me as competition. (Magda I2)

Objectification, sexual objectification and self-objectification

All participants experienced relationships within modelling and the fashion industry as "objectifying" (Amy I1). Amy's words exemplify the accounts:

[Agencies] run products, us, but we have feelings and we are human beings. Because of the money you are ready to do anything and you just see the core of how just human beings towards each other is just so not empathic with no consideration of what they can actually create. (Amy I1)

All accounts reveal a highly manipulative, objectifying and exploitative relational *praxis* within the profit focused modelling industry, as Asia directly expressed:

Agencies are your best friend when you are working well, and the next day they just forgot your name and …. It's quite cruel. (Asia I1)

As seen above, agents often groom models using familial and friendly language and attitudes when models are at the peak of their modelling potential. All participants noticed a drastic, and – as reported – shocking, shift in the tastemakers' attitudes, directly proportional to the proximity of models' "expiry date". This data reveals the

exploitative and commoditising nature of agents' relationships with the models, as Asia's and Amy's statements illustrated:

You think that, you know, yea this agency it will do something for you, but they don't, they don't care about you. (Asia I1)

At the beginning for me the relationship with any agency was very big, ahmm respect and trust, that they actually looking for my interest. But that's not true. (Amy I1)

The models' realisation of such a relational approach has been reported as being very "painful" (Amy I1), deceiving and dehumanising, as Amy put it:

the human approach was missing. (Amy I2)

Even within the wider context of fashion tastemakers, data reveals an objectifying relational attitude, wherein the conduct can be interpreted as disrespectful and dehumanising, as Anne directly expressed:

It was not always very respectful like sometimes people would make you wait for six or seven hours [at castings]. (Anne I1)

Models' attempts for humanisation and for appreciation beyond their looks can often result in tastemakers' and agents' contempt, as expressed by four participants and as the following quote from Anne exemplifies:

> *I always had this picture in my back of my book or my mom and dad, and I had a picture of myself … sometimes I felt good when I had this and people look at this pictures and I like, I liked it, I don't know. So, I remember going to this casting, a very important job, and I came, and this photographer was very arrogant, very audacious. He looked at me, but not very nicely, and he looked at these pictures and went, ah your parents look absolutely like coming from the Beatles, but really humiliating, I got really upset I didn't say anything and left. I didn't get the job. (Anne I1)*

Three participants described the emotional and psychological outcomes of such relational objectification with an embodied correlate experience of not owning their bodies, which instead were objects in service of the industry. Katie expressed this very directly:

> *Once, one hairdresser told me that my hair don't belong to me today, they belong to him! And I cannot touch them. So, this is the metaphor of all modelling … so my body doesn't belong to me, I myself … so where am I? Then myself I don't belong to me, but then it's horrible! … it's disaster, it's like err you better die, it's like being in prison. Prison and victim and being used … so it's kind of choice between my body and being successful. (Katie I1)*

Additionally, participants were customarily sexually objectified according to traditional feminine identity and gender role behaviour, and were, more or less explicitly, requested and expected by fashion tastemakers to comply and embrace a self-objectifying and sexually objectifying relationship with themselves, as illustrated by Anne's words:

I remember this phrase like … "Shut up and be beautiful", I remember … this phrase that was very popular between models. (Anne I2)

Participants reported becoming accustomed to and complying with such *praxis*, as exemplified by Asia's statement:

When you are a model you are looked at as an object often and [models] get used to that. (Asia I2)

They also expressed that subjugation, self-objectification and sexual objectification was regarded as professionalism in the industry, as directly expressed by Katie:

I felt like … I should just stay and do everything they tell me, and I cannot be angry, I cannot be upset, I cannot be cold, I cannot be tired. Shoes cannot hurt me, you know? … I kind of started to work better because I was always were always saying yes to everything. Oh Katie you are so professional! (Katie I1)

Thus, in time, the relevant others' objectifying and sexually objectifying *praxis* became internalised and began to control participants from within, leading to an engrained habit of self-objectification and sexual objectification, and in turn to patterns of self-discipline and self-punishment. Magda shared overtly the nature of her self-punitive and demanding internal dialogue:

[I] hear voice there in the back of my head all the time … you are not good enough, you have to work out, to diet, all that sort of thing. (Magda I1)

… with resulting experiences of dehumanisation and alienation, tellingly expressed by two participants as being *“a piece of furniture” (Asia I1; Magda I1).*

All participants’ focus eventually turned towards the external appearance, their bodies and looks, whilst the internal world was denied, and became atrophied, as described by Amy, who used the metaphor of the “cage”:

> *Everything is about the body … like products … at the end it becomes your cage, your beauty, and your inner part remains all the time locked, you are not able to express it because you get validated all the time by the outside. (Amy I1)*

The industry’s objectifying relational praxis and behaviour progressively constructed the participants’ sense of identity – within the context of their malleable, developing personalities during adolescence and young adulthood years – in turn shaping the external reality.

Data reveals that objectifying relational experiences with relevant others within their developmental age correlate with the likelihood of re-enacting similar patterns within the modelling and fashion fields, as Asia directly expressed in her comment:

> *I feel like in a relationship I always kind of fall for people who are … who have their issues … it’s like a pattern on my life, you know? (Asia I2)*

Her account also shows how ageing can be deemed by people surrounding models as sinful and outrageous, as a personal responsibility and outcome for which one deserves to be punished, as Asia directly expressed:

> *I was in a long-time relationship with, a very successful man … and he was also putting me down for me getting older, even if he's older than me, and he likes very young woman. (Asia I1)*

Within the wider context of objectifying relationships, the character of the "promoter" and the experience of further sexual objectification emerges from all accounts. Leveraging on girls' isolation, vulnerability, financial hardship, sense of loneliness or desperation, the promoters (generally described as malign individuals carrying deeply – and hidden – exploitative objectives) manifest in models' lives, typically grooming them outside casting venues. They were described by all participants as sexual procurers for wealthy men, as illustrated by the quotes below:

> *people who take you to clubs … very greedy men … they had contacts … they were kind of like pimps … take models to the clubs, make them very drunk … pretend they were their friends … I saw cocaine and the pills. (Magda I2)*

> *They are paid by nightclubs to bring girls and there are rich men buying alcohol, spend money …. [They] bring girls to the night clubs we would not stop getting drinks, even myself I got so bad drunk … sometimes we would do some drug … their approach is not to care about [models] as human beings. (Anne I1)*

Because of the precarious and isolating modelling lifestyle, the promoters are often the easiest, or only, avenue through whom models may socialise outside of the modelling environment. Models may seek human connection out of loneliness thereby falling into the trap. Anne shared this very directly:

> *I didn't really like going out with promoters but at one point I went because I do not want to stay alone always, you know? In the apartment… (Anne I1)*

Alternatively, models may give in to the promoters' grooming practices out of desperation due to financial hardship, as data revealed and as Lily directly shared:

> *Drugs and party and promoters and everything no good … in the waves of desperation you can go for things that you can regret later. (Lily I2)*

As a result, girls may lose self-respect and begin to feel like escorts or prostitutes, as Anne's statement illustrates:

> *Going out was going out with these promoters and I think I was not really feeling … I felt like a cow. (Anne I1)*

Asia directly shared aspects of the identity of the promoters' clients and why they seek models, as further discussed in Chapter Seven:

> *Playboys, really rich who wanted to see the supermodels … something to make them greater, to show off their friends … I never thought that they actually were like into the models themselves, but more of the things that come with dating a*

model … you are dating a model, you are dating one of the most beautiful girls in the world. (Asia I2)

Politics and sexual harassment

All participants disclosed the importance of networking with powerful tastemakers within the industry of both fashion and modelling as a way of increasing their chances of securing relevant modelling jobs. Participants described the networking avenues to include parties, special occasion gatherings, jobs and castings, as Asia put it:

My agency … was always saying that I need to go out to the parties … all kind of people are invited and they say oh this photographer is coming so you should go … so you could meet him. (Asia I1)

Indeed, all participants shared that becoming close to powerful tastemakers could make a substantial difference in the modelling outcomes. Asia's quote exemplifies the power held by some tastemakers:

Casting directors decide who can work with these brands and who's cool … that one person can really change your life. (Asia I1)

Securing rapport with powerful tastemakers by way of developing close relationships with them, often of an intimate nature, as Lily's statement illustrates, represents the route to increasing the likelihood of winning prestigious modelling jobs that can catapult a model into stardom:

[The agency] say now you have to be really friends with this photographer. (Lily I1)

The accounts indicate that very often bookers and tastemakers are sexually promiscuous, drug addicts and/or heavy drinkers. Anne shared one example very directly:

[My agent] was completely drug addict. (Anne I1)

From the accounts, it is inferable that socialising within the industry requires the need to embrace an analogous lifestyle to the tastemakers'. Participants expressed that developing addictions or becoming sexually exploited within such a context would be frequent. The accounts indicate that in some instances, modelling can even become an excuse for sex trafficking and sexual assault, as shared by two participants.

All the participants (except one who had been accompanied throughout most of her adolescence within modelling by a family member) reported, to varying degrees, issues relating to sexual harassment, sexual assault and dubious practices among fashion-modelling agencies bookers and directors, as well as some fashion tastemakers, as Asia's words illustrate:

Older guys who are hitting on you, you know mother agents and etcetera … who are trying to sleep with you when you are sixteen, you know and he's over fifty or sixty. (Asia I1)

Tastemakers, particularly heterosexual photographers, may abuse their power, as further reported by three participants and as exemplified in the quote below:

> *I worked with [a famous photographer] who makes those jokes … he was like ah now I am going to pull my pants off and you suck my dick! I was looking at him like what!? (Amy I1)*

Girls may feel compelled to comply in order to facilitate success in their modelling labour, otherwise they are disadvantaged, as shared by four participants. Asia expressed this very directly:

> *They didn't get what they want, they were arrogant with me [I was penalised for the work]. (Asia I1)*

Some models' heterosexual agents held implicit assumptions that models should be sexually available, whether for them and/or for other tastemakers, in the manner of being a possessed object of desire, as reported by two participants and as illustrated by Asia's quote below:

> *He was feeling like the little harem owner of girls … trying to sleep with most of them … despite those girls being, you know, he had serious top models, worldwide. (Asia I1)*

Girls may be treated by their agents or tastemakers like prostitutes or escorts and may experience or re-experience trauma, as reported by Katie, who failed to set boundaries

for self-protection. For Katie, this was a very difficult memory to share which stirred up reminiscences, as inferable through her body and implicit language:

> *I went and then he started touching me … at the dinner, and he invited me to go to his place and we had sex and I felt … like … I am out of my body, you know? … and after that he even put money in my bag, I was like, I was completely out of … it was like a movie … I was out of my body, completely dissoc … dissociated. (Katie I1)*

Some girls may be protected by a family member, as in the case of Magda, or may find other ways of staying safe, like Anne, who married a powerful booker, thus enjoyed protection and a privileged treatment:

> *I had friends who told me stories of photographers who came in the night in the hotel room with a bottle of Champagne. I never experienced that. And heard horrible stories … I was married to a booker of an agency so that was a protective shield, everybody knew this booker and I was married to a booker. (Anne I1)*

Caregivers play a crucial role in the protection of the young girls; if hardship or a quest for status prevail, caregivers may be tempted to ignore suspicious cues and hand over their children to predators.

Lack of control

The experience of lack of control came pervasively to the fore throughout all accounts. Participants experienced a sense of powerlessness and lack of agency in relation to influencing the professional outcomes of their modelling journeys. The quotes below exemplify this issue:

> *[You are] absolutely not in control. In other jobs you can always improve yourself, in modelling you cannot do that. You can have a smaller size but if client doesn't like you, if agency think you are not in fashion, you cannot do anything. (Anne I1)*

> *You may do all the shows and then all of a sudden you don't do any show. (Lily I1)*

> *You want to work but you can't because it's not up to you. (Anne I1)*

The accounts reveal, as directly shared by Asia, that the lack of agency correlates with further decrease in self-confidence and with the increase of experiences of dependency, incompetency, worthlessness and failure, eventually spiralling into depressive symptoms, as shown in the final section of this chapter and as shared by all participants:

> *What takes away all your confidence as well the fact that you have no control in your life at all. (Asia I1)*

> *It depresses you, it takes away your confidence, so it's not great for you. You cannot do much. It is not into your power … hopelessness, not being in control. It is terrible. (Asia I2)*

Participants shared that successes were not enjoyed because they appeared ephemeral and uncontrollable. Asia expressed this very directly:

> *You don't realise that you are successful because you know you have so little confidence. (Asia I2)*

Successes also appear not to be internalised, as a result of high levels of unrelenting standards, competitiveness and feelings of worthlessness, as shared by Asia:

> *You don't appreciate the full extent. That you are successful. You don't realise how amazing is that … you think it's never good enough what you achieve. (Asia I2)*

The experience of nothing ever being good enough and of not being in control is paired with the general sense of instability and unpredictability within the modelling enterprise, as Lily described, wherein any success can vanish into nothingness the day after:

> *When you reach up there then you are safe, because you did this job then you can pat your shoulder, but you never can relax and never can say yes, I did it. That's not enough, still not enough, not good enough. (Lily I1)*

Data show that to get a sense of control models often blame themselves for their failures to achieve stardom, in turn proceeding to work harder at perfecting themselves, thereby furthering the sense of powerlessness and failure. The quotes below illustrate this point:

> *and you think oh my God this is because I am bad. So it's the tough part of the job to receive the no's and to go through the no's and continue being who you are is also another … trick I think that I didn't hold on. (Lily I1)*

> *Many times clients don't chose you and you don't know why and you go like maybe because I'm bad, but it's just because the colour of your hair is not pink, I don't know, because you are 182 not 181, many many factors you cannot fix. (Lily I1)*

Such a pattern led to identify self-worth with the outcome, as expressed by five participants, and to the reinforcement of internal toxic shame. Lily, for example, commented:

> *You get casted you feel special, you get not casted you feel antispecial. (Lily I2)*

All participants expressed how exhausting and destabilising the experience of attending castings could be. Three participants drew a parallel to the stressful process of attending job interviews in other industries and expressed how such distress is amplified for models who may attend up to ten castings per day to win just one small assignment. Anne revealed the following:

If you go to normal job appointments [interviews], you are looking for normal job and you are seeing ten people per day it's hard. Castings is kind of the same thing. So it's hard, it's a hard thing on yourself … you can get smashed psychologically. (Anne I1)

All participants expressed competition to be fierce and how they may feel dehumanised, powerless, helpless and out of control. Magda, for example, shared:

You know when there are too many models in a casting, they just put everyone in a line: "You, you, you, out; you, you, you, come". It didn't feel like rejecting for me, but it was just something like I don't have control in any of this and there is like two hundred girls that are just like me, so I am like, if I am here if I am not then it doesn't really matter … [it was the experience] of not having control. (Magda I1)

Such an experience further led to the internalisation of the critical gaze, the development of a self-punitive schema and the reinforcement of toxic shame, as expressed by all participants and as exemplified by the quote below:

[You] go and see ten clients per day and you not get booked for one job, it's hard. It's hard. And when you come back home you start to look at the mirror and say what's wrong with me? … I cried many times. (Anne I1)

"Expiry date"

Four participants raised the topic of ageing as one of the reasons leading to the culmination of their modelling journeys, or to the deterioration of their modelling work. Lily's modelling engagement ended due to issues relating to a loss of control over eating suppression and subsequent weight gain, whilst Magda rebelled against her family's pressure, spontaneously terminating to break through the constraints of oppression, performance, objectification, false self and normative gender role behaviour, as will be discussed in the last section of this chapter. Magda was the only participant who did not raise the topic of ageing, for she quit modelling at age twenty-two, well before reaching the critical "expiry date" age.

Whilst models can be scouted as early as age ten or eleven, as is the case of some of the models in my consulting room, they may only commence part time, and in those circumstances, their parents or caregivers may expect them to complete college before modelling, as was the case for four participants. More rarely models start university, as was the case for Anne. Magda, who retired at aged twenty-two, was encouraged by her family and her agents to quit school at age twelve in order to model full time.

All participants shared that models generally reach the peak of their labour before age twenty-five. Nonetheless, they shared that their agents invited them, whether explicitly or not, to lie about their age by subtracting a few years, as reported by four participants and as exemplified by the quotes below:

> *We have to lie about [age] when we go to castings … agency told me to lie about my age. (Anne I2)*

I started to lie … I didn't like lie. So [at castings] they ask me the year I was born and I was putting wrong number and I felt ashamed. (Katie I2)

Participants shared that when models approach the age of twenty-five, they typically begin to be considered as being “old” by agents and tastemakers, as Asia put it:

At twenty-five you are considered already an old model. (Asia I1)

Subsequently, they are informed by their bookers that they will be modelling for commercial or much less prestigious jobs, a different branch of the industry. This is the time where model agencies “make money” (Lily, I1) from models who do not reach celebrity within the most prestigious high-fashion circuit but who have the potential and the body shape to be sold for commercial jobs, previously having constructed their “books” and images through moderate high-fashion jobs. The following quote exemplifies this point:

Slowly the agency is basically let you know that you know you have to do jobs maybe for pregnant women … for mums, etcetera, when you are twenty-five. (Asia I1)

The experience of getting closer to the “expiry date” raised increasing anxieties for four participants, alongside a rising sense of worthlessness, as Asia’s statement illustrates:

The clock is ticking, you are getting older … you can’t stop time … it was taking away my confidence more and more. (Asia I2)

The distorted belief of being old at the approximate age of twenty-five can become deep rooted, as reported by four participants, fostering toxic shame and hopelessness, as the following quotes illustrate:

> *When I was twenty-five, I was constantly pulled by the age from the agency, that you are old, you should already retire, but you know when it's said constantly by the people … you actually have like respect … [it hits you]. (Amy I1)*

> *They were saying like you are old! Twenty-five years old. So this kind of message in a moment when I already have vulnerability it hit … it hit the point. (Amy I2)*

> *This is when you realise that you are probably old. (Asia I1)*

Such a *praxis* can result in the development of a taboo and shame related to ageing, as Amy expressed very directly:

> *It started to create a paranoia, like about my age … like to be ashamed of your age … you can imagine what kind of damage it creates on the mental level on a twenty-five to consider yourself old! And I hear this from all the girls around me. (Amy I2)*

Ageing anxieties and shame at the end of modelling can ultimately lead to depression, as further examined in the last section of this chapter, and as reported by four participants and exemplified by the quotes below:

Well, I'm old, what's the sense of living? … I'm old. (Amy I2)

I was in big depression … fashion put me down so much … for age. (Asia I1)

Indeed, the issue of age and ageing, as discussed in Chapter Seven, pertains to traditional gender role behaviour, and is directly paralleled within females' experiences, becoming increasingly impairing and problematic for females in Western societies.

Coping strategies

Table 5: Subordinate Themes Associated to Superordinate Theme 4

Subordinate Theme	Amy	Lily	Katie	Anne	Asia	Magda
Overcompensation	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Avoidance		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Compliance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A turning point and the recourse to adaptive coping strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

All participants had to engage in coping strategies early in their modelling experiences – mostly developed through trial and error – to function within the environment, as directly shared by Amy:

> *There is no support system for the girls … no preparation for girls … they need to figure things out alone on the field … they don't know what their rights are. (Amy I1)*

Three main coping strategies emerge from data analysis, embraced, to varying degrees, by all participants throughout their modelling experiences: overcompensation – including the quest for perfection of the body and personality; compliance – correlating with dependence – to others' demands; avoidance – numbing, detaching, dissociating from embodied sensations and feelings and recurrence to maladaptive self-soothing practices.

Overcompensation

The industry and caregivers' incessant demands to control and perfect body and personality commencing from young adolescence, became deeply internalised and began to regulate the participants from within, as Magda put it:

> *For ten years [since age twelve] being told that I have to be perfect … after modelling in my head I had to take like 10s or 9s as marks only … [perfectionism] just shifted. (Magda I2)*

I had to be perfect and I have to worry about my image … because I would get my money from it. (Magda I1)

Strategies matching the industry's thin-ideal and the pubescent and androgynous look were implemented by all participants to varying degrees. Two participants admitted to undertaking – or considering – cosmetic surgical procedures to fit the criteria, as illustrated by Anne:

So at one point I was really thinking oh my God where should I get the money, where could I borrow money to do the surgery because if I would do the surgery probably I would do all the jobs and I was calling my mom, saying this and that and my mom said … no … I don't think it's a good idea, and I said no mum you don't understand, my life will be ruined if I don't reduce my breast. (Anne I1)

Feelings of shame and impostor syndrome resulted for these participants, for undertaking such beautifying practices meant to them they were not born "naturally perfect", as Magda expressed:

I felt ashamed of telling people I did liposuction … shame about … about not being in control of my own body somehow not being naturally perfect. (Magda I1)

Five participants expressed how they coped through the recourse of extreme diets and obsessive control over food intake, as exemplified by the quote below:

It was crazy! I have done a lot of crazy diets like what the soup diet, when you eat three grapes a day diet, watermelon diet, pineapple diet, I had ulcers all over my mouth … it's kind of like mutilating yourself really, I'm dieting every single day. (Magda I1)

Five participants applied restrictions to their food intake, as Lily's statement illustrates:

Limiting my calories plus limiting the source of food. (Lily I2)

In the case of four participants, food intake restrictions led either to the loss/disruption in the pattern or the delay of the menstrual cycle. Lily expressed this very directly:

[From age sixteen, I] ate very little I'd say so I kind of lost my period. (Lily I2)

Four participants engaged in excessive – and deliberately low-impact – aerobic physical exercise to burn fat and calories without increasing muscle mass in order to maintain the androgynous, pubescent/pre-pubescent look, as Lily's statements illustrate:

Exercising too much will get me bulky and they also don't want that … too much muscles also is no good … you have to be skinny, but not skinny fat but not skinny muscly. (Lily I2)

I was running and exercising as much as I could, then I got a trainer and I remember with him we were climbing one skyscraper. (Lily I2)

Participants embraced various purging practices, however, did not disclose one of them to be vomiting, despite acknowledging the latter to be popular among models. Only Lily admitted to having experimented with it:

> *I tried to like vomit after food. (Lily I2)*

All participants disclosed, directly or indirectly, smoking tobacco and use of appetite suppressants such as amphetamines as means to suppress appetite, and large consumption of laxatives and diuretics to avoid weight gain, controlling the embodiment in order to preserve or pursue a flat tummy and the thin-ideal, as exemplified by the quotes below:

> *Lots of smoking [tobacco] to help not eat. (Magda, 2nd interview)*

> *some kind of drug that can make you lose weight. (Lily I2)*

> *She opened her bag and there were all these pills and she was taking them, laxatives or … amphetamines as well … but one was for diuretic. (Magda I2)*

Four participants shared the struggle and the emotional impact of having to control their bodies relentlessly in order to guarantee their accountability. Amy's statement illustrates this point:

> *I had problems going to the toilet or I had paranoia that I am not going, like I was trying to control maniacally my system of eating because when I was working I could not go to the toilet, so I was all the time under stress. (Amy I2)*

To pursue the employment demands, all participants reported progressive – eventually complete and obsessive – distraction from other, perhaps more meaningful, activities or being derailed from investing in other aspects of their personalities and lives beyond the look and body, instead finding themselves practicing compulsively hollow activities to mould their bodies and attitudes in attempts to secure modelling jobs. Lily expressed this directly:

> *I was super concentrated on the food and I missed so many things that I could have focused, be focused on. (Lily I2)*

> *Instead of living your life you are living your diet. (Lily I2)*

> *I was too worried to not get the job, … that I am not skinny enough, … about many many things and to realise that I have some power, which also could be directed into good things, like… ehhh … social I don't know whatever, helping kids, helping animals, helping … whatever, but I was focusing all this time into something else. (Lily I2)*

Avoidance

All participants reported a general tendency to avoid facing challenging issues and difficult feelings by utilising avoidant coping strategies such as numbing/detaching, comfort eating, overanalysing and/or resorting to maladaptive self-soothing distracting/stimulating activities, as Asia put it:

> *You replace … try to change the happiness for shopping or whatever you know? Something like you look for temporary … temporary heights … I was trying to escape for a while. (Asia I1)*

To reduce inhibition and to numb difficult feelings, all participants reported, as illustrated by Magda's words, profuse use – or witnessing – of alcohol, recreational drug usage and/or benzodiazepine consumption:

> *There was one … girl putting OB, the tampon, in Vodka and put it inside her. It would make you drunk … and don't have the breath of being drunk. (Magda I2)*

Binge eating – typically enacted as a way to avoid emotional pain, reduce pressure and self-soothe from unpleasant feelings or as the body's attempt to recover from physical exhaustion – emerged directly from the accounts of two participants, but was inferred, through all accounts, as an unconscious and compulsive self-excluding/self-sabotaging strategy to stop working. They utilised the unconscious alibi of weight gain as a means to cope with the fear of envy and success, failure about losing the competition and facing the caregivers' reprisals, and anxieties about losing privileges, success and status, as Lily's statement exemplifies:

> *I was very strict to myself, like too strict. I was not anorexic, I was eating but like eating super properly, like not eating after six, I have three meals, no more than this, no more than that, so too much of this pressure. And agency was very happy with the way I look. And something happened to my head. I started eating like to fix my stress out … I started eating, eating, eating … maybe I was protecting myself from being chosen … maybe I was afraid to lose the*

> *competition … many athletes are able to reach the top but not to keep it. (Lily I1)*

From the analysis of all accounts, obsessive thinking strategies (which can be also understood to represent overcompensatory behaviours), whether ruminating about the past or worrying about the future, were used as ways of avoiding difficult feelings and coping with a general sense of helplessness and lack of agency, as Anne's words illustrate:

> *[I was] tired from these thoughts, am I doing the right thing, am I not … maybe I should go back, maybe I should just you know do this and that, maybe I am wasting my time … at one point you have to stop otherwise you go mad! (Anne I1)*

Compliance

Unremitting compliance and the inability to set self-protective boundaries within the industry for realistic body shape and working demands were apparent from the analysis of all accounts, as seen above throughout this chapter.

Amy's statement shows a compulsive desire to gain weight within the context of being assigned by her agency to endless jobs, regardless of the quality, as her way of indirectly setting boundaries for self-care and self-preservation:

> *I [felt] constrained to say yes … I knew it was wrong, I knew, but I was doing it … I was overeating … like I had to eat all the time I could not stop … I could*

not … I wanted to gain weight so much that I stopped working. I had no strength to say no, I had difficulty to say no to the job. (Amy I2)

Participants feared setting boundaries because of the real or perceived consequences, as Katie put it:

I felt like if I say no everything would crash, all the world. I would be very bad, unresponsible and everyone would kick me out from all the agencies … I felt like … I cannot ask anything, I cannot say no to anything, I just have to do … everything they tell me, everything. (Katie I1)

A turning point and the recourse to adaptive coping strategies

Despite relentless efforts, participants never felt they were fit or sufficient for the industry demands. Amy shared this very directly:

I was not all the time in perfect conditions for my job. (Amy I2)

Burnout and relevant disruption of the body's natural cycles occurred in four participants, as the quote below illustrates:

So much travelling in different time zones [my circadian rhythm] all went crashed, I didn't understand anymore when it's breakfast, when it's lunch, when it's dinner. (Amy I2)

All participants indicated their arrival at a breaking point, typically around their mid/late twenties. Amy's illustrates how the body began to rebel and send ever stronger messages:

> *I was closing myself and I think … to the moment until my body started pushing me towards … towards action …. My body started to have that aches … like backache, shoulders, like too much tension on the level of thinking. (Amy I2)*

As a result of the body speaking through symptoms, a shift, to varying degrees, towards more adaptive coping strategies began for all participants. Examples of adaptive behaviours shared by participants included seeking professional psychotherapeutic help, embracing various forms of meditation, deep breathing techniques and yoga, dance and body movement practices, seeking competent and caring support, sharing experiences openly, diversifying interests and activities, experimenting with other employments, taking independent decisions, assertiveness and boundary setting towards abusive behaviour and attitudes, personal and professional development through workshops and courses and learning to discriminate between constructive and destructive criticism.

