University of Alberta

Influences on Creativity: Exploring an evolving design process

by

Andrea J. Schuld

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

Textiles and Clothing

Department of Human Ecology

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall 2002

University of Alberta

Library Release Form

Name of author: Andrea J. Schuld

Title of thesis: Influences on Creativity: Exploring an evolving design process

Degree: Master of Arts

Year this Degree Granted: 2002

10809 -126 Street
Edmonton, AB.
Canada
T5M 0P2

30 Aug 2002
(Date)

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Influences on Creativity: Exploring an evolving design process* submitted by Andrea J. Schuld in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Textiles and Clothing.

L. Capjack

Prof. Linda Capjack

Prof. Anne Lambert

Dr. Douglas Sadao Aoki

August 28/02

(Date of Approval)

Abstract

This study examines the way that life experiences combine to influence the investigator's creative process as applied to garment design. Through tracing the longitudinal development and interaction of numerous central ideas and inspirations, an approach for fostering design creativity was constructed. The study is unique in that it employs the theory of memetics to investigate the creative process. Gruber and Wallace's (1999) published study on the 'evolving systems approach' and 'networks of enterprise' were key to the investigation.

A conceptual model mapping the evolution of creative development is presented. A small collection of women's garments was designed and produced to explicate the investigator's life-long creative paths, and a second conceptual model was developed to depict the most recent inter-related influential forces.

Acknowledgements

Professor Linda Capjack: Thank-you for your supervision. Your kind, insightful encouragement and guidance have made my 'evolving' thesis process most meaningful and enjoyable.

Professor Anne Lambert and Dr. Doug Aoki: Thank-you for your valuable input and enthusiasm. I treasure your dedication to exploring 'marginal' ideas.

Dr. Sandra Niessen and Dr. Susan Kaiser: Your encouragement to pursue an unconventional topic was deeply appreciated.

Daemon Rowanchilde: Thank-you for permission to use your artwork.

To my family: Thank-you for your support, and for imparting to me the value of education and the arts. Curiosity has turned out to be a strength... Thank-you for seeing me through it all.

To Meighan Hope: I cherish your never-failing friendship. You are my model of bravery.

To Tom Leiper: Thank-you for helping me to find my way and rediscover *living*.

To my beloved, Shey Ergil: The beauty of your heart has made all the difference. Thank-you for believing in me, for being my solace, and for bringing true joy into my life. I am enriched through knowing your wonderful family.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Thirty spokes converge upon a single hub;
It is on the hole in the center that the use of the cart hinges.

We make a vessel from a lump of clay;
It is the empty space within the vessel that makes it useful.

We make doors and windows for a room;
But it is the empty spaces that make the room liveable.

Thus, while the tangible has advantages,
It is the intangible that makes it useful.

Lao Tzu, *Tao Teh Ching*

Introduction

For most of my life I have been a student in one form or another, starting with private violin instruction from the age of four. Another large segment of my life has been spent in the position of a teacher, as a private violin instructor from the age of thirteen until twenty, as a camp counsellor at age sixteen, and now as a teaching assistant and guest lecturer at the university through my late twenties. It is my wish to constantly be in the position of both learning and teaching for the duration of my life.

Through the many years that I have spent around music and design protégés, I have often reflected on the nature of creative ability, and have often pondered the psychological debate of "Nature vs. Nurture". That is, are people born with an innate genius talent to play an instrument, design clothing or buildings, or write music and poetry? Or, can creative process and ability be learned over time - and if so, to what extent?

Can and do various educational programs or approaches make for a noticeable difference in producing creativity? If so, how can educators enrich students' creative abilities, whether or not the student is a protégé? Can creative people learn to self-propel their own development outside of an educational program? If so, how?

How much does self-awareness determine creative (and artistic) ability? What underlies creative ability, and the ability to develop creative processes? One of the most flattering questions I have been asked occasionally is, "What makes you tick?" I believe this is a fundamental question for the creative person to try to answer *continually* in order to fuel self-development.

Educators can play a major role in promoting self-directed creative thinking in students, although there needs to be more exploration into this area for effective art- and design-related training. Especially with declining resources for the arts in general, it is my belief that greater importance be allotted to educational and grant/support programs, in order to foster the development of creative process for individuals in all walks and stages of life. Innovativeness and creativity should be fostered in all areas of education, lest we become a culture that eventually accepts mediocrity as the standard in all our endeavours...

