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CHAPTER FIVE

Wardrobes and Soundtracks: Resources for Memories of Youth

Jo Jenkinson

Marian: I see my little round blue plastic bag that I had when they first came out, and it used to fit the records in because it was round. And I remember getting on the 89 [bus] to come up to Alan's, and I used to get it in Albert Square that, with these records in, you know.¹

Marian relates a vivid memory whilst we are listening to 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes' (The Platters 1958).² The 7-inch vinyl record, that she has kept from her youth, is playing on the record player in her front room. We are surrounded by photographs of Marian aged between fourteen and eighteen, a pile of records and several garments she has kept from that time including a mohair wool suit from the late 1950s (Figures. 5.1 and 5.2). The atmosphere in the room is charged with emotion as Marian's stories of youth play out through the material artefacts that are present and the soundtrack that fills the room. These intense moments of remembering are orchestrated in an interview experience designed to explore how the clothes we wore, and the musical soundtracks we listened to in our youth, act as resources for memory. Marian is in her late 70s at the time of the interview and yet these moments of recollection are readily recalled, and fluently described in expressive detail.

¹ Marian (2018), interviewed by author, 13 March. Born 1942 in Greater Manchester. Influences include Rock and Roll. Her memory toolkit included vinyl records, photograph albums and clothes from her youth.

² The Platters (1958) 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes'. [7" vinyl record] UK: Mercury Records.



Figure 5.1. Wool suit jacket, 2018. Author's own photograph; Figure 5.2. Marian, age 16, wearing the suit, 1958, Unknown Photographer © Marian. Reproduced with permission.

Marian was one of seven women, aged between forty-nine and seventy-seven, whose interviews are analyzed in this chapter. Participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire about their memories of youth in advance of the interviews, which took place in their homes. They were briefed to compile a 'memory toolkit' to include any kept clothes and accessories from their youth, photographs of them in their youth (featuring dress), and albums or specific tracks that were significant to their memories of youth (physical collections, a digital playlist, or a written list). Also, any other relevant memorabilia, i.e., tickets, magazines, objects etc., with a connection to the clothes they wore and music they listened to in their youth. This toolkit supported oral narratives which centered on the participants' experiences of youth, as seen through a lens of everyday dress and recorded music. The findings presented in this chapter focus on the interaction between these oral narratives, the images (or items) of dress, and the soundtracks played.

This chapter proposes that both dress and music can be considered 'tokens of youth' that play a considerable role in young peoples' participation in youth cultures,³ becoming intrinsic to self-affirmation in youth, and often throughout a lifetime. Youth in the context of this study was defined by the participants, ranging from the age of twelve to beyond thirty years old, framing youth as a transitional stage, and a state of mind that goes beyond chronological age (Tebbutt 2016: 3). The participants, who all grew up in the north of England, were selected to ensure that their self-defined 'youth' fell after the arrival of the 12-inch long player album (LP) in 1948, and the end of clothes rationing in England in 1949.

³ Youth cultures in this context refers to the everyday cultural practices of young people, not specific sub-cultures, or groups.

Likewise, the younger participants all turned eighteen before access to the internet became commonplace in the early 1990s, and social media and digital technologies for sharing music and photography became available. These boundaries enabled focused analysis on a period within which recorded music and dress, or photographs of dress, were relatively accessible as everyday material objects.

Dress, Music, and Photographs in Context

Dress, music, and photographs have all been found to have mnemonic properties in academic studies,⁴ yet they have not previously been considered alongside each other in this context. This chapter scrutinizes how they work together in a multisensory interview environment as described in the example above. The term ‘dress’ is adopted to include worn garments, artefacts and body modifiers such as make-up and hair (Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1992: 1), and the evolving content of the participants’ wardrobes. ‘Style’ works together with dress to designate the assembling of different looks. This styling activity regularly surfaced when looking at photographs of dress, prompting the participant to recall how they wore a garment or combined items into distinct outfits. Carol Tulloch’s (2010) academic framework for the relationship between ‘style-fashion-dress’ in her analysis of ‘style narratives’ of the African diaspora, positions dress as a means to articulate personal narratives, as part of “a system of concepts that signifies the multitude of meanings and frameworks that are always ‘whole-and-part’ of dress studies” (275).