Exit and aftermaths

Table 6: Subordinate Themes Associated to Superordinate Theme 5

Subordinate Theme	Amy	Lily	Katie	Anne	Asia	Magda
Fall from grace	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Depression	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Regrets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The challenge of social integration after modelling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

This section examines the experience of coming to the end of modelling or losing the status of an appetible model.

All participants reported reaching a point where they stepped out from the industry realising the *praxis* they had been subjected to and reflecting upon them, also retrospectively, subsequently bringing up, previously repressed/suppressed, feelings associated with such experiences, as Amy put it:

> *When I started to get out from this, I started to notice the language they use and approach the girls, the errrr the manipulations … how to say … tactics they used to say, the way the words they put, I started to notice little by little everything and at some point it was too much information and anger came out, anger that I did not notice this before so I had to make peace with this … anger … at them that they use these kind of things towards the girls not understanding what kind of effect they have on the girls, on the young girls. (Amy I1)*

Simultaneously, ambivalence manifested regarding whether to remain or leave the industry, as inferred through all accounts and as illustrated by the quote below:

> *[a part of me] feel[s] I should want to be there, but other part doesn't … [this] creates huge conflict and depression. (Amy I1)*

Fall from grace

The accounts reveal how difficult ending the employment was – or is – for all participants, as Lily's words illustrated, whether through the agency's or the model's decision to terminate:

> *I needed a visa, so slowly slowly, with no money with no work I just decided to go home and it was the toughest decision in my life and I am still now thinking why didn't I stay, why was I not strong enough and I am beating myself up … I know it also could have been worse … that it would have just ate me I think. So I am back [home]. I have no idea what am I doing, what is going on. (Lily I1)*

The accounts indicate that ending represents a progressive journey, starting as the model ages, reaching its peak when she approaches the age of – or turns – twenty-five, wherein "interesting"[119] (Anna I1; Asia I1) jobs decrease, leading to the model's final withdrawal/exclusion.

[119] Uninteresting jobs are understood by participants to represent less prestigious, more commercial and lower paid jobs.

Asia and Magda ended modelling before their agents – and/or the market – dismissed them. Asia ended modelling as a way to partially protect herself from humiliation and the experience of being discarded. Magda retired out of her own volition at age twenty-two (despite her family's severe reprisals) whilst at her peak, through her wish to break through the experience of constricting gender role behaviour and objectification, to retrieve humanness, wholeness and her soul. Her statement illustrates the longing to be valued as a person in her own right and not just for her looks:

I didn't want to be judged by my beauty anymore. (Magda I1)

Lily was dismissed by the industry due to issues relating to her inability to maintain the required body weight, albeit at the time of her interviews, she was still trying to win some lower paid/lower prestige modelling jobs in her hometown. Anne retired, but is still available ad hoc for opportunities as they occur. Amy and Katie are still modelling for commercial, low paid and low-profile jobs and are actively grappling with the dilemma/ambivalence of closure.

Five participants reported the experience of ending or losing the opportunity to secure prestigious jobs as that of having become an old, worthless and worn out object. Indeed, it led four participants to avoiding practices. Lily admitted the ending of her modelling labour to be the natural result of repetitive self-sabotaging/self-excluding behaviour. Feelings of lost opportunities haunt her to date as a result – particularly given her potential for success, as her words exemplify below – as well as feelings of failure, regret, and self-punitive and self-blaming behaviours:

some models they come and they cannot even go further that certain demand of shows or campaigns, but I had like mm I went on almost the top 50 models, all the runways and I had the photoshoots, I had some campaigns, whatever and then I still blame myself for that! … I failed. (Lily I1)

Four participants reported that when they approached the age of – or turned – twenty-five, they were "hit by reality" (Amy I2). A "sudden change" (Amy I2) occurred in their employment, as illustrated by Asia:

I just stopped getting good jobs and my jobs got worse and worse … for less money, for less … you know less interesting jobs and ehm I just stopped, I thought I need to stop. (Asia I1)

Amy reported the experience of a "psychological crash" (Amy I2) when her employment diminished and the end of modelling approached. Furthermore, as the quality/quantity of jobs decreases as the model ages, the ambivalence about the employment and the difficult feelings related to the employment endings progressively increase, wherein the closure may be extended over many months or even years, so as to procrastinate from having to deal with the harsh reality and the difficult related feelings. Amy's statement illustrates this dynamic overtly:

and you see maybe your job is going less and less all the time and then when you decide to do something[120] *all of a sudden a job comes up and you are kind of all the time in the middle of choosing or understanding the ehm should I*

[120] She is referring to the option to explore a new employment or alternative life avenues.

continue to put my energy inside modelling or maybe should I just there you are all the time. (Amy I1)

The accounts suggest that all participants were adversely impacted as a result of being socialised from early adolescence by the modelling *praxis*. The experience of falling from grace was psychologically devastating as a result of the lack of a competent sounding-board and perspective to help participants throughout the journey of making sense of their experiences as they unfolded and/or to guide them through what to expect, to help put experiences – including fame – into perspective and to prepare them for the closure/fall from grace. The stark contrast between the feelings of superiority fostered by the industry within the early stages of the employment and the feelings of worthlessness at the end of the employment were experienced as intolerable with participants finding it extremely difficult to process the internal dichotomy, as Amy directly expressed:

I lived the star system and this and it is very hard for one who was not prepared for this … it was actually painful, … you have to be prepared to be so much on the spotlight and I think these also agencies they have to prepare girls for …. They suffer to get back to the normal life. (Amy I1)

I had this period where I completely isolate myself …. I had also an eating disorder … agency was pulling down the prices and when agency change the approach in a way. I felt the change … the change of non-importance any more. So now of not being valued, so the sayings like "oh don't you think you are like [supermodel name]!" Or "don't you think like you are …" so there is seven years that they put all the time this thinking that you are the best and you don't

understand what's happened, you don't know what did you do wrong, what can you do better, no communication!! Nothing!!! … I lost trust in the agency and felt betrayed … I felt worthless. (Amy I1)

All accounts infer the pervasive lack of competent, trustworthy and caring guidance and information in the modelling field, as Amy put it. Data analysis reveals this to be one of the reasons for the modelling closure to be so traumatic:

but there is actually no one who actually can suggest you, or there is no information about girls who actually pass this co … ehm inner conflict or had this experience already before you. (Amy I1)

As Anne's and Amy's statements illustrate, ending modelling entails uncertainty, further instability and precariousness, especially when the model has typically invested in modelling exclusively:

It was a little bit scary because when you stop, you're like oh I don't know what I am going to do, I should do this I like this I like that…. You are a little bit lost, you are looking for yourself and this and that. (Anne I2)

If you dedicated six, seven years full time to this industry at some point, I don't know why, you think you don't know how to do anything … and you are no one apart from just being a model. (Amy I1)

Five participants shared further experiences of feeling lost and of loss when approaching closure, as Asia put it, alongside annihilating experiences of exclusion, incompetency and of having no alternative:

> *feeling a bit lost the fact I had no career, no no anything you know? So you know … Because at thirty, for example, people already have careers, jobs … and… and me I just didn't know what I want to do … even if I am not entrepreneurial … I have no choice even … even I would say I'm not entrepreneurial person, but I have more choices by doing that because I … I … I have no … no other … what else can I do? … the only job probably I could do is if I need had to is to go work as a shop assistant with my qualifications. (Asia I1)*

The strong negative feelings triggered by closure illuminate the function of five participants' procrastination around the ending of modelling, which is indeed still ongoing for three participants who have yet to close despite job opportunities becoming progressively scarcer or of lower quality, as the following quote from Anne illustrates:

> *opportunity would come up and then I would stop and say wow it's great, it pays quite well, and it is interesting, and I would steal away to one month and nothing, and I said now really I have got to stop because there is no … I did not work for two months for example not one day so I am not going to wait again and then I don't know the job would come up again and the, like this, it's lasted for maybe one year, maybe even longer, maybe almost like two years of this … like … transaction … transaction … [transition] and I have never been strong*

enough like some of my friend they did now they stopped, this is it, do not call me anymore, I am off. That is it. And I, like I said, I would always be back, because the job proposals were quite interesting. (Anne I2)

A general attitude of denial is embraced as a coping strategy to avoid the pain of the reality and the difficult related feelings, as Asia shows for example, but also as a result of an absolute lack of competent and caring guidance:

you don't realise that one day it's over and no one would really look back to you. (Asia I1)

Indeed, all participants, as the quote below illustrates, lost perspective and a sense of reality having been deeply embedded in the modelling field:

because I think that when you are inside… inside … ehm … emotionally inside in this part, you don't objectively see the situation. (Amy I1)

Depression

Five participants reported the experience of ending modelling and/or the fall from grace as being accompanied by depressive symptoms. Lily's and Katie's words illustrate such an experience very directly:

I … I had something that I called depression … I don't want to do anything, I don't want to talk to people, I don't want to go to work, I just want to be stuck somewhere at home, maybe watching something but not seeing anybody …

But if I allow myself to do it, it just gets even worse … that started in Paris … like when I was there, and again these periods where you don't have work … no matter how successful you are, you have the periods when you have work and you have the periods when you don't have work … for different reasons, and the main reason that you think it's because of you. (Lily I2)

I arrived at this point when I was completely empty inside … I was completely destroyed, and I think not only because of my personal story, also because of the fashion industry, how it's build up. I felt completely depressed. (Katie I1)

Asia described her experience of depression during the ending phase of modelling, sharing her feelings of worthlessness and sudden invisibility, in direct antithesis to her previous experience – during the peak of her modelling employment – of worship, power, privilege and omnipotence:

because, you know, when you are depressed you are very … you are very small … very small inside. You feel like you are just a little dark shadow walking around …. This is how I felt when I was depressed. (Asia I1)

Depression was described by Katie as the outcome of suppressed anger driven by her compliance and lack of assertiveness and boundary setting throughout her modelling experience:

That's what also really destroyed me, this … all this anger which never went out … suppressed anger which let me to depression. (Katie I1)

Regrets

All participants shared that dropping education and investing solely in modelling, its *praxis* and demands (patterns mirroring aspects historically ascribed to females within traditional binary gender role behaviour, as will be further discussed in Chapter Seven), as the quotes below illustrate, was their major regret and what led to future challenges of social integration after modelling:

> *[to] opt for … not continue education, … this is the one thing that actually put me into trouble after to get out or to leave the industry, in a way. (Amy, I1)*

> *I should have figured out how to combine work and studying … I dedicated all myself to work and I thought that if I miss one day of work or one day of shooting then they will all drop me at once and it will be impossible to combine two things together. (Lily I2)*

All participants regretted having not diversified the focus of their attention during their modelling experiences, as the quote below illustrates:

> *spending more time with people, with friends, making friends, making efforts to make friends, maybe even study something that is like a hobby, which doesn't require you study at university, it could be … I don't know singing, or it could be … anything, just something that I could have dedicated some of my free time, especially having so much free time. (Lily I2)*

All participants, to varying degrees, are still grappling with uncertainty, trying to find their space and place in life and the world. Lily shared this very directly:

> *I have no goals, I don't know where I am going I am just going …. Blown with the wind … I try not to think about it. (Lily I2)*

Katie grapples with feelings of lost opportunities, still blaming herself for failures to achieve a greater or longer success within modelling:

> *I wasted some opportunities in life. (Katie I2)*

The challenge of social integration after modelling

As seen above, the twilight period in modelling is greatly challenging for models needing to re-invent themselves and start afresh – often from an underdeveloped self. Out of six participants, two are still modelling. The four participants who exited modelling shared how they managed social integration after modelling. The quote below illustrates the common experience of models getting married or having kids (once again mirroring traditional binary gender role behaviour) as one of the few perceived routes available to former models – a natural psychological outcome resulting from a belief of being worthy only as an object of the others' desire/use:

> *That's why it is difficult for model to change because at some point you have to realise that I have to be good not only at looking good but also at other things. That's why many women just go and have kids. (Asia I2)*

Indeed, all participants shared an experience of knowing nothing other than looking good and performing as the modelling character, mainly due to having been socialised from such a tender age, as illustrated by the quotes below:

> *For me for years this was my work … [it] was everything for me because I was working non-stop and then all my time was dedicated to this. (Amy I2)*

> *I grew up inside the fashion industry somehow I started when I was twelve so it was just life. (Magda I1)*

The adverse and/or conditioning psychological impact of the fashion modelling *praxis* and culture on the developing psyche of the model is clearly stated or inferred by all participants through the totality of the accounts. Asia expressed this very directly:

> *[Modelling] has impacted my life mentally because … you know I was … ehm … working and making money at very early age just because I was pretty, … I didn't study for that. (Asia I1)*

As a result of the controlling modelling *praxis* and function of the agent/booker in models' lives, participants expressed their challenges to integration back into societies, resulting from having always had others managing their lives, fostering an extended childhood/protracted early adolescence wherein the experience could be understood as that of a woman frozen in childhood or pubescence entering the world of adults. Anne and Asia shared this sense of dependency, incompetency and powerlessness very directly:

[E]verything is done for you, I mean I think you come out after the modelling you come out a little bit like I said handicapped because everything is done for you. (Anne I1)

thinking that you are not capable of doing things. (Asia I1)

The participants' under-investment in other aspects of their personality and life resulted in a fusion with one way of being in the world and a subsequent underdeveloped self, with related feelings of incompetency and dependency, which only become apparent when the fashion model *persona* was no longer available as a way of being in the world. Amy's statement illustrates this point:

when I started to think, I don't know, for example medicine, I don't know, lawyer, whatever, any other profession like this, I understood that I lacked knowledge and then it started the mechanism of oh I don't know actually to do nothing! Unless … it was mm actually it was very destroying. And like it was destroying because you started to lose your errrr confidence, your starting to lose your importance in the world. (Amy I2)

Having not invested in education, participants found themselves with no alternative opportunity, as illustrated by the quote below:

My girlfriend … is working in Paris, you know? In an Investment Bank and has a career and you know when you are a model you don't follow that path …. What can a model put on her CV? (Asia I1)

Entering the "real" world was experienced by participants as being daunting and annihilating, because childhood is generally deliberately protracted by agents as too is dependency, in an attempt to control and retain the fashion model, including over competitors. Anne shared her experiences of incompetency and dependency very directly:

> *[Y]ou go and get normal job and it's very difficult, because you are so used that everything is done for you, so even to make a normal phone call I was scared in the beginning after the modelling when I like I did studies and everything and but for me was very difficult to pick up the phone and call someone because I felt ah! what I am going to say, what they will think about eh … eh … it's such a … like for fifteen years been not capable of, you know, not being capable, but you know everything was done for me … it was very scary for me at the beginning because you are like a princess and now it's everything … the world is very different actually. (Anne I1)*

Another area of challenge after modelling, as reported profusely by all participants (except Amy and Katie who still model full time), is the subsequent relationship with the body (one participant did not admit to issues relating to her body weight), as Magda's statement illustrates:

> *it bothers me that I'm not … my body is not looking like I want it to. Not as skinny. (Magda I1)*

In the case of Magda, who had been coerced into dieting since age 17 by her family members, changes in her body are still encountered by an unrelenting punitive internal object:

> *body changes because… because I was not dieting or doing exercise as much and I got ten kilos fatter … I was like really mad at myself oh how was I being so lazy. (Magda I1)*

Data reveal an experience of identity crises, within a stereotypical gender role context, and anguish resulting from the loss of the high-fashion beauty standards, as expressed by three participants, with resulting compulsive recourse to over-controlling coping behaviours and patterns. Magda expressed this very directly:

> *When I realised I gained some weight … I got really neurotic and disturbed and I started dieting right away and going to the gym a little bit more … [beauty] was everything I had [and was]. (Magda I2)*

Participants' difficulties in accepting their natural bodies was approached with ideas on how the pristine body shape could be retrieved, thus protracting the self-objectifying ways of being a woman in the world, to dispel fears of exclusion, rejection and/or abandonment underpinned by a core belief that self-worth equates to the modelling body and *persona*. Anne expresses such pain very directly:

> *that was quite difficult thing …. After the first [child's] birth, I looked at my legs and I said wow my legs now I'm not skinny anymore … nobody would want me to do any more bathing suit catalogues …. My breast really got damaged ….*

Maybe in some years I do not mind to do a little surgic plastic, surgery like … how to say, maybe to uplift a little bit my breast … in five or four years maybe I will do a little surgery, I mean breast surgery to feel better. (Anne I2)

COMPARATIVE DIFFERENCES AMONG PARTICIPANTS

As discussed at the start of this chapter, the large sample did not make it possible to present an individualised narrative of each account. In its place, the narrative was written around recurring themes for the entire group. It is relevant to note that, despite the overlap of several of the emerging themes, each participant found specific dimensions more relevant or meaningful to their personal experience than others. Furthermore, every participant presented her unique complexity and attitude during the process involving this study, from recruitment to conclusion of the interviews. The above tables show some differences among participants, which I shall discuss in this sub-section.

Table four shows that the subordinate theme of "politics and sexual harassment" did not apply to two participants. Lily made no mention of this theme whilst Magda was always followed by a family member (from age 12 to 18) who shielded her from any possible risk and may have handled the politics on her behalf. Table four also shows Lily and Magda did not present the "expiry date" theme. Lily quit modelling because of issues in maintaining slenderness, whilst Magda quit aged 22 in response to family pressures of wishing her to become a famous model, which she perceived as oppressive.

Table five highlights differences and similarities among ways of coping. Katie did not present any overcompensatory modality, having chiefly complied or avoided triggering situations. Amy and Magda embraced either an overcompensatory or a compliant stance. Such differences relate to personal innate traits and may also be linked to developmental experiences.

Table six illustrates that Magda did not experience the "fall from grace", chiefly because she withdrew from modelling aged 22. As a result, she did not experience depressive symptoms in contrast to the other participants, for she chose to end modelling of her own volition and embarked on further education, thereby shielding herself from the more common path of being discarded by the industry on their terms.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The findings presented herein captured relevant dimensions pertaining to the lived experience of models. I was deeply moved by the level of candour shown by the participants. One participant indicated that she had chosen to be open about her experience of sexual assault in the hope of supporting fellow colleagues. I am deeply grateful to all participants for enabling the richness of the findings which emerged from this chapter. I chose to honour their voices by including a large number of quotes, for their voices not only matter but are culturally relevant, as further discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.

We shall now move to the next Chapter, Clinical Vignettes.

CHAPTER SIX: CLINICAL VIGNETTES

The goal of this chapter is to provide further anecdotal evidence by sharing a number of clinical vignettes of composite cases – in parts fictionalised to assist anonymity (see Chapter Three for a discussion) – thereby stressing themes derived from the rich and deep accounts and stemming from my longstanding clinical work with this population to enrich the material emerging from AE and IPA.

The four presented composite vignettes are greatly condensed. Whilst the matters are substantive, it seemed the most effective way of presenting the thematic parallels and interpretative comments was through the footnotes, thereby not interrupting the narrative of the vignettes.

SISSY

When Sissy, a White European woman, reached out to me, she was in her early thirties and presented with depressive symptoms, a lack of self-confidence alongside significant general and social anxiety.[121] She had been modelling for nearly twenty years, since age sixteen.

At this stage of her life, Sissy was well aware that modelling was progressively coming to an end, nonetheless, she could not imagine herself transitioning into a different life, as she felt incompetent, incapable of doing anything else, having invested all her

[121] As seen in Chapters Five and Seven, these are common symptoms models experience towards/at the end of their modelling journeys.

focus, energy and efforts into modelling and her looks.[122] She felt, regretfully, that she did not fit into the world outside modelling and whenever she paused to think about such matters, her level of anxiety rose to such a degree that she quickly had to distract herself in order to detach from the unbearable pain in order to survive.

She had felt stuck for years, unable to transition, and had coped through avoidance, denial and procrastination.[123] She had also been suffering with insomnia over the previous five years, waking up in the middle of each night facing waves of panic regarding her predicament and, as a result, regularly feeling exhausted.

Sissy's modelling pursuit was originally driven in part by a quest for financial independence, and to ensure freedom from abuse and oppression at home[124] – something she achieved swiftly as she embarked on modelling – but also by a desire for high social status as a way of simultaneously pleasing her internalised parent's demands[125] and to attain redemption from the relentless humiliation received from one of her parents throughout her developmental age.[126] By the time she reached my consulting room, she had travelled the world and earned good money whilst working with notorious fashion tastemakers, having been relatively successful in her modelling journey.

At the onset of her modelling experience, the industry countered a deep-seated core belief of looking/being unattractive that had haunted her up until that point, fostered by

[122] This point is also confirmed by all other accounts in this thesis.
[123] As seen within the other accounts presented herein, these are common maladaptive coping strategies embraced by models in the context of the modelling endings.
[124] As in other accounts, developmental trauma is also present in Sissy's life.
[125] Another common theme emerging from all accounts.
[126] Indicating possible envy as discussed in Chapter Seven.

peers at school and by her mother. In contrast, the modelling world praised her androgynous, unconventional look,[127] which helped her to secure high-fashion jobs in the initial stages of her modelling journey. Subsequently, when she approached twenty-five years of age, she began to be assigned by her modelling agency to commercial jobs.[128] From that point onwards, her body and look had to be moulded with more feminine and classical beautiful features.[129]

She perceived her beauty as being a lucky strike, something that could not be achieved through hard work like a career in any other sector, but nevertheless a powerful means to earn money and thus to achieve freedom from her abusive parent, social status and financial independence.[130] Modelling was also a way for her to get to meet powerful and notorious people, to work within a highly creative environment and to experience a luxurious existence.[131] She enjoyed the freedom of the modelling lifestyle with all the travel and the relative ease with which one could move between countries, as a way to avoid attachment to people and/or places.[132] She had felt, and continued to feel, extremely lucky to be a model.[133]

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[127] Further confirmed by all accounts, indicating the industry's idealisation of youth and sexualisation of young teenagers as well as the evaluation of females based on their looks.
[128] This point also parallels other findings herein.
[129] As discussed in Chapter Seven, the body is shaped according to the market it needs to target, whether high-fashion or commercial.
[130] This confirms gender role behaviour norms as discussed in Chapter Seven – culture valuing and prizing females for their looks.
[131] As discussed in Chapter Seven, looks enable females to enter the elite circuits and in turn access a luxurious lifestyle.
[132] A nomadic, transient lifestyle, in line with the themes discussed in Chapter Seven on the provisional life of the eternal *puella*.
[133] As discussed in Chapter Seven when exploring overcompensating modes, despite the symptoms, generally fashion models do not perceive modelling as problematic (understandably, due to the numerous advantages and privileges it delivers), at least not until they make sense of their experience more in depth – whether through psychotherapy or through any other path of awakening/awareness.

The idea of giving up mobility, high wages and the sense of freedom modelling had provided was inconceivable for her at this stage of her life. The thought of working daily in the confines of the same office, earning considerably less, perhaps being in one committed intimate and/or professional relationship, overwhelmed her and made her feel trapped in a tedious and meaningless life.[134] These aspects, coupled with her sense of incompetency and fear of losing financial independence, in the absence of an alternative plan to earn a decent income, having thus far only invested in modelling because of its requirements and rules of the game, led to her inability to transition and settle into any other lifestyle, including starting a family or motherhood, for the latter would entail commitment and a body shape change which would likely have led to the end of her modelling journey and a disruption to her sense of identity.[135]

Through the therapeutic process, as a result of progressively engaging in alternative activities beyond modelling and gradually strengthening level of trust in our therapeutic alliance, Sissy began to open up and observe her modelling experience from a broader perspective, beginning to understand it and its impact on her body, sense of self, psyche, emotional and physical wellbeing more objectively. She began admitting to herself that she had not enjoyed the experience of being at the agents' and fashion tastemakers' mercy, repetitively waiting for a job to be booked, feeling helpless and powerless, and having to play the industry politics with those in power in the hope of securing jobs.[136] She also confessed to having felt voiceless – for her opinion was not requested, and neither did it matter, within the modelling world – and sexually

[134] This aspect is in line with the *puella aeterna* experience and the provisional life discussed in Chapter Seven.
[135] This inability to transition is very common among fashion models, as seen within the other accounts.
[136] In line with the theme of dependency and co-creation of the field, which emerged in all other accounts.

objectified – seen and valued just for her looks – in turn becoming progressively recognised with such an identity.[137]

She began to notice the similarities between the dynamics at home (as shown below in the next section) and those experienced in the modelling world, having again felt trapped in a demanding, subjugating, objectifying, exploitative and punishing environment, in turn feeling helpless, dominated and powerless.[138] She drew an analogy between her experience of being excluded from becoming self-actualised or flourishing in her life whilst growing up with her mother, and the experience of being represented by a model agency under an exclusivity contract – as generally model agencies do – thus becoming fully dependent on their actions and suffering the negative consequences of their inactions; she shared that agents had the power to make or break models and their modelling futures as they pleased, often on the basis of their political agendas and favouritism.[139] Having witnessed such dynamics for nearly two decades as an insider, she became aware of this being common practice within the modelling world and thus its "rules of the game".

Sissy came to realise that her employment as a model exaggerated her perfectionistic coping modality by virtue of it demanding her to embody its strict criteria. Consequently, her body and behaviour, attitude and personality had to be held perfectly under control and chameleonically matching any fashion tastemakers' request.[140] She internalised these rules such that she demanded perfection in herself

[137] This experience was shared in all other accounts in this thesis.
[138] This point confirms that the past is unconsciously re-enacted in the present, unless processed, as discussed in Chapter Seven.
[139] The power of fashion "tastemakers" (Mears, 2011, p. 121) in the making of the fashion models is discussed in Chapter Seven.
[140] The theme of the fashion model persona as well as the perfectionist coping modality are discussed in Chapter Seven.

and could not accept making a mistake. She would proceed to berate herself when she failed to achieve her internal unrelenting standards, burdening herself to the point of exhaustion and burnout.[141]

She felt ashamed of herself, especially when she could not control or suppress her emotions. Her body reactions – including trembling, blushing or sweating – would often reveal her denied and suppressed feelings.[142] The schism between her body sensations and feelings was severe and had the function of allowing her to comply with such unrelenting, inhuman demands.[143] Her inability to control her bodily reactions frustrated her immensely and produced feelings of failure, helplessness and worthlessness. As a result, she perceived herself as being out of control and weak.[144]

Sissy did not know what she wanted in life and she struggled with her sense of identity. She noticed her wants changing daily and she learnt not to trust her own judgement. Her representation of herself in her mind differed to the one in her heart, the latter being typically denied and only engendering internal conflict. She was not able to access her feelings or needs, she did not trust her perceptions and instead she responded and lived to the demands and expectations of others.[145] She feared

[141] In Chapter Seven, the point of self-surveillance is discussed as well as the internalisation of the demanding and shaming fashion modelling *praxis*.
[142] Within the context of over-controlled attitudes, mannerisms and the body, it is common to encounter, as seen in other accounts, emotional inhibition and shame in models, for what is underneath the fashion model *persona* is generally experienced by the model as being insufficient and defective.
[143] The topic of the schism with the body and internal world is discussed in Chapter Seven.
[144] The failure of the overcontrolling modality unveiled schemas of failure and shame, a common experience for models as the data herein indicate.
[145] As discussed in Chapter Seven, the disconnection from the body and its sensations required by modelling results in the mistrust in one's perceptions and the consequent tendency to delegate one's life and decisions to others and in turn with issues with identity and self-confidence.

intimacy, was scared of being seen and known for who she was, feeling utterly worthless and vulnerable.[146]

Modelling also fostered Sissy's compliant side, as it demanded full availability and surrender to the tastemakers' and agents' practices and demands[147] such as standing on shoots whilst wearing summer clothes or bikinis for entire winter days or tolerating frequent sexual harassment. Such *praxis*, she shared, could not have been challenged because of the significant and unilateral tastemakers' power over models, especially in the absence of alternative caring and competent tastemakers or adults.[148] Furthermore, compliance provided her with a sense of safety from abuse and fear of retaliation as well as a sense of being included and accepted within the modelling world, ensuring the continuation of her employment therein.[149] Through the therapeutic, self-reflective process she began to notice how dehumanised[150] she had felt throughout the modelling years, having known nothing else to that point.