1.1 Problem statement

The problem addressed in this thesis was to explore and document the evolution of my personal design philosophy as it informs the development of a collection of garments. The overarching inquiry addressed the way(s) in which

creativity is generated and generative. My research strategy followed the 'evolving systems approach' to the case study method (Gruber & Wallace, 1999) to understand how multivariate elements may influence an individual's (i.e. my own) creative process.

The study was longitudinal in nature, and included: ① journaled reflections during the design process; ② a consideration of past influences, including the effects of upbringing, interests and experiences in subcultures, and personally held beliefs; and ③ a literature review embodying a range of theories, methods and instances informing my approach to designing and creating the collection. I documented both verbally and visually (i.e. by diagram, sketchbook and some videography/ photography) the creative process of the resultant collection.

1.2 Significance of the study

Having completed a four-year bachelor's degree in fashion design at one of Canada's pre-eminent schools for this subject, I have become intimately aware of a lack of academic emphasis on *how to approach design,* as well as *how to foster one's creative process.* This is sorely missing both in educational systems for designers (especially of clothing), as well as the literature available on this topic. While most curricula include art, design and clothing history, and classes to develop the 'formal' design skills (such as rhythm, balance and proportion, pattern and texture, and colour theory), there is little or no emphasis on how students are *guided to develop their own sense of design.* There is even less emphasis on how designers may foster an awareness of self-processes.

In my previous educational experience, novelty and innovation was praised as an end product of a student's work, although there was no discussion on how other "less inspired" students could learn to push the expression of their creativity. It was generally assumed that the "excellent" or "best" designer or design-student simply had a special way of looking at the world, which translated into an interesting aesthetic in a finished product or project. It is my belief, however, that designers can be encouraged or educated to increase self-awareness of personal influences on their design abilities, thus greatly influencing, improving, and diversifying end results of the design process.

1.3 Objectives

- To design and produce a line of women's clothing, of approximately five complete looks, created from used materials. This includes such things as previously sewn and worn garments, as well as materials from construction, the medical field, military, work-wear, and home décor end-use and other post-consumer products. These will be re-made into a collection of 'art-to-wear', yet functional garments suitable for resale in the global market place.
- To achieve, within each garment, the best possible end-use of the materials at hand, as well as a cohesive collection of garments, while maximizing functionality through design details (e.g. pockets, closures, articulated joints) with a balanced sense of aesthetic interest. Final items will be wearable, comfortable, and highly original.
- To document the creative process undertaken, including the relationship to

life influences, personal beliefs and design philosophy.

- To evaluate the production process in terms of workability/ feasibility, functionality, and adherence to initial design objectives.
- To develop a concise definition of creative design process based on the experience of developing my own collection.
- To develop a working model of influences on design creativity and creative process, and to explicate this in a theoretical discussion.

1.4 Personal design philosophy

An examination of my personal design philosophy is an important initial step to the creative design process. It also introduces the reader to my personal beliefs underlying and providing impetus for the study. The following points are intended to provide the reader with some insight into my 'headspace' as I begin laying out the elements of my thesis work. This personal design philosophy should prove to be reflected throughout the consequent intellectual and practical work as I design and create my collection, and also delve into important issues that emerge during and after the process. I believe that it is critical for all designers to understand and articulate their personal design philosophy. An individual's attempt to gain such insight is an important step in advancing one's abilities towards becoming a better designer.

- Clothing/fashion does not "make the man"; rather, it is an expression of inner state(s), beliefs and aspirations. It is a complex form of communication.
- Leitch (1996) states that "...clothing constantly undergoes coding and

decoding in intricate processes of social interaction and judgement." The wearer (of garments) should play an active role in identity formation through fashion; the wearer should take an active hand in creative expression. As a designer, I am not a dictator of style; I do not wish to sell a packaged image with the wearer as my devoted subject.

- Fashion designers should not aspire to *dictate taste*, but rather use the creation of clothing as a platform to express personal creative ideas, and to provide garments that a portion of the public may find suitable for wear and/or personal expression through the use of appearance – that is, as an accessory to identity-making.
- The project of the *fashion apparatus* is unethical. *Planned obsolescence* propagates lust for the new.
- Clothing should gain meaning and value over time, like a companion. It therefore should be designed carefully, constructed with high standards, and purchased with forethought. Even if the original owner does not keep a garment, it should contain value that can be passed on to another person.
- Clothing – with only a few exceptions – should not be designed to be 'precious'. It should be worn well and treated as a portable living space. It should stand up to the rigours of every-day life and the many environments with which we interact. It should sit as well on the curb as a cushioned seat at the symphony.
- Good design should strike a balance between *aesthetic* and *functional* qualities, attempting to maximize both without sacrificing one for the other. Both

should endure through time.