In this analysis the term ‘music’ refers specifically to recorded music, that is, or has been, commercially available in the public domain. Live performances and public events were referenced by the participants, but personally selected music, played in the home, was the focus of the interviews as it prioritizes individual choice above collective music experiences.⁵ This is music that has “biographical significance” as defined by Michael

⁴ For dress, see Buse and Twigg (2016), Hunt (2014), Slater (2014); for music, see Baird and Samson (2015), Green (2016), Schulkind et al. (1999); for music and photographs, see Pickering and Keightley (2015); and for photographs, see Kuhn (1995) and Stewart (1999).

⁵ Genres of music that the participants related to included Rock, Rhythm and Blues, Soul, Mod, Motown, Punk, Indie, Pop, and Rock and Roll.

Pickering and Emily Keightley (2015: 2) who use the term “self-chosen” music to distinguish between a track purchased and played at home and, for example, music heard on the radio (7).

Photographs, specifically amateur snapshots, have been compared to music as technologies of remembering by Pickering and Keightley (2015), whose theoretical framework aligns music and photographs as communication technologies through which it is possible to access a memory or reflect on the past. They propose that recorded music and photographs are both able to configure or summon mnemonic experiences as “pieces of the past” (Pickering and Keightley 2015: 8). This temporal aspect is what enables music and photographs to act as conduits to memories of youth, as they are often linked to key events, people, or places from a specific time, whilst simultaneously providing fresh experience in the present. Pickering and Keightley (2015: 7) refer to vernacular photography, photographs that take everyday life as the subject, and use the term “self-made” photographs which aligns to their focus on “self-chosen” music. In this chapter the term ‘snapshots’ is used to describe the images of everyday dress included in the ‘memory toolkit.’⁶

The roles dress and music play in our identities as we move through life are performed in private, as intimate personal experiences of dressing or listening to recorded music at home, and publicly as we use these cultural ‘tokens’ to represent our public selves and communicate our interests and preferences to others. It is the personal, self-selected playlists and snapshots of dress (supported by kept items of clothing where available) that are of primary interest in this study. However, personal and collective experience cannot be considered in isolation. David Hesmondalgh (2013) has proposed that although most cultural products have potential to cross personal and social realms, music has a particularly powerful ability to bring together private and public experience. It is suggested that dress crosses a similar scope of experience, categorized by Joanne Eicher (1981) as dressing our private, public, and secret selves. This was evidenced in a previous analysis of dress behaviors in young people, in which I reported a fluid spectrum of experience across the private-public realm (Jenkinson 2020).

⁶ See also Kealy-Morris in this volume.

Wardrobes and Soundtracks as Everyday Mnemonic Resources

In this project, the focus was on episodic memory, described by Martin Conway (2009: 2305) as “summary records of experience,” including both voluntary and involuntary autobiographical memories (Bersten 2010). However, the mnemonic qualities of dress, music, and photographs rely on the relationship between the shared public experience of popular memory and first-hand experience of personal or episodic memories, “the mnemonic imagination allows us to connect personal and public remembering as part of the same mnemonic process, with each being implicated in the other” (Keightley and Pickering 2012: 199). Annette Kuhn (1995) described the relationship between her private photograph albums and more public memories of films or art for example as “less readily separable than conventional wisdom would have us believe” (4).

The self-edited selection of artefacts in the ‘memory toolkit’ are considered as conduits, access points, or triggers to memory in this research. They provide the mode of access to personal ‘memory resources’; categorized as ‘wardrobes’ (to include snapshots of dress, actual clothing, and dress memorabilia such as dress making patterns or magazines) and ‘soundtracks’ (personal playlists and music memorabilia including tickets, scrapbooks, and recorded music in analogue formats such as the compact discs, tapes and vinyl records included in the toolkits, and sometimes played in the interviews). These memory resources act not only as conduits to a memory as part of the remembering process, but also as subjects of remembering, often activated by each other in the multisensory interview environment. These resources impact on the ‘mnemonic spaces’ that are accessed and drawn on by the participants through imaginative remembering and re-experiencing. These are conceptualized as the ‘memory wardrobe’ and ‘memory soundtrack.’ In the ‘memory wardrobe’ memories of dress are metaphorically stored, whether triggered by tactile or visual stimuli in the present or imagined in the mnemonic process. The ‘memory soundtrack’ includes the musical playlists that accompany an individual through life in the mind, or through analogue formats, or digital technologies in the act of remembering (Davidson and Garrido 2014; Williamson 2014). The communicated content of these