At this stage of her life, the previous activity of engaging in regular body work, such as exercising and dieting to upkeep her looks and body shape within the modelling criteria,[151] felt like a waste of her time. The agony resulting from a sense that she was wasting her life by complying with others' demands and expectations, at the expense of any of her emotional needs and needs for self-actualisation, was shattering.

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[146] As discussed in Chapter Seven, this is the experience of the *puella aeterna*.
[147] Compliance is also observed in all other accounts and represents an unavoidable coping modality in most cases in modelling, for there is no alternative – other than being excluded from the game/field for not complying (as is the case for any game with its rules).
[148] The issue of power imbalance and abuse emerged from all the other accounts presented in this thesis.
[149] These are classical secondary gains of the coping modality, also emerging from all other accounts.
[150] This is a common experience for models who embark on a journey of self-awareness and transformation; otherwise it is one that remains unconscious/denied but present nonetheless.
[151] Body work represents the core activity of a fashion model, as the results indicate.

She became aware that, until this point, she had rarely invested her time and effort in activities that would lead her to feeling happy and fulfilled, to live her own life, struggling to do so as a result of the lack of competent and genuinely caring guidance in her life.[152] Instead, she felt that she had lived to please others, in the hope of receiving their approval and recognition, love and acceptance. A void that was never bridged led to further re-enactments and to a repetition compulsion, culminating in feelings of desperation, lack of emotional nourishment, being stuck and powerlessness, all of which entrenched her fashion model *persona*. She only realised through therapy how her complete focus on modelling had adversely affected and limited her at multiple levels. Her view of her experience, therefore, became more balanced and realistic, and she was able to reclaim her feelings and repressed experiences.

Her entire personal agency had been handed over to the model agencies' who focused on running a business rather than ethically and professionally having her best interests at heart.[153] This resulted in a sense of complete lack of control over her life.[154] She coped through over-compensatory compulsive behaviour which included excessive control of body image, eating patterns, calorie counts and food intake[155] in order to feel somewhat in control, albeit fictitiously, whilst passively subjugating herself to others' desires. Such awareness left her with significant feelings of grief, linking with the developmental relationship with her mother.

[152] A very common, if not ubiquitous, issue for models, as the results indicate.
[153] As seen above this is common praxis within modelling, as also confirmed by the findings.
[154] The results indicate this to be a ubiquitous experience among participants.
[155] A typical coping strategy to overcompensate for feelings of lack of control, lack of agency and helplessness.

Having finally transitioned into a new life, she now enjoys the experience of being appreciated as a person in her own right, rather than for how she looks. Seeing the fruits of her efforts now pay back in multiple domains in her life, by taking back control of her life and having invested effort in further education, alternative employment and relationships, has provided a sense of self-efficacy, fulfilment, agency and empowerment.

Background

Sissy grew up with a psychologically, verbally and emotionally abusive, punitive, envious, manipulative and demanding mother who appeared to take pleasure in hurting, controlling and/or excluding her from activities that mattered to her. Sissy described her father as weak, socially anxious, introverted and loving, especially with her. Her father would ask Sissy to be understanding and accepting of her mother's abuse. Sissy conformed and felt her compliance would protect him. She was parentified and lacked competent nurturance and guidance whilst growing up within an unsafe, and often unloving, environment.

As a result of developmental trauma, Sissy internalised significant toxic shame, developing mistrust, becoming emotionally inhibited and feeling trapped and imprisoned. Once she left home to model, she reported that her mother followed her as a persecutory internal punitive object.

Her mother had a very difficult childhood herself, having similarly had a severely punitive, demanding and authoritarian mother, who had not allowed her to display any

vulnerability, nor tolerate the expression of emotions.[156] Sissy's mother married early as an escape from her mother,[157] paralleling Sissy's escape into modelling.

GRETA

Greta, a White American young woman aged seventeen, was referred to me by the director of her mother agency, who, alongside her mother,[158] wished for me to persuade Greta to become fully committed to modelling, for they believed she could become a supermodel.[159] On the contrary, Greta expressed significant ambivalence towards modelling, especially as a result of her experience of a number of unpleasant incidents, as described below.

Greta was torn between pleasing her mother and her father. Whilst her mother was ambitious and wished Greta to be a supermodel, her father just wished for her to stay at home with him and have a simple life. Greta's ambivalence and internal unconscious forces drove her to repetitively drop-out from her modelling attempts with the consequent, interchanging, disapproval of her parents. She was caught in a double-bind, and, as a result, continued to flip between the two stances. Indeed, the conflict impeded her focus on a vocation in philosophical studies.

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[156] Evidence of transgenerational transmission of trauma.

[157] Highlighting a typical gender role behaviour practice that often results in re-enactments of abusive patterns.

[158] It is quite common, as the results indicate as well as my longstanding experience in the field, that one or both parents – or relevant other – persuade/pressurise the daughter/girl into modelling from a desire to acquire vicarious financial gain and status. [note: but this is also said earlier]

[159] My attempts (within the context of my project Role Model Living, recently renamed as Role Modelling – www.RoleModelling.com) to reach out to modelling agencies to offer support to the models they represent, mostly resulted in the agencies' expectation that my role would be to persuade/condition the girl into modelling and into fully complying with the modelling *praxis*, as shown in this vignette. Rather than just to support the girl to meet her needs, agencies only wished to use me for marketing purposes to share with the press that they support models whilst not allowing me to do so. This of course resulted in the impossibility for me to partner with model agencies, instead liaising directly with the models who were looking for support.

Greta was scouted at the age of twelve in a shopping mall whilst grocery shopping with her mother and was persuaded by her mother to begin modelling at the age of fourteen.[160] In her sessions with me, Greta reported becoming self-conscious of her body image at that time and began to struggle with eating and body dysmorphic disorders around age seventeen.[161] She shared that the significant focus on the look which modelling required, coupled with her mother's pressure, led her to be consumed by this aspect of her life at the expense of any other,[162] resulting in obsessional worry and compulsive concentration on body work to attain/maintain a body image within the industry's required physical criteria.[163]

Greta's symptoms became more acute when, in an attempt to win catwalk jobs during fashion week in Paris – aged fifteen – a notorious designer told her that she had to lose weight, adding that fat girls were neither welcomed nor liked there, despite her extreme slenderness (Greta was 182 cm tall with a body weight of 48 kg at the time).[164] At that point her restrictive anorexia through purging and body dysmorphic symptoms worsened and she became more obsessional and over-controlling.[165] She proceeded to restrict her food intake further and recurred mostly to fasting or to the – very common

[160] This data is in line with the other accounts regarding the average age at which models are scouted or begin modelling, further confirming the industry's sexualisation of youngsters.
[161] As is discussed in Chapter Seven, girls begin to struggle with eating disorders and over-compensatory behaviour generally when their bodies begin to transition from the body of a child to the body of a woman.
[162] As the other accounts show, external pressures result in the development of, and fusion with, the fashion model *persona*, as discussed in Chapter Seven.
[163] Another example of a perfectionist/overcontroller overcompensating, coping part that develops in response to external pressures and demands, as emerged in other accounts and discussed in Chapter Seven.
[164] This is an example of a very common *praxis* within the field.
[165] This paragraph and the previous paragraph contain data providing relevant insights into the dynamics underpinning the genesis of eating and body dysmorphic disorders and obsessive and compulsive overcompensatory responses, in attempts to cope as experienced by fashion models and as further discussed in Chapter Seven.

among models – “one apple per day” diet. Greta’s mother was pleased with and proud of her daughter’s efforts , despite her being extremely underweight.[166] She developed amenorrhea and only regained her menstrual cycle when she gained some weight during her drops-out from modelling when returning to her father’s home.[167]

When she transgressed from the abovementioned standards, she felt disgusted with herself. She had just turned sixteen years of age when she induced vomiting for the first time. Thereafter, she habitually purged at least once per day. She shared that the idea of making herself sick came from the media.[168] In her mind, being perfect, something to which she aspired, meant both fasting and intense exercise.[169]

During her phases of dropping out from modelling, she would sit at home, binge eat and watch TV rather than use her time fruitfully by investing in other aspects of her personality and life that could lead her to somewhere more fulfilling.[170] Neither of her parents nor anyone within the modelling industry had provided competent guidance to support her in the process.[171] She avoided life’s opportunities, as there were to be no

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[166] The maladaptive coping mode is reinforced by culture and relevant others, as emerged in all other accounts, thereby reproducing culture, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

[167] The theme of amenorrhea is discussed in Chapter Seven and is common among models. Here we observe the flipping between the prepubescent stance fostered by the fashion modelling/mother and the more relaxed stance promoted by the father where Greta is allowed to develop naturally in her transition from adolescence into adulthood.

[168] In particular, from watching TV shows where she noted models were represented as having eating disorders. Essentially, the anorectic, perfectionistic stance is fostered by the industry, by the mother and enhanced by the media. Failure to match these unrelenting demands trigger and fuel toxic shame, as seen in the other accounts and as discussed in Chapter Seven.

[169] Common practices among models, as observed within my clinical experience and as emerged in all other accounts.

[170] In the absence of a competent adult guidance that could facilitate meaning-making and attunement to her feelings and experiences, Greta, as is the case for several other participants and models, coped by avoiding her feelings – in this case the confusion between contrasting demands and the inability to find her direction in isolation from any competent guidance.

[171] One of the most ubiquitous unmet needs among fashion models – as seen in Chapter Five and as discussed in Chapter Seven – is that of competent and caring guidance, underpinning the “emotional deprivation” (in particular the deprivation of protection) and “abandonment” schemas in fashion models (for definitions see http://www.schematherapy.com/id73.htm).

other way of being in the world other than in her mother's or father's life paradigms.[172] She felt she was wasting her time[173] in so doing, thereby raising her anxiety levels further.

Background

Greta's parents divorced when she was in primary school. They had never been loving with one another throughout their relationship. Greta had been deprived of protection, nurturance and empathy by both parents. She perceived her mother as a business and money-oriented person, ambitious, cold, harsh and selfish, emotionally unavailable and abandoning. She had felt neither seen nor heard by her mother (nor later, in parallel, by those in the modelling world). She never felt good enough for her mother, who didn't allow her to experience or show emotions or any sign of human fragility, instead expecting her to perform stereotypical gender role behaviours and according to her personal agenda. As a result, Greta longed to be seen, recognised, acknowledged, accepted and considered as a person in her own right, for her inner qualities and not just for her look, body or earning potential, in contrast to her experience of objectification and sexualisation from a young age. Furthermore, she also learned to deny her feelings and emotions, to perceive them as bad, to perceive herself as a burden and out of control when experiencing any challenge or vulnerability.

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[172] The internalisation of the parents' coping modalities is common practice in offspring. In this case, avoidance – including procrastination – is also embraced as a way to cope with confusion and unbearable feelings.

[173] As seen in Chapter Five and in the previous account herein, the experience of wasting time is very common among models and is also strictly linked to the demanding internal object and to the resulting unrelenting standards schema (for a definition, see: http://www.schematherapy.com/id73.htm). This theme is explored and further discussed in Chapter Seven.

SASKIA

When Saskia, a White French woman, reached my consulting room she was in her early twenties. During our initial consultations, Saskia barely appeared to know what she suffered from, but it was clear that she was riddled with toxic shame, a sense of incompetency and terror. She appeared to be extremely emotionally inhibited, shy, frightened and completely detached from any of her body sensations, as if her body were frozen or anesthetised.[174]

Her levels of anxiety were heavily impairing. She also presented a severe social anxiety disorder. She coped through avoidance and using her boyfriend as her spokesperson to function in her daily life. She felt like a burden to the world and was drawn to abusive relationships and masochistic patterns. She was committed to the therapeutic process, was desperate for secure attachment but at the same time dreaded it. She did not commit to a regular contract, albeit she attended sessions regularly for several years.

Saskia was scouted at the age of fourteen in her hometown and had been modelling since the age of sixteen, having joined a reputable modelling agency in Paris. She recounted that at the age of seventeen, the owner of the agency, thus a person in a position of high power for her, and a close associate of his, both in their fifties, took her to a country house without providing any clear explanation. She had very few memories of the experience, however she recalled an arranged dinner with them along with a very wealthy and famous footballer and being on her own with the agency

[174] The – very common among models – theme of detachment from body and emotions is thoroughly discussed in Chapter Seven.

owner's associate in the house for a substantial period, perhaps several days., . She recalled strong feelings of confusion at the time, not really understanding the purpose of the situation, but having simply trusted the agency owner. She felt very uncomfortable talking about this incident. In hearing her, I wondered whether some details had been defensively repressed from conscious memory.[175]

After an onset within the commercial modelling circuit, largely driven by what appeared to be her agents' exploitative agenda,[176] and by the time she reached my consulting room, she had changed model agency and shifted into high-fashion modelling with the help of her new boyfriend who was skilled in managing the industry politics, albeit he was not an insider at the time (but he became an insider eventually through her connections). She reported that such an intimate relationship only partially shielded her from sexual harassment[177] within the fashion and modelling industries.

Saskia managed to become moderately successful on the competitive high-fashion modelling circuit, albeit she could not but grapple with the internal conflict[178] of, on the one hand, being drawn to success and, on the other hand, being terrified of it thus self-sabotaging for fear of suffering the wrath and reprisals of others.[179]

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[175] One example that further confirms the *praxis* of sex trafficking within the industry, as discussed in Chapter Seven.
[176] A common *praxis* for some modelling agencies is to allocate girls, without consulting them, to a commercial circuit to secure steady income despite promising the girls fame and/or to confirm all jobs regardless of the quality and whether the girl may burnout.
[177] The theme of sexual harassment emerges from most accounts herein and is discussed in Chapter Seven.
[178] This conflict had origins in her developmental age, as will be seen in the next subsection of her narrative.
[179] Saskia was caught in a double-bind between the demands of the father introject for success and status and the fear of being abused for standing out by the maternal introject. These themes are discussed in Chapter Seven.

Saskia's boyfriend acted as her personal manager and mediated every decision with the modelling agents. She was treated as a child, controlled by adults, sexually objectified by the industry and subjugated to her boyfriend, whom she trusted blindly. Her boyfriend also controlled her food intake, expecting her body weight not to rise over 50KG (she is 179 cm tall) in order to fit within the high-fashion modelling body standards. Saskia recounted that during her meals he would eat large and mouth-watering dishes in front of her and expect her to eat a barely seasoned salad, and perhaps some steamed white fish or chicken. Saskia complied, feeling cared for and looked after. She clearly confused abuse and exploitation with love, as this was the way she had been raised, as will be seen below.[180]

Due to body image being so important in modelling, Saskia was continuously trying to control her body, suffering from the fear of a blemish or a pimple appearing on her face before a shooting or her menstrual cycle altering her body size and shape. One of the ways she controlled these incidents was through extreme attention to her diet and the types of foods consumed and cooking styles. Her efforts to keep her body under strict control became so extreme and obsessive that she lost her menstrual cycle[181] and, in an attempt to control the odd pimple, she damaged and scarred her face several times with a chemical product.[182] She had little choice in her mind but to heavily control her body if she wanted it to be as reliable as she and the industry

[180] This paragraph presents a series of common themes within the modelling experience, as discussed in Chapter Seven.
[181] Again, this presents common themes discussed in Chapter Seven. In particular, as a result of her low body weight and malnutrition, Saskia lost her menstrual cycle whilst engaged in high-fashion modelling and only regained it when she stopped modelling and put on some weight.
[182] The unconscious motivation of this behaviour emerged in therapy: it was her way to exclude herself from opportunities in an unconscious attempt to keep herself safe from the introject's envy and subsequent abuse to dim her light. As such she had developed a way of standing out to an extent, to please the father introject, but never too much in order to keep safe from the mother introject, a pattern that was re-enacted incessantly in her daily life and with others.

needed it to be. To her, and to the industry at large, that meant being a professional model.[183] She also observed her feelings, such as shame, failure and worthlessness, which, despite being mostly unacknowledged and repressed, showed up on her body against her wishes as embodied manifestations of her internal experiences. Her embodiment and bodily manifestations disrupted her attempts to control and suppress emotions, displaying – over her face and body – internal struggles, which indeed altered her facial expression, body look and shape in, at times, uncanny ways, thereby unveiling the underlying shame, fear (of being attacked, humiliated and physically abused for shining – as will be seen in the next subsection, which illustrate links with her past and developmental trauma), and the sense of feeling like an impostor which she often experienced when offered an opportunity to be on a prestigious high-fashion shooting set.[184]

Her failure to control her self-sabotaging mechanism and body reactions left her feeling frustrated and distraught, hopeless, shameful and anxious. To describe these enactments, she used the metaphor of feeling as if she was repeatedly getting closer to the door of life's opportunities only then to be violently pulled back to the usual *status quo* by a powerful rubber band.

She was eager to win high-fashion jobs, for she enjoyed the status, the creativity and the potential high wages,[185] but feared getting too close to the fashion tastemakers as

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[183] As seen above and in Chapters Four and Five these are common experiences and themes among models, illuminating the cultural reproduction of gender role behaviour and of feminine identity, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

[184] Incidents cracking the *persona* and exposing the underlying girl's sense of worthlessness through uncontrolled embodied responses are common experiences among models, as also seen above, in Sissy's account and as discussed in Chapter Seven.

[185] Typically, as the other accounts show, fashion models are drawn to the employment to achieve high status, earn high wages and enjoy a luxurious lifestyle, as promised when scouted by the relevant stakeholders (see Chapter Seven).

she felt inferior.[186] However, she also witnessed much use of recreational drugs, alcohol and promiscuous sex within the environment.[187] As such she became frightened and withdrew.

She tried to win prestigious jobs without success for she was neither networking nor socialising with the fashion tastemakers. She felt torn between not wishing to give up her dignity and wellbeing, partaking in a decadent lifestyle and achieving success, financial wealth and status within the modelling employment. These appeared to be two irreconcilable stances.

As Saskia approached age twenty-five, she began receiving implicit or explicit messages from agents and fashion tastemakers that she was becoming too old for high-fashion modelling jobs, and on her twenty-fifth birthday she was told by her agent that she had to shift purely towards commercial jobs.[188] She felt emotionally shattered as a result and her feelings of objectification, shame, desperation, hopelessness and worthlessness were amplified. However, she continued to model and continued in her attempts to win high-fashion jobs only to be regularly rejected and humiliated, which, as a consequence, lowered her levels of self-confidence and caused her to become more obsessional about extreme thinness in an attempt to control her modelling opportunities, by looking androgynous and pubescent to match the beauty standards required by high-fashion.[189]

[186] In her case, she did not feel worthy of the people that she idealised. However, she was also confused for the very people she idealised engaged in a decadent lifestyle most of the time.
[187] The results indicate this to be common *praxis* within the modelling and fashion industries.
[188] As the other accounts confirm, age 25 is the time where fashion models are considered old by the field.
[189] This type of response is common among fashion models, as the results show.

When she quit modelling at the age of twenty-eight, Saskia fell into a deep depression, feeling incompetent, old, rotten and worthless, having completely identified with her body as the site of her worthiness and identity.[190] Her life and financial situation had become very unstable.[191] She had few savings, given most of her income covered her living and professional costs and unaccounted deductions made by agencies for expense claims. Furthermore, as a result of the lack of competent and caring guidance,[192] Saskia had been unable to invest or save money when her modelling endeavours were more successful, instead spending her income on discretional luxuries and gifts for others.

Through therapy, she managed to resume studies, re-integrate into a more fulfilling life and progressively stabilise herself whilst rebuilding her self-confidence.

Background

Saskia was raised in the context of financial instability and an invalidating, exploitative and abusive environment. Both her parents had suffered from developmental trauma in their personal history.[193] Saskia was placed in the position of the family's caretaker and was envied by her mother and sister, who often manifested their feelings through violence towards her.[194]

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[190] Depression, as seen in Chapters Five and Seven, is another very common experience for models in the exit phase of modelling.

[191] Instability – within the financial, the sense of self, the lifestyle and the relational dimensions – is one of the greatest risk factors and worst outcomes of modelling, resulting in and facilitating many other issues including vulnerability to predators, as further discussed in Chapter Seven.

[192] This is another ubiquitous experience among models and a great risk factor for it enables the abusive practices to be silently perpetrated and the field to reproduce itself, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

[193] Another evidence of transgenerational transmission of developmental relational trauma, further discussed in Chapter Seven.

[194] Envy is a common theme emerging from the accounts, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

Saskia had embarked on modelling to escape the horrors of home,[195] unaware that she would further re-enact her trauma within the modelling field.[196] She felt she could neither stand out nor be happy in her life, for if she dared, she would be tortured by envious women, in the same manner as she experienced within her developmental age. The regular exposure to abuse throughout her developmental age underpinned her masochism: she felt like a bad person who deserved to be punished.

ANASTASIA

Anastasia, an Eastern European model in her early twenties, reached out to me, driven by issues relating to lack of self-confidence, a pattern of dysfunctional intimate relationships, binge eating with purging and alcohol/drug addiction.

When she reached my consulting room, she had been modelling for over ten years, having started modelling at the age of eleven,[197] dropping out of school[198] at age fifteen and being relocated by her mother agent to Milan. Her parents were consensual, and she was required to send money home every month thereafter since her parents were living in poverty.[199] It appeared that modelling had given Anastasia

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[195] Modelling as an excuse to escape an abusive, oppressive or financially disadvantaged home is common among models.
[196] Typically, unless the wounds are healed, they become re-enacted in daily life, regardless of the field. Specific environments are however unwittingly sought/recreated for they may be familiar thus perpetrating vicious cycles of deepening the wounds (as further discussed in Chapter Seven).
[197] An onset of modelling as early as eleven years of age is not uncommon, as witnessed in my consulting room and as emerged from the data (see Chapter Sevenfor a discussion on this point).
[198] Dropping out from school is a great risk factor in modelling, as discussed in Chapter Seven, leading to many more issues later in life – including the sense of incompetency – when the model approaches the exit phase. It represents one of the biggest regrets of models, as further discussed in Chapter Seven.
[199] Sending money home is also common among models, even within less financially deprived contexts.

a wonderful opportunity to escape her challenging background and find financial stability, however, she struggled to secure decent modelling jobs that could cover her own expenses, let alone her parents', hence she felt burnt out and stressed.

For a few years, Anastasia lived in models' apartments, sharing the space with six to ten other colleagues. This experience had been difficult for her, given the other girls were often binge eating, purging, fasting or controlling/restricting food intake, counting calories, eating cotton balls instead of food, taking home strangers collected in night clubs for paid or unpaid sex and hanging out with nightclub promoters with the hope of being introduced to wealthy men and thus securing a conspicuous intimate relationship/marriage, but instead being offered recreational drugs, alcohol and expensive, decadent holidays that were excuses for sex trafficking.[200] Unfortunately, Anastasia, compelled by the financial pressures, fell into the trap and became addicted to drugs and alcohol, alongside losing her dignity.

At the age of fifteen, she became engaged in an intimate sexual relationship with the owner of her modelling mother agency, a shrewd man in his fifties, who placed her with other worldwide agencies to be managed as he pleased and needed, careless of her emotional needs, professional path or best interests.[201] She had to report to him regularly about the outcomes of her work and felt ashamed for her lack of success within the modelling arena.

Anastasia also reported being exposed to sexual harassment from fashion tastemakers, typically male photographers and/or model agents, who persuaded her

[200] These experiences are ubiquitous among models, as the data confirm.
[201] This theme is common among models and is discussed in Chapter Seven.

to sleep with them and to engage in social gatherings filled with alcohol, recreational drug and promiscuous sex, in exchange for being bestowed with modelling jobs.[202]

By the time Anastasia reached my consulting room, her self-esteem had been crushed. After quitting modelling and commencing therapy, it took several years for her to find her dignity and establish herself in a more fulfilling life.

Background

Anastasia grew up in a financially disadvantaged household. Her father was an alcoholic and Anastasia regularly witnessed him being physically and emotionally abusive to his wife. Her mother was highly subjugated and worked as a maid in a small hotel to upkeep the family whilst her father frequently dropped out of various jobs.

Anastasia's mother did not have the time to look after or nurture her, besides, she was not entirely capable of doing so, as she, herself, had not been nurtured by her own mother.[203]

Anastasia had been happy to leave her hometown to start modelling, for she hoped she could look after her mother and possibly see her freed from her husband's abuse (she disdained her father). Her failure to achieve such a goal generated deep feelings of guilt and failure.

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[202] As seen above, in Chapter Four and Five and as discussed in Chapter Seven, this is a ubiquitous experience among models, mostly normalised by the field *praxis*.
[203] Further evidence of transgenerational transmission of developmental relational trauma, discussed in Chapter Seven.

Through the therapeutic process she progressively managed to heal her wounds and find stability within a new employment and intimate relationship.

The presented clinical vignettes show themes in line with those emerging from Chapters Four and Five, further discussed in Chapter Seven, offering further depth, which in turn deepens the understanding of the phenomena under investigation, providing additional – in this case clinical – perspective.

We shall now proceed to the discussion Chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

This chapter critically examines and evaluates the findings[204] that emerged from the data collection (Chapters Four to Six), makes judgments about what was learnt from the exploration of the phenomena under investigation and shows how the findings relate to the research question and the critical literature review (Chapter Two). The meanings of the results are illuminated, as interpreted through psychosocial, cultural, feminist, theoretical, psychological and depth psychological lenses, whilst highlighting how and why they may be of value.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The key findings, as they emerged from the empirical research, are summarised in this subsection and discussed later in this Chapter. The following features were found:

- Transgenerational transmission of developmental and relational trauma and gender role behaviour, that primes girls for similar patterns later in life;
- A quest for high social status, fame, wages and the illusory extraordinary model's lifestyle as a driver to embark on modelling;
- Early modelling onset and the industry's objectification, sexualisation and exploitation of girls;
- Modelling often being used by models' agents as a smokescreen for sex trafficking of females, including those underage;

[204] The reader may note that when I refer to the data, the findings or the results in the discussion below, I refer to the original empirical research presented in Chapters Four to Six, unless otherwise specified.

- Lack of caring and competent guidance;
- Models' exclusive focus on the modelling *persona* resulting in their fusion with it;
- A transient lifestyle fostering instability, isolation, vulnerability and dependency on others;
- Blurring of boundaries between personal and professional life;
- Fashion-modelling agents' grooming[205] practices;
- A general scarcity of professionalism within the modelling industry;
- Promoters, fashion and modelling tastemakers' enticement of models towards recreational drugs, alcohol consumption and sexual promiscuity;
- Unrelenting working hours and demands on the job;
- A requirement of models for unremitting availability;
- A requirement of models' extreme thinness in high-fashion;
- A cultural idealisation of the pre-pubescent/pubescent/androgynous embodiment within high-fashion;
- Models' detachment/dissociation from their bodies at the onset of modelling in order to function within modelling;
- Exploitative and objectifying relationships;
- Controlling and critical fashion and modelling environment;
- Unpredictable and uncontrollable industries' responses to models', often dependant on internal politics;

[205] Grooming is herein referred to as the deliberate practice of building "a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them … Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative" (NSPCC, 2020. Retrieved from https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/grooming/).