- Designers, like engineers, have a responsibility for the products they create.

A consideration for ethics should be incorporated into the design-production-consumption process. This includes those individuals who design, source, fabricate, market, sell, and buy the product. For this project/thesis I am collapsing many of these functions into my one role; therefore I must strive for awareness throughout the process(es).

- Nothing is new. Everything is related to something else to some degree.

Design/ creative thought never happens in a vacuum. References and relations should be celebrated and utilized to their fullest extent.

1.5 Definitions of frequently used terms

The following section of terms is provided for the reader to understand what is meant by the frequently used terms as they are interpreted for this study.

Alternative: that which is not part of the mainstream, or, something (e.g. an aesthetic; an ideology; a movement) that has broken off from the mainstream to gain its own momentum as a 'different' type of entity. Something that is on the fringe of regular culture/society.

Anti-Fashion: Gill (1998), in her discussion of 'deconstruction fashion', states that "...an anti-fashion statement [is] a willful avant-garde desire to destroy "Fashion"... (p.26). Anti-fashion, which Gill sees as parallel to "Deconstruction",

is

> ...a form of criticism by philosophers and literature specialists across the world... In addition, architects, graphic designers, film-makers, multi-media designers, and media theorists have embraced deconstruction as a mode of theoretical practice (p.26).

Not only does the term 'anti-fashion' refer specifically to fashion and the fashion system, which Gill quotes as "...the industry and its supporting infrastructure – media, education, economics, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries, politics, technology, sports sciences – that bring regular changes to men's and women's clothes and bodies..." (p.27), but also to the other creative realms mentioned above that deal with a *fashionable* image as a subject.

Appropriation: the act of borrowing or 'stealing' elements or qualities from one source for incorporation into a second source. This term is usually implied negatively in reference to an attitude or act of 'ripping off' from an original source in order to fuel some aspect of design for the secondary item/idea.

Various forms of appropriation include "co-optation" (Straw, 1997, p.498) as seen in the co-optation of punk music into more mainstream forms of rock music; "poaching" – De Certeau's term as discussed by Jenkins (1997, p.512) – is another that refers to individuals within popular culture who make their own meanings and attempt to hold a level of fluidity in personal interpretation. Finally, Crimp and Rolston (1997) discuss "appropriation art",

> ...in which the artist forgoes the claim to original creation by appropriating already-existing images and objects [and has been significant] to show that the 'unique individual' is a kind of fiction, that our very selves are socially and

> historically determined through pre-existing images, discourses, and events (p.442).

Bricolage: the term can be used in two ways, either meaning a multi-faceted approach to research methods where the researcher employs an array of techniques for investigation, or to describe "...an eclectic mixing of aesthetic codes, particularly relative to fashion...", which are considered as a significant characteristic of postmodern style (Morgado, 1996, p.42, 46).

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state,

> The researcher-as-*bricoleur*-theorist works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms. The interpretive *bricoleur* understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting (p.6).

Related both to method and aesthetic style, Kaiser (1997) views *bricoleurs* as creative, unconventional 'handypersons', "...who find tools and various odds and ends in a bag or work environment that provide design solutions. ...[They] make do with whatever objects are available, develop new connections among objects, and use them to 'think' about the world" (p.468-69).

Creativity: Similar to terms such as "fashion" (below), *creativity* is difficult to succinctly define. Vernon (1970) has conceded this position, stating,

> To the layman, and indeed to the artist himself, the nature of the creative process is mysterious and unanalysable. It is difficult to even define creativity, though many have tried... usually emphasizing novel combinations or unusual associations of ideas, and the point that such combinations must have social or theoretical value, or make an emotional impact on other people (p.12).

Boden (1997) distinguishes first-time novelty from radical originality in the effort to define creativity. She states,

> A merely novel idea is one that can be described and/or produced by the same set of generative rules as are other, familiar, ideas. A genuinely original or radically creative idea is one that cannot. It follows that the ascription of creativity always involves tacit or explicit reference to some specific generative system. It follows, too, that constraints – far from being opposed to creativity – make creativity possible (pp.78-79).

