



Second-hand and the Tacit

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ABSTRACT

Methodologies of affect and embodied materiality are key components of the second-hand embued in clothing and fabrics. These ideas are the unspoken, the hidden areas of tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is seen as the raw data in research, which reveals itself as strands; it is visible data driven by its transparency, such as the predictions for growth in second-hand markets over the next five years.

Making is a key component of tacit knowledge, as it is in the making where hidden knowledge can be made and embedded. The emotion and affect embodied in the second-hand can be embedded in the visible repairs or the additions that can create unique meanings within artefacts, beyond looking at the fabric manufacture, or garments on the surface. It is this hidden origin which is the tacit, and the reasons why the second-hand can have value and a unique quality not necessarily attributed to those garments made at the designer level.

The second-hand does play an important role in the original materials, where tacit knowledge forms the part of embodied materiality, encompassing the meaning of the work in making, and making new meaning in repairing. This application of tacit knowledge can be embedded, as used fabrics can be used to make new uses for materials that can hold emotional meaning. Using these seamless methodologies allows another meaning that reveals itself in the work that goes beyond the surface fabrics of the second-hand.

This article is based on reflections and discussions in a hands-on repair workshop held as part of the Second-hand Cultures in Unsettled Times Symposium, in which participants were invited to work on their own repairs.

KEYWORDS

Repair, tacit knowledge, affect and emotion, second-hand clothing, design research

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FIGURE 1 During the first lockdown April 2020, I volunteered to sew surgical scrubs for the NHS. After making up a set of scrubs, I would embroider a hand stitched heart on the inside of one of the front pockets, hidden, so that only the wearer would find it and know it was there—it was an appreciative heart from myself, the person that made it. The fabric was gifted workwear. The pattern was cut from the factory of a local manufacturer of sails who had changed his computerised lay to scrubs. All photographs taken by the author, Dr Jules Findley, and copyrighted © 2022.

This paper evolves from a repair workshop, making a repair through a community workshop, rather than making a garment from scratch. In some parts of the paper, the author converses with the repairer, who can repair alongside the reading of the paper. The writing is born from making, rather than the formal approach to historic narrative; therefore the order of the historical and ethnographical context may not be in a formal order, as the author checks in with the reader as to how their repair is working, and brings reflections of their own repairs in context with the ethnographical context. Let us start, shall we? Please go to Figure 5 for the equipment you might need.

In making clothes, the skillset needed to make patterns, cut lays, overlock and lock stitch, have never been more important. We are in precarious times. At present, we are at the tipping point of facing accelerated climate change, the destruction of nature, huge losses of biodiversity and humanity, unless we radically reduce our carbon emissions globally through the reclaim of materials and re-purposing of fashion items, consuming less, recycling and prolonging the life of a garment through repurposing and repair. In order to

confine the rise of our global temperature to 1.5 degrees, as agreed in the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC 2015), means changing every way we currently know about our lives so far, including practicing thrift and reuse in the fashion and textile industry. Stitching, and the metaphors of textiles and the seam have never been more relevant. Forty years ago, we had more respect for our things, our materials and fabrics (Roseyear 1896; De Dillmont 1922). Over the years, however, due to being wealthier, having more efficient manufacturing processes and cheaper fabrics, manufactured clothing has become more readily available (Morgan and Birtwistle 2009), and a throwaway culture has ensued; the respect for making by hand and for the care of clothing has been lost (Fletcher 2008).

According to the UK Fashion and Textiles Association (UKFT 2019), which produces industry performance and statistics, the UK fashion and textiles industry spend amounts to £74 billion on fashion, fashion accessories, household textiles and carpets in 2018. Fashion clothing sales made up the most of the spend at £53 billion, up by £17 billion in ten years since 2008, from £36 billion (UKFT 2019). The United Kingdom is the worst of all its European counterparts in their consumer spend on fashion (Fixing Fashion 2019). Sustainable thinking needs to be delivered to everyone in the form of education, and actioned into more efficient recycling practices and imaginative repurposing. The call is for the British public to consume less and look after their existing purchases for longer, extending the life of garments and accessories, and not buying cheap clothing and throwing it away. In order to eliminate waste and poor fashion disposal, learning more about a circular economy model—from growing fibres, manufacturing to producing clothes—needs to be implemented through systems right at source, from farming and re-agriculture, to the consumer.