- Moulding of girls' personalities into a "bubbly" style;[206]
- Lack of sisterhood and elevated levels of envy and intrasexual competitiveness, furthering models' isolation and vulnerability;
- Relevant presence of sexual harassment, sexual assault, maladaptive and abusive politics within the modelling and fashion industries;
- Models' recourse to maladaptive coping strategies to survive within the fashion and modelling industries;[207]
- The experience of needing to grow up quickly, paradoxically paired with a simultaneous protracted childhood/adolescence;
- Compression of models' significant life experiences into short timeframes;
- Models' significant age/ageing fears and feeling "old" from age 25 – being their "expiry date" from high-fashion;
- Financial challenges;
- The experience of invisibility, loss of status, loss of identity coinciding with the decline of or exit from modelling;
- Elevated levels of anxiety during the decline phase;
- Depression at the exit phase;

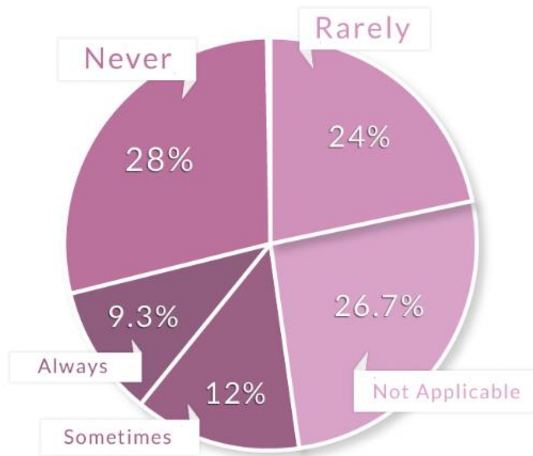
[206] The results indicate – as seen in Chapter Five – that the "bubbly" personality is carefree, reckless, and ever-happy, unquestioning of fashion tastemakers' behaviours and demands. Within this context, and in line with traditional feminine gender role behaviour, anger and assertiveness expressed by fashion models is not tolerated within the industry and is generally punished with exclusion. Instead, compliance, obedience, submissiveness, friendliness, passiveness, amenability, unreservedly trusting and easy-going styles are generally required. The data show that girls who do not match or adapt to such personality styles lose the privileges and approval of the fashion tastemakers, unless backed by other powerful fashion tastemakers, thereby losing job opportunities, especially within high-fashion. In other words, modelling requires a docile personality within a docile body. The data show that these criteria are generally communicated implicitly by fashion tastemakers. Fashion models are therefore required to perform, portray – and thus promote – a very specific type of femininity to the world at large, as will be discussed further below.

[207] Chiefly: avoidance of feelings and body sensations; denial of the *status quo*; compliance and subjugation to the field's *praxis*; overcontrolling/perfectionistic patterns to fit within the culture; obsessive and compulsive patterns in response to external demands; self-aggrandising patterns in response to feelings of worthlessness and/or external idolisation of the modelling embodiment

- Difficulties and ambivalence about transitioning into a new life after modelling;
- Challenges around social integration after modelling, further restrained by models' curtailed education or lack of an alternative career;
- Healing approaches adopted by models to overcome the crises at the decline/end of their modelling journeys.[208]

The findings emerged from the Model Alliance 2017 survey (Rodgers, Ziff, Lowy, Yu, & Austin, 2017) and the Model Alliance 2012 survey (Model Alliance, 2020) converge with many of the findings emerged from this study, albeit the depth produced by the qualitative methodologies deployed herein is absent in quantitative research, the latter producing instead more generalised results. Specifically, in the Model Alliance 2012 survey, administered anonymously to 241 working fashion models, the following data emerged:

[208] Including meditation, yoga and pranayama breathing techniques, psychotherapeutic support, diversification of focus and interests, exploration of and investment in other aspects of the personality, and development of a support system of genuinely caring and/or competent people.



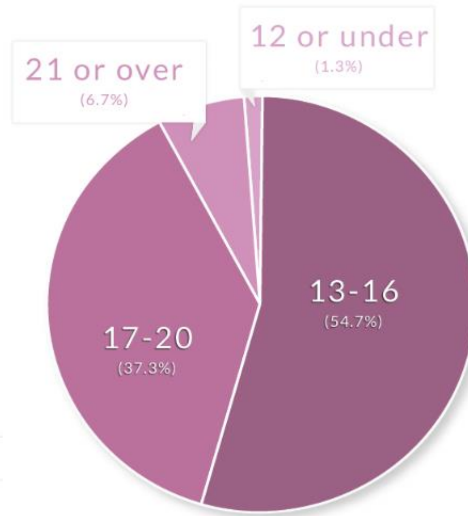


Figure 2*:* Model Alliance 2012 survey (https://modelalliance.org/industry-analysis).

The findings stemming from the IPA research that overlap with the Model Alliance 2012 survey (Model Alliance, 2020) are as follows:

- Four out of six participants were younger than 16 when they started modelling;

- Five out of six participants were not supervised by a parent or a caring and trusted guardian whilst modelling;
- All participants had to move to a new city or country to model, five being unaccompanied by a caring adult;
- Three participants had experiences of being actively enticed into recreational drug and alcohol consumption by fashion tastemakers;
- All participants experienced anxiety and/or depression;
- Three participants were instructed/encouraged to lose weight by fashion tastemakers;
- Three participants admitted to having struggled with eating disorders;
- Four participants admitted to having engaged in some form of body weight control (such as fasting, purging, restriction or control of food intake, control of types of foods consumed, appetite suppressant consumption, laxatives/diuretics or excessive physical activity);
- Four participants directly experienced sexual harassment from fashion tastemakers;
- Two participants admitted to having experienced sexual assault from fashion tastemakers;
- All participants' privacy was invaded when changing clothes whilst working, whether on photo shoots or backstage in fashion shows;
- All participants were generally conditioned into a culture of normalisation of sexual harassment and assault. Five participants only recognised these occurrences to be inappropriate after their modelling journeys, whilst one still largely normalised them;
- All participants kept these experiences private at the time.

An observable difference between the aforementioned surveys and the present IPA study is that the theme of posing nude did not emerge from any of the IPA accounts. Indeed, participants were not overtly requested to speak about any of the emerging themes, the interviews being participant led.

REFLECTIVE NOTES ON PRE-EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

Being simultaneously the researcher and a participant within this study and having had three decades of personal, professional and clinical experience in the fashion and modelling industries, I was already aware of many dimensions of the lived experience of fashion modelling. The in-depth phenomenological interviews of six international fashion models confirmed much of my pre-existing knowledge of the subject matter (partially[209] presented in Chapters Four to Six), whilst adding new insights and findings, namely on the degree to which sexual assault, sexual harassment and internal politics dominate and orchestrate the industry; the collective and subjective desire to feel superior (as discussed below); the prevalence of transgenerational transmission of developmental and relational trauma in models' backgrounds, the pervasiveness of the issue of age and ageing in modelling – and its impact on models – and the construction of the fashion model's personality – in addition to her body.

In reading Chapters Four to Six, a large number of similarities are apparent between the themes and experiences emerging from the IPA interviews, the AE narrative and the clinical vignettes. This represents an interesting and unexpected outcome. Indeed, in any research there is a risk for confirmation bias. In this study, such a risk was

[209] There were limitations to what could be shared and disclosed related to ethics and scope.

addressed in several ways: firstly, the choice of methodology. The axiological assumption underpinning qualitative research implies that “researchers make their values known in a study”, and this was herein achieved even through my personal narrative (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). Furthermore, my attitude throughout the IPA process was exploratory rather than confirmatory, which is also why a qualitative method, and specifically IPA, was selected as the chief research methodology, for it enabled me to approach the empirical research with no pre-existing hypothesis, albeit I had indeed pre-existing knowledge.

Throughout the process of the interviews, the engagement with the participants, the analysis phase and during the interpretation of the data, I sought to bracket my own preconceptions, fore-knowledge, “fore-meanings” and “fore-understanding” of the phenomena under investigation, and to remain aware of my own bias, exploratory and mindful of my own presence, such that the “new object” could emerge in “its own truth” (J. A. Smith *et al*, 2009, pp. 25-26). By focusing on attending closely and listening carefully to the participants’ words, I was able to suspend my own fore-meanings more effectively.

Participants were aware of my background as a model. Two participants asked about my perspective and experiences before sharing their own. I had to be very careful with any disclosure to ensure my goal of entering their lifeworld was achieved. As such, I chose not to disclose my experiences. Two participants asked what I was seeking to know specifically, thereby possibly seeking to be led. I maintained neutrality and simply asked them to share whatever came to mind when thinking about the open question of their experience of modelling.

Conscious that even the interpretation of information can be biased, I sought to remain aware and reflective throughout about this potential pitfall such that it would not be enacted. The bias in the recall of memory was avoided by remaining faithful to the IPA analysis process (shared at the start of this chapter). The supervisory and peer review processes further helped in avoiding any risk of confirmation bias, wherein critical views were carefully considered and welcomed. Several emerging results overlap with the surveys presented in Chapter Seven (pp. 264-265), a further confirmation that any possible risk of confirmation bias was successfully avoided.

The purposive sample of participants followed specific criteria for inclusion,[210] selecting only experienced international fashion models with the goal of exploring their embodiment, psychology, personality and sense of self as might have been shaped by years of modelling as well as the ways models may come to embody the messages that the industry wishes to convey to the larger population. The specific criteria for inclusion also served to illuminate dimensions relating to endured challenges, opportunities and potential pitfalls. Indeed, as further mentioned in Chapter Eight, a completely different set of data and experiences would possibly have emerged had the focus been on young females at the entry of modelling or on models having already fully, sometimes happily and successfully transitioned into a new and fulfilling life.

Much of the discussion in this chapter will articulate new material emerging from my original research (Chapters Four to Six), whilst, in parts, briefly reviewing relevant existing literature presented in Chapter Two. The interpretation of the data, through

[210] See p. 105 for the criteria for inclusion.

the lenses of relevant literature,[211] illuminated insights on a wider scale, facilitating deeper meaning-making and understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

DISCUSSION

Transgenerational and cultural transmission of developmental and relational trauma and gender role behaviour

Understanding trauma and its transgenerational transmission

> [M]ore people are affected by trauma than ever before. These may be both what we call large 'T' and small 't' events. (Shapiro & Silk Forrest, 1997/2016, p. 4)

Trauma "comes from a Greek word meaning 'wound'" (DeYoung, 2015, p. 84) and is the result of repetitive overt or covert "adverse life experiences",[212] including misattunement and neglect of caregivers (Klein, 1987, p. 330; Kohut & Wolf, 1978), misunderstandings during the developmental age[213] (Shapiro & Silk Forrest, 1997/2016; van der Kolk, 2015).

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[211] Feminist, cultural, psychosocial, psychological, theoretical and depth psychological studies and theories.

[212] The following definition of adverse life experiences resulting in trauma is herein embraced: "Large 'T' events are technically called *Criterion A* events and include natural disaster, combat, accidents, catastrophic illnesses, and the loss of a loved one … Small 't' events are those more prevalent experiences that make us feel unsafe, unloved, or without control or hope. These can be humiliations, failure, or losses of any kind. For children, the events can include being bullied or excluded or even falling off their bicycle. Events that can seem unimportant to an adult can be devastating to children and can have lasting effects" (Shapiro & Silk Forrest, 1997/2016, p. 4).

[213] Herein understood as embracing childhood and adolescence (Kegerreis, 2010).

The findings indicate a transgenerational transmission of developmental and relational trauma from relevant others to future models (Fromm, 2012/2019), wherein wounded caregivers wounded their offspring. The resulting adverse life experiences[214] primed and led the future model towards analogous experiences later in life through the unconscious process of repetition compulsion[215] (see also van der Kolk, 1989) and the consequent pull towards the familiar, relational *imago*[216] (Hendrix, 1988/2008), the latter being strictly correlated to relational developmental experiences and internalisation thereof. Furthermore, transgenerational transmission resulted in different attachment styles[217] (Ainsworth, 1991; Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Bowlby, 1958, 1969).

"Regardless of the 'triggers', the [root] causes [of psychological discomfort] are generally found in earlier life experiences"[218] (Shapiro & Silk Forrest, 1997/2016, p. 1; van der Kolk, 2015). Whilst each individual's circumstances will be unique and some may be more wounded than others, "[n]obody grows up under ideal circumstances … every life is difficult in its own way" (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 306). Furthermore, research

[214] Including misattunements, neglect and varying degrees of large T and small t traumatic events.
[215] See Chapter Two, footnotes, for a definition.
[216] *Imago* refers to the "composite picture of the people who influence you most strongly at an early age", whether siblings, parents, nannies, relatives and so on (Hendrix, 1988/2008, p. 38). "Gradually, over time, … hundreds of thousands of bits of information about our caretakers merged together to form a single image": the *imago* (Hendrix, 1988/2008, p. 39). The *imago* leads people to the unconscious process of selecting a lover, friend or partner – I would even argue an employment and its field – based on past experiences, to "recreate the conditions of [one's] upbringing in order to correct them … [in an attempt to return] to the scene of [one's] original frustration so that [one] could resolve [their] unfinished business" (Hendrix, 1988/2008, p. 36).
[217] The attachment theory, formulated by John Bowlby (1958, 1969), pertains to the relationship between human beings and an infant's need for a secure attachment for optimal biopsychosocial development. The theory was further advanced by Mary Ainsworth, who identified four attachment styles, which she understood to be the result of caregivers' emotional responses to the growing infant's needs. The four attachment styles identified by Ainsworth are: secure, anxious-ambivalent, anxious-avoidant and disorganised. The theory was further extended into adult attachment styles (Ainsworth, 1991) and continues to have very important implications, underpinning several psychological and psychotherapeutic frameworks.
[218] Namely within childhood and adolescence.

shows that "general adverse life experiences can result in even more PTSD[219] symptoms than major trauma can" (Shapiro & Silk Forrest, 1997/2016, p. 4), fostering additional issues such as a lack of self-respect and chronic/toxic shame (DeYoung, 2015; Young et al., 2003; van der Kolk, 2015, p. 306).

As seen in Chapters Four to Six, "[l]ack of fit", an invalidating, "unempathic environment" (Klein, 1987, p. 329) and adverse life experiences result in trauma having "lasting psychological effects [wherein] a survivor continues to suffer the past as if it were present" (DeYoung, 2015, pp. 84–85), for it "causes people to remain stuck in interpreting the present in light of an unchanging past" (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 307), inevitably resulting in negative life patterns, wherein the past becomes repeatedly re-enacted in the present (Mann & Cunningham, 2009).

Suiting the environment

The findings indicate experiences that could be understood as falling under the umbrella of "posttraumatic growth"[220] (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004), especially evident at the end of modelling and within the context of the transition into a new life and identity. Evidence of the same process were also observed during modelling, wherein after much hardship, and in order to survive, models adapted to the environment by

[219] Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.
[220] Post traumatic growth is understood to be the process that leads a person towards "life-changing" psychological transformations in relation to one's thinking process and to the way people relate to their surroundings and to people therein (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

leveraging on personal resilience and alternative responses to life circumstances.[221,222]

In spite of adversity, human beings, to varying degrees, inherently tend to strive for and towards a meaningful, full and rich life, suggesting an innate drive towards adaptation and thus resilience. However, I suggest a distinction between optimal and maladaptive adaptation, wherein one leads to thriving and the other to suit a given – albeit toxic – environment.

A "psychologically healthy individual is one who can adaptively meet [his/her] core emotional needs" (Lockwood & Perris, 2012; Lockwood & Samson, 2020, p. 76; Young, Klosko, & Weishaar, 2003, p. 10), rather than simply adapt to cope/function within a specific environment (Balint, 1968/1984). Only when core needs are met can an individual thrive. The devised coping strategies may work to suit an environment; however, when the person's needs are not met, the adverse consequences may surface in differing forms and timelines – especially occurring for models towards the decline/exit phase of the modelling employment (Arntz & Jacob, 2013; Fisher, 2017, p. 187; Flanagan, 2010, 2014; Young et al., 2003; van der Kolk, 2015).

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[221] A continuum is herein seen between adverse and favourable outcomes within the experience of fashion modelling. Fashion models fall on a given point of the continuum, depending on multiple factors. Among the supportive factors that enable them to be closer to the adaptive end of the *spectrum* within the fashion modelling industry are innate higher levels of resilience (Papadopoulos, 2007), a higher internal moral compass, strong human values, higher levels of intelligence, ability to mentalise and reflect/self-reflect, higher degrees of intuition and discrimination skills, better internal objects to draw upon, and/or the presence of competent adults/role models. The results indicate that such factors protect fashion models from some of the risks presented in the industry, enabling them to limit the perils, make the most of the experience and increase the possibility of learning new skills and gaining new perspectives.

[222] This is generally the case for all models who endure the modelling field for longer periods.

When adaptation is not aimed at meeting one's emotional needs and basic needs are not satisfied, psychological discomfort or illness result (Meyer, Enstrom, Harstveit, Bowles, & Beevers, 2007; van der Kolk, 2015), potentially reinforcing psychic defences and fostering maladaptive cultural reproduction,[223] further resulting, as this study shows, in collusion with abusive practices. Furthermore, the profession and the industry does shape the model's identity, personality and body, fostering a *persona*, as will be discussed below.

The results indicate, and the literature confirms, that models' basic needs are not met (Meyer et al., 2007) and that they neglect their needs by adapting to the industry, complying with its *praxis,* avoiding feelings and/or overcompensating.[224] The results further indicate that models – especially in the peak modelling phase – may not perceive aspects of the field, or some of their experiences therein to be adverse, for the appetible secondary gains prevail. Cultural reinforcement and normalisation of abusive practices also play a role. Alternatively, they may feel ambivalent about their experiences.

[223] Including, but not limited to, "(re)production of cultural standards of beauty" by virtue of fashion models' efforts to attain 'the right look'" (Holla, forthcoming, p. 27).
[224] For example, overcompensating by seeking to achieve more success, public admiration, perfection in themselves, their bodies, attitudes and mannerisms, and/or by becoming invested in a grandiose self-image, whilst avoiding uncomfortable and/or irreconcilable feelings

Research shows that overcompensating coping strategies[225] can be ego-syntonic (Freud, 1914/2013; Palombo, Bendicsen, & Koch, 2009).[226] Therefore, models can understand these coping modalities[227] of response to life circumstances as being effective in helping them to function, or even succeed, within the modelling environment. In turn the coping responses may remain rigid, "split[ting]-off" the schemas[228] – or psychic pain – from consciousness (Arntz, & Jacob, 2013; Simpson, 2017, para. 3; Young et al., 2003).

The results indicate that the fashion and modelling industries actively engage in flattering/idolising high-fashion models, making them feel special (because of their looks and sensuality) and confirm that "models work to arouse affective flows" (Wissinger, 2007, p. 250) wherein "bodily affect is made productive for capital" and "capital [exploits] human vitality even below the level of conscious awareness" (Wissinger, 2007, p. 269). Participants begin to feel extraordinary, special, superior to others as a result, a seductive experience, to which they may become addicted,

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[225] Borrowing schema therapy language – an integrative psychotherapeutic framework – overcompensating modes – or parts – are understood to be sets of coping behaviour with the function to protect the person from difficult feelings – schemas – however, they result in strengthening the schemas. Perfectionism, over-achievement and self-aggrandising are all over-compensatory modes. For an overview see, for example, Arntz and Jacob (2013, pp. 41–42, 45–46). Overcompensating parts are often endorsed/reinforced within contemporary culture. See for example the fashion industry reinforcement/fuelling of successful fashion models' sense of grandiosity/superiority, as the results further confirm.

[226] The term ego syntonic was first used by Sigmund Freud (1914/2013) to indicate ideas and instincts accepted/acceptable by the individual's ego. For an overview of the term, see Palombo, Bendicsen, and Koch (2009, p. 55).

[227] Overcompensating coping modes such as the perfectionist/overcontroller or the self-aggrandiser modes (Arntz & Jacob, 2013).

[228] Schemas "result from unmet core emotional needs in childhood" – five core universal emotional needs were postulated, being the need for "[s]ecure attachment to others", for "[a]utonomy, competence and sense of identity", for "[f]reedom to express valid needs and emotions", for "[s]pontaneity and play" and for "[r]ealistic limits and self-control" (Young et al., 2003, pp. 9–10). For the participants, schemas were aggravated by the experiences within the fashion and modelling industries and the lack of a caring support system. "Study after study shows that having a good support network constitutes the single most powerful protection against becoming traumatized. Safety and terror are incompatible" (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 212).

especially where self-object needs[229] (Kohut & Wolf, 1978) were not effectively met during the developmental age, as further discussed below. The results indicate that such a *praxis* results in models holding an allure of superiority, specialness and “glow” in pictures and on catwalks, thereby dazzling the public/observer. In so doing, they deliver the tastemaker’s desired outcome: to impress and engender desire in the public. Through the observer’s unconscious processes, the alluring qualities of the model are “split off and reattached” to the marketed commodity (Orbach, 2005, p. 15). The consumer purchases the product under the illusion of acquiring the desired qualities, thereby in turn hoping to become/feel special, superior and extraordinary, as overtly shared by Magda (IPA interviews, I1) and further confirmed by my clinical and mentoring work with fashion models.

This finding is paralleled on a vast scale by females’ behaviour, as anticipated by Bourdieu, feeling superior for their natural or crafted looks (1984/2010, p. 204), and adds a distinctive multifactorial line of thought underpinning consumer behaviour by illuminating a subjective and collective craving for feelings of superiority or sufficiency, possibly, I suggest, as forms of overcompensation for feelings of insufficiency and inferiority fostered by consumer culture and developmental, relational trauma. This raises concerns about the adverse impact on people of a culture that distracts caregivers from their roles as unconditional and present Others for their offspring. Even mothers are led to believe their mothering roles not to be as important as other possible “achievements” or activities, such as socially acclaimed careers (resulting in

[229] The mirroring self-object reflects and recognises a child’s capabilities and talents. The idealising self-object links a child with admired caregivers. The twinship self-object provides the child a sense of being an alter ego of the caregiver (Kohut & Wolf, 1978).

attachment issues and unmet self-object needs in the offspring, and thence in pathologies and vulnerabilities in the self-structure (Mollon, 2020)).

Developmental trauma (including the caregivers' failure to meet their self-object needs), the influence of relevant others growing up, innate temperaments, furthered by environmental factors,[230] can result in a narcissistic flavour to models' personality structure – as confirmed by the findings herein – characterised by a sense of entitlement and grandiosity",[231] fantasies of unlimited success and fame, self-aggrandising and admiration-seeking tendencies, alongside core shame and a sense of deprivation of nurturance and guidance (feelings that are mostly repressed and split-off from consciousness (Klein, 1987, p. 198), unless triggered by particular incidents). An internal demanding, and in some cases punitive, introject/gaze is often also observed (Arntz, & Jacob, 2013; van Genderen et al., 2015, pp. 31, 34–35; Young et al., 2003).

The coping modalities do not respond to girls' needs and can reinforce the schemas (Arntz & Jacob, 2013; Simpson, 2017; Young et al., 2003). When the overcompensating coping strategies begin to fail[232] and/or the source of the perceived self-worth[233] begins to subside,[234] the underlying schema/s and related emotional discomfort resurface (Young et al., 2003). In the case of a presence of an

[230] Namely the modelling industry *praxis*, as seen in the previous paragraph.
[231] According to this schema, and as a result or fashion tastemakers who make the girl feel special because of their looks, the girl begins to feel special, of greater value when compared to peers or others and/or that she should be entitled to special privileges, rights (as she often is whether within or outside the industry as a result of her looks) and exemptions from societal conventions/rules.
[232] E.g., when the model is no longer able to maintain the required body shape, to perfect her body/attitude/personality or to self-aggrandise – generally/increasingly towards the end of modelling.
[233] E.g., the young bodies that granted models special treatments, attention/recognition, flattery.
[234] Typically, the source of self-worth is associated to the pubescent/prepubescent looks and the other's approving/admiring gaze.

entitlement/grandiosity schema,[235] this may become frustrated at the decline/end of the modelling employment. The underlying feelings associated with the defectiveness/shame schema, triggered by the modelling decline, can overtake. The limits to the entitlement schema are, thus, abruptly set by a "reality check", whilst the model is forced to readjust to the real world of "laypeople" with the further disadvantage of having to identify a new way of living at a later stage of their lives compared to other people, with little education, and experiencing a great sense of incompetency (Young et al., 2003). At this point, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, models can experience depression and may undertake a journey of personal healing or seek therapeutic support.

The person's willingness to seek, sustain and embrace optimal and adaptive relationships and practices that respond to the emotional needs and enable a befriending of the body (such that it can perform its function – "signal safety or warning" – within any given circumstance), to "rescript" past experiences, to achieve the goal of feeling "at home" in one's skin and thus in the world (van der Kolk, 2015, pp. 306–307), can be understood to be a sign of optimal adaptation, leading to actualising "one-Self in one's own unique suchness" (Neumann, 1994, p. 278).

Trauma and the body

Embodiment (for a definition, see below) comes to the fore in modelling and in this study, almost as a reminder that, as research shows, trauma is embodied for it is

[235] A very common schema among models for they are made to feel special and privileged by culture and by the industry as a result of their looks and youth, as the findings emerging from the empirical research – Chapters Four to Six – indicate (Young et al., 2003, p. 19).

registered in the body, as it especially emerges from the autoethnographic account, and that only through the body can it be transformed and healed, allowing people to reclaim agency over their lives and inner worlds (van der Kolk, 2015),[236] as will be discussed in the final subsection of this Chapter.

Repeated, problematic/misattuned relational dynamics within the developmental age,[237] wherein needs remain denied/unmet, may result in disconnection and often in the adoption of "dissociative strategies and behaviors", as will be further discussed below (DeYoung, 2015, p. 88). In the case of models, not only may connection have been hindered by early relational trauma, but it may be further hindered by modelling, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, which requires them to dissociate from their bodies and sensations in order to perform.

These notions illuminate the participants' experiences related to their general challenges of attunement to their internal worlds (but also, as a result, to attune to and connect with others), furthered by the necessity to operate a separation of body sensations and feelings, necessary to objectify[238] the body and be the fashion model "product" (Chapters Four to Six). It may also clarify the girls' attraction to the generally objectifying and misattuning field of fashion modelling, for it represents the familiar, thereby perpetrating the negative patterns, as also discussed in Chapter Two.

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[236] In particular, van der Kolk refers to the self-regulatory system being dependant on a friendly relationship with one's body (van der Kolk, 2015).

[237] In the case of fashion models, longstanding and repeated relational dynamics "in which there was some painful misunderstanding … between the child [or adolescent] and the adult" (Klein, 1987, p. 330), also occur, as seen, within the context of fashion modelling, since the onset of modelling generally falls within adolescence.

[238] See Chapter Two for the objectification theory definition (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 173) and for further insights on the subject of objectification (Bartky, 1990).

The embodied, relational mind

"The mind is both embodied and relational": it "regulates energy and information flow … between people … but also the interdependence that exist[s] between people and their physical environment" (Bromberg, 2011; Rejeski and Gauvin, 2013, pp. 657–658; Siegel, 2007).

As discussed in Chapter Two, the vital dependence on primary caregivers from birth results in implicit "psychobiological" learning and "relational knowledge" involving "mind and body" (Schore, 2011, p. 79), indicating the brain's plasticity to be dependent on experience. Furthermore, as seen in Chapter Two, research indicates that "the origin of the mind is [intersubjective,] dyadic and dialogic" and the subject relationally learns about "intimacy" and self-regulation (but also about self-love/self-acceptance, as will be discussed in the next subsection), for "relationships regulate our brain" (Beebe et al., 2005, p. xxiii; Beebe & Lachman, 2014; Bromberg, 2011; Cozolino, 2014; Schore, 2016). By linking it to the caregiver, the child's brain develops a neural network of self-regulatory links and capacity (Cozolino, 2014), in the absence of which the future adult is unable to regulate affect, resulting in an unstable sense of self (Bromberg, 2011), as the results indicate (further discussed below).

As presented in Chapter Two, epigenetic studies show that "development is a product of the effects of experience on the unfolding of genetic potential" and has "a long-lasting impact on how we learn, [directly affecting] genes expression" (Siegel, 2015, p. 30). Misattunements "to the internal, subjective experience of a child" and the lack/scarcity of meaningful interaction with relevant caregivers during the developmental age (as the results indicate), produce adverse effects on gene

expression and a general inability to be aware of one's internal world and subjective life (Siegel, 2015).

Systems of domination and cultural (re)production

Whilst modelling can open the door to considerable and appealing social, financial and lifestyle opportunities, the results suggest that young girls – and/or their caregivers – are often groomed, conditioned and enticed towards modelling through the alluring prospect[239] of an extraordinary future comprising fame, high social status,[240] social, bodily and financial capital[241,242] (Bourdieu, 1978, 1986, 1989; Mears, 2011, 2015). A discrepancy between myth and reality has dominated culture, representing one of the greatest risk factors for females embarking on modelling. Its dynamics will be further illuminated below.