It was one goal of my thesis to formulate a concise, workable definition of creativity that can be applied both specifically to my own design process and generally to others' means of design and creation.

Deconstruction/ Deconstructivism: refers to both a "form of criticism by philosophers and literature specialists... as it represents for them a method of reading and writing to 'uncover' the instabilities of meanings in texts", and also "...a mode of theoretical practice" by those in the fields of architecture, graphic design, film-making, multi-media and fashion design (Gill, 1998, p.26).

Morgado (1996) defines deconstruction as:

> In literature, a critical analysis which attempts to uncover unstated assumptions underlying an author's position; in architecture deconstruction refers to the practice of undermining assumptions about 'natural' relationships (p.43).

The same applies to the practice of deconstruction in fashion by certain designers, such as Martin Margiela.

Design: the act of willing an object or sequence of events into creation; the purposeful arrangement of elements towards an end-goal, usually related to an

aesthetic entity; the planning and editing process that precedes and sometimes accompanies the production of a thing. Bevlin (1994) defines design as "A work of art intended to serve a specific purpose, either aesthetic or otherwise" (p.382). Art, on the other hand, is defined as "The application of skill and taste to the production of an aesthetic result, independent of, but not necessarily excluding, practical use or purpose" (p.380). Design is found in clothing, 'fine' art, architecture, music, and most physical goods.

Fashion: Kaiser (1997) defines fashion as: "A dynamic social *process* by which new styles are created, introduced to a consuming public, and popularly accepted by that public; *as object*: a style accepted by a large group of people at a particular time" (p.4, original emphases). Fashion is different than *style*, in that fashion refers more to a bought, popular commodity, or a sense of being 'in the know' of what is trendy and desirable for more or less mainstream taste at any point in time. Style is a more personal translation of one's sense of self through appearance, whether fashionable or outside of popular taste; it is a more enduring quality than that of fashion.

Vinken (1997) emphasizes the essence of time and temporality in fashion, stating, "Fashion is defined as the art of the perfect moment, of the sudden, surprising and yet awaited harmonious apparition – the Now at the threshold of an immediate future. Its actualization is, at the same time, its destruction" (p.60).

Identity-Making: negotiation with self and others to define one's own sense of

self. Fashion is often used, particularly by teen-agers, to experiment and search for a goodness of fit with different forms of self-expression. Kaiser (1999) has stated, "Consciously or unconsciously, we are both commodity consumers and identity producers as we manage our appearances and continue to create ourselves and our communities" (p.114). This act of defining the self through both inward and outward experimentation belongs within the category of academic terminology that is called 'identity politics' (p.114).

Other related terms for the above are "identity construction" and "identity work". According to Kaiser (1997),

> The appearance management that goes into the construction of styles can be located within a larger context of *identity work*. Consuming apparel and media images becomes a kind of labor, as individuals sort through various options in the global marketplace and then attempt to select pieces of those options that express just the right combination of identities... Identity work becomes a part of everyday discourse about clothing... (p.576).

Leitch (1996) states that dress "...plays a central role in the social construction and maintenance of identity, particularly in contemporary societies increasingly dominated by images".

Memetics: Blackmore (1999) states, "We *do* copy each other all the time and we underestimate what is involved because imitation comes so easily to us. When we copy each other, something, however intangible, is passed on. That something is the meme" (p.52). Memes travel, according to Blackmore, via spoken word, on radio and television, through written words, other people's actions, products of technology, film and pictures (p.37). Very few of the possible

memes actually get picked up and spread on. "The ones we regularly meet are the successful ones – the ones that made it in the competition for replication" (p.37). Most importantly, memes are passed on by *imitation*/ replication/ copying.

Richard Dawkins, a geneticist, first introduced the concept of memes, with memetics now being regarded by many as a new paradigm. Routinely quoted by others, Dawkins (1976) has stated,

> Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, *clothes fashions* [my emphasis added], ways of making pots or of building arches. ...Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation. [...] When you plant a fertile meme in my mind you literally parasitize my brain, turning it into a vehicle for the meme's propagation in just the way that a virus may parasitize the genetic mechanism of a host cell (pp.206-7).