During the global pandemic in 2020, lockdown silenced the roads and skies; we could hear the birds sing. As charity shops and stores were closed, people increased marketing their second-hand clothing online, and digital second-hand became a fixture. The second-hand clothing market is set to soar: according to figures for 2021, while currently worth \$24bn dollars, predictions say that the second-hand clothing market is expected to rise to \$50bn dollars by 2023 (Eley 2021). In May 2021, Etsy, an online shopping platform, bought the app Depop, a social media platform primarily for the Generation Z demographic to realise cash from and shop for second-hand clothing, for for \$1.6 billion (Neate 2021). Second-hand has become part of the luxury market, too: Gucci owner, Kering has a 5% share in Vestiare, the French up-market second-hand on-line store (Eley 2021).

In 2020, Covid-19 in the UK and elsewhere fuelled a wardrobe and house declutter on extraordinary proportions, as so many had more time to go through their homes and clear

out. An opportunity emerged for the second-hand in “unsettled times”, from the title of the conference, which inspired this mending workshop and paper; greater importance was attributed to not letting these pieces of clothing and accessories go to landfill, (Keep Britain Tidy [no date]). In other areas, such as deadstock (oversupply of fabric and fashion goods), there are opportunities for this fabric to be resold and reduced in production, as currently much deadstock is being burnt or destroyed particularly in the case of manufactured luxury goods, in order to keep existing clothing prices high (Fletcher 2008). In terms of responsibility, there needs to be a decrease in the carbon platform of clothing, as not only do we in the UK import much clothing from overseas, but we ship container-loads of used clothing, baled up and sent out of England from recycling centres such as East London Textiles to Africa (BBC News 2021).

REPAIR AND THE TACIT

In examining “Second-hand and the Tacit”, let us consider what is tacit? “*Tacere*” from its Latin roots means to be silent, things done or made without words, and in terms of materials leave unmentioned. The name ‘textiles’, materialises meaning in the very words, according to Pajaczkowska, in “Tension, Time and Tenderness: Indexical Traces of Touch in Textiles” (2009), uses the essence of tenderness being connected to the haptic. ‘*Texere*’ is Latin for text, or textiles, meaning to weave. In this sense, the craft of making is tacit, haptic, and it’s the product which is explicit, tactile. Pajaczkowska (2009, p. 2), writes, “it takes a special kind of consciousness to enable textiles to achieve the status of a cultural object”: she goes on to write that textiles can be used in ritual, magic, and in these uses of religion and superstition can “articulate the meaning of cloth in culture”. There is an allure of the second-hand and the tactility not just of the material but of an age that’s past or a life that has since gone, even in second-hand clothing which is relatively new.

Making, is a key component of tacit knowledge, as it is in the experience of making where hidden knowledge is made and embedded in the materialising of the product (Gregson, Metcalfe and Crewe 2009). The ideas of emotion and affect embodied in the second-hand can be infused in the visible repairs or the additions that can create distinctive meanings within artefacts or fashioning beyond looking at the fabric manufacture or garments on the surface. This is also true of repair, and in repair we try to bring back the integrity of the garment through the conjoining stitches, through the broken fibres.

Let’s take up our needles and thread, threading our needles with the purpose of repair.

I am repairing my mother’s vintage Marks and Spencer’s dressing gown, which is nearly 50 years old. The garment is made from 100% cotton and is a polka dot print with large regular

white spots on a blue ground. The fabric is faded and fragile, and needs some careful attention in repairing it.



FIGURE 2 Photograph of Marks and Spencer dressing gown or day coat. The object of repair—my mother’s cotton dressing gown. Photograph by the author, Dr Jules Findley, and copyrighted © 2022.

I have admired this piece from when I was little; it was the robe my mother wore when we needed attention in the night, when my sister and I were little and when we shared a bedroom in our early lives. If we cried in the night, mum would sweep into the bedroom wearing the gown to see what we needed. When our mother died, I claimed the dressing gown from her wardrobe. I don’t wear this piece often; it hangs on the back of my bedroom door, remaining present for those moments (rarely), when I need to look glamorous (in my opinion), dressed for the night time or early morning.