Youth,[243] paired with a demand for limitless availability, blurred by the boundaries between professional and personal life, increases models' vulnerability and precariousness. In particular, the empirical findings show that models' agents generally position themselves as parental authorities or caring figures to the model

[239] The dream of the fashion model's extraordinary lifestyle is produced and promoted by the modelling industry, further reinforced by the fashion industry and disseminated by media.
[240] Social status has been defined as "having power, being esteemed or respected by other people, ranking high in a status hierarchy or pecking order, having authority other over people, being dominant or having prestige (Leary et al., 2016, p. 160).
[241] For a definition and further information about these notions, see Chapter Two and below.
[242] Instances occur where families, as experienced by two participants in the IPA study, consciously or unconsciously offer their child to a predatory person within the fashion modelling industry, almost as a sacrifice, which is in and of itself traumatic for the child. Such instances result in a total assault on the personality, for the girl is used as financial and/or social capital, implicating an objectified sense of self and position in the world. The child understands that she is given away in such a manner, wherein the trauma becomes complex to overcome; she is passed onto a "mother agency" who takes on the role of the mother in the socialising process and – conditional – caretaker, amongst other roles.
[243] As observed, girls generally model at ages ranging between 12 and 25 – with their employment generally ending around the age of 25 and being at its peak between the ages of 17 and 20.

(especially to those who are relatively successful) – through the use of a familial language and/or displaying fictitious interest and care – to secure the model's (and their caregivers', when necessary) loyalty and compliance. The model, as a result, and as directly expressed by Amy, follows instructions, mostly disregarding her needs and perceptions, believing the agent's guidance to be in her best interests. During the decline phase of her employment, a more realistic picture of the *status quo* emerges, and only then does she realise the grooming nature of the agent's previous behaviour, resulting in feelings of betrayal, grief and shock.

The power to confer capital, status and fame

> Bookers and clients are cultural producers in the sense that they are creators of culture – they reproduce culture, invoking and reworking our shared social positions of class, sexuality, and race when looking for the right look. (Mears, 2010, p. 42)

Drawing from Bourdieu's ideas, as anticipated in Chapter Two, the results indicate that the fashion-modelling industry *praxis* comprises of a *habitus* which in turn contains attitudes, mannerisms and bodily postures, *hexis*,[244] thereby producing and reproducing the "field" of fashion modelling (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984/2010, 1993, p. 2) and the making of fashion models (Mears, 2011).

[244] *Hexis*, a term borrowed by Bourdieu's ideas, is defined as "schemes of perception and thought, extremely general in their application, such as those which divide up the world in accordance with the oppositions between the male and the females", perhaps "in the form of bodily postures and stances" and gestures (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 15, 1984/2010; Clausen et al., 1968).

The results confirm that fashion tastemakers hold symbolic capital,[245] being in positions to judge and determine distinction and taste – therefore contributing to the definition – or maintenance – production and reproduction of social classes and hierarchical division (Bourdieu, 1986, 1998, 1984/2010), as well as hegemonic femininity (Bordo, 2003). They hold the power to define and mould what is tasteful and precious and to bestow financial and symbolic rewards as well as "bodily capital" (Bourdieu, 1978, 1986, 1998, 1984/2010) on the docile fashion model who successfully embraces the fashion modelling *habitus* and internalises its *hexis*, in the fashion modelling world's system of "symbolic power"[246] (Bourdieu, 1977/2002, p. 159, 1978, 1986, 1991, 1998, 1984/2010; Mears, 2015) which could transform the model's life and catapult her into the system of stardom.[247] They choose how and when each girl can and will be placed in the chosen circuits, influenced by the levels to which the girls comply with the industry's internal politics and *habitus*. These "cultural intermediaries" (Bourdieu, 1984/2010, p. 84) "set the terms of work under which … models … have to adapt their bodies and 'personalities'" (Entwistle & Mears, 2012, p. 6).

Typically, the agent of a promising international fashion model within a prestigious market begins by building her brand within the editorial circuit (Chapters Five and Six). Subsequently, she may be shifted into different categories within the commercial circuit, if she does not attain stardom by her "expiry" date,[248] as the accounts indicate

[245] For a definition of symbolic capital, see Chapter Two footnotes.
[246] Symbolic power is a notion introduced by Pierre Bourdieu (1991) to indicate the implicit patterns of social and cultural power dynamics and domination unfolding within a field and its *praxis*, which indeed is underpinned by social categorisation and hierarchy. Symbolic power to reproduce itself necessitated both a dominator and a person who accepts to be dominated, in this case the docile fashion model within the modelling field (Bourdieu, 1991).
[247] The chosen fashion model acquires significant social, financial and embodied cultural capital, all converging into symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1998, 1984/2010; Unger, 1979).
[248] Albeit the great majority of models are simply assigned to the commercial circuit from the start.

(Chapters Four to Six). Bookers construct, classify and price girls as marketable commodities, allocating them to different markets within the fashion industry (Mears, 2010, 2011). Furthering thoughts raised in Chapter Two and the accounts, the illustration below, taken from Ashley Mears' 2010 paper, highlights the distinction between the commercial and editorial circuits:

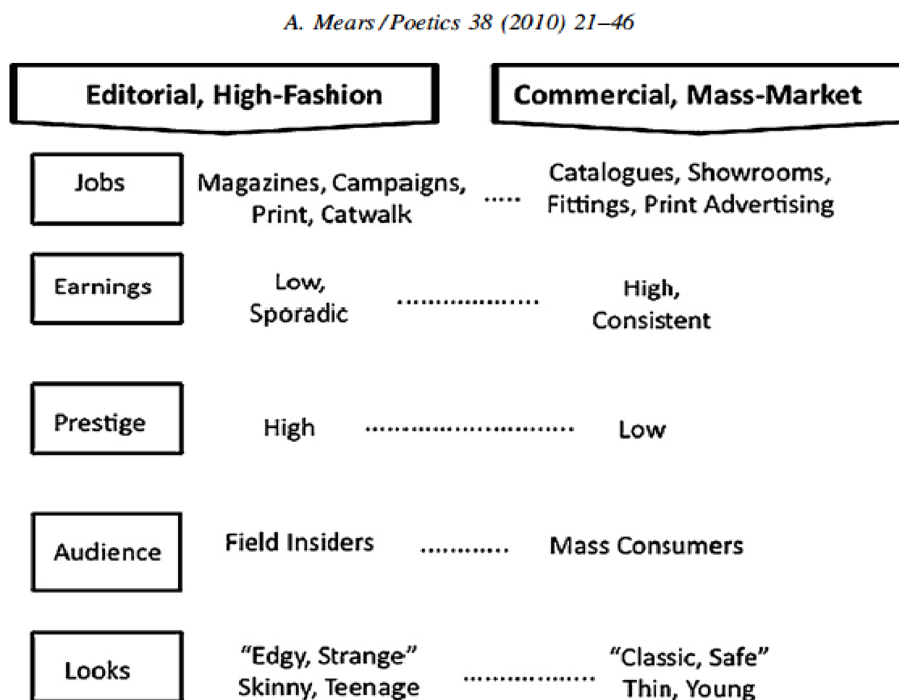

Figure 3*:* Editorial and commercial worlds in the fashion field.

Indeed, within this division, there are sub-divisions and degrees of relevance. The editorial circuit is associated with prestige (high social status) and is addressed to the fashion industry insiders and the elite of the world at large, whilst the commercial circuit is directed towards the masses and generally delivers a steadier income for both models and the modelling agencies. However, it is only through success within the editorial circuit that a model may have a chance, if the relevant tastemakers so choose,

to access stardom and achieve material financial gain. Within this context, models are continuously engaged in "self-presentational tactics" – such as body control and personality style performance – to "maintain or enhance their status" (Leary, Jongman-Sereno, & Diebels, 2016, p. 175), performing emotional labour to "sell themselves to clients and agents, to create illusions for observers and the camera, and to find dignity in a job that is often degrading and humiliating" (Mears & Finlay, 2005, p. 317) (see Chapters Four to Six).

Sexual harassment, sex trafficking and the industry politics

> [T]he heightened sexuality of modelling work frequently spills over to become something of an occupational hazard: stories of the 'casting couch' were frequently told, with models on the receiving end of unwanted sexual advances from photographers and stylists while on photo-shoots, and, in one case in our sample, from a model's booker. Nearly every model saw such encounters as an occupational hazard. (Entwistle & Mears, 2012, p. 12)

Although female models may not report or even recognise sexual advances, despite often experiencing a great degree of confusion and/or discomfort given the ubiquity of sexual harassment models on any job or within the industry are likely to face (Entwistle & Mears, 2012, p. 12), a majority of participants experienced sexual assault and all participants experienced sexual harassment from their modelling agents, fashion tastemakers and/or the promoters – or their clients/friends – who orbit models, as presented in Chapters Four to Six, wherein men "appropriate women as a symbolic resource to generate profit, status and social ties in an exclusive world of businessmen" (Mears, 2015, p. 22).

Fashion models' bodily capital (Bourdieu, 1978, 1986, 1998, 1984/2010) is utilised by the fashion and modelling industries, but also by sex traffickers (whether within or outside the industry), to produce disproportionate financial gain (Mears, 2015). Some instances of sex trafficking and the conversion of the girls' capital "into economic, symbolic and social capital, which they use to network and climb elite social and business hierarchies" (as further discussed when exploring Bourdieu's ideas), are commonplace, as the results indicate, albeit unspoken of, within the environment of the model agencies themselves (Mears, 2015, p. 35). Such data indicate that fashion modelling has also frequently been utilised by the fashion modelling industry as a smokescreen for sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of young females on behalf of predatory men, further substantiated by the documentary Picture Me co-produced by former model Sarah Ziff (2009) and by recent controversies relating to Jeffrey Epstein and Jean-Luc Brunel (Arnold, 2019), both investigated for sex trafficking, induction to prostitution and sexual assault of underage fashion models, as further exposed by Sara Ziff[249] (2019) and by the surveys conducted by the Model Alliance in 2012 (2020) and Rodgers et al. (2017).

The results show that girls are implicitly or explicitly silenced, either being led to believe sexual harassment/assault is the acceptable norm[250] or that they would bear consequences such as exclusion and/or the loss of job opportunities if non-compliant,

[249] Founder of the Model Alliance.
[250] When girls do not comply, they are generally deemed to be "boring", lacking the desired fashion model "bubbly" personality type, resulting in exclusion and loss of job opportunities. Models are generally led to believe their feelings and perceptions are wrong or not valid, hence they begin to distrust and suppress them, relying instead on external orders and demands to self-regulate and function within their given environment. This silencing, invalidating praxis that normalises sexual harassment/assault within the fashion and fashion modelling fields leads models to experience feelings of confusion and discomfort and often even cognitive dissonance.

promptly being replaced by – abounding – alternative, compliant girls, a pattern that results in the co-creation of the field *praxis* and in cultural reproduction. For many models, the consequences of exclusion can be challenging, especially within the context of a lack of professional alternatives and their/their families' financial challenges. Young models who struggle to win modelling jobs can become indebted, thereby furthering their vulnerability to predators (as seen in Chapters Five and Six). Predators, in fact, recognise and target the vulnerable (albeit young girls are often coerced into vulnerability as discussed above through various techniques including isolation, deceit and grooming practices). This leads to a vicious circle of vulnerability, disempowerment, exploitation and abuse, which furthers the internal core shame.

The findings show that the degree to which fashion models must engage in public relations and networking practices[251] – in the context of political dynamics – with the relevant fashion tastemakers in order to secure relevant jobs is much higher than what I had anticipated before embarking on this study (Chapters Four to Six). Models routinely "engage in 'strategic friendliness' with clients and bookers, channel their 'energy', and suppress their true feelings in order to get hired" (Entwistle & Mears, 2012, p. 329). This *praxis* is problematic, since the vulnerable young girl can easily be lured into temptation or deception towards sexual promiscuity, sexual exploitation, recreational drugs and alcohol consumption (see also Mears, 2015) (see Chapter Six, in particular).

Symbolic imprisonment and self-surveillance

[251] In order to secure the financial and/or social capital necessary to win relevant modelling contracts.

The findings confirm that a model's core occupation is to construct and maintain the fashion model look, representing her "bodily capital", being both inherited and perfected through "glamour labor"[252] (Wissinger, 2015, p. 3), aesthetic and body work apt at securing financial, social, bodily and symbolic capital[253] (Bourdieu, 1978, 1986, 1984/2010; Holroyd, 2002; Mears, 2015; Wacquant, 1995), and that, as seen in Chapter Two and confirmed by the results, the incessant gaze placed upon the model subsequently becomes expected and internalised (Foucault, 1977, 2008; Wolf, 1991).

The results confirm that models adopt the observer's perspective, in particular the fashion tastemaker's, which results, as discussed in Chapter Two, in self-objectification (Bartky, 1990; de Beauvoir, 1949/1997; Berger, 1972; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Ross, 2013) and "panopticism" (Foucault, 1977, p. 195), a productive internal self-surveillance, wherein the observer is internalised and the docile girl becomes her own sentinel, controlling her "subjected and practised" body and personality, the result of disciplinary power.[254] By facilitating panopticism, the modelling industry generates "human capital" (Foucault, 1979/2008, p. 226) – the model – capable of generating symbolic capital for the stakeholders (Bourdieu, 1986). Panopticism informs continued micro-analysis and micro-labour aimed at incessantly adjusting and perfecting the body, posture, attitude and mannerism, resulting in the loss of spontaneity and distinct uniqueness,[255] in the experience of being imprisoned and enslaved to a *persona* alongside an unstable sense of self and self-image.

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[252] For the definition of "glamour labor", please refer to Chapter Two.
[253] For a definition of symbolic capital, see Chapter Two footnotes.
[254] A "policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behaviour" (Foucault, 1977, p. 138).
[255] Models are conditioned to believe that their spontaneous personalities and natural bodies are inadequate, insufficient, flawed, lacking or defective, leading to self-surveillance to perfect and control. The results indicate that the meticulous control of body shape, posture, facial expressions, attitudes and behavioural responses is also accompanied by incessant personality moulding and control. In fact, models are expected to appear as confident, flawless, euphoric and chameleonic performers of the tastemaker's preferences. This *praxis,* in time, is perceived by participants to be an enslavement.

The internalisation of an other's gaze is further associated with core shame[256] (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), for rarely can the scrutinised subject, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, ever match the external projections and/or fashion tastemakers' ever-changing demands, thereby fostering ruminations (Brown, 2011). Furthermore, as seen in Chapter Two and as the findings confirm, females' gaze can be harsh and critical, whether of themselves or other females (Faer et al., 2005; Ferguson et al., 2011; Gamman & Marshment, 1988; Heinberg & Thompson, 1992; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004). This mechanism could be understood to be a means of controlling oneself and others, ensuring compliance with norms and docility.

The results confirm that body and personality moulding practices – wherein models "continuously reinvent and negotiate their self in different contexts" (Holla, forthcoming, p. 27) – and self-surveillance are perceived – at least until the model reaches the decline/exit phase wherein a sense of reality may dawn – as being beneficial means to attain the industry requirements, in the hope of acquiring high social status, fame, financial and bodily capital. Therefore, body work may often not be perceived to represent "symbolic violence"[257] (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 4; Foucault, 1977; Giddens, 1991), rather to be a valuable, or even indispensable, activity: "there is something wrong with me that with effort – exercise, cash and vigilance – I can repair. I can make my offending body part(s) right"[258]

[256] The notion of core shame refers to the experience that there is something wrong with the person, rather than simply a behaviour which may have perhaps been inappropriate. It is the experience of being fundamentally bad, wrong or defective, hence unlovable/unacceptable at fundamental levels.
[257] Symbolic violence is understood to recognise the imposition of power and meanings as legitimate and which conceals the power relations underpinning their symbolic force (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).
[258] As seen in Chapter Two, an efficacious socialising process induces the girls to "*wish* to do what is *needed* to enable the system to reproduce itself" (Bauman, 2007, p. 68).

(Orbach, 2009, p. 91). The data indicate that only during the decline/end of modelling, models may acknowledge the actual *status quo* and may embark on a healing journey. When they do, they often feel regrets (a sense of having wasted time), as the findings show, and may even overcompensate later in life to make up for lost time.

Fashion models as "performers and subjects of [gender] performativity"

> As the professionalization of types of gender performance, women craft themselves into 'ornamental objects' in modelling (Mears, 2008). This process is continuous with normative femininity, premised on ornamentation and decoration, and, thus, their performances look like what models – and women generally – *are*, and not something that models especially *do*. (Entwistle & Mears, 2012, p. 325).

The results confirm Chapter Two's observation that models are simultaneously "performers and subjects of performativity"[259] (Butler, 1990; Soley-Beltran, 2006, p. 41), wherein gender is displayed and performed (Entwistle & Mears, 2012). Soley-Beltran's stance can be supplemented by the present findings, for modelling has progressively shifted – since the 1990s – towards the recruitment of increasingly young females – often looking androgynous. Naturally skinny prepubescent/pubescent girls are sexualised by the media in contemporary Western culture,[260] presented as "ideal embodiments of normative identity" (Soley-Beltran, 2006, p. 23) according to which adult women are socialised (Costanzo, 1992) to

[259] The notion of gendered performativity (Butler, 1990) is discussed in Chapter Two.
[260] A phenomenon known as age compression, wherein "girls are expected to dress and behave older than their years" (Orbach, 2009, p. 114).

fashion themselves. A new, and problematic, epitomisation of hegemonic femininity emerges (Crane, 2000, p. 231; Goodwin et al., 2008).

Freezing the prepubescence/pubescence cusp

Whilst scouts generally target naturally tall and slim girls, at some point after embarking on modelling, models will have to adjust their bodies to fit, or remain within, the field's strict criteria. The results suggest, adding a very distinctive line of thought and contribution to the existing literature, that the majority of models begin to struggle with forms of eating disorders and obsessive-compulsive behaviour once their bodies begin the transition from childhood into womanhood,[261] as an overcompensation to maintain the prepubescent/pubescent look in response to the field's requirements, especially within the high-fashion circuit which, as seen, targets the insiders as well as the world's elite. These results illuminate relevant sociocultural factors underpinning the aetiology of eating disorders, indicate a cultural idealisation of youth (as an "object signifier" [262] (Baudrillard, 1970/2017) of high status and power), the sexualisation of prepubescent/pubescent girls and females' socialisation to the eternal *puella*.

Some authors argue that the several examples of highly sexualised young females frequently appearing in television, films, advertising and fashion shows, indicate that

[261] The age varies depending on the person, generally the majority of girls begin to struggle at the age of 17, however some even earlier, others later. As will be seen further below when discussing fashion models as a metaphor for femininity in Western societies, these data illuminate the issue raised by Orbach about the anorexia pandemic within the female population indicating "an attempt to stay a girl" (2005, p. 4), as enticed by culture, thus not solely by intrapsychic or systemic factors, whereby a direct link is observed between fashion models' pressures to maintain a pubescent body and the same pattern enacted by the female population.
[262] For a definition of the object signifier, see Chapter Two, footnotes.

sexual attraction to pubescents is normal (Prentky & Barb, 2011). However, I argue that the sexuality of young people is relentlessly and unethically capitalised upon by consumer culture and the advertising industry's pursuit to sell. This may result in the promotion of adults' fixated sexual interest in the young and may foster paedophilic/hebephiliac forbidden lust,[263,264] in adults, in turn placing them in a double bind which may result in psychological discomfort and the problematic increase of clandestine activity. With time, such a cultural drive could produce a normalisation of paedophilia/hebephilia/paraphilia.

Structural masochism and perfectibility as responses to intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics and cultural adaptation

As seen in Chapters Four to Six, the incessant physical work and consequential suffering required to maintain the prepubescent/pubescent – preferably androgynous – look, sought within the editorial circuit (Mears, 2010), conditions models to become accustomed to a – or to fuel a pre-existing – masochistic stance in the world (as anticipated by Karen Horney, who suggested that "masochistic trends are inherent in, or akin to, the very essence of female nature" (1967/1993, p. 214),[265] entering into a self-harming relationship with themselves, as further argued by feminist thinker Dworkin (1974) and as mirrored on a pandemic scale by the female population

[263] "The term paedophilia denotes the erotic preference for prepubescent children [in contrast with the term hebephilia] that has been proposed to denote the erotic preference for pubescent children (roughly, ages 11 or 12-14), but it has not become widely used" (Blanchard et al., 2008, p. 335).
[264] In literature it is largely understood that "it is natural and no sign of mental illness to feel sexual attraction to pubescent youngsters. But to act on such impulses is, in our society, a reprehensible crime that deserves severe punishment" (Frances, 2011, para. 4).
[265] In agreement with Karen Horney, it can be argued that "the problem of feminine masochism cannot be related to factors inherent in the anatomical-physiological-psychic characteristics of woman alone, but must be considered as importantly conditioned by the culture-complex or social organization in which the particular masochistic woman has developed" adding that the "importance of anatomical-physiological-psychic factors has been greatly overestimated by some writers" (1967/1993, pp. 232–233).

(Orbach, 2005, 2009). As a result of fashion tastemakers' praise/lust for the ultra-thin prepubescent/pubescent body, no matter how painful or maladaptive it is to achieve, models begin to associate a sense of pleasure with suffering practices. For example, most accounts indicate that hunger or excessive exercise became linked with a sense of pride and pleasure, or, as one of my model clients asserted: "through pain I become amazing". The birth/furthering of structural masochism is observed.

The results indicate that models may attempt to find the secret formula, since stardom is perceived to be alluring, turning the gaze within, feeling responsible for the failure to achieve celebrity, consequently often obsessing about, and compulsively enacting, ways to perfect their personalities, attitudes and bodies. This pattern generates the onset of – or reinforces – the "perfectionist" coping part (Arntz & Jacob, 2013, p. 6; Simpson, 2017) and the over-identification with the body and the fashion modelling *persona*.

Unremitting body work can be apt at atoning for the perceived insufficient self and body, in line with the anorectic stance. The "overcontroller" part, fuelled by the internalised demanding/critical object, epitomised by the demanding fashion and modelling industries, often dominates/controls models from within[266] and "acts as a 'Scrooge', denying basic needs … to reduce the risk of evoking the wrath of the Introject" (Simpson, 2018, p. 3).

The fashion model persona and the eternal Puella

[266] As further discussed above when exploring Foucault's ideas.

Drawing from classical Jungian ideas, the specific character performed by models could be understood to be a *persona*[267] (1953/1966) which holds a particular *habitus*, body type and script, the latter containing a specific set of attitudes and mannerisms. Such a fashion model *persona*, to which the model eventually becomes fused, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, has "*Puella Aeterna*"[268] charachteristics (Griessel, 2013; Schwartz, 2009, p. 203). The eternal *puella* is trapped in a perpetual, protracted childhood/adolescence (Gosling, 2009, p. 137; Schwartz, 2009) within a context that infantilises her (Mears, 2008). The *puella* is characterised by "unbounded instinct, disorder, intoxication, whimsy" (Sharp, 1991, p. 110), and epitomised by the "bubbly"[269] personality script, as mirrored by many females in Western societies (further discussed below in the dedicated sub-section). The fashion model *puella* is often characterised by an inflated sense of self – overcompensating an underlying deep sense of worthlessness (Schwartz, 2009).

As the data show, neither does the fashion model *puella* want to live an ordinary life, nor does she want to give up the prospect of an extraordinary life – or the extraordinary life to which she has become accustomed or that she dreams of. The attachment/addiction to either the dream or the experience of an extraordinary life makes the decline/exit phase from modelling excruciating. At that point, having lost

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[267] The *persona,* a word that "originally … meant the mask once worn by actors to indicate the role they played" (Jung, 1953/1966, para. 245), was understood by Jung to be an impersonal "psychic material", an "arbitrary segment of the collective psyche" (1953/1966, para. 245), made from a "sum of psychic facts that are felt as being personal" (1953/1966, para. 244) and "often fashioned with considerable pains" (1953/1966, para. 245), as epitomised by fashion models and by many females trying to fit within the impossible fashion model ideal of normative and hegemonic feminine identity in contemporary Western societies (Crane, 2000; Goodwin et al., 2008; Soley-Beltran, 2006).
[268] The *puella aeterna* is the female counterpart of the *puer aeternus* archetype, or the "child god" (Jung, 1959/1968, para. 268). In classical Jungian terms, the archetype is understood to be the "inherited part of the PSYCHE; structuring patterns of psychological performance linked to INSTINCT; a hypothetical entity irrepresentable in itself and evident only through its manifestations" (Samuels et al., 2013, p. 26). (For a comprehensive definition, see also Schwartz, 2009, p. 204.)
[269] See Chapter Five.

the *persona*, the underlying feelings of worthlessness, disappearance, loss and desperation generally emerge (see Chapters Four to Six), resulting in depressive symptoms, as will be further discussed below.

As examined above, presented in Chapters Two and Three and seen in Chapters Four to Six, a fusion with the fashion model *persona* fosters incompetency, for the model relies on tastemakers to instruct her. She over-invests in one isolated aspect of her life – the appearance – and when she loses it (quite early, as seen herein), she does not have alternative dimensions in her life or professional prospects and lacks alternative professional competencies. The fusion with the fashion model *persona* also results in the obstruction or delay of the transition into mature adulthood.

As seen in Chapter Two and confirmed by the empirical findings, the fashion model eternal *puella* lives a provisional[270] lifestyle, which epitomises "liquid modernity"[271] (Bauman, 2000), entailing "the strange attitude and feeling that one is not *yet* in real life" (Delaney, 2009, p. 215; von Franz, 1970/2000, p. 8). Such a lifestyle has been described in the accounts as being both frightening/unsettling and exciting/addictive; however, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, it eventually becomes a risk factor, engendering instability and isolation, thereby furthering vulnerability.

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[270] The fashion model's provisional lifestyle is characterised by financial instability, uncertainty and insecurity – fashion models are self-employed freelance workers and generally bear their own, abounding and/or fictitious expenses (Mears, 2011) with no or little certainty about future income – and instability related to not knowing or not being able to control the outcome of the castings and the future of the employment. Furthermore, models' efforts do not lead to the construction of a solid career, but rather are underpinned by short term thinking around the hope of winning individual jobs, campaigns or a prestigious editorials that may open the door to stardom and conspicuous financial gain.

[271] See Chapter Two for a definition.

The results confirm that high-fashion chooses androgynous[272] looking girls as the embodiments of their brands, where girls and boys are often indistinguishable. It could be argued that contemporary culture promotes the "child god" idolatry (Jung, 1959/1968, para. 268), the *puer aeternus/puella aeterna* God/Goddess, epitomising emotional and physiological arrest. The latter is exemplified by anorexia (currently a pandemic Western societies, characterised by a female's "refusal to be an adult … an attempt to stay a girl, a denial of femininity" (Orbach, 2005, p. 4), characterised by the *puella* archetype), denoted by amenorrhea,[273] resulting from the embodiment of the ultra-thin ideal[274] (Rodgers et al., 2017). This cultural drive leads to a collective lack of the *senex* – Wise old Man/Woman[275] – wherein a "developmentally retarded" collective psyche emerges and is reproduced (Jensen, 2009, p. 9).