Modern Primitivism: Sometimes termed 'neo-tribalists', modern primitivism was coined by Fakir Musafar in the mid-1970s to describe a group of body modification devotees that emerged in the San Francisco 'underground' (Pitts 1999; Vale & Juno 1989). An increasing awareness and adoption of this style has been occurring within sub- and mainstream culture(s) over the last five to ten years in Edmonton, and approximately ten to fifteen years in Toronto (personal observations).

While some subcultural groups (such as punks, bikers and ravers) have used body modification as a peripheral fashion statement, Modern Primitives ('ModPrims') have made it central to their fundamental self-identity, ideology and lifestyle. Eubanks (1996) loosely defines ModPrims as "...those who participate

in contemporary rituals that include extensive body piercing, constriction (binding), scarification, 'tribal' tattooing and branding" (p.74). This is seen as a movement to redefine ideas of the contemporary human body and social bodies, outside of our imposed culture of 'technocracy'. Motivation for modifying the body varies from person to person, but throughout ModPrim culture lies a hypothetical reverence for ancient modes and rituals of body adornment by such groups as Native North Americans, the Maori of New Zealand, the Massai of Africa, the Ibitoe of New Guinea, and other non-European groups.

Postmodernism: the ideological and philosophical stance that 'knowledge' is only ever partial and situated; the doubt that "...any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the 'right' or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge" (Richardson, in Tierney and Lincoln, 1997, p. *ix*). Academically applied, no method to approaching knowledge is seen as being superior, and science is not held above other realms of inquiry. Postmodern works stress the importance and need for non-traditional voices to uncover personal experiences, in the effort to expand the definition of 'research'.

Ihab Hassan [1987] has attempted to frame a theoretical basis for what postmodernism *is,* and has written a list of eleven criteria of postmodernism, as quoted in Higgins (1997). These include:

> 1) indeterminacy, 2) fragmentation, 3) decanonization, 4) self-lessness/ depth-lessness, 5) the unpresentable/ unrepresentable, 6) irony, 7) hybridization, 8) carnivalization, 9) performance/ participation, 10) constructionism, and 11) immanence. Missing from his list is an emphasis on myth as an allusive device but also as a creative strategy... (p.3).

Rave/ Ravers: originating in the holiday island of Ibiza and in the U.K. between the mid- to late-1980s, rave has since spread to all corners of the globe. Clothing and music in this 'style-tribe' (see below) are inextricably bound together, and have an unmistakeable look and sound. Various sub-genres of musical styles are accompanied to a varying extent by respective clothing styles. Examples of such sub-genres include house, jungle/drum & bass, ambient, trance, tribal and progressive (Hilker, website; personal observation).

A simple definition of a rave is a party, usually held in a warehouse-sized space with many disc jockeys ("DJs") playing techno-style music. Events usually go all night, and sometimes for multiple days. Rave can also refer to the community that has built up around these parties, with accompanying record and fashion stores to cater to ravers' tastes. Many such stores have opened in Edmonton in the last three to five years, although raves have been present in this city for a longer period. Jordan (1997) defines rave as

> ...a meeting to dance for hours to a music that is fast, loud and sounds like a machine's delight... In these vast celebrations, participants gradually lose subjective belief in their self and merge in a collective body... What can be recognized as raving's production is... a gradually achieve[d] communal state of euphoria (pp.125-29).

Style-Tribes (Tribes): an increasingly common 'buzz-word' in sociological and anthropological descriptions/ discussion of subcultures. Ted Polhemus (1994) may have been the first to coin the term, indicating that those who show subcultural group belonging do so through "...distinctive styles of dress and

decoration to draw a line between 'Us' and 'Them'" (Damhorst, Miller & Michelman, 1999, pp.451-454). These style-based social groups function in western nations as a replacement for former, traditional social and/or family groups. Members of one style-tribe feel an affinity with similar others even on an international scale.

Subculture: is related to the terms 'alternative' and 'style-tribes'. The term, coined in the 1940s, refers to a group of individuals who share some similar beliefs, codes, or preferences. Thornton (1997) states that used broadly, the term means "...groups of people that have something in common with each other (i.e. they share a problem, and interest, a practice) which distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other social groups" (p.1). However, the term 'subculture' is defined more specifically – according to Thornton – by the way in which there is distinctiveness or variance between a smaller cultural/ social group in comparison with the more dominant culture/society (p.5). "Subcultures... are condemned to and/or enjoy a consciousness of 'otherness' or difference" (p.5). Examples include ravers and Modern Primitives.