For all the years we grew up, I remember Mum had it hanging up behind her bedroom door ready for action. The dressing gown, like a comforter or a childhood toy, acts as a source of familiarity even more so now that our mother has died. It’s like looking at a familiar photograph, except it’s made of textiles. Inside the gown there is an old vintage label printed with St Michael, in what would be closest to the digital font, ‘Brush Script’. The label is visibly old and creased.



FIGURE 3 Photograph of the label of the dressing gown day coat. The vintage M&S labels were in a printed script. Photograph by the author, Dr Jules Findley, and copyrighted © 2022.

I start stitching at the pocket, as it ripped one time when I caught the pocket, tearing the main fabric of the coat. I heard the unmistakable noise of the fabric ripping as the pocket tore; it came away leaving a flapping frayed edge, broken and forlorn. Now the needle pierces the fabric and the thread laces through the rip; tiny stitches are needed as the weave count (number of threads in warp and weft counted in one square inch), is fine and dense.

My stitching starts in regular, even stitches which help to secure the pocket back in place in order to repair the torn fabric.

There is a privilege in repairing, making an artefact better, and bringing something broken or frayed back to life. Repair Cafés (2022) have sprung up, and repair has been helped by the BBC television series *The Repair Shop* (2017-2022), to raise the profile of repair, by focussing on some of the narratives of the object being repaired, their histories and memories within the family seeking the repairs, and why. Touching the fabric as it is being repaired is an intense activity; the tactile fabric gives you immediate sensory feedback as to the quality and thickness of the cloth, the stitching, as the fabric repair is turned inside and out.



FIGURE 4 Photograph of the extent of the repair on the dressing gown. The rip that had been my doing as the button hole got caught on something and ripped the fabric in a large tear. Photograph by the author, Dr Jules Findley, and copyrighted © 2022.

I turn to look underneath my repair on the underside, to monitor my stitching. This is to check on the accuracy of the single stitch, but also an opportunity to reflect on the repair itself. I remember when the garment was worn, and the happy memories of my childhood. Reflection time can be mindful, positive, and in terms of repair, thought provoking. Maintaining the dexterity of making and interacting with the fabric, the needle intersecting the fibres of the cotton during the repair, reminds me of Tim Ingold's ideas on materials in his paper, "The Textility of Making" (2009, p. 96), where he writes about materials, "what people do with materials, as we have seen, is to follow them, weaving their own lines of becoming into the texture of material flows comprising the lifeworld." Ingold describes the hylomorphic model of objects being compounds consisting of matter and form, an idea derived from Aristotle. The needles and the textile materials are part of this matter and form, and as such these tools and materials in our repairing embodies part of our cultural history, especially the importance behind needles and stitch.

It is satisfying completing a repair, which is usually on a small scale compared to the larger made garment or artefact. The repair once finished gives the repairer a muscle memory and

extends the tacit knowledge of that repairer's expertise. It is this hidden origin which is tacit in many ways, both physically and psychologically. There are reasons why second-hand ordinary artefacts can have a value and a unique quality not necessarily always achieved at designer level.

"Now we see tacit knowledge opposed to explicit knowledge; but these two are not sharply divided. While tacit knowledge can be possessed by itself, explicit knowledge must rely on being tacitly understood and applied. Hence all knowledge is either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge. A wholly explicit knowledge is unthinkable" (Polanyi 1966, p. 61).

Peter Stallybrass (1993), wrote about the impregnated materiality from the cloth of the jacket given to him from the widow of his dead friend, Allon. The jacket was a find from a second-hand shop in Brighton years ago, which Stallybrass recalled. He described the label, "Made Expressly for Turndorf's by Di Rossi", as the only surviving part of the lining, which had shredded through wear and age. Whilst wearing the jacket at an event where he had to speak, he remembered the good times he shared with his friend and the scent of his friend materialised whilst he wore the jacket. It is the scent from his friend that overcame him during a lecture; Stallybrass was unable to carry on, overcome by emotion. Writing about the event he shared the idea of how memory arose from the wrinkles in the jacket, a dual interpretation of memory in cloth as well as the memory of his friend. The second-hand brings the opportunity for memory of an era as well as a memory of the last person's gesture and memory in the very fabric itself.