As seen in Chapters Four to Six, ageing is feared – as again paralleled on a pandemic scale in the female population – for it signifies the progressive modelling decline and eventually the end of the model's labour and privileges and the disappearance from the world's acknowledgment of her very existence. Ageing can thus equate to a symbolic death. The results show ageing and the exit phase from modelling often correlated with depression and the annihilating experience of "invisibility" (Chrisler & Johnston-Robledo, 2018, p. 145), contrasting with the girl's previous experience of

[272] For a definition of androgyny, see Chapter Two, footnotes.
[273] Most participants reported having amenorrhea (loss/absence of menstrual cycle due to malnourishment).
[274] The cultural obsession on pre-pubescence/pubescence, symbolised by the androgynous high-fashion look, may suggest and foster the ideal of females frozen at the cusp of the culturally deemed most alluring and sought-after age/life stage symbolised by amenorrhea. It may have something to do with the innocence of a virgin, who has yet to have her menarche, and the drive, possibly located at the level of collective and individual unconscious, to enact the desecration of such innocence, in an attempt to feast upon it or to rob and possess its life force.
[275] The *Senex* archetype is characterised by wisdom, discipline, control, responsibility and order (Sharp, 1991).

high visibility and public admiration (albeit it was never the girl in her own right who was under the spotlight, rather it was the fashion model *puella persona*[276]).

In contrast with the external appearance, internally, as seen in Chapter Two, Four, Five and Six, the fashion model *puella* is required to hide her feelings, whilst a hypercritical internal dialogue flourishes (Schwartz, 2009). There is little space for her to be – manifest or become – herself. She is not accepted, and in turn cannot accept herself for who she is; instead she has to perform (Griessel, 2013). She fails to discover and “use her talents as she holds some internally imposed ideal” (Schwartz, 2009, p. 212), a reality fostered by the modelling field within which she operates and, once again, mirrored by many females in the larger population, as seen in Chapter Two. As the results confirm, she has identified with her body and modelling performances and does not know who she is, for she had no opportunity to explore, or foster, any other aspects of her existence and personality, remaining underdeveloped and relegated in the shadow in the form of potential. Instead, she becomes fused with the *persona* of the fashion model, is frightened to show her true feelings and experiences and remains trapped within the constricting role of performing as a way of being in the world, whilst personal toxic shame increases and gender performativity for the world at large is disseminated through her *persona*.

Relationships

[276] Despite both the *puella* and the *persona* being two distinct archetypes, mutual interpenetration and contamination of the archetypes can occur (Gray, 1996, p. 15). In the case of fashion models, the persona adopts *puella* characteristics, performing the personality and embodiment scripts. The question of whether the *puella* element is a cultural script that might have developed out of the *puella* archetype, having a cultural subscript for the fashion model or whether she is possessed by that external archetype remains, highlights an area for further research.

Relationship with oneself

As discussed in Chapter Two, and confirmed by the findings, models epitomise objects of consumption, unwittingly promoting consumer culture as the "unquestionably approved choice" (Bauman, 2007, p. 53), whilst incessantly working to make "themselves fit for being consumed" (Bauman, 2007, p. 62). To become appealing objects of consumption, and to be able to perform modelling, a new relationship with oneself (and the body) is required at the outset of modelling: the girl has to detach/divorce from her bodily sensations and feelings, as seen in Chapters Five and Six. A split with the body and experiences of dehumanisation and alienation result, as foreseen by Soley-Beltran (2006), with a consequent sense of imprisonment within a performed and disembodied self, wherein the experience is one of being "divorced or detached" from the body[277] (Laing, 1960/2010, p. 69). Such a disembodied relationship with oneself "destroys the integrity of the personality" (Klein, 1987, p. 337). The person may feel that what is happening is not actually happening to the real self, engendering ontological insecurity, wherein the person in effect does not consent to what is being done or said, but rather, is being coerced,[278] whether by another part of the self or by other people (Laing, 1960/2010, p. 69), since she has lost her compass, being disconnected from her own source of information (her bodily sensations and emotions).

[277] Laing (1960/2010, p. 78), in the context of the phenomenological underpinnings to psychological discomfort/symptoms, attributed unembodiment to the schizoid, borderline and schizophrenic conditions; however the notion of unembodiment – also referred to as disembodiment herein – is not linked herein to any particular diagnosis but is understood as having an *aetiology* linked to transgenerational developmental relational and cultural trauma/neglect, leading towards a particular relationship with oneself – and consequently with others and the world at large – to a schism as a defence to cope and to adjust to the given environment characterised by self-objectification and detachment from feelings, body sensations and intuition, as also elaborated by van der Kolk (2015) and as discussed in the first sub-section of the discussion part of this Chapter.

[278] This point illuminates distinctly the vicious circle wherein the model may not perceive abusive or inappropriate behaviour as such, as seen in Chapters Four to Six and further discussed above.

When such a split takes place, a person has to "rely on external regulation – from medication, drugs like alcohol, constant reassurance, or compulsive compliance with the wishes of others". Many models may not be aware of being subjected to adverse situations, wherein such an awareness prior to a healing journey is scarce, as the vignettes in Chapter Six reveal. They may feel happy when modelling whilst perhaps simultaneously have "no words for feelings"[279] and/or experience contrasting feelings, including a sense of depersonalisation and/or alienation. They may somatise disavowed feelings and discomfort – for example with "migraine headaches or asthma attacks" (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 99), alexithymia,[280] "somatic dissociation",[281] "body image distortion", "somatoform dissociation"[282] (Seijo, 2015; van der Kolk, 2015, p. 100–101), as seen in Chapters Four to Six.

The findings indicate that the split[283] in the personality often presents an idealised image of the self,[284] wherein a feedback system with a regulating Other – in this case with the fashion tastemakers and the field itself – may be established, subsequently

[279] A psychological condition named "alexithymia" (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 100).
[280] "Alexithymia: Difficulties regarding this type of dissociation are centred on discriminating and expressing feelings and differentiating emotional aspects. Clients have trouble describing their feelings and differentiating them from bodily sensations. This is a core deficiency in eating disorders." (Seijo, 2015, p. 3).
[281] "Somatic dissociation: This is the most common type of dissociation in eating disorders. The body is perceived as strange and not felt as their own. Instead, it is felt as an enemy against whom they must fight, or as anesthetized parts that may be felt as foreign at a biological level: "I feel my legs melting sideways into the chair," "After eating, I feel my body starting to swell up from the neck down to my toes." These perceptions and sensations, which are experienced as real, reflect depersonalisation or derealisation symptoms due to the anguish they generate" (Seijo, 2015, p. 3).
[282] "Somatoform dissociation: This differs from somatic dissociation in that somatoform dissociation does not present a distorted perception of the body. In this type of dissociation, the client projects her discomfort on multiple physical symptoms, which generate poor quality of life. Examples of these symptoms would be: abdominal pain, nausea, dysmenorrhea, menstrual irregularities…" (Seijo, 2015, p. 3).
[283] For an overview of the notion of split, see Klein, 1987 (pp. 198–200).
[284] This "self-region" – "a set of interconnected object-relations" – is "mapped … according to what I wish to be", to an ideal self (Klein, 1987, p. 199). I posit that the idealised self-image is derived from the industry's wish which also produces and reproduces the cultural ideal of feminine beauty.

becoming internalised as a self-monitoring function (Klein, 1987, p. 198), as further discussed above and in Chapter Two (in the section on self-surveillance/ panopticism).

The schism from the body and its internal processes is possibly the most problematic outcome of modelling, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, especially as it takes place during the crucial developmental age, thereby dissociation/detachment and self-objectification – with or without an idealised image of the self – become part of the future woman's *modus operandi*, both towards her own self and the world around her, unless she embarks on a healing journey. In turn, the wounded fashion model disseminates a wounded model of womanliness to the larger population, unwittingly fostering an alienated and disconnected (from the self and others) way of being in the world.

Ultimately, tastemakers seek a girl who feels good in her skin, as the accounts show. This requires high levels of self-esteem and enthusiasm, which, as seen above, firstly result from good enough parenting from birth and show in the model's embodiment, but also later from a continuously respectful and supportive environment. The intrapsychic conflicts and inner discontent cannot be hidden from the camera and the embodiment will not lie.

Relationship with others

As seen in Chapter Two, and as confirmed by the empirical data presented in Chapters Four to Six, the fashion model *persona* can be understood to be an "object signifier" (Baudrillard, 1970/2017), capable of communicating meaning to the outside world about social status, symbolic capital and class (Bourdieu, 1986; Soley-Beltran, 2012).

Specifically, the fashion model's body, as an object signifier, conveys detailed grades of information that insiders are capable of interpreting.

Indeed, especially within the fashion-modelling and fashion industries, successful high-fashion international models represent the finest of all consumer objects (see Chapter Four to Six), thus hold, as discussed in Chapter Two, high "sign value"[285] (Baudrillard, 1968/2005, 1970/2017, p. 148). "[I]n the global VIP party scene, the fashion model body is a highly prized symbol of 'very important' people and places" (Mears, 2015, p. 35). As a result, models are often targeted by wealthy men[286] (see Chapters Four to Six), for they can be perceived to be luxurious goods, used as public displays of economic power or to signify prestige, high social class and status, bestowing upon themselves distinction from "the classes beneath" (Barkow, 2016, p. 42), boosting self-esteem (Barkow, 2016, p. 43) and evoking envy in the observer. The notion of "conspicuous consumption"[287] connotes and illuminates such behaviour, as the results show, wherein individuals may even exhibit their possessions – in this case, the latest fashion model – in an ostentatious manner to signify "invidious distinction"[288] and incite "invidious comparison"[289] (Veblen, 2007, p. 74).

As the results confirm, models have the opportunity to

> access benefits as they circulate through these luxurious scenes; they gain access to the high-status world of business elites and celebrities, and they get

[285] Sign value can be understood to be social status (Baudrillard, 1970/2017, p. 148).
[286] Especially high-fashion models, for they are perceived as being the most luxurious of all objects.
[287] Veblen (2007, p. 49) understood "conspicuous consumption" to be a human consumerist behaviour characterised by the act of purchasing goods – especially luxurious and expensive ones – as a way to signify power, high status and noble social class.
[288] According to Veblen (2007, p. 64), "the archaic discrimination between noble and ignoble classes is at the basis of invidious distinction".
[289] According to Veblen (2007, p. 74), "the propensity for emulation – for invidious comparison – is of ancient growth and is a pervasive trait of human nature" resulting in "invidious discrimination between noble and ignoble classes".

> access to a dating pool of rich men, although this benefit is tempered by the whore stigma and the distrust men exhibit toward them. (Mears, 2015, p. 35)

However, the empirical findings indicate that this appears to be a strategy that delivers more advantage to the "owner" than to the models themselves, for the latter are used as capital who are deprived of cultural capital, whilst remaining dependent; furthermore, "codes of sexual morality penalise women for strategic intimacy" (Mears, 2015, p. 22).

Whilst fashion tastemakers hold the power to catapult a girl into stardom, and wealthy men orbiting the environment leverage on their financial and/or social power to attract models – which in turn can enable models' to attain access to the elite lifestyle – models hold, and often leverage on, the power of beauty and seduction to secure high social status and inclusion within the elite (as shown in Chapters Four to Six). "Selling the self involves producing an energetic, upbeat version of oneself that 'connects' to bookers and clients: warm smile, solid eye contact, and manufacturing the persona of genuine niceness. Models exploit their good looks and sexuality by flirting to charm clients" (Entwistle & Mears, 2012, p. 10). However, when females' seductive power and sexuality are used to attain benefits, patriarchal domination and women's subordination and sexual objectification can be furthered and reproduced. Sexual encounters among models with tastemakers could also be "sought as a desperate need for reassurance that one is wanted [and] … desired for their own sake", and not just in the hope of encouraging favouritism; furthermore, the "pursuit of excitement can be employed effectively as a defence against and denial of underlying depression" within this age group[290] (Kegerreis, 2010, p. 59).

[290] "[M]id – and later adolescence" (Kegerreis, 2010, p. 59).

As seen in Chapters Four to Six, most girls abandon education in order to model, representing one of the main regrets shared by all participants. The sole investment in the modelling *persona* and the utilisation of the body as a professional tool result in the hindrance of alternative professional outcomes after modelling, leading to profound feelings of incompetency, humiliation, worthlessness and hopelessness, furthering, as seen in Chapters Two, Four, Five and Six, a subservient, dependant, “fragile and transient” type of normative feminine identity (Mears, 2011; Soley-Beltran, 2006; Stacey, 1994, p. 226).

I am what you see

As seen in Chapter Four, and as also emerges from the IPA accounts (Chapter Five), the gaze places a central role in human experience, for “[w]e are all dependent upon the gaze of others” and rely “on being scoped by others” from birth, so much so that the very self assumes its coherence in relation to the other’s perspective” (Lemma, 2010, pp. 20, 27). To be able to see ourselves, paradoxically we must be seen (Lacan, 1977). Such a reality is coloured by intrapsychic and interpersonal experiences and develops within specific cultural contexts that reward certain attributes over others (Lemma, 2010, p. 15).

This riddled scopic existential dimension is brought to the extremes in the modelling experience. As a result, I suggest, much can be learned from the modelling experience, for it unveils the dire reality of human dependency on the other’s gaze and its quality, experienced chiefly at the level of the body (Lemma, 2010), dire in so far

as the other’s gaze, and its quality, are out of the subject’s control, whilst holding immense power over the subject, especially across the developmental age.

Tellingly, Lacan uses the metaphor of photography to describe the experience of being seen: “It is through the gaze that I enter life and I receive its effects … the gaze is the instrument through which I am … photo-graphed” (Lacan, 1977, p. 106). Being photographed, thus existing as a bidimensional, still image, represents the model’s very experience and, as seen in Chapter Four, each photographer – and team on a set – will co-create a different image, even when the same person is being photographed. When a model does not feel accepted or desired enough on a set, she may feel worthless and ashamed (as seen in Chapters Four and Five), despite the other’s gaze ultimately being coloured by their own projections, unconscious phantasies, feelings, memories and cultural diktats. It is not a simple endeavour for a model to be comfortable in her skin in front of a camera and many may choose to consume recreational drugs or alcohol to ease the inhibition.

In optimal conditions, the good-enough relevant caregiver “looks after” the baby’s needs. Looking acquires the function of an active process, thus the gaze can be understood as having a holding and “containing function” and as being “the blueprint for the ego” and its cohesion (Lemma, 2010, pp. 58). Furthermore, “[t]he self … internalises otherness – the other’s desire – as the condition of his own desirability” (Lemma, 2010, p. 59). When the relevant other’s gaze is either hateful or absent, as seen in Chapters Four and Five, that is to say in those circumstances where the relevant other used the gaze to project into the baby’s body unwanted parts of the self, the baby becomes the mother’s container for such badness and ugliness and internalises these projected aspects, identifying with them. The camera will capture

these intraspecific dynamics, as seen in Chapter Four. Furthermore, a persecutory internal object's gaze may develop and haunt the subject from within; the subject may, as a result, identify with "an ego-destructive 'super'-ego" (Bion, 1962, as cited in Lemma, 2010, p. 83), thus becoming self-destructive (see Chapter Four). The intrapsychic dynamics may transpire at the level of the embodiment, as seen in Chapters Four and Five, and appealing modelling opportunities may be lost.

The wounded subject may seek bodily perfection as a way of atoning for the sinful self or to keep the perceived badness of the self under control. She may also rely on her image and seek the loving gaze in any available mirror to feel whole. The photographic camera's gaze can become alluring in the presence of such an intrapsychic constellation (see Chapters Four and Five).

The paradox about the model's voyeuristic-exhibitionistic experience is that she is typically watched but not seen. Eventually she becomes accustomed to being watched, albeit, as seen in Chapter Five, from the critical external observer's perspective. Her need to be seen and acknowledged as a person in her own right often remains unmet whilst modelling, resulting in deep feelings of deprivation and worthlessness.

On envy and intrasexual competition

Since models are often perceived by the larger population to possess the most desirable attributes, capital, fame and lifestyle, they can trigger raging envy, generally in other females. However, as seen, models' reality is much different from the stereotype that permeates the collective consciousness.

Despite envy being rarely talked about or even admitted by the self (representing a taboo fraught with complex feelings such as shame in the person experiencing it), the themes of envy and intrasexual competitiveness emerged recurrently from the accounts captured in Chapters Four and Five. Indeed, a culture that incessantly praises people for their capitalistic accomplishments and females for their youth and normative beauty, magnifies ambition, ruthlessness and the possible evolutionary base underpinning the intrasexual envy based and appearance,[291] further hindering sisterhood.

Models can be oblivion to their qualities, for they generally focus on their imperfections, thereby may be grappling with toxic shame. When envied, they can cope by internalising the projected shadow/shame, subjugating to the envious people, dimming their light/camouflaging, dressing themselves down and self-sabotaging life opportunities to avoid exclusion, abandonment and/or reprisals from those who envy them. As seen in Chapters Four to Six, models may internalise other's negative projections whilst projecting onto others their positive qualities and identifying with the dark collective or individual shadow. This process could underpin and/or worsen their low self-esteem and inability to recognise any of their positive attributes, which can remain split-off from consciousness. This may result in the models' idealisation of those whom they place in positions of authority and devaluation of themselves, further resulting in the internalisation of the fashion model stigma[292] and on taking on the scapegoat position. This internal experience is in stark contrast with the external

[291] See Chapter Two for references related to evolutionary psychology and on the Kleinian notion of envy.
[292] The results confirm that fashion models are often seen by the world at large as being overindulged, lazy, shallow, reckless, sexually promiscuous and lacking intelligence.

world's praise and admiration of their looks, the latter being the very qualities which are envied.

As seen in Chapters Two and Five, in the context of a hugely competitive environment, models are also subject to experiencing envy. One hypothesis could be that models could wish to hold onto modelling as a way of avoiding their denied envy by retaining the position of the envied object – of desire – whilst continuing to forcefully project it outwardly, unwittingly seeking to cause envy in the other.

For envy to arise, that which is good has to be experienced as not me (Roth, 2008), as epitomised by most models' experiences to varying degrees. Furthermore, "when dependency and loss cannot be borne, envy can dominate the psychic landscape (Lemma, 2015, p. 25), which for models means that they may be unable to verbalise their psychic conflicts and uncomfortable feelings. Indeed, a more successful model may be perceived as possessing all the valuable things that she lacks (youth, fame, capital, admiration, for example), thereby prompting the potent and painful experience of envy, as well as hatred, humiliation and a sense of inferiority (as seen in Chapter Five and above). Defences are geared towards spoiling the envied object and its qualities/possessions, whether literally or in one's mind, for example through devaluation or denigration. However other forms of spoiling can be idealisation and over-valuing of the envied object, for its real value and qualities are denied (Roth, 2008).

As seen in Chapters Four and Five, self-sabotaging instances occurred for some participants and were underpinned by early relational trauma from a relevant caregiver from birth (see also Chapter Two). A repetition compulsion to self-sabotage/self-

exclusion in the model can result, producing failure to achieve success in modelling. Two IPA participants overtly reported primary caregivers' dynamics riddled with envy and hostility. Some caregivers may see in their offspring the opportunities they were not offered in their own lives, either retaliating or wishing to live an extraordinary life by proxy through their daughters. Others may have been deeply wounded, simply acting their unfinished business out on their offspring (as was reported by three IPA participants). The exploration of the question of whether the repetition compulsion is linked to the death instinct, as mentioned in Chapter Two, or is rather related to other psychic dynamics – such as it being an intrapsychic battle between parts and introjects or a way to keep oneself excluded from something they do not actually desire – is outside the scope of this work and deserves a study in its own right, given the relevance, which I recommend in the next chapter.

Splitting defences (e.g. blame shifting, idealisation and destruction) can take place in the absence of self-awareness and without a sound process of individuation. Personal accountability for the failure to achieve (i.e. the acknowledgement of intrapsychic forces at play leading to self-exclusion/self-sabotaging) and the resolution of internal conflicts requires significant introspection and processing at a deep level, alongside mourning of the loss and self-forgiveness. A full exploration of the dimensions of hatred and envy, especially within the mother-daughter relationship, an area of research particularly scarce in literature, is relevant in this sense. It is outside the scope of this study to delve in this topic and I have recommended further research in this domain in Chapter Eight.

Fashion models as a metaphor for hegemonic femininity in contemporary Western societies

By encountering the fashion model as a person in her own right, thus learning about her lived experiences, the spectacular life of the fashion model is overturned and a reality emerges which parallels, in many ways, the struggles of females in contemporary Western societies.[293]

This subsection discusses the emerged parallels between microcosmic (the experiences of fashion models) and macrocosmic (the general female population) dimensions of relevance pertaining to the shared human experience, highlighting problematic cultural patterns and aspects of the collective unconscious that may require awareness and integration into the individual and the collective consciousness.

A shift from idiographic to nomothetic

> In order to understand the part (the specific sentence, utterance, or act), the inquirer must grasp the whole (the complex of intentions, beliefs, and desires or the text, institutional context, practice, form of life, language, game, and so on), and vice versa. (Schwandt, 2000, p. 193)

This thesis describes, evaluates and challenges cultural beliefs and practices not only within fashion modelling and the fashion industry but also within contemporary culture,

[293] The reader may wish to read the thesis again as if it refers to females within the larger population, wherein he/she would notice little difference between the experience of fashion models and that of many females in Western cultures, as will be summarised in this sub-section.

highlighting problematic aspects therein (Adams et al., 2015, p. 38) to engender awareness and facilitate transformation for a better future (Etherington, 2004, p. 147).

Furthermore, this study enabled hidden meaning to emerge through the microcosmic examination of idiographic aspects of the lived experience of fashion models (presented in Chapters Four to Six),[294] integrated with the analysis of the existing body of knowledge (presented in Chapter Two). As a result, it delivers a holistic perspective, illuminating macrocosmic aspects of a “shared humanity” of contemporary culture and of the collective unconscious (J. A. Smith & Eatough, 2015, p. 54). A shift from the idiographic to the nomothetic thereby results, wherein the fashion model’s experience can be seen as a metaphor for normative feminine identity – also epitomising relevant experiences pertaining to humankind at large, regardless the gender – in contemporary Western societies.

The disembodied self

> To men a man is but a mind. Who cares what face he carries or what form he wears? But woman’s body is the woman. (Bierce, 1911/1935, p. 15)

In the same way that models must adjust to the tastemakers’ diktats and perform the fashion model *persona*, so too must females in Western societies, disciplined by models’ imagery that disseminate hegemonic femininity diktats (Entwistle & Slater, 2012, p. 21; Orbach, 2005, 2009) devised by the people in positions of power who

[294] Individual, in-depth, accounts analysed through IPA offered opportunities to make more general claims (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 32). Furthermore, the short autoethnographic narrative and the clinical vignettes further enabled the exploration of the convergence between idiographic and nomothetic phenomena (Etherington, 2004, p. 140), thus aspects pertaining to a “larger group or culture” emerged (Ellis, 2004, p. xvii).

define taste, distinction and norms into which the masses must mould, as seen in Chapter Two.

Bombarded by societal pressures and media images of flawless bodies, females strive to construct false bodies that lead to a culturally uncontested normative feminine identity that results in an "unembodied" embodiment (Crane, 2000, p. 231; see also Butler, 1990; Laing, 1960/2010, p. 65; Orbach, 2009, p. 69; Soley-Beltran, 2006). Such a culturally fostered obsession induces women towards incessant/compulsive body labour – a "third shift" on top of household chores/childcare and work (Chernin, 1983; Wolf, 1991), paralleling models' predicaments. As a result, body moulding – facilitated by the practice of self-surveillance and implemented through recourse to, amongst other practices, cosmetic surgery, extreme dieting, feeding and relentless exercise – has become rampant (Bordo, 2003; Entwistle & Mears, 2012; Lemma, 2010; Orbach, 2009) alongside females' self-criticism, distrust and/or hatred of their bodies (Orbach, 2005).

The sense of self can be understood to be an idea that one holds about himself/herself, whether negative, positive or anything in between, whether "empowering or disempowering" (Chrisler & Johnston-Robledo, 2018, p. 3) and is reflected on one's embodiment. As further discussed above, through embodied responses one has the opportunity to learn about and understand the world, oneself and one's needs (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; van der Kolk, 2015). Thus, the body offers a foundation for self-knowledge, self-expression and subjectivity (Chrisler & Johnston-Robledo, 2018, p. 3). As seen in Chapters Four to Six and as paralleled by a large number of females in contemporary Western societies affected by the fashion model feminine normativity, as discussed in Chapter Two, instead of being "absorbed in their bodies", many

increasingly "find themselves to be … somewhat detached from their bodies" (Laing, 1960/2010, p. 66).

The "conscious body" is largely dismissed within contemporary culture, instead "a flawless machine whose icon is a cadaver in Vogue Magazine" (Woodman, 1982, p. 87) is celebrated. The relentless efforts to fit within the *status quo* of achieving the hegemonic *persona* that leads to, or fuels, a "false-body" (Bordo, 2003; Chernin, 1983, 1994a, 1994b; Orbach, 2005, 2009, p. 100; Soley-Beltran, 2006) also result in the promotion of an impossible body and a lack of diversity, with consequent homologation of looks, gendered attitudes, behaviour, subjective identities (Crane, 2000; Orbach, 2009; Soley-Beltran, 2006) and loss of creativity.

Research shows (Chapter Two), as paralleled by models' experience (Chapters Four to Six) that females are culturally led to distrust their bodies, believing them to be insufficient and in need of perfection. Body distrust and hatred result when culture shames bodies into being insufficient. The body is therefore no longer a place from which to live but rather "an aspiration always needing to be achieved" (Orbach, 2009, p. 145). The belief that the body is a lifelong "self-improvement project" geared towards moulding of body and personality – a way of being a female in the world (Chrisler & Johnston-Robledo, 2018, p. 11) – and that one needs to repair/perfect an insufficient body/self, engenders/fuels toxic shame, leads to perfectionism in self-presentation and is also associated with the development of personal and interpersonal psychological discomfort (Hewitt et al., 2003), psychological conditions such as depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive and eating disorders (Canter, 2003), low self-esteem, disempowerment (Soley-Beltran, 2006) and burnout (Hill & Curran, 2015).

As discussed above, conscious awareness is hindered once the body is turned into an object. The perfected/perfectible body-object loses a crucial function: to be simultaneously an experience and an instrument for experience (Chopra, 2019). The disconnection with/distrust in one's body is deeply disempowering (van der Kolk, 2015), severing individuals from their most relevant source of information – their bodies – thus hindering the possibility of responding effectively to their needs, instead fostering or perpetrating physical, emotional, spiritual and mental disconnection, malaise and discontent. Such a disconnection is culturally and transgenerationally transmitted – even from mother to daughter, wherein the "corporeal sense of self [is] not surely enough established" (Orbach, 2005, p. 73).

Orbach, as seen in Chapter Two, has extended Winnicott's notion of false self[295] (Winnicott, 1965/1990) with the notion of false body: "A body that ha[s] adapted, that ha[s] created itself in the absence of any relation to a potential or 'true body', which because she neither possesse[s] nor inhabit[s], ma[kes] her bodily existence fragile" (Orbach, 2005, p. 70; Orbach, 2009, p. 69). Both the false-self as well as the false body are "devoid of the needs and the initiations that seemed to push the caretaker away" (Orbach, 2005, p. 70), for mothers may seek specific embodiments, attitudes and behaviours in their daughters.

[295] Winnicott theorised that caregivers' misattunements/impingments to the infant/child's developmental emotional needs – intended as the "Ego-needs", rather than the "Id-needs" or "instinct needs" (Winnicott, 1965/1990, p. 141) – result in the formation of a "defense organization", the "False Self" (Winnicott, 1965/1990, p. 140). According to Winnicott, the function of the false self is to "hide the True Self, which it does by compliance with the environment" (1965/1990, p. 147), protecting it "against … the exploitation of the True Self, which would result in its annihilation", whilst, as a secondary gain, securing the caregivers' – conditional – love and care. "[C]ompliance is then the main feature, with imitation as a specialty" (Winnicott, 1965/1990, p. 147).

Furthermore, females' bodies in Western societies continue to be predominantly socialised, as the results confirm, to signify "sexual object[s] for the use and appreciation of other sexual beings" (Greer, 1970/2012, p. 17), paralleling the model's experience again (Chapters Four to Six). Alarmingly, the empirical results indicate that the most sought after sexual objects appear to be underage or have the physical looks of prepubescent/pubescent females, flagging, as seen above, concerns related to a cultural drive towards, and/or normalisation of, paedophilia and sexual objectification of the young – another area requiring further research, in particular with regard to aspects of the collective unconscious and the shadow that such a thrust may point the researcher towards – whilst allowing women neither to show their age (Bordo, 2003; Schippers, 2007; Wolf, 1991) nor to enjoy the different and existentially relevant stages of their lives.