While often the term is used to describe a non-mainstream group of young people that share a similar style of dress and/or music, the difference between a "style-tribe" (above) and a subculture is that the latter does not necessarily define its identity in an overtly visual, aesthetic manner. Subcultural members may hold cohesiveness through covert, coded bonds that are not accessible to those outside the group. An example of this is a segment of gay men who make a

habit of wearing a certain colour, pattern and location of bandana to signify preferred sexual practices to other gay men (personal conversation, Toronto, mid-1990s).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

We ourselves must be the change we want to see in the world.

Mahatma Ghandi

2.1 Introduction

The literature surveyed in this chapter represents what may at first appear to be a wide and somewhat disparate range of theories, methods of working, perceiving and understanding, and being. Taken together, however, this assortment of information embodies the influences that inform my approach to designing – as well as my attempt to live a creative life. This literature acts as a background, or a base, from which I studied my creative process through designing a collection of women's clothing.

2.2 Theories of creativity

Webster's Dictionary (2000) defines creativity as: "The quality of being able to produce original work or ideas in any field; creativeness." The following theories and approaches are recent and non-traditional in the field of creativity research.

Psychology/ Psychoanalysis

Brink's (2000) theory of the creative impulse derives directly from psychoanalytic theory. He states that "...creativity and the aesthetic experience of nature and created objects regulate moods, controlling anxiety and reducing the likelihood of depression" (p.8). The effort of creating and creativity, which the

author views as a harmonized language of imagery, is not reserved for only the 'gifted' individual, but is rather an adaptive and self-regulating human function. In "...authentic art (that communicating unconscious wishes and defences)..." Brink explains imagination and the creative urge as an individual's way to discover, simulate, and repair anxieties that may reach back as far as early formative experiences.

Summarized, Brink's position is that,

> Creativity thus helps to relieve high anxiety... arising when social support is under assault. It is allied to dreaming and arises from the same intrapsychic pressures to process dissonant information. Words, images and musical notes are the symbolic carriers of states of feeling needing reprocessing to confer reassuring meaning upon them. They are... the reparative elements of culture (2000, pp.10-11).

Creativity is seen in this theory as a way for the individual to explore the inner self, re-set one's emotional homeostasis, and redirect anxious arousal into a healthier, more manageable personal state.

Continuing within the psychoanalytic vein, Gedo (1996) lists a few criteria that he views as present in creative endeavor. First, the novel work represents the creator's authentic point of view; second, it should "...transcend one specific instance by transmitting as clearly as possible something of wider significance..."; third, it should have a "...commitment to ethical values..." at least in terms of technical execution; and resultingly, creativity should surpass purely utilitarian goals but keep regard for "...the value of social utility" (p.5).

Similar to Brink's (2000) theory outlined above, Gedo (1996) states that the creative individual attempts to communicate an artistic message through their

work, which can transmit personal ideals to others (p.11). Unlike Brink, however, Gedo sees creativity not so exclusively as a by-product of psychological trouble (such as depression or anxiety), but moreover as an individual's enjoyment of accomplishment and preference for novelty (p.11).

May (1975) eloquently discusses the necessity of a creative individual's courage to engage in creative expression, and society's need for creativity. Creativity, according to May, "...is the encounter of the intensively conscious human being with his or her world" (p.54). May, similar to Gedo (1996), differs in his description of creativity from the more classic psychoanalytic view of creativity as expressed by Brink (2000). He views the creative process as the highest degree of emotional health, whereby individuals can fulfill a state of self-actualization and being-in-the-world (p.40). In doing so, the creative individual "...must fight the *actual* (as contrasted to the ideal) gods of our society – the god of conformism as well as the gods of apathy, material success, and exploitative power" (p.30).

On a societal scale, May (1975) suggests that creators and artists are instrumental in generating the ethical structure of a society. Although the creative individual is generally "...not a moralist by conscious intention", he or she helps to create the consciousness of the race by "...expressing the vision within his or her own being" (p.26). Creative individuals, therefore, play an important role in bringing to light the spiritual meaning of their time. "They give us a 'distant early warning' of what is happening to our culture" (p.23).

Boden's (1994) inquiry into 'What is creativity?' proposes that creative ideas

are ones that are novel due to the fact that they *did not* happen before, nor *could* they have happened before (p.76). Another factor necessary for creativity is a context of constraints. Boden states,

> ...Constraints – far from being opposed to creativity – make creativity possible. To throw away all constraints would be to destroy the capacity for creative thinking. Random processes alone, if they happen to produce anything interesting at all, can result only in first-time curiosities, not radical surprises (p.79).