mnemonic spaces, accessed through the multisensory interview process, enabled scrutiny of the combined power that dress and music have to support memories of youth. Interviews took place in the participants' homes, guided by the toolkit, playing the soundtracks, and looking at the snapshots and garments where available. This created a space in which narratives from the 'memory wardrobe' and 'memory soundtrack' were constructed. I undertook thematic and narrative analysis (Riessman 2008) of the verbatim interview transcripts, taking into account descriptions of dress items, musical soundtracks and snapshot evidence, to consider the trans-temporal experience of remembering in the sensory-rich interview environment.

The interviews evidenced that clothing, music, and photographs are bound together through the relative ease with which they are accessed as tools for remembering; however, accessibility differs for each resource. Although dress is an essential part of everyday life, only three participants had kept garments or accessories from their youth; although there are various reasons women may keep clothes that they no longer wear,⁷ for example, two participants cited lack of fit as a reason for not keeping clothing. Unlike music artefacts from our youth, often displayed on shelves in shared areas of the home, clothes are not made in compact formats designed for efficient storage, and when they are kept, they are often concealed in out-of-the-way corners (Cwerner 2001).⁸ Although accessible in youth as part of the everyday ritual of dressing, clothes are less commonly available as a tool for remembering later in life. However, all participants had distinct memories of what they wore at the time; even in the absence of actual garments there is evidence of strong memory for dress. It is often music and photographs that can support, trigger, or illuminate these memories of absent dress artefacts, as articulated in the example that opens this chapter.

Digital technologies have made music, in the form of personally selected playlists, accessible as a tool for remembering in everyday life. All the participants described buying and owning records, cassette tapes or compact discs (CDs) in their youth and five included vinyl records or CDs in their toolkit. Swift changes in music listening technology can 'trap'

⁷ See Banim and Guy (2001) and Bye and McKinney (2007) for studies on unworn clothing.

⁸ See also Webb in this volume.

music in artefacts: one participant had kept a record gifted by her husband despite having no means of playing it; another described music missing from her toolkit that was on the now defunct 8-track tape format:⁹

Heather: Well, some of the music is missing because it was all 8-track, a big chunk of time was on 8-track. Some of the clothes are missing because you do get rid of clothes. And I had a friend that always said, "I'll have it, I'll have it, have you got rid of that yet?" so I would hand them over to her.¹⁰

Mo: I haven't kept clothing or shoes or anything like that because I've moved around quite a bit and I had a flood in a house where quite a few of my possessions got ruined, and a fire. So, that's mainly why the photographs have survived because I always have those in a really safe place because to me the photos are something you can never replace. Whereas you can replace a jacket or a pair of shoes, so that's my thinking.¹¹

The ease with which photographs are taken, stored and shared has also been affected by changes in digital technologies. All participants had kept physical photographs, developed from 35mm film.¹² Most of them also had access to digital collections of personal photographs. The research took advantage of this accessibility, with the mnemonic powers of dress being transmitted through the medium of photography. While this was sometimes supported by items of actual clothing, the snapshots played a valuable role in providing a synthesis of style-fashion-dress (Tulloch 2010, 2016), representing the clothed and styled body. While collections of photographs were commonplace, many participants cited chronological gaps in their family albums. Not everyone had access to cameras, before they became part of everyday experience with the introduction of smart phones, and there were often periods of time or events where photographs were not taken. Janet reflects on

⁹ 8-Tracks were a short-lived tape-recording technology that preceded the cassette tape.

¹⁰ Heather (2018), interviewed by author, 26 July. Born 1950 in Staffordshire. Influences include Rock, R&B and Soul music. Her memory toolkit included music memorabilia (vinyl records, compact discs, cassette tapes, scrapbooks), photograph albums and clothes from her youth.

¹¹ Mo (2018), interviewed by author, 24 March. Born 1955 in Cumbria. Influences include Motown and Pop. Her memory toolkit included a digital soundtrack, photograph albums, and digital copies of photographs from her youth.