There are decisions to make in mending, and one question is whether to make a knot at the end of my thread or not. Sometimes a knot in the thread makes an obvious repair as it has an ending, and this might not look well on the repaired garment. However, if I run out of thread towards the end of the repair, I know I can knot the last bit of thread around the hole of the needle, which will allow me to finish out the thread in my mending without having to recharge the needle. In its purest form, the very act of using a needle is tacit knowledge, like riding a bike, once we've learnt how to thread a needle, we can do it without thinking about it as our muscle memory allows us to move automatically. This is true of most stitching using thread, in knitting, crochet and weaving: it is the repetition that ingrains our learning.

As I was preparing for this repair workshop, I rummaged through my archives for old second-hand books on repair. Inside one of them, Elizabeth Roseyear (1896), in her volume, *Needlework, Knitting and Cutting Out*, wrote about sewing for children and for service. Inside are quite beautiful line drawings which illustrate the hand holding a needle. The illustrations have a material quality to them, together with the written text from a bygone age. In the

used book, with its patina of age engrained in the pages and on the cover, the advice given is amusing as well as touching. They too evoke memory, however for me, the line drawings don't have the same emotional attachment and value that seems to seep out of real fabric. The level of making and sewing skills expected of a child at certain ages is recorded. These skills in dexterity required for service and held to account in schools have been replaced today by digital skills. The making required in those times at certain ages created as a tangible product, and the skills required at each age group, is fascinating to read.

In *The Encyclopedia of Needlework* by Thérèse de Dillmont (1922), there is a chapter in this volume on plain sewing and another chapter on mending, which is indicated as a female activity and like the Roseyear volume mentions domestic service. Printed in 1922, it originally cost 1/3 shilling at a time when domestic service was a large employer, but starting to decline after the First World War. However, sewing and mending were an important part of maintaining workwear and laundry. According to *The Encyclopedia of Needlework*, (1922, p.2) in plain sewing for work, we need needles, thread, a thimble, scissors, and material, as equipment for our repair (see Figure 5).



FIGURE 5 Photograph of embroidery scissors, needles and thread. Equipment needed for repair work. Photograph by the author, Dr Jules Findley, and copyrighted © 2022.

What was evident in the Roseyear (1893), and the de Dillmont book (1922), was that part of the school day was given over to mending and making, and teaching these skills. This was for the purpose of practicality as in those times, many women went into domestic households to work at an early age. These sewing skills were essential in order to gain employment to support their families, or in taking in sewing and working from home as a

means of earning. Sewing skills were taught in schools right up until the Second World War and beyond, and these skills were vital during the austere years of war and rationing.

During World War II, in 1943, the British Ministry of Information wrote a leaflet called, 'Make do and Mend', to help families repair their clothing during the war years (Imperial War Museum; Make Do and Mend). The campaign encouraged repair sewing groups so that people helped each other with being busy, and to encourage people to repair, talked about a character called, 'Mrs Sew-and-sew'. Making repairs on existing clothing helped with rationing restrictions, which had been introduced on buying new clothing in 1941 (Imperial War Museum; Mrs Sew-and-Sew). The campaign enabled people to try to re-imagine their clothing, as well as making second-hand and mending a viable and respectable thing to do. Slater (2014), examines why women remember the materiality of clothes but no longer wear them. Economically, repairing clothing made sense rather than buying a new garment. As clothes became plentiful in supply in the 60s and 70s, then repairing declined and fell out of fashion and now the culture of repair has declined (Fisher et al, 2008). In 2014, Gwilt (2014), made a 'Make do and Mend' project examining community repair, and concluded that in future there could be opportunities for repair for micro-businesses.

In today's computerised world, there is an urgent need to return to include sewing skills on the school curriculum. The skills needed in repairing clothes, making new from old in repurposing and reimagining existing fabrics and clothing we already have in the system, will become increasingly important as the cost of living rises and climate change becomes ever more evident (Roberts recycling [no date]).