The following theories and approaches are recent and non-traditional in the field of creativity research.

Memetics

One of the fundamental elements to my design philosophy is that *nothing is new*, and everything is related to something else in some way and to some degree; design and creative thought never happens in a vacuum. This echoes the sentiments of Diana Crane, who discusses the widespread adage that nothing is really new in fashion (2000, pp.152-53). Thus, I cannot adhere wholeheartedly to Webster's definition of creativity above, due to its use of the word "original". Memetic theory, which is introduced in a book by Richard Dawkins called *The Selfish Gene* (1976), reflects the above statements well, regarding the sources and origins of things such as work and ideas. Regularly quoted in other writings on memetics, Dawkins states, "Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, *clothes fashions*, ways of making pots or of building arches" (pp. 206-7, my emphasis added).

Samplings from Susan Blackmore's book, *The Meme Machine* (1999), provide insight on what memes are: "We *do* copy each other all the time and we underestimate what is involved because imitation comes so easily to us. When we copy each other, something, however intangible, is passed on. That something is the meme" (p.52). The author shows that to learn *how memes spread* is to learn a good portion about *what memes are*. Tied into this are the questions "Why do memes spread? [Or]... How do particular memes get copied?" (p.27). Blackmore's list includes reasons and methods such as: benefits are provided to human happiness and well-being; they are easily copied; they change the environment and stamp out competing memes; they may appear to provide advantages to individuals even when they do not; and, underlying these all, because they benefit themselves. Memes travel, according to Blackmore, via spoken word, on radio and television, through written words, other people's actions, products of technology, film and pictures. Very few of the possible memes actually get picked up and spread on. "The ones we regularly meet are the successful ones – the ones that made it in the competition for replication" (p.37). Most importantly, memes are passed on by *imitation/* replication/ copying.

Blackmore (1999), states that memes "...are the very stuff of our minds. Our memes is who we are" (p.22). The author compares memes with seeds, calling this her 'weed theory' of memes, to explain the concept metaphorically. "If something can grow it will. There are far more seeds in the soil and in the air

than can possibly grow into mature plants... This is just what seeds do [i.e. grow as conditions allow]. Memes do the same with brains" (p.41).

An article entitled *Digital Sampling, the Memetic Impulse and Appropriation in Modern Art* (1994) provides discussion revolving around notions of sampling, appropriation and imitation that have existed as a foundation for various forms of art and aesthetic endeavours over the ages. This short paper resulted from a presentation given at a symposium on the arts, technology and law at the Smithsonian Institution. It quotes Igor Stravinsky, an influential composer of music, as having said, "A good composer does not imitate; he steals." The article continues, "The electronic and mechanical realization, reproduction or recreation of a sound [or *garment style* for my purposes] involves many more steps, collective wisdom, and means of creation than can be possessed by one person."

In the area of memetics, Liane Gabora's work is perhaps most directly related to my investigation into creativity. This is achieved in her 1997 paper through the exploration of a framework whereby memes produce creativity in humans. Gabora states that viewing our world as fully interconnected and relational, or *within a memetic perspective*, can feel disorienting due to our tendency to focus study upon the individual as the primary unit of investigation. However, in changing our view we may come closer to "...disclose population-level phenomena that would otherwise go unnoticed because [memes in our usual view] are not readily detected through introspection" (section 2.1). In another section Gabora states,

> While biological needs affect the focus from the inside, environmental stimuli impact it from the outside. [...] For the purpose of understanding the evolutionary mechanics underlying culture, any interaction between an organism and its environment that impacts the focus is part of this process (section 5.3).

It is interesting to note the similarities of the above points to the diagram of Clothing in Relation to the Human Ecosystem Model (based on Kilsdonk, 1983), discussed in foundational masters-level courses (McFadyen, Capjack and Crown, 1998, p.123).

Echoing Gabora's position on memes as essential to the creative process, Aaron Lynch (1996) states that thought contagion, his term for the memetic process, "...reshuffles old ideas into novel combinations. Sometimes the recombined beliefs [or *designs*] hold new implications that spark completely new ideas. Other times, newly combined beliefs become novel thought contagions in their own right" (p.11). This act of recombination was very important to the process of design and creation, the centre of my investigation.