¹² Color or black and white photographic film used in single-lens reflex cameras (also known as SLRs).

the gaps in her photo albums, but this does not prevent her remembering what she was wearing at the time:¹³

Janet: I think I said before that between 14 and 18, I don't seem to have a lot of photographs. I can imagine what I was wearing. And it's not because I didn't want to share it, it's because I just haven't got it, and I would quite like to share it. I can see myself wearing the Perry belt¹⁴ dangling down the jeans and stripy t-shirt, and I can see me in the shirt and the mod tie ... I will have to try and dig some more out because I think that's the bit that's kind of missing a little bit. And I think the other gaps are, ... there's a certain time again, where children kind of took over a little bit and all my photographs are like me with the children.

Janet's narrative highlights how changes in life practices, such as motherhood, can impact on how we interact with dress or music. Janet's choice of words is also interesting here as she describes how she can 'imagine' what she is wearing and 'see' herself back in her youth. This articulation of multisensory and trans-temporal experience is typical in the responses of the participants during the interviews, suggesting a supportive interconnection between experience, memory, and imagination. This is central to the concept of *The Mnemonic Imagination* proposed by Keightley and Pickering (2012), who argue that far from compromising memory, imagination has the potential to synthesize memories and lend new meaning in the present. *The Remembering–Imagining System* proposed by Martin Conway, Catherine Loveday, and Scott Cole (2016) also highlights the relationship between remembering and imagination and the role the past plays in the present and in our future selves, from a cognitive neuroscience perspective. As Keightley and Pickering (2012: 5) explain "our memories are not imaginary, but are acted upon imaginatively" and this creative practice of remembering was given priority in this study, above concerns about accuracy of memory often evident in scientific literature (Brainerd and Reyna 2005; Bernstein and Loftus 2009).

¹³ Janet (2018), interviewed by author, 21 February. Born 1965, in Greater Manchester. Influences include Mod, Punk, and Indie. Her memory toolkit included music memorabilia (records, CDs, tapes) and photograph albums.

¹⁴ Woven webbing belt with a sliding buckle that allows the excess belt to fall free. Inspired by similar military designs and made popular as a fashion item in the early 1980s, usually worn with denim jeans.

Pickering and Keightley's approach is further expounded in their text *Photography, Music, and Memory* (2015). However, while their view of photographs and music as communication technologies sits comfortably within media studies and memory studies, when using photographs to explore the wardrobe, the focus and hierarchy shifts. Keightley and Pickering (2006) described photography and music as "parallel forms of perceptual engagement, as are our own eyes and ears" (150), and here, the inclusion of dress expands this into the realm of touch, and tactile perception (Stewart 1999).¹⁵ Kuhn's (1995) writing on the mnemonic power of photographs illustrates this perspective, as she uses the photograph to prioritize the haptic or material, articulating the *feeling* of the clothes she is wearing in an image: "today, as I imagine myself at that moment, inside that dress, my body feels constrained, my chest tight. I can scarcely breathe. The clothes are uncomfortable, restricting. The belt squeezes, the collar chokes. The top half of my body feels cramped and immobile" (Kuhn 1995: 63).

The toolkits that included material artefacts – clothes from the participants' youth, music artefacts and a range of photographs – elicited strong emotions in the interviews, such as those with Marian and Kate.

Marian: It's been quite a bit of an emotional trip, hasn't it? ... And especially that suit, when the photograph that I had, you know, of my friend and I, that was quite, what can I say with that? It was, sort of, the moment there, you know, I was, sort of, in that moment there with her. You know. Yeah, I think if you hadn't have been here and I just brought it out of the wardrobe, I don't think it would have been so emotional. But I think with everything put together it, sort of, brought back everything, you know.

Kate: So yes, when I was getting stuff out of the box last night, it was just kind of like, 'I need the bits that I know are going to be useful,' but I'd not sorted anything out. And then when you actually come to talking about it and, 'Oh well, there's this, just listen to this, right, this explains why this, this is how we dressed, this is the music.' And that's

¹⁵ Research into everyday dress and memory within the academic field of material culture includes studies by Buse and Twigg (2016), Chong Kwan, Laing, and Roman (2014), Hunt (2014), and Slater (2014). Pickering and Keightley (2015: 5) referenced Batchen (2004) and Edwards and Hart (2004) in recognition of the tactile, material qualities of photographs, yet in their own work the communicative value of these visual and audio 'technologies' dominates over the haptic.

been kind of, making those, making those connections has been really, it's been really nice for me.¹⁶

The impact of the overlapping visual, auditory, and tactile experience on personal memory intensified these interviews. Bringing together wardrobes and soundtracks as memory resources appeared to enhance imaginative remembering and the “creative regeneration of past experience,” creating new meaning and significance in the present (Keightley and Pickering 2012: 50).