More recently one automatically associates sewing as a feminine activity, but this is not always the case: bespoke men's tailoring for a long time was considered masculine work, and the craft of knotting, hand repairing nets in fishing, (netting is also stitching), is associated with men's work (Wassell Smith 2018). In times gone by, knitting used to be fashioned by men, and spinning by women (The Crafty Gentleman [no date]). Women, however, are and have been often employed in garment and fast fashion factories; as Labour Behind the Label are keen to point out, women are most often employed in these conditions due to the gender stereotype that women are "passive and flexible", and is one of the reasons why they are exploited so heavily in the fashion industry. Historically, women who handmade shirts in England in the Industrial Revolution were paid a pittance, as documented by the plight of Mrs Biddell, a widowed seamstress who tried to make a living; her poverty inspired a poem, "The Song of the Shirt", written by Thomas Hood, in 1843 (The Circumlocution Office 2017).

Peter Stallybrass (1993), writes that in past times, cloth was a currency, and a means of incorporation. In these times, there was a power to clothing: if clothes were handed out, for instance if given as a uniform to wear such as a livery, the clothing would come with an obligation, a legal bond. Cloth used to be a binder of ties with the giver. Stallybrass (1993) reminds us that a long time ago, in aristocratic households, when there was a livery given to a member of staff, due to the expense of the cloth, the staff member was paid for with the cloth. This act of clothing also happened in the guilds; when 'freedom' from training was granted to the apprentice, the apprentice was said to be 'clothed' (Stallybrass 1993). Repairs of a uniform are often necessary, as a uniform can be expensive to buy or not readily issued. Cloth can be permeated by both maker and wearer, embodied materiality and memory that has an ability to endure through time. In hand weaving, knitwear, and handsewn clothes, the clothes incorporate the DNA of the maker, with the cutting, the stitching, and the finishing, especially in made-to-measure bespoke tailoring, being all made by hand.

Clothes can be associated with good and bad memories; if you've had a bad experience wearing a piece of clothing out socially, somehow that bad memory is held in that piece of clothing that you wore. Time can be measured by the clothing you wear, and the memories they create recorded in time through photographs or your own memory in wearing the clothes. After a friend of mine invited her mother's close friends to a lunch, a while after her mother died prematurely, on their place mats, she presented them each with a parcel that contained a beautiful Hermès silk scarf from her mother's wardrobe. In spite of all the scarves having been dry cleaned, once the parcels had been opened by her mother's friends, they could smell their previous owner by the scent of her perfume imbued in the material of the silk. There were tears of remembrance and of joy in talking about her memorable moments and anecdotes as well as the gratitude of taking away a beautiful used silk Hermès scarf, a memento as well as a tangible memory. The tacit knowledge hidden in the folds of each scarf, were made more meaningful by the event. Penina Barnett (1999, np), writes about folds, citing Serres and Lomax (1999, p. 29), "to unfold is to increase, to grow, whereas to fold is to diminish, to reduce, 'to withdraw into the recesses of a world'".



FIGURE 6 Photograph of tablecloth. In domestic households, often woven labels identifying the owner were sewn onto the underside of tablecloths or sheets if they went to professional cleaners. Photograph by the author, Dr Jules Findley, and copyrighted © 2022.

Second-hand clothing has an appeal not only for the life that the garment has lived before, but because it is usually more of a unique piece in your wardrobe (Cassidy and Bennett 2012). One of the tacit objects I look for in second-hand clothing, especially vintage clothing, are the labels. The labels sewn into vintage clothes go a long way to reveal the time of manufacture. The graphics of older labels used to be woven in script in the 1950s, and became more as capitals in the 1960s and 70s when design for labels and brands evolved. In second-hand linens, identifying coloured thread visibly hand sewn into a corner of a table cloth or a Cash's woven label sewn into the fabric shows this to be family linen, indicating the linen, such as sheet or tablecloths, have been sent to laundry for cleaning (Linenmaven's weblog 2012). The label identifies the age of the garment, often taking on its own identity together with the other labels that identify the fabrics, if they haven't been removed.



FIGURE 7 Photograph of a jacket made in the 1980s. Graphic labels in garments often give away the approximate date of manufacture. Photograph by the author, Dr Jules Findley, and copyrighted © 2022.