Performing hegemonic feminine identity

> [W]e are selves through bodies and we know bodies through eyes, surfaces and appearances are what matter in the construction of identity (Johansson, 1998, p. 27).

As seen above and in Chapter Two, fashion models represent agents of socialisation for the larger population, especially for females, wherein a *doxic*[296] adherence to the

[296] "Every established order tends to produce … the naturalization of its own arbitrariness" (Bourdieu, 1977/2002, p. 164). *Doxa* or *doxic* in Bourdieu's language thus refers to "that which is [culturally and socially] taken for granted [that which becomes perceived in any given society as being] self-evident and natural" in other words, "that which goes without saying and [that] cannot be said for a lack of an available discourse" (Bourdieu, 1977/2002, pp. 166, 170), where "the natural and social world appears as self evident" (Bourdieu, 1977/2002, p. 164).

habitus and its field – through "social reproduction" of the field of structure to the larger population – occurs, simultaneously engendering and adjusting social practices, wherein the fashion modelling *habitus* becomes *doxic*, both for the fashion model and for the larger population (Bourdieu, 1977/2002).

The transgenerational transmission of gender role behaviour indicates a cultural and social construction[297] (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Oakley, 1972/2016; Rubin, 1975) of gender (Butler, 1990; Levant & Alto, 2017) by way of symbolic interactionism[298] (Blumer, 1969b). The modelling industry and the media act as relevant agencies of – secondary – socialisation[299] (Reiser & Gresy, 2011; Salesses & Romain, 2014), wherein models are moulded to play a crucial role in the global gender performativity socialising process, by virtue of role modelling normative gender role behaviour for the masses (Butler, 1990; Entwistle & Mears, 2012) and incorporated by females.

As seen,

> "models are subject to intense surveillance, a discourse of infantilization, and uncertain judging criteria. This labor process typifies the politics of gender, in which women exercise power over themselves insofar as they internalize and pursue the glamour of their regime" (Mears, 2008, p. 429)

often resulting in an unstable self-image and/or sense of self and in a fusion with a *persona* at the expense of free self-expression. Culture, alongside normative feminine

[297] Social constructionism is a theoretical approach according to which "the reality [knowledge and meaning] is socially constructed", wherein knowledge is the result of relational interactions (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 13).
[298] Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical approach according to which social interaction is responsible for the construction of identity (Blumer, 1969b).
[299] Socialisation is the process of internalising and disseminating social norms, beliefs and ideologies (Clausen et al., 1968).

identity, is thus produced and reproduced (Butler, 1990; Entwistle & Slater, 2012; Mears, 2010; Orbach, 2005, 2009).

Macro notions, such as gender and identity, are performed and constructed (Entwistle & Slater, 2012), wherein bodies are simultaneously produced and consumed (Warwick & Cavallaro, 1998). Females – just like models – are culturally enticed to perform idealised, normative gendered identities (Butler, 1990; Fressange, 2002; Orbach, 2009; Soley-Beltran, 2006), The ultra-thin body, epitomised by the high-fashion model look, represents, as seen in Chapter Two, the embodied exemplifications of ingrained patterns of contemporary gender role behaviour concerning how to be a woman in the world: a dependent, sexualised, moulded subject with little voice, power, freedom or agency, taking little space and masochistically suffering to remain in such a confined position – literally epitomised by the struggles to maintain the anorectic/ultra-thin body. Such dimensions forcefully emerge from this study and need to be culturally and individually problematised and deconstructed.

The external (and internal – resulting from internal objects) normative and unrealistic demands foster a persecutory "ego-ideal"[300] within the subject to which she strives relentlessly, at the expense of realistic and authentic self-expression and the actualisation of one's potential self, producing *personas,* misery and toxic shame (Akhtar, 2009, p. 89). Comparably to fashion models, through the process of moulding into normative identity, people progressively become simulacra, object signifiers, representations devoid of idiosyncratic subjectivity (Baudrillard, 1994; Crane, 2000; Jung, 1959/1968, para. 221). In turn they become alienated from the self and others.

[300] "[T]he inner image of oneself as one wants to become" (Akhtar, 2009, p. 89).

Such a process further entails that, within the context of consumer culture, such simulacra become objects of consumption, involved in reified relationships (Lukács, 1923/2017), underpinned by a liquid existence (Bauman, 2000). This phenomenon is further exacerbated by rapid advances in technology, wherein females are presenting themselves, again paralleling fashion models, as bidimensional, often airbrushed, still-life images, which they disseminate through social media in an attempt to receive social approval – collecting "likes" and "followers" – and/or validation of self-worthiness, sufficiency or decency.

The results confirm that modern day "gender performativity" (Butler, 1990) appears to be evolving towards the performance of attitudes, mannerisms and behaviours that promote youth, androgyny and a juvenile stance in the world, endorsing immediate gratification of urges and wants, as was discussed when exploring the *eternal puella* archetype, furthering a collective psychic arrest at the age of adolescence. The denial/shaming of mature femininity and a cultural scarcity of *senex* (Jensen, 2009; Jung, 1959/1968; Sharp, 1991) are two problematic collective and individual dimensions emerging from this study. Indeed, the *puella* epitomised by the fashion model "is mirrored in the lives of many contemporary women who struggle to feel secure in their bodies and their talents. [The *puella*] is compromised by the cultural value that women are desirable only when young" contributing to the "lack of mature female models in our society" (Schwartz, 2009, p. 204), who in turn struggle to effectively mother their offspring.

Females' resulting obsessive focus on everlasting youth, as emerged from Chapters Four to Six and discussed in Chapter Two, suggests that the stages of a woman's development are culturally denied, compressed and reduced into the unique and

idealised stage of youth. Such a fixated focus indicates a cultural denial of femininity (Orbach, 2005, p. 4) but also a possible fear of, resulting in the split from, "the numinous archetypal Feminine"[301] (Neumann, 1994, p. 272). This split, within patriarchal culture, epitomised by the disconnection from self and/or others, is in direct antithesis to the very essence of a pivotal feminine quality, characterised by "a sense of connectedness with all living things" (Neuman, 1994, p. 273). The split also suggests a collective drive to keep females within limited confines, a controlling *praxis* contributing to women's subordination (Frye, 1983), dependence and disempowerment, wherein womanly features are portrayed as unfashionable, suggesting a cultural attack to or dissuasion of the fertile, maternal feminine within the context of an increased geriatric population, an area requiring further research. Indeed, this results in the cultural reproduction of a restrictive set of gendered role behaviour, wherein feminine power is virtually nullified. As a result of such a fracture and the cultural idealisation of youth, women defeminise their bodies, literally represented by the ceasing of menstruation and through hindering of their reproductive capacities, they are disempowered, "desexualized and [even] degendered" (Orbach, 2005, p. 7, 68).

The cultural drive towards hegemonic femininity obstructs females' ability to freely express themselves in the world in ways that could lead to a more authentic, empowering, fulfilling and dignified life and self-expression and to reclaiming their power as human beings. It distracts them from political injustices, from the possibility of exploring and nurturing their unique talents, from engaging in relevant social and political causes and from developing all aspects of their personalities, instead being

[301] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to elaborate on this complex notion which may require further investigation.

culturally led towards confinement within limiting diktats (Blood, 2005; Duncan, 1994; McRobbie, 1997; Ross, 2013; Wolf, 1991) and beautifying practices. Females may believe they are expressing their unique identities by emulating hegemonic femininity, whereas they are often simply unwittingly busy cloning themselves to the fashion model *persona*, thereby losing individuality, empowerment and existential meaning.[302] In so doing, as seen above and in Chapters, Four to Six, they remain subordinated, dependent and docile to the – generally male – authority, therefore becoming highly controlled/controllable through insecurity and disempowerment.

The "obsessive cultural focus on the body" (Orbach, 2009, p. 72) and the over-emphasis and idolatry of youth (resulting in the ageing *taboo*, in contrast with the global increase in the geriatric population), alongside females' incessant attempts to look younger and to perform with juvenile personalities can also foster females/mothers' envy of teenagers/their daughters (as the findings in Chapters Five and Six indicate). Instead of being culturally enabled to be content at all stages of their lives and thus empowered to attend to and protect their daughters/young girls, intrasexual competition may dominate also – but not exclusively – because, as seen in Chapter Two, males have been socialised by models' imagery to evaluate females according to their thinness and youthfulness (Hargreaves & Tiggeman, 2003).

The patterns of intrasexual competition and envy, discussed in the sub-section dedicated to the relationship with others, are mirrored within the female population, resulting in a noticeable lack of sisterhood and intrasexual support that represent risk

[302] The *persona* is "a mask of the collective psyche, a mask that *feigns individuality*, making others and oneself believe that one is individual, whereas one is simply acting a role through which the collective psyche speaks" (Jung, 1953/1966, para. 245).

factors which further enhance a dominant patriarchal culture, disempowering and subordinating females, who appear to regulate one another and downgrade the standing out subject. The role of evolutionary psychology (Faer et al., 2005; Ferguson et al., 2011) as a possible explanation for such a phenomenon[303] was also explored in Chapter Two, however, further research is needed on the overlap of cultural, feminist, psychosocial, theoretical and psychoanalytic studies, for an in-depth exploration of this relevant theme is outside the scope of this thesis.

Opportunities to transform – for models and females

Personal agency

> Resilience is the product of agency: knowing that what you do can make a difference. (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 357)

Agency is largely understood to be the experience of being in charge of, and actively shaping, one's life (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 99), however, the efforts often may not be aimed at meeting one's needs but rather at fitting within specific cultural diktats, as discussed above. Furthermore, as seen in this thesis, the model is subservient to a complex system of powers (Chapters Four to Six), as are females within consumer culture (Chapter Two).

In the same manner of a child trapped within an abusive/neglecting environment being

[303] As seen in Chapter Two, according to evolutionary psychology, females are driven to compare themselves to highly desirable women as a drive to secure mates and to compete for status (Faer et al., 2005; Ferguson et al., 2011).

at the mercy of relevant others who govern his/her life, models have negligible agency/power within the modelling and fashion industries and females may have little awareness of the predicaments within which they are trapped, as discussed above and emerged from the empirical research. Furthermore, in the case of experiences of "depersonalisation", separation and detachment from the body, hence from the source which provides precious information about the environment, further challenges result, wherein the subject remains dependent on others and at the mercy of events (van der Kolk, 2015, pp. 101–102).

To thrive, females could retrieve conscious agency by taking actions that respond to their needs. Many models are able to attain a level of success by befriending one or more powerful tastemakers, albeit remaining dependent upon them. Typically, models hold very low degrees of self-efficacy[304] (Bandura, 1982), for they are simply called to execute the orders of tastemakers/relevant others. However, by diversifying the focus of attention (as is helpful for females in general) – for example, by investing in alternative activities and parallel interests, applying relativity to the importance of their looks and fashion modelling in their lives – they could reclaim agency and empowerment over their lives and manifest more fruitful outcomes. Cases of models who have been able to apply such a paradigm are rare (unless they are mentored by caring, competent guidance), for success in modelling still requires adherence to the industry's set of rules (as seen above and in Chapters Four to Six).[305] Furthermore, as the results indicate, models often perceive few alternatives to modelling as being more appealing, since they are still endeavouring to achieve the dream of the

[304] Self-efficacy refers to the degree to which a person is able to execute sets of action necessary to handle forthcoming situations or any given situation (Bandura, 1982).
[305] Fashion models' "private lives are strongly guided by professional imperatives, it can be argued that not only models' bodies, but their entire selves are being colonized by an industry that is greedy in nature" (Holla, forthcoming, p. 27).

“supermodel” or they feel incompetent to do anything else.

With regard to females, greater awareness and understanding of the themes discussed herein is necessary to break the oppressive cycle of chasing ego-ideals and developing socially constructed normative identities, perhaps by embracing the solutions that worked for models (presented in this sub-section, below and summarised in Chapter Eight).

Individuation

Healing developmental and relational trauma is key to breaking the transgenerational negative patterns, in order for individuals and the collective to flourish, whilst manifesting a future freed from past scripts (Maté, 2011). Drawing from classical Jungian ideas, and as seen in Chapter Two, the androgyne can be understood to be “the syzygies, the paired opposites [Animus and Anima], where the One is never separated from the Other, its antithesis”. This field of personal experience leads directly to the experience of individuation, the attainment of the Self”[306] (Jung, 1959/1969, para. 194). The process of individuation facilitates the integration of shadow parts into consciousness, whilst recognising the ego’s subordinate position to the self (Jung, 1959/1968, 1959/1969), thereby enabling people to manifest themselves more authentically in the world.

[306] As seen in Chapter Two, “Jung’s Self is the transcendent, unchanging part of ourselves, in stark contrast to our undulating ego, shadow, and complexes … a Self which transcends any identification we might have with our physical bodies” (Schnackenberg, 2016, p. xix).

According to Jung, as discussed in Chapter Two, the collective unconscious is the "repository of man's psychic heritage and possibilities … The more a person becomes him or herself, i.e., the more he submits to [individuation], the more distinctly he will vary from collective norms, standards, precepts, mores and values"[307] (Samuels et al., 1986/2013, p. 32). Through the process of individuation, facilitated by the "transcendent function",[308] wherein the conscious and unconscious can be brought together or integrated to "arrive at a new attitude" (Jung, 1960, para. 146), models – and females – could have the opportunity to integrate and nurture distinctive aspects of their personalities, rather than attempting to clone themselves into ideal beings. They could therefore develop in a more authentic, whole and spontaneous manner, capable of flowing flexibly from one role in – and stage of – life to another. Furthermore, an increased awareness about their socialising power and responsibility for any verbal or implicit messages disseminated through their actions, embodiment and imagery, could also result.

Reclaiming mind-body integration and body trust

"[P]roductive suffering"[309] (Davies, 2012, p. 6) can motivate people to embark on a journey to heal past wounds to achieve psychic transformation, as confirmed by the results. Research shows, and the results confirm, that embodied practices and sound support networks are key to facilitating the achievement of genuine recovery from developmental and relational trauma, in turn resulting in the breakup of the

[307] Jung viewed the process of identification with the "collective ideal" to represent the opposite of individuality and believed such identification could lead to self-inflation and "ultimately to megalomania" (Samuels et al., 1986/2013, p. 32).
[308] According to Jung the transcendent function "arises from union of conscious and unconscious contents" (1960, para. 131).
[309] "that which furthers our unfurling and development" (Davies, 2012, p. 6).

transgenerational transmission of maladaptive cultural patterns and trauma, such that "the imprints of the trauma [or neglect] on body, mind, and soul" are rescripted and the entire system becomes integrated, whilst the person, as a result, experiences true freedom from trauma/dissociation and therefore has the genuine opportunity to thrive (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 205).

According to van der Kolk

> Mainstream Western psychiatric and psychological healing traditions have paid scant attention to self-management. In contrast to the Western reliance on drugs and verbal therapies, other traditions from around the world rely on mindfulness, movement, rhythms, and action. Yoga in India, tai chi and qigong in China, and rhythmical drumming throughout Africa are just a few examples. (2015, pp. 210–211)

The results confirm his statement by indicating that some models who were seeking to heal were able to improve their emotional regulation and restore body-mind integration – therefore learning to trust their bodies and feel safe therein – thereby becoming empowered to navigate their lives after modelling through recourse to practices such as conscious and focused breathing (van der Kolk, 2015), "embodied mindfulness" (Khoury, Knäuper, Pagnini, Dyer, Chiesa, & Carrière, 2017, p. 1),[310] pranayama, yoga[311] and meditation. Such practices are a type of body work that can facilitate the "dynamic dance between body and mind" and its interconnectedness (Etherington, 2004, p. 212), in antithesis to the outcomes of objectifying and self-

[310] In particular, the valuable practice of noticing with curiosity, without judgement and being with/feeling/sensing body sensations and feelings in the moment as they arise in the body (Khoury, Knäuper, Pagnini, Dyer, Chiesa & Carrière, 2017).
[311] Yoga has been recognised as a practice which can restore reconnection with one's body (Emerson & Hopper, 2011; van der Kolk, 2015).

objectifying body moulding practices. Such results may inspire females to embark on similar paths towards personal healing and thriving.

It is not coincidental that the entire psychotherapeutic field is shifting towards recognition, and often integration into practice, of an embodied approach to treatment (Appel-Opper, 2010, 2015; Cornell, 2015; Cozolino, 2010; Hartley, 2008; Ogden & Fisher, 2015; Ogden et al., 2006; Orbach, 2009; Schore, 2016; Siegel, 2015; Sletvold, 2014; Stauffer, 2010; Staunton, 2002; Totton, 2002, 2015, 2018; van der Kolk, 2015). As such, this study holds that embodied practices, such as the adoption of a lifestyle encompassing regular practices of body awareness for psychic integration, stress release and neurobiological system support, are crucial for effective integrated healing, as recognised by model Gisele Bündchen (Conway & Thorbecke, 2018; Ogden & Fisher, 2015; Schnackenberg, 2016; Siegel, 2015). Furthermore, the clinical adoption of relational approaches, interpersonal neurobiology and techniques aimed at rescripting – and potentially reconsolidating – negative/traumatic memories, facilitate healing and brain rewiring (Arntz & Jacob, 2013; Badenoch, 2011; Ecker, Ticic, & Hulley, 2012; Ogden & Fisher, 2015; Parnell, 2007; Shapiro, 2001; Siegel, 2006, 2015).

This concludes the present discussion. We shall now move to the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

This concluding Chapter discusses the contributions, implications and limitations of the study, and makes some recommendations for future research.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As compared to the limited previous studies in the fashion and fashion modelling fields, this research produced deeper accounts and clearer results on the lived experience of fashion models. To achieve such a depth and breadth of perspective, as discussed in Chapter Three, the IPA methodology was enriched by embracing a pluralistic approach to qualitative research wherein personal (Chapter Four) and clinical (Chapter Six) dimensions interacted with the IPA accounts (Chapter Five). The results were interpreted through the lenses of psychosocial, cultural, depth psychological and feminist studies (Chapters Two and Seven). This study could therefore offer a substantive contribution to the fields of psychotherapy, psychology, depth psychology, psychosocial, feminist and cultural studies, for it offers an insight and an interpretation that could facilitate the understanding of the phenomena investigated herein, the themes emerging from Chapters Two, Four, Five and Six, and the macro notions to which they relate, as discussed in Chapter Seven, making this study relevant, interesting and useful (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 183).

As seen in Chapter Two, Meyer et al. proposed that “lower levels of need fulfilment might be attributable to internal rather than external causes”, and that models’ alleged “personality maladjustment [is] a pre-existing characteristic of individuals that are

drawn to a modelling career", hence their inability to fulfil their basic needs (2007, p. 14). The present study overturns such a conclusion by illuminating the multiple forces and dynamics that affect and shape models' embodiments and personalities. In so doing, this study provides clarity and knowledge and shows that, whilst an imago unconsciously draws models into modelling, offering invitations for the re-enactment of transgenerational developmental trauma, the drive to model is not only linked to a desire for personal redemption or visibility as a result of unmet self-object needs within the developmental age, but often the result of relevant caregivers' ambitions and status seeking forces, as well as a way to escape poverty or also a result of cultural conditioning. Furthermore, it appears hazardous, misattuned and pathologizing to label models with underlying "problematic personality profile[s]" (p. 15), since they embark on modelling in their childhood or early adolescence, when the personality is still in development. Thereby it is herein proposed that the fashion modelling environment provides opportunities for further enactments and for the remaking of older wounds but also shapes models in ways that may lead to the development of personality disorder features later in young adulthood. This study shows that the alleged "narcissistic, intensely emotional, non-conforming, and socially alienated personalities" proposed by Meyer et al. (2007, p. 14) do not necessarily result from an inherent personality trait of fashion models, but rather, may be socially constructed, representing the outcome of the adherence to consumer culture and the industry's required *habitus* further interacting with innate traits and developmental trauma.

Meyer et al.'s propositions that "urges for admiration, excessive needs for reassurance, and reckless disregard of social norms" that may "predispose certain individuals to achieve fame and celebrity status" (Meyer et al., 2007, p. 15), are clarified in this study wherein it is shown that such a *persona* is required and

constructed by the fashion and modelling industries, thereby is socially constructed. In other words, a models' adjustment to the modelling field produces a specific *persona*, rather than the *persona* being innate. Furthermore, as seen in Chapter Two and Seven, fame could be sought to adapt to consumer culture values, to avoid getting in touch with unconscious feeling of envy, and/or to feel desirable, as a way to cope with underlying feelings of worthlessness stemming from impingements in the relationship with the relevant other during the developmental age.

Carr and Mercer (2017) argue that modelling can "act as a catalyst into adulthood" (p. 64), and that models can experience "growth in confidence and maturity" whereas this study, as discussed in Chapter Seven, shows that models' embodiments and personalities are both sexualised and infantilised, shaped in ways that protract childhood, adolescence and dependency on the adults that surround them. Indeed, young models are catapulted in a world of adults, having to cope whilst experiencing a systematic lack of competent and caring adult guidance, protection and support. It emerges from this study that fashion models experience an extended childhood/adolescence, a fusion with a specific *persona* with *puella aeterna* characteristics wherein, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, the model plays a bubbly *persona* who performs with high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence as a response to the industry requirements, whilst the inner experience is often one of shame, worthlessness and/or incompetency. This study confirms Carr and Mercer's finding related to a model's increased self-critical view of her appearance and to modelling being a "way of life" (p. 51).

The study produced, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, the in-depth, distinctive and truthful lived experiences of fashion models, presenting the realness, and at times

rawness, of what it is actually like to be a fashion model, the psychodynamic implications for fashion models, as well as sensitive topics and issues within the fashion and modelling fields (as discussed in Chapter Seven and as emerged from Chapters Four to Six). The fashion model, often objectified, as seen in previous Chapters, is generally only encountered at the level of the surface, over her appearance. Herein, instead, it is her internal world that is of interest, attuned to and encountered. The model is met empathetically as a person in her own right, with her feelings, experiences, thoughts, unmet emotional needs and vulnerabilities. She becomes as a result humanised in the eyes of the reader, who is enabled to see beyond the surface. The fashion model's lived experience and the complex system of forces that shape her embodiment and personality, as well as the dynamics leading to the personal and interpersonal difficulties she experiences, are illuminated as a result. This outcome could enable the reader's connection with the person of the fashion model. It could also facilitate a better understanding of her predicament and possibly the access to analogous personal experiences. It could potentially support the reader's meaning-making about the interplay of different forces in the shaping of models' and humans' subjectivities and embodiments, thereby offering a contribution to the fields of cultural, feminist, psychosocial, psychological, psychotherapeutic and depth psychological studies.

By delving into the lived experience of fashion models, this study provides a balanced insight into the reality of fashion modelling, thereby overturning the image that most, even reflecting, people hold about fashion models, a fictitious image that has been sold to consumers as an ideal lifestyle (Wissinger, 2007, 2016). This study thereby transforms a powerful image in the collective consciousness. Such a contribution could be relevant for models, prospective models and their caregivers who may be

helped to make better informed decisions about embarking on and operating within this employment and field. It may also be helpful to consumer culture, psychotherapy, psychology, and depth psychology, to cultural, feminist and psychosocial studies, and to the population at large by facilitating understanding and clarity, relevant to each field, thereby potentially inspiring change and further research.

A significant, and unexpected, finding which emerged from the empirical research (Chapters Four to Six) is related to the systematic transgenerational transmission of developmental and early relational trauma within the participants' backgrounds, as discussed in Chapter Seven, in antithesis to the cultural myth about the assumed "fantastic" life of the fashion model. Relevant parallels with the general population also can be drawn, as illustrated by previous literature in the field (as presented in Chapter Two and as witnessed in my consulting room). As discussed in Chapter Seven, this finding indicates that, unless wounds are healed, trauma, being the result of adverse life experiences, becomes re-enacted, producing and reproducing itself and maladaptive culture. The implications could be relevant for the fields of psychotherapy, psychology, and depth psychology as well as for psychosocial, gender, feminist and cultural studies, and it is hoped this finding could inspire a focus on healing personal wounds to generate a positive change in the collective and the breaking of maladaptive personal and systemic transgenerational patterns.

Whilst some elements of the myth of the fashion model's "fantastic" life are real, for she can be privileged and overindulged by both the industry and the world at large, this study clarifies that the admired object of desire, being also a cultural signifier of high status and power, is not the person of the model *per se* but her youth and ultrathin prepubescent/pubescent embodiment, which appear to be fetishized. Privilege and

admiration are typically lost when the model outgrows the ultrathin prepubescent/pubescent embodiment, as seen in Chapters Four to Six. The implications of these findings could be relevant for gender, feminist, sociocultural, psychological, depth psychological and theoretical studies, for therapists and for females and people at large, since, as discussed in Chapter Seven, they are revelatory of a cultural idolisation of youth and immediate gratification, resulting in the problematic collective absence of mature femininity and of *senex*.[312] Furthermore, the deliberately relentless sexualisation of prepubescent/pubescent girls within capitalistic societies, as emerged from Chapters Four to Six and further confirmed by recent literature (as discussed in Chapters Two and Seven), raises concerns about a cultural tendency to promote lust for underage girls, thereby possibly increasing covert paedophilic practices.

This study illuminates relevant dimensions relating to individuals – albeit fuelled by the environmental dimensions – such as identity, femininity, eating disorders, body image, overcompensating beautifying practices, embodiment/disembodiment, self-esteem, gender role behaviour, intrapsychic and interpersonal aspects of real lived experience that are hoped to support the psychotherapeutic work with the larger – especially female – population. In particular, the emergence from the modelling experience and discussion of the themes of envy, intrasexual competitiveness and the gaze, as seen in Chapters Two and Seven, could offer relevant contributions to the fields of feminist and depth psychological studies. Furthermore, in Chapter Seven a distinctive line of thought is discussed which considers relevant sociocultural forces underpinning the *aetiology* of eating disorders and overcompensating compulsive practices (linked to

[312] As discussed in Chapter Seven.

the cultural idealisation and sexualisation of the pubescent/prepubescent body, as emerged from Chapters Four to Six).

The study also highlights the parallels, which emerged from Chapters Four to Six and were discussed in Chapters Two and Seven, between the experience of models and the *puella aeterna* archetype alongside a cultural devaluation of the maternal feminine, thereby facilitating, it is hoped, a better understanding of the multidisciplinary forces at play underpinning psychological discomfort and issues related to body image discontent. Such insights could inform the personal and collective need to explore and foster a mature and maternal femininity, enhancing the entirety of its multiple qualities and values, in contrast to the cultural idolisation of the compressed eternal *puella* icon. This outcome could honour all stages of human development, potentially supporting a cultural retrieval of the numinous feminine and *senex*, such that the process of subjective and collective maturation and the differentiated, free expression of the multiple feminine qualities and values are no longer obstructed.

By illuminating both the strategies generally adopted by models to cope and those that helped them overcome their struggles and psychic pain, as emerged from Chapters Four to Six and discussed in Chapter Seven, this study could provide a resource, where applicable, for prospective models and their parents, models, therapists, and females in general, as well as for the fields of psychological and depth psychological, gender and feminist studies. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Seven, a “toolbox” of specific practices and approaches to healing emerges from the findings to help restore psychic, body-mind integration and wellbeing, in contrast to the general cultural tendency to objectify and produce false bodies (Orbach, 2005), split off from feelings, the relational and spiritual dimensions.