Multisensory Mnemonic Experience

William Brewer (1986) found that personal, episodic memories often come to mind as strong visual images. The ‘memory toolkits’ of the participants elicited vivid connections to the past, often accompanied by a mental image. Below Janet relates her memory as if a scene is unfolding in her mind:

Janet: And it was Suzi Quatro in Thameside¹⁷... and there were people at the front, running to the front, dancing and kind of like bowing to her, because they really like, you know, sort of like, were totally obsessed by her, and that was probably, that's brought back an *image* of me going out with my sister to our first gig.

David Rubin (2005: 79) has proposed that the senses work together as a multimodal system within autobiographical memory to include “vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and body sense or kinesthesia,” with visual images working alongside auditory and motor images. Scientific evidence suggests that the retrieval of autobiographical memories is supported by multimodal cues. Catherine Stevens (2015: 263) has described music as “multidimensional and multimodal” with auditory, visual, verbal, and emotional dimensions. Likewise, Marie Kirk and Dorte Bersten (2018) found the use of multimodal objects as cues for

¹⁶ Kate (2018), interviewed by author, 7th January. Born 1967 in Derbyshire. Influences include Indie (previously a professional drummer). Her memory toolkit included music memorabilia (vinyl records, CDs, scrapbooks), photograph albums, digital copies of photographs, and clothes from her youth.

¹⁷ Reading Festival, 1983, Thameside Arena, Reading.

remembering past events increased vivid memory recall in adults, recognizing potential for future studies using objects of personal significance. They concurred that objects have significant mnemonic value, yet their study did not evaluate whether a picture of the object could provide a similar effect (Kirk and Bersten 2018). In this study the images of dress present in the snapshots often triggered vivid memories, even in the absence of physical garments.

Johan Willander, Sverker Sikström, and Kristina Karlsson (2015) studied the interaction between different sensory cues, concluding that even when multimodal cues are present, the retrieval of autobiographical memories is largely driven by visual and auditory processes – a hypothesis supported by the results of this study in which the musical soundtracks and snapshots of dress worked together mnemonically. Often it is visual and auditory cues that heighten perception of the tactile object (Spence 2007) and in this study the use of music as a complementary memory resource often intensified the recollection of dress. In this example, ‘How Can I Tell You’ (Cat Stevens 1971) is playing in the background,¹⁸ prompting Helen to go back to her ‘memory wardrobe’ to put together an outfit to go with the song.¹⁹

Helen: I'm wearing a sweater from ‘Way In’ in Manchester and I had three, all the same style but different colors. And this particular one was grey and it had buttons here [shoulder]... And I had one in yellow and one in brown. I'm not sure what I'd be wearing with it. I don't think it was jeans. Probably a brown pleated skirt, *the* skirt.

Instant, involuntary recollections often are considered unique to music, such as the common phenomenon of “earworms,”²⁰ yet while clothes themselves do not return in the same way as the literal replaying of a song in the mind, memories of dress can be just as spontaneous and unexpected. A song, scent, or photograph can trigger memories of clothing from the past. When interacting with the objects in their ‘memory toolkits’

¹⁸ Stevens, C. (1971) ‘How Can I Tell You.’ *Teaser and the Firecat*. [Played on iPad through Spotify]. UK: Island Records

¹⁹ Helen (2018), interviewed by author, 16 July. Born 1954 in Greater Manchester. Influences include Mods, Motown, and the Beatles. Her memory toolkit included music memorabilia (vinyl records), a digital soundtrack, and photograph albums.