Sometimes used clothes often have the odd stain that lives forever engrained in the fabric, especially in vintage clothes. These stains can be either from the age of the fabric or just stains from living a previous life. They become part of the materiality of that garment. The garment or object, no longer new, takes on the character of the existing life of the most recent owner; the ingrained stains are passed on to a new owner as the garment or object has a second or third or more life. Bartlett (2008) writes eloquently about the stains, of the fragile boundaries of cloth and edges of our lives.

In my repair of my mother's house coat/dressing gown, I decide that the repair needs to be hidden, as seamless as possible, if that can be so with a rip in the cloth. Turning the fabric over, I take up my needle and edge the needle into the fabric from the reverse. Small stitches are needed to be able to make the repair as hidden as possible. It is challenging to encompass the frayed edges from the rip.

There is an emotional draw to second-hand pieces, and this is evidenced by the beautiful photography of Miyako Ishiuchi "Mother's' no49, 2002" (Maddox 2015), who after the death of her mother had a problem with disposing of her deceased mother's clothing. One of the ways in which she was able to overcome her grief and bereavement was to photograph her mother's belongings, and after she had made this record, she was able to move on from her

mother's death. Ishiuchi originally trained as a weaver; she comes to her photography with a tacit knowledge of textiles, which enables her to get an emotional connection with the fabrics of the materials she photographs. She is able to conduct this dialogue and communicate affect to the viewer of her photographic work.

'Affect', meaning to touch the feelings of, or move the emotions (Oxford Language dictionary): the word expresses an intimacy between us and the object or person. What is important is creating those feelings and being able to shift emotions within us. Textiles consisting of materials that are tactile can also create affect, through the design, age, or texture, and create that intimate and emotional connection between us and the fabric. Within the materiality of Ishiuchi's photographs of her mother's underwear, she has been able to record the impression of her mother's body on the clothing, as the Lycra has stretched over time and taken on the shape of the person, for example in "Mother's no 16, no29, 2002" (Maddox 2015), and creates this emotional connection of affect as well as the tacit knowledge of the body. Stallybrass (1993), writes about the human gestures left behind in the memory of the fabric; Ishiuchi photographically records the embodiment of the previous owner in the clothing without them being there physically (Maddox 2005, p. 29). Ishiuchi reveals more than the materiality in the narrative of the pieces of clothing; it is photographed from the love of a daughter and the memory of the maternal.

One could consider that the product of the photograph is explicit as it portrays her mother's clothing, but there is so much more in the photograph that is tacit and it is this tacit knowledge that conveys affect and gives so much meaning to the photograph. The series of photographs of Ishiuchi's mother's intimate clothing are even more poignant and atmospheric shot on analogue using black and white film. As Polanyi (1966), cited in Litchell (2006), writes, "We can know more than we can tell". This knowing from Miyako Ishiuchi, of the very fabric of the materials is conveyed through the craft of developing her analogue photographs. This is the tacit working with affect to tug at our emotions.

Cloth that is worn also conveys these emotions within the folds of fabric. Typical types of artefacts remade or reworked from second-hand garments are patchwork type garments or accessories. These items can be made from various pieces cut from a multitude of different patterns and fabrics laid out and recut to form new outfits. Patchwork works really well when the same weight of fabric like denim or a range of printed fabrics are used. The Japanese patched their denim and remade their denim as it was very expensive to produce. '*Boro*' means tattered or rags, and was used in rural Japan in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Li 2020, p. 42). Some of the regular hand stitching over the patchworks made to reinforce the denim can be quite beautiful. Antique *boro* pieces fetch a high price in the

second-hand antique markets. These highly valued, rare pieces hide lives or several lives on their journeys through time (Li 2020, p. 65). The imperfections become part of the garment: the denim has its own patina and clearly the respect for the fabric and garment has been carefully passed through generations.

More recent patchwork items can be from prints or customised with over-printing onto repurposed garments or accessories which can bring a new dimension to second-hand fabrics. There is a social aspect through gathering these remnants of fabrics and the patchwork quilt can bring together communities of people to sew at a certain time or place, often in remembrance.