Among the most relevant supportive – and healing – factors emerging from the findings (Chapters Four to Six) that result in the abovementioned “toolbox”, aside from the clear need for a cultural change within the fashion and modelling industries towards the ethical approach to models, the study illuminates the need for a model’s profession to commence at a much later age and suggests modelling could be extended into older age. Furthermore, the following dimensions of needs emerge: a process of individuation to enable, through the “transcendent function” (Jung, 1960, para. 131), the restoration of individuals’ wholeness; competent, reliable and caring adult guidance; the need for stability; the need for self-expression and assertiveness; the need for embodied practices to maintain or retrieve integration with body, mind and soul (for example, mindfulness, meditation, pranayama breathing and yoga); the focus on emotional needs, self-compassion, self-acceptance, self-actualisation, and retrieval of the trust in one’s perceptions. It also highlights the importance of education and diversification of focus of activities to avoid a fusion with the *persona*.[313] The implications of this contribution could support therapists to assist their clients, where appropriate, to reduce or avoid the reproduction of maladaptive cultural and hegemonic feminine identity and to express more freely their uniqueness – thereby also potentially offering a contribution to feminist studies.

The results (Chapters Four to Six) indicate that the need for competent and caring adult guidance and the need for effective parenting in models’ lives represent the two principal overarching needs – albeit rare in the presented data – that would act as relevant protective factors and could facilitate the optimisation of any opportunity

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[313] See Chapter Seven for a discussion on each of these points.

arising within the modelling journey and in relation to alternative career prospects after modelling, as well as the circumvention of the major pitfalls. When such fundamental needs are met, models are also better placed to embody boundaries and respond more effectively to unreasonable demands, whilst meeting their personal needs and avoiding overidentification with the modelling role and/or stigma. Additionally, they could embody inspirational role models for the world at large. Furthermore, by reducing the exposure to developmental trauma, the chain of transgenerational transmission could be broken and the model could thereby be better placed to respond to life's circumstances in a more effective manner.

The understanding of the psychological and psychodynamic implications for models could offer a relevant contribution for the modelling employment itself as well as for the fashion and fashion-modelling industries and for study of these fields. In particular, the fashion and modelling industries could be inspired into re-thinking their practices and the current dominant agenda that still promotes hegemonic gender role behaviour, feminine identity and beauty. This may result in a shift towards the broadening of the image of beauty, bringing diversity into looks and femininity. The implications may also be relevant to females in general, currently oppressed by the cultural diktats of hegemonic feminine identity.

This study may inspire readers to challenge pre-existing assumptions, thereby facilitating a shift towards renewed and holistic understandings and perspectives of the findings emerging from this research. A heightened awareness and understanding could enable the integration of – individual and collective – shadow parts into consciousness and the change of unethical cultural practices, which in turn could

permit the subjective conscious choice of informed actions, behaviours and responses (Madison, 2012; Thomas, 1993).

In the "#MeToo" and Time's Up[314] age, inappropriate practices within the fashion and fashion-modelling industries, as seen in Chapters Four to Six and discussed in Chapter Seven, will continue to be exposed, inviting the stakeholders to behave more ethically – as is already taking place, for example, in the film industry. As such, this study offers a contribution towards a radical transformation of the industry *praxis,* potentially resulting in a more ethical approach to fashion models, such that boundaries are set and models can be respected as human beings in their own right.

The study also has deep implications for sociology and psychosocial studies, for it provides an insight into the depths of the psyche on relevant social and cultural dimensions, exposing them such that any reflection on the phenomena discussed herein would need to take into account studies, such as this one, which explore the actual lived experience.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

A major strength of this study concerns the depth and truthfulness of the accounts, revealing insights into personal, psychodynamic, sociocultural and clinical dimensions of the phenomena under investigation. The peer reviewed data interpretation also represents a strength, being the result of the interaction with the participant, the

[314] The Time's Up is a movement against sexual assault and harassment. It was founded by celebrities from the film industry in January 2018.

hermeneutic process and the analysis of the emerging themes from multiple angles and disciplines, further enhanced by the active supervisory participation.

A limitation pertains to its qualitative nature, thereby to the generalisability of the findings, given qualitive research requires focus to be on a small number of participants in order to achieve depth. However, this limitation is partially overcome by the existence of recent quantitative studies, as presented in Chapter Seven, showing that several of the results presented herein overlap with the findings in the Model Alliance 2017 survey (Rodgers, Ziff, Lowy, Yu, & Austin, 2017) and the Model Alliance 2012 survey (Model Alliance, 2020).

The pluralistic approach to qualitative research entailed that both the clinical vignettes and the autoethnographic narrative had to be condensed, posing limitations on the narratives related to the scope, but also strengths related to the exposure of sensitive topics and nuanced clinical and personal dimensions, enriching the entire project (for a fuller discussion on the strengths or limitations related to IPA, AE and the pluralistic approach, the reader may refer to Chapter Three).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Since it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore further certain of its findings, some recommendations for future research are made on the following areas (for discussion of these points, the reader may refer to Chapter Seven):

- Cultural, psychosocial and depth psychological dimensions of mothers' envy and competition towards their daughter/s;

- Cultural, psychosocial and depth psychological dimensions of mothers' punitive/critical/demanding parenting style;
- Cultural, psychosocial and depth psychological dimensions of the sexualisation and sexual objectification of increasingly younger girls;
- The question of whether the *puella aeterna* may be a cultural script developing out of the *puella aeterna* archetype or whether the archetype emerges culturally and possesses the individual from the inside;
- A historical study of the fashion industry and the comparison of today's lived experiences of models with those of models from earlier times of fashion modelling, to illuminate the developments of the phenomena and themes presented herein;
- A study exploring cultural, psychosocial and depth psychological dimensions related to the face and facial expression of contemporary high-fashion models;
- A similar study conducted with male models to compare and contrast findings based on gender;
- A similar study conducted with fashion models at the entry stage of modelling to capture the dimensions of excitement, hope and other possible interesting themes, comparing them with those that emerged from this study – which instead, as seen, focused on models closer to the exit stage of modelling to capture how the fashion and modelling cultural *praxis* shaped them.
- Further research to explore the cultural thrust to defeminise women and the apparent cultural attack on the maternal feminine.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study shows, as emerged from Chapters Four to Six and discussed in Chapter Seven, how developmental and relational trauma and culture – including gender role behaviour – are transgenerationally transmitted, produced and reproduced, resulting in hegemonic femininity and disconnection within Western societies – as epitomised by the look and the lived experience of fashion models who, in turn, unwittingly socialise females into the disconnected hegemonic femininity into which they are moulded by powerful tastemakers.

The overarching, ontological question of what makes humans human emerges (Hauke, 2005), as well as the relevance of retrieving one's humanness (including the recognition that we do need others (Klein, 1987)); the development of "our capacity for being in relationship with each other"; the expansion of personal and collective consciousness; an attitude that embraces genuine "caring about ourselves and caring about the world" (in other words *caritas* (Jung, 1957, p. 74; Hauke, 2005, pp. 1, 12, 215)) and the necessity for authentic self-expression – within a generally objectifying capitalist culture that dictates constricted, fictitious and monolithic gendered identities).

The cultural quest for perfection – chiefly of appearance – epitomised by models' lived experience and mirrored by the predicament of many females in Western societies, is in deep countertrend to the essentially imperfect nature of human beings. The "[r]ecognition of the shadow… leads to the modesty we need in order to acknowledge imperfection", to achieve self-knowledge, wholeness and for "human relationship to be established" (Jung, 1957, p. 73). The disconnection from self, body and others resulting from the drive to be perfect and self-objectification can lead, as seen in Chapters Four to Six, to alienation and to a fracture in the spiritual and human dimensions of existence (Hauke, 2005). The latter represent metaphors for a large

proportion of a contemporary, self-absorbed, achievement-driven culture that tends to seek status above human values, appearance over substance, displaying greed and excess over contentment (Jung, 1957).

Fashion models' lived experiences, so permeated with embodiment, invite us to acknowledge the wisdom (McBride, 2013; Ogden & Fisher, 2015) and meaning (Grosz, 1994) held by bodies. Bodies speak "clearly to those who know how to listen", revealing "what words cannot describe" (Ogden & Fisher, 2015, p. 25; van der Kolk, 2015). Attuning to one's body sensations and responses facilitates the process of hearing and seeing oneself and ultimately of awareness of self and the outer world. Embodied practices facilitate such a process, the progressive familiarisation with the "reactions in the body" (Biddulph, 2007, pp. 8–9) and the awareness of one's body sensations, such that the relevant information these carry about what is happening in the moment and one's needs can be understood and responded to effectively. Furthermore, through such a process, the "precious energy [they carry can, where appropriate,] be transformed" (Biddulph, 2007, p. 8; van der Kolk, 2015), rather than enacted impulsively/compulsively (Schnackenberg, 2016; Siegel, 2006).

In line with Jung's vision, "the only way to bring about genuine and lasting change in society is by bringing about change in the individuals who compose that society" (as cited in Main, 2006, p. 46). The process of embodied individuation appears to be a central endeavour for models and for females in our culture, which could assist a break away from the commonly experienced psychic imprisonment of *persona*, ideal self, toxic shame, disconnection and disempowerment, as witnessed in my consulting room and as emerged from Chapters Two, Four, Five and Six. Through such a process, the broadening and deepening of consciousness could be facilitated (Jung, 1957, p. 76);

dignity, self-knowledge, wholeness, integration, interconnectedness, and therefore humanness thus could progressively be reclaimed.

“[A]nyone who has insight into his own actions, and has thus found access to the unconscious, involuntarily exercises an influence on his environment” (Jung, 1957, p. 76): culturally and personally conscious fashion models, supported by their striking socialising power and by a transition in the fields of fashion and modelling towards ethical *praxis*, could serve a relevant renewed and adaptive socialising function for the larger population, one that could facilitate a process of embodied individuation in people and in turn people’s fulfilment of their potential. “These reflections are not intended as an appeal to idealism”; acknowledging that real and enduring psychic and cultural change require time, they are intended to raise awareness about the necessity for change in the individual psyche such that cultural change can result (Jung, 1957, p. 74).

On a personal level, my journey during this study, led by a constellation of synchronicities,[315] has been a deeply moving, unexpectedly therapeutic and transformative gift, albeit also extremely emotionally challenging. I was able to make sense of personal and cultural dimensions that previously I had neither fully integrated nor entirely understood, thus overcome lingering confusion, and at times denial, about our cultural *status quo* regarding the phenomena investigated herein. I am deeply grateful also for the better understanding of the parallel dimensions that I have been

[315] The multiple synchronicities that guided me through to completion of this study may confirm “the possible usefulness of synchronicity for illuminating contemporary social and cultural events”, since the results could be of considerable social and cultural significance (Main, 2006, p. 36).

able to observe since beginning this study, both in the world and within my consulting room, pertaining to the larger population and especially females.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ADVERTISEMENT

We want to hear your voice!

Would you like to share your experience of fashion modelling?

- *Are you – or have you been – a female international fashion model?*
- *Have you been modelling for at least 5 consecutive years?*
- *Do you wish to explore your experience of fashion modelling?*

If you answered YES to these questions, you may be eligible to participate in an exciting research study, the purpose being to give a voice to the in-depth lived experience of fashion modelling.

You will have the opportunity to share your valuable experience with the researcher, a former international fashion model herself. Your contribution will enrich our understanding of the topic and provide relevant perspective.

This study is being conducted at Essex University, Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ, UK.

Please email Adriana Giotta at ag17122@Essex.ac.uk for more information or to take part in this study.

APPENDIX B: MESSAGE SENT IN SUPPORT OF ADVERTISMENT

Dear

I am a former international fashion model. I am now a researcher and I am in the process of doing a wonderful study on the experience of fashion modelling.

Models are too often seen but not heard, and this needs to change. It would be so great to hear your voice and experience. Your voice matters and your experience is pivotal for us researchers to learn about this field and for women to make sense of some of the similar experiences to those of models. Would you like to take part? I will also be sharing my experience in this study.

Everything you share will be anonymised to protect your identity.

Thank you for your time in advance.

Warm regards,

Adriana

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

ESSEX UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

11/12/2018

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you so wish. Ask me if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

Study title

Clinical, cultural and personal dimensions of fashion modelling as a basis for phenomenological and depth psychological exploration of femininity in Western societies

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to investigate international fashion models' lived, embodied experience of fashion modelling. It is often the case that fashion modelling employment poses particular challenges for the fashion models involved and it is important for us to understand better the subjective lived experience of fashion modelling and the particular relationship with the body it requires such that the fields of depth psychological, cultural, fashion and fashion models' studies can learn and grow from it. The results of this research could deepen our understanding and contribute to helping improve awareness within contemporary Western societies. The study is likely to be completed within twenty-two months.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you have been a female international fashion model for at least five consecutive years. A total of 3 or 4 participants who fulfil these criteria will be taking part in the study.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this research study. If you do decide to take part you will be given a privacy notice that will explain how your data will be collected and used, and be asked to give your consent. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, in which case, any information you have given will not be used for the study and your data (interview recordings and transcripts) will be destroyed. Please note that choosing to either take part or not take part in the study will have no impact on your current/future employment.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Your involvement in the research will entail two interviews of around one hour each conducted on different days, within approximately one week of each other. This will be conducted by the researcher who will ask you some open questions about your lived experiences of fashion modelling. The researcher may ask you further questions during your account. The interviews will be audio recorded, with your permission, and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to read the transcript in order to check that you are happy with what is written. At a later stage

the interview transcript will be analysed and interpreted by the researcher, who may contact you to ask for clarification on parts of the interview which are to be included in the analysis. You might also be asked for your thoughts on the analysis and interpretations offered, and you will have the opportunity to review sections of your account to be included in the study.

What do I have to do?

Taking part in this study entails your willingness to talk openly about your lived, embodied experiences of fashion modelling in two recorded interviews of approximately one hour each. It also requires your willingness to be contacted subsequently during the research period as outlined above.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is possible that talking about your experiences of fashion modelling may take you back to times of vulnerability and might reawaken painful feelings. It is recommended that you contact a therapist if you feel you require support. The researcher can give you information about sources of support.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By participating in this study you will have the opportunity to voice your personal experience with the researcher, a former international fashion model. Such a process may support your personal exploration and further your understanding of your experience in this arena thus far. Furthermore, the information gained from your experiences, along with others, may further our understanding of the topic, whilst improving awareness at a larger cultural scale.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material. Any information about you or people you mention in your narrative which is used will be anonymised, your name and personal details as well as those of other people you discuss will be removed and changed so that you or they cannot be recognised from it. Research data will be kept securely at all times. Laptops, other devices and electronic files will be password protected. All data will be stored, analysed and reported in compliance with UK Data Protection legislation and with the University's policy on Academic Integrity. The data generated in the course of the research is required to be kept securely in paper or electronic form for a period of ten years after the completion of a research project.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be published as a PhD thesis, potentially used in presentations, articles based on the research may be published in academic and practitioner journals, or rewritten in the form of a book or book chapters. The researcher can tell you where you can obtain a copy of the published results. You and the people you talked about will not be identified in any report/publication.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The researcher is conducting the study as a student of Essex University, department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic studies. The research is self-funded.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by the Essex University Research Ethics Committee.

What should I do if I want to take part?

You can 'opt in' to the study by contacting the researcher directly via email (please see contact details below). The deadline for your notification of your decision on whether to participate is 15 April 2019.

Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study or you have a complaint, in the first instance please contact me (see contact details below for Adriana Giotta). If are still concerned or you think your complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction, please contact the Director of Research in the principal investigator's department (see below). If you are still not satisfied, please contact the University's Research Governance and Planning Manager (Sarah Manning-Press).

Researcher's contact details

Adriana Giotta
Telephone +44 (0)7500904323
Email: ag17122@essex.ac.uk

Director of Research Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies

Dr. Jochem Willemsen,
Telephone +44 (0)1206 873903
Email jawill@essex.ac.uk

University of Essex Research Governance and Planning Manager

Sarah Manning-Press
Telephone +44 (0)1206 873561
Email sarahm@essex.ac.uk

Thank you

We thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

Participant Identification Number:

Title of Project: Clinical, cultural and personal dimensions of fashion modelling as a basis for phenomenological and depth psychological exploration of femininity in Western societies.

Name of Researcher: Adriana Giotta

Please tick box

1	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 11/12/2018 for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	☐
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. If I choose to withdraw, I can decide what happens to any data I have provided.	☐
3	I understand that my interview will be taped and subsequently transcribed.	☐
4	I agree to take part in the above study.	☐
5	I agree that this form that bears my name and signature may be seen by a designated auditor.	☐
6	I agree to the use of anonymised data and quotations in publications.	Yes ☐ No ☐
7	I agree that an anonymised data set, gathered for this study may be stored in a specialist data centre/repository relevant to this subject area for future research.	Yes ☐ No ☐

____________________ ____________ __________________

Name of participant   Date   Signature

____________________ ____________ __________________

Researcher   Date   Signature

1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher

University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ
Telephone: +44 (0)1206 874321

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Could you please share your experience of fashion modelling? (**principal question**)

Prompts:

Could you share your experience of attending castings / of working with fashion photographers / with fashion models' agents / for editorial shootings / for commercial shootings / for catwalks and the fashion show season / body image / eating / exercise

Could you please share your experience of:

Money in fashion modelling / starting fashion modelling / ending fashion modelling / your life as a fashion model?

Could you please share:

a brief history of your employment as a fashion model from when it started to now / what your fashion modelling employment entailed and requested of you?

If you had to describe what fashion modelling means/meant to you, what would you say?

What are your thoughts and feelings on fashion modelling?

How has your life changed from before you became a fashion model?

How do/did you feel when you are at a casting/ shooting / on a catwalk?

Prompt: physically, emotionally, mentally

How did ending of modelling come about? (where applicable)

How did you feel when you were approaching the end of / when you ended fashion modelling? (where applicable)

How did you come to terms with the end of fashion modelling?

How was life after modelling different?

APPENDIX F: ETHICAL APPROVAL

Application for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants

This application form must be completed for any research involving human participants conducted in or by the University. 'Human participants' are defined as including living human beings, human beings who have recently died (cadavers, human remains and body parts), embryos and foetuses, human tissue and bodily fluids, and human data and records (such as, but not restricted to medical, genetic, financial, personnel, criminal or administrative records and test results including scholastic achievements). Research must not commence until written approval has been received (from departmental Director of Research/Ethics Officer, Faculty Ethics Sub-Committee (ESC) or the University's Ethics Committee). This should be borne in mind when setting a start date for the project. Ethical approval cannot be granted retrospectively and failure to obtain ethical approval prior to data collection will mean that these data cannot be used.

Applications must be made on this form, and submitted electronically, to your departmental Director of Research/Ethics Officer. A signed copy of the form should also be submitted. Applications will be assessed by the Director of Research/Ethics Officer in the first instance, and may then passed to the ESC, and then to the University's Ethics Committee. A copy of your research proposal and any necessary supporting documentation (e.g. consent form, recruiting materials, etc) should also be attached to this form.

A full copy of the signed application will be retained by the department/school for 6 years following completion of the project. The signed application form cover sheet (two pages) will be sent to the Research Governance and Planning Manager in the REO as Secretary of the University's Ethics Committee.

1. **Title of project:**

   Clinical, cultural and personal dimensions of fashion modelling as a basis for phenomenological and depth psychological exploration of femininity in Western societies

2. The title of your project will be published in the minutes of the University Ethics Committee. If you object, then a reference number will be used in place of the title.
   Do you object to the title of your project being published? Yes ☐ / No ☒

3. This Project is: ☐ Staff Research Project ☒ Student Project

4. Principal Investigator(s) (students should also include the name of their supervisor):

Name:	Department:
Student: Adriana Giotta	Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies
Supervisor: Prof. Andrew Samuels	Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies

5. **Proposed start date**: December 2018

6. **Probable duration**: 10 months

7. Will this project be externally funded? Yes ☐ / No ☒
   If Yes,

8. What is the source of the funding?

9. If external approval for this research has been given, then only this cover sheet needs to be submitted

External ethics approval obtained (attach evidence of approval) Yes ☐/ No ☐

Declaration of Principal Investigator:

The information contained in this application, including any accompanying information, is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and correct. I/we have read the University's *Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants* and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in this application in accordance with the guidelines, the University's *Statement on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice* and any other conditions laid down by the University's Ethics Committee. I/we have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my/our obligations and the rights of the participants.

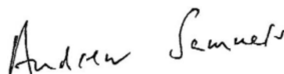
Signature(s): .... ……………………………..

Name(s) in block capitals: ADRIANA GIOTTA.. ………………………..

Date: 13/11/2018…………………………………………………………………………

Supervisor's recommendation (Student Projects only):

I have read and approved the quality of both the research proposal and this application.

Supervisor's signature: 

Outcome:

The departmental Director of Research (DoR) / Ethics Officer (EO) has reviewed this project and considers the methodological/technical aspects of the proposal to be appropriate to the tasks proposed. The DoR / EO considers that the investigator(s) has/have the necessary qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in this application, and to deal with any emergencies and contingencies that may arise.

This application falls under Annex B and is approved on behalf of the ESC ☒

This application is referred to the ESC because it does not fall under Annex B ☐

This application is referred to the ESC because it requires independent scrutiny ☐

Signature(s):

Name(s) in block capitals: JOCHEM WILLEMSEN

Department: ……PPS………………………………………………………..…………….……

Date: ……11/12/2018……………………………………………………………………………..

The application has been approved by the ESC ☐

The application has not been approved by the ESC ☐

The application is referred to the University Ethics Committee ☐

Signature(s): .... …………………………………..

Name(s) in block capitals: …... …………………….

Faculty: ……………………….…………………………………..……………………….…………

Date: ………………………….……………………………………………………………………

Details of the Project

1. **Brief outline of project** (This should include the purpose or objectives of the research, brief justification, and a summary of methods but should not include theoretical details. It needs to be understandable to a lay person, i.e. in everyday language that is free from jargon, and the reviewer must be able to understand what participants will be asked to do.).

The purpose of this project is to collect rich qualitative data to explore the lived experience of fashion models. The objective is to interpret the emerging data to facilitate the understanding of – and to draw conclusions on – the phenomena under investigation. This is a necessary project because of the scarcity within existing literature of the in-depth exploration of the lived experience of fashion models who represent a socially influential cluster. The results could enable a better understanding and a greater awareness of the many challenges a large trope of females experience in contemporary Western societies. The methodologies utilized are autoethnography and interpretative phenomenological analysis of a small group of participants. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews and will be further supported by clinical vignettes stemming from the researcher's clinical work with fashion models.

Participant Details

2. Will the research involve human participants? (indicate as appropriate)

Yes ☒ No ☐

3. Who are they and how will they be recruited? (If any recruiting materials are to be used, e.g. advertisement or letter of invitation, please provide copies).

The participants are former or current professional international fashion models who have been working as professional international fashion models for at least 5 years.

The participants will be recruited through networking, advertisements and by receiving a letter of invitation (see attached copies).

Will participants be paid or reimbursed?

No

4. Could participants be considered:

(a) to be vulnerable (e.g. children, mentally-ill)? Yes ☐/ No ☒

(b) to feel obliged to take part in the research? Yes ☐/ No ☒

If the answer to either of these is yes, please explain how the participants could be considered vulnerable and why vulnerable participants are necessary for the research.

Informed Consent

5. Will the participant's consent be obtained for involvement in the research orally or in writing?[1] (If in writing, please attach an example of written consent for approval):

Yes ☒ No ☐

If in writing, please tick to confirm that you have attached an example of written consent ☒

Consent should be obtained before data is collected. How will consent be obtained and recorded? Who will be giving consent? Please indicate at what stage in the data collection process consent will be obtained. If consent is not possible, explain why. Firstly, the participants will receive the letter of invitation or they may respond to the advertisement. Once they agree to participate in the study, they will receive the written consent form and the participant information sheet. The participants wishing to embark on the study will be requested to sign the consent form and to return it to the researcher (see 3 attached copies).

Confidentiality / Anonymity

6. If the research generates personal data, describe the arrangements for maintaining anonymity and confidentiality or the reasons for not doing so.

All identifiable data (fieldnotes, diaries, case notes, completed semi-structured interviews transcripts) will be encrypted. All data collection instruments will use study codes (each participant will be assigned a study ID). Each participant data document will only indicate the participant's unique study ID. Any identifier (such as names, addresses, employers' information) will be encrypted, removed or obscured from any collected data, document or transcript. Several techniques will be adopted to encrypt and de-identify depending on the case: use of pseudonyms; change of the person's demographic information; construction of composite characters (compressing several characters into one); fictionalisation of part of the narratives. In situations where the identity of a participant or of a person emerging from a narrative cannot be protected and where consent is not granted (such as for eg. members of the family for the autoethnographic narrative), such people and their inputs will be omitted from the narrative and will not appear in the text and data at all.

Data Access, Storage and Security

7. Describe the arrangements for storing and maintaining the security of any personal data collected as part of the project. Please provide details of those who will have access to the data.

Data will be stored in locked locations and assigned security codes for computerised record. Interview recordings will be locked in a separate location and access to this document will be restricted, i.e.

[1] If the participant is not capable of giving informed consent on their own behalf or is below the age of consent, then consent must be obtained from a carer, parent or guardian. However, in the case of incompetent adults, the law in the United Kindom does not recognize proxy consent by a relative. In addition, the University Ethics Committee is not able to provide ethical approval for such research. It needs to be approved by a Health Research Authority National Research Ethics Service Research Ethics Committee.

Access to identifiable information will be limited only to the researcher and her supervisor.

Data Sharing

8. Do you intend to share or archive data generated from this project?

Yes ☒ No ☐ (If no, please skip to question 10)

If Yes,

Please describe briefly and continue to question 9. (*Relevant considerations include funder, publisher, or other requirements for shared data. If you have completed a data management plan, the section on sharing/archiving may be copied here*.):
The results of this study will be published as a PhD thesis. Potentially, articles based on the research will be published in academic and practitioner journals, or rewritten in the form of a book/book chapter.

9. Please indicate the means by which you intend to share/archive your data:

Openly available from a data repository (*e.g. ~~UK Data Archive~~, University of Essex Research Data Repository, ~~other repository~~*)	☒
Available via a data repository but with controlled access (*Examples of access controls include registration with the repository, requesting permission from the depositor, and data access committees.*)	☐
Other (*Please provide details*)	☐

10.

If you answered 'no' to question 8 above, please provide specific reasons why the data will not be made available (*e.g. participants have not consented, sensitivity of the data, intellectual property restrictions, etc.*)

It is a requirement of the Data Protection Act 1998 to ensure individuals are aware of how information about them will be managed. Please tick the box to confirm that participants will be informed of the data access, storage and security arrangements described above. If relevant, it is appropriate for this to be done via the participant information sheet ☒

Further guidance about the collection of personal data for research purposes and compliance with the Data Protection Act can be accessed at the following weblink. Please tick the box to confirm that you have read this guidance
(http://www.essex.ac.uk/records_management/policies/data_protection_and_research.aspx) ☒

Risk and Risk Management[2]

11. Are there any potential risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants or subjects associated with the proposed research?

 Yes ☒ No ☐

 If Yes,

Please provide full details of the potential risks and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise the risks:
As a result of the exploration, the participants may experience the surfacing of difficult emotions for which the participant may need the support from a professional psychotherapist. The researcher will provide a list of resources.

12. Are there any potential risks to researchers as a consequence of undertaking this proposal that are greater than those encountered in normal day-to-day life?

 Yes ☒ No ☐

 If Yes,

Please provide full details and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise the risks:
Risks deriving from personal exposure for the autoethnographer: The researcher is protected throughout the research process by her regular supervisory process and can reach out to a psychotherapist should there be a need for it.

13. Will the research involve individuals below the age of 18 or individuals of 18 years and over with a limited capacity to give informed consent?

 Yes ☐ No ☒

 If Yes, a Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure (DBS check) may be required.[3]

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[2] Advice on risk assessment is available from the University's Health and Safety Advisers (email safety@essex.ac.uk; tel 2944) and on the University's website at www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/risk/default.aspx.
[3] Advice on the Disclosure and Barring Service and requirement for checks is available: (1) for staff from Employment Compliance Manager in Human Resources (email staffing@essex.ac.uk) and on the University's website at http://www.essex.ac.uk/hr/policies/docs/CRBdocumentpolicy.pdf; (2) for students from the University's Academic Section.

14. Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of the Faculty Ethics Sub-Committee and/or University Ethics Committee.

No