²⁰ Earworms or Involuntary Musical Imagery (INMI) are defined as “the experience of a short section of music that comes into the mind without effort” (Floridou et al. 2015: 29).

participants relived the moment worn, evoking strong emotions and meaning in the present; recalling encounters with dress they often referred to ‘feeling good’ in the clothes. The focus on how clothes feel in the present has been explored from both anthropological (Woodward 2005) and cognitive perspectives (Adam and Galinsky 2012), but here the participants were describing a feeling that crosses past and present. This memory of emotional feeling was apparent even when clothes were experienced through an image. Three participants, Heather, Helen, and Mo, used the expression “the bee’s knees” when recalling how they felt in the moments captured in snapshots of their youth.²¹ Where clothes were present in the toolkit as material resources, visual images were triggered, which in turn provided imagined material feelings as part of the memory. Talking about a suit she has kept from her youth (Figures 5.1 and 5.2), Marian imagined herself back in the Belle Vue dancehall before describing the feeling of the outfit back then, concluding:

Marian: I just think when you see these things and you think, ‘I really felt good in that,’ you know, you had that feel good factor.

The interviews with the ‘memory toolkit’ evidenced this multisensory remembering. When Marian plays ‘Smoke Gets in Your Eyes’ (The Platters 1958) in the example that opens this chapter, she describes a striking visual image. As the music plays in the background, it provides the soundtrack to the materiality of the handbag and its imagined image, integrating visual, auditory, and tactile experience. Much as earworms can be triggered by a smell or visual image, the image of the little blue bag is projected immediately into the foreground, triggered by the sound of the music played and the atmosphere it provides. Dress and music share this ability to act as sensory memory resources, provoking reactions beyond their individual visual or auditory nature. In her interview Mo instantly transposed dress to music:

Mo: As soon as I saw the photograph [Figure 5.3] I thought, ‘Right, Led Zep’.”

²¹ See also Slater in this volume.



Figure 5.3. Mo, age 16, 1971 © Mo. Reproduced with permission.

The connectivity across memory resources is explicit in these interviews and it would appear that, through recollections of dress, imagination is vividly at work. In the example below Helen describes clothes that feature in a black and white snapshot (Figure 5.4).²² The snapshot is acting as an entry point, then once in the memory space, the image becomes technicolor, supported by the mnemonic imagination, and enriched in the retrospective present. This articulation of memory beyond the black and white image was common in these remembered experiences of dress; unprompted and involuntary as experience, memory, and imagination worked hand in hand.



Figure 5.4. Helen, age 14, 1968 © Helen. Reproduced with permission.

Helen: Let's see what's on my feet? [Studies photograph] Oh pink, pink peep toe shoes from Stylo²³ with heels, bee's knees, and a slide just there... and that handbag was pink and yellow beads, I remember.

²² Jayne (2018), interviewed by author, 15 October. Born 1969, in South Yorkshire. Influences include Mod (founder <https://soulandmod.com>). Her memory toolkit included music memorabilia (tickets and flyers), a digital soundtrack, photographs, and digital copies of photographs from her youth.

²³ Stylo is a Bradford, UK, based shoe brand founded in 1935.

This articulation of memory beyond the black and white image was common in these remembered experiences of dress; unprompted and involuntary, these discussions brought together experience, memory, and imagination. Jayne also added color to a black and white snapshot of her and her friends on their way to a Mod rally during her interview, by describing the Harrington jacket and button-down shirt that she was wearing in the image:

Jayne: It was like a pale beigey brown and then when you turned it inside out it was dark brown but I never wore it dark brown. I always wore the beige color ... The shirts I used to buy from Burtons, button down Ben Sherman. I had a variety. I had a white one. I had a peach, I think it was a peachy color, a yellow one, a pink one, a pale blue one. And if I rightly remember that is, I think that is the pale pink one I was wearing there.

Time Travel with Dress, Music and Photographs

The experiences above reflect Sarah Pink's (2015) framework for sensory ethnography where she positions sensoriality as "part of how we understand our past, how we engage with our present and how we imagine our futures" (3). Dress and music share this capacity to transcend time, making them invaluable as trans-temporal resources that contribute to personal biographies. Experiences of youth accessed through these resources are potentially better understood in the present and have the potential to create future meanings; as Keightley and Pickering (2012: 198) propose "we look backwards in order to see forwards." The meaning we attach to clothes or musical soundtracks shifts over time, and these memories might be translated differently each time they are drawn upon as experience and perspectives change. This is described by Marian:

M: I know how I felt at the time. I thought I was wonderful, but I mean when you see it now, it's, 'What a sight!'