The quilt and its history of making is especially familiar in the USA. Apart from ancient antique quilts made from remnants of beautiful, printed cottons, one of the most famous more recent quilts, started in 1985, is the National AIDS Memorial quilt, housed in San Francisco in memory of the thousands of those who died from AIDS. It is now quite an extraordinary effort: it weighs 54 tons, contributed from over 20 countries and has brought communities of stitchers together in memory and to collectively overcome grief, National Aids Memorial (no date). This unusual example demonstrates the power of community sewing and how people together can support each other in bereavement projects. Sewing, particularly hand sewing, stitching and embroidery brings peace as well as discussion, and the regular material process of connecting fingers with materials and sewing can be meditative and offer a feeling of achievement.

How is your repair going? I've made good progress and I can see the end. Mending can be taught in education at all levels as well as in a community setting. It is a positive action, satisfying to achieve; repair work could be perceived as helping the self and in well-being. Repairing second-hand clothes is comparable to having a dialogue with the fabric, the weft and torn fibres, or the loops in knitting, the very material itself, and the fibres that are disrupted. In this tacit dialogue, the needle dares to interrupt the fibres with the new thread. The dialogue with a visible repair can become an art form, and visible repair has now become a speciality in its own right. In the work of Celia Pym (no date), the repaired garment with its visible repair takes on another identity, it becomes something 'other'. It becomes a different garment, a new object with an extended identity from the original. In a repair, there is an opportunity for the repairer or maker to incorporate something unique and special, as I was able to in the hand sewing in Figure 1.

There are potential business opportunities for making or repurposing ideas from existing second-hand clothes (Palmer and Clarke 2005). Julia Twigg (2014) offers opportunities with

her studies in fashion and an older population examining the success of *Advanced Style*. In changing behaviours and education, Michie, Atkins, and West (2014) share a practical wheel diagram that evaluates behaviour change, policies, barriers. These types of diagrams can be useful in designing methods for justifying why repairing should be useful in education and why it is so relevant in today's climate.

When fabrics get a bit thinner, the threads laid bare, the worn areas of fabric become evocative in their textures and draw us to mending. Peter Stallybrass (1993, p. 49), reminds us that:

“The magic of cloth, I came to believe is that it receives us: receives our smells, our sweat, our shape even. And when our parents, our friends, our lovers die, the clothes in their closets still hang there, holding their gestures, both reassuring and terrifying, touching the living with the dead. [...] Bodies come and go; the clothes which has received those bodies survive. These clothes can be passed on, from parent to child, from sister to sister, from brother to brother, from sister to brother, from lover to lover, from friend to friend.”

Indeed, as I finish my final stitch and reach for my scissors to snip my thread, I reflect that in these times of climate emergency, we need to relearn our repairing skills and in this tacit knowledge will give respect to our clothes, and renew a life in our wardrobes. My repair is not perfect: the garment is not as it was before the tear; it retains the scars of the rip and the new repair, like surgeon's stitches; the repair is sound but the traces of repair remain. The dressing gown is a vintage piece now retained in the same family; the dressing gown has a story to tell of generations of wear. Even as we repair together in our workshop online, the community aspect of joint sewing is evident, I feel this sense of collaboration across the interactive digital platform. Community repairing brings people together regardless of skills, age or beliefs; reparation and the hand stitch are a leveller. I replace the dressing gown on the hanger behind my bedroom door, ready for being reused. The journey with this dressing gown continues. It is time to re-invent the value of repairing and realise that the materialising emotions that are hidden in our clothes are good things, full of the potential of heritage to pass on, giving us or a new wearer a special feeling after a life well loved.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Dr Jules Findley's research is in the domestic and embodied materiality. She has presented at international conferences, works as an installation artist as well as Principal Lecturer at the University of Brighton in Fashion Communication. More recently, she was co-investigator on UKRI-AHRC funded research into waste and sustainability project, Sustainable Materials in the Creative Industries, (SMICI) in craft, fashion, textiles, accessories, leather and fine art sectors. collaborating with other researchers from Royal College of Art, University of Edinburgh and University of Plymouth. Jules gained her PhD Textiles from the Royal College of Art.

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