This temporality is played out in Jayne's reflection on youth, demonstrating her understanding of the continuity from the past into the future through her 'memory wardrobe' and 'memory soundtrack':

Jayne: I think I'll still retain my bob. I always will do. I'm sure I will do. I think Soul [music] will always be a part of me. It's been, it's been too much of a part of me for now, thirty? Since I was fifteen, so what's that? I'm forty-nine now, thirty-four years. Music will always, always play an integral part in my life.

Whereas dress tends to belong to a certain era, due to short lived fashions or changes in body shape, music travels better. More loosely situated in time, a track or album may be accessed over extended periods of a lifetime. As a resource for memory, music is not always connected to a specific time or place as photographed dress might be; participants linked tracks to the year in which they remembered them, not necessarily the year they were released:

Mo: The era in which the photograph was taken doesn't necessarily match the music, but it matches the music that was played at that time, if that makes sense. So, it could have been an old tune from the '60s but I've linked it to the '80s because that's when I was experiencing it.

Music can connect experience across time and facilitate an instant plugging in; it has the advantage that it feels the same even though the body has changed. This would indicate that although the wardrobe, specifically snapshots of dress, has more potential to capture a specific moment of youth, a soundtrack often references multiple moments linked together by common emotion. This retrospective application of music to one's own past appears to be a common feature in everyday mnemonic practices.

When referring to snapshots in the toolkit, participants initially referred to the events or experiences captured in the image. Yet, snapshots were often elaborated upon, and literally colored by imagination, suggesting that an image can be translated in diverse ways under the influence of different sensory triggers. The findings suggest that the visually captured moments of a snapshot are more vivid when accompanied by other memory props, such as a music track. Equally the items of clothing, dress snapshots or soundtracks played in the interview influenced the participants to fit a memory to what they could touch, see, or hear in that moment.

Jayne: I think looking at my own personal experiences in the photographs linked with the tracks made it easier for specific events to come back.

Mo: I think the photographs elicit the memories of the music, if that makes sense, because I've chosen, mainly, photographs in social event situations so there was music all happening there.

Jayne: The older you get, you remember certain things from certain days and certain times in your life, but you don't remember, you can't, you don't remember the minute detail. And I think that when you, like today, when I got the boxes out, you can pick certain things out and you can relate to what photographs they went to, and you remember. You remember a certain incident or a certain song or a certain person. So that's the sort of, the thing that happens when, with the memory thing, I think, keeping the artefacts and the photographs and music.

In music literature 'peak music experiences' have been explored by Ben Green (2016). Similarly, wardrobe interviews conducted by Sophie Woodward (2007), and Guy and Banim (2000), referred to dressing for key life events. In this study the participants experienced episodic memories of these peak moments through their 'memory wardrobes' and 'memory soundtracks.' These events included marriage, a special concert or party attended, or more generic periods where memories of youth reach a crest such as the time Helen spent at an American University:

Helen: I seemed to stop looking [for more items to include in the toolkit] after I'd found my American stuff in the loft ... I was looking at it myself and hours were ticking by [laughs]. So, I stopped, but I suppose subconsciously that was my, not my best time of life, but a time of life that I enjoyed, and [pause] that I remember.

The participants' mnemonic experiences varied as to whether they remembered particular youth events or a more general era when interacting with the toolkit, for example music genres were sometimes mentioned rather than specific tracks or albums. When Mo

was asked if her photograph (Figure 5.3) reminded her of any connecting events, she recalled the period of time in which the photograph was taken rather than a specific event:

Mo: Not so much particular specific events, but the *time*, the sort of [pause], meeting my husband-to-be, where we used to go, playing Led Zep at his house and my house and that sort of thing, but not a specific one thing.

Focusing on dress, bolstered by personal soundtracks, may support the ability to look beyond the specifics of a snapshot, because the clothing pictured may have been worn on many occasions, and trigger multiple memories. In the interview Mo's snapshot (Figure 5.3) and the memory of that time, enabled her to rummage even further in her 'memory wardrobe,' triggering a memory of a green leather jacket she owned around the same time, although no garment or photographs of the garment were available.

Remembering Youth, Remembering Dress

Reflections on youth, experienced through the lens of dress and music, enable memories that endure to take on new meaning across the lifespan. For these participants, youth was not separated from current experience, and through their 'memory wardrobes' or 'memory soundtracks' they were able to formulate consistency of self and connection to their youth:

Janet: I think it's interesting, again, how it's come a bit of a full circle, that I feel like I'm in my own youth culture right now, at the moment ... I'm not sure if I've ever stopped being young or being part of a youth culture.

Working in the field of memory science, Clare Rathbone, Chris Moulin, and Martin Conway (2008) found autobiographical memories relating to self-image are much more likely to be retained in later life. As dress and music support the formation of self-image, they can also enrich our memories and understanding of our youth. There appears to be a strong mnemonic connection to the music listened to during youth (Holbrook and Schindler 1989; Loveday, Woy, and Conway 2020) and vivid autobiographical memories are most likely to be

recalled from the period between ten and thirty years of age; a phenomenon known as the ‘reminiscence bump’ (Rubin, Rahhal and Poon 1998).²⁴ The events and timescales referenced by the participants, suggest that memory for dress *and* music peak in this age range; a time when the participants developed confidence in their appearance, and gained autonomy over what they wore, where they went, or what they listened to. Access to cultural events and control over their social lives was cited as a reason these event memories of ‘youth’ hold such significance in the present. Marian described this period as when her “personal life” began. The participant narratives suggest that dress and music have value as ‘tokens of youth,’ in our present, remembered, and future experience, and that peak experiences and memories of youth form part of our continuing life trajectory.

In this study ‘recorded’ dress (snapshots) and ‘recorded’ music were prominent in the mnemonic experience. Both provided stable access points to the participants ‘memory wardrobes’ and ‘memory soundtracks.’ The findings suggest that photographs of dress and items of clothing, personal playlists or music memorabilia and artefacts all have special mnemonic qualities, and when working together they enable a deeper or richer experience of remembering. Pickering and Keightley (2015: 8) propose that it is the ability of music and photographs to act as “an alibi for what we remember” that imbues a memory with deeper meaning. Alison Slater (2011) has also suggested that more trust is placed in memories supported by physical artefacts such as photographs, and that they may remove doubt. However, the ‘records’ of dress or music referenced by the participants in this study are not treated as evidence, but as part of the rich experience of remembering. The wardrobes and soundtracks made combined use of the visual and auditory cues that drive autobiographical memory processes (Willander, Sikström, and Karlsson 2015), a synergy that generated the successful re-creation of vivid memories of youth in these sensory interviews. Yet, multiple memory resources were not always required to activate strong memories; encounters with just one artefact or image from the wardrobe or a singular track triggered vivid, multisensory visual, auditory, tactile, or olfactory experiences. Often it is sight or sound that evokes touch as physical feelings are imagined or re-experienced in the present, in response to an image or musical track. In

²⁴ See also Çili and Slater in this volume.

the multisensory interview environment rich, textured memories were reported even when the physical dress or music artefact were not present. The snapshots played an important role, as they provided access to the 'memory wardrobe,' supported by the soundtracks, and sometimes the material artefacts, providing multisensory triggers which served to illuminate and expand the image or dress memory. While instant access to memories through music is upheld by scientific literature, to date there is no equivalent science-based evidence of how similar 'snapshot' memories of dress are formed. However, while the scientific approach may go some way to providing hard evidence of access to memory through music, it often lacks the focus on personal experience, emotion and meaning that is more common in dress research. This suggests scope for further cross-disciplinary research investigating how memories form through multisensory interactions with dress and music.

The interviews and 'memory toolkit' were found to be effective methods for reflecting on youth, as dress and music acted as conduits or 'tokens of youth' through which the participants re-experienced their past. This led to insights into the significance of music and dress practices during youth, and how those memories endure. The combined sensory power of the dress images and artefacts with the musical soundtracks created a sensory rich environment, impacting on the act of creative and imaginative remembering. The 'memory wardrobe' – conceptualized in this study as a space where imaginative remembering brings together the tactile, visual, or imagined memories of dress – expands the possibilities of dress research where original garments are absent. Unlike the content of the physical wardrobe, the 'memory wardrobe' contains all potential imagined aspects of dress including memories of hair, bodily sensations, and emotional connections to our clothing. In the 'memory wardrobe' intangible aspects of dress can be accessed, where memory and meaning are created, as opposed to the physical wardrobe where garments tend to lie dormant until they are worn. Working hand in hand with the 'memory soundtrack' these metaphorical wardrobes store the peak experiences and memories of youth that illuminate our present and accompany us into the future.