Networks of Enterprise and the Evolving Systems Approach

Gruber and Wallace's (1999) work on the evolving systems approach to the case study method was vital to my thesis and collection. Their article attempts to explain how the creative individual goes through multidirectional, unpredictable, non-linear periods of artistic and personal development, both internally and externally (p.93). It is interesting to note that, in their discussion of methodology, the authors state,

> ...there is a close relation between theory and method in the study of creativity. Indeed... method is the theory in the sense that it specifies what is considered important and worthy of study (p.96).

The authors point to the importance, in the usage of the case study method, of taking the creative individual's life context into consideration. This includes elements such as 'the intellectual setting', general societal ideology of the times, and the role of the family. They warn, however, "The student of the creative case must not use the task of examining context as substituting for the task of penetrating the case in all its inwardness" (p.99).

An important factor in my study was keeping an ongoing journal of my personal development, to understand the various influences and their effect on my work. Gruber and Wallace (1999) discuss the importance of this schematization approach, giving the example of Darwin's unfolding thought as can be evidenced through his many personal journals kept over a number of years, in which ideas were recorded both *verbally and visually* (p.101). As well, case study of a creative person's running narrative can divulge information about that person's reflective thought – a key for understanding one's process of creativity.

In tracing the creative individual's ideas, an investigator can eventually map out ("schematize") the network of creative development. Gruber and Wallace (1999) call this a "network of enterprise" (p.105), and state that the goal of this mapping is to "...get an overall view of the creative person at work..." (p.105), and to reveal the main 'ingredients' that have influencing effects on creativity. The authors state,

> From the investigator's point of view, the purposes of a network of enterprise are, first, to provide an overview of the patterns of continuity and relationships among enterprises by showing the course of the work as a whole... and, second, to serve as a counterpoint to the detailed and hermeneutic narrative derived from examining texts such as the person's notebooks, critical comments, autobiographical accounts, correspondence, and creative products. Mapping... is a task performed 'outside' the case... [and gives] an aerial map (p.106).

The mapping of networks also allows the investigator to see patterns of relationships, and to view the creative individual's development both cross-sectionally as well as longitudinally (p.107).

It is unfortunate that the authors did not provide an example of this type of diagramming method, although their suggestions conjure up a three dimensional image reminiscent of a multi-coloured yarn varying in thickness due to plies being added or removed over its continuation. This yarn could illustrate both the element of time (along its length as well as frozen in time cross-sectionally) and the various influences being interwoven or discontinued. Such a diagram would be best shown by computer modelling.

Gruber and Wallace (1999) discuss the role of the investigator in the evolving systems approach to case studies, stating that two roles are crucial: "...the investigator's... roles [are] a phenomenological one and a critical one or, to put it another way, an inside and an outside role" (p.111). They describe the investigator as constantly moving between these two roles, playing both an objective and subjective part in the study. In my own research, I occupied both the role of the investigator and the *investigated*, meaning that careful reflection

and analysis was done to ensure validity and reliability throughout all steps of the research process.

2.3 Design

If we are to approach the workings of creativity with a sampling of theories on the topic, it is no less important to introduce published findings on *design* for the understanding of following chapters. In this section I briefly consider various facets of 'pure' design, that is, the act and process of design as a broad topic, as opposed to a specific type of design as related to fashion, fine art, or other creative endeavour.

Zeisel (1984) discusses design from a multi-disciplinary approach with the goal of providing useful information for researchers in both fields of social sciences and environmental design (p.*v*). While he admits the difficulty in describing design due to the many intangible elements surrounding the activity – such as creativity, intuition and imagination (p.3) – the author does provide a basic definition of design.

> Physical design inventively mixes together ideas, drawings, information, and a good many other ingredients to create something where nothing was before. Design can also be seen as an ordered process in which specific activities are loosely organized to make decisions about changing the physical world to achieve identifiable goals (p.5).

Although Zeisel's (1984) book mainly focuses on environment-behaviour *research* (p.*xi*), he provides a useful itemization of five prototypical characteristics found in the act of designing (pp.6-16):

1.) *Three Elementary Activities. Imaging, presenting and testing* are elemental,

complex and interconnected activities that constitute design, which all include "feed-back and feed-forward" dimensions (p.9). The author sees these three activities as loosely ordered and always present throughout the process of design, which includes the items listed below.

2.) *Two Types of Information. Image information* and *test information* are pieces of knowledge, used in a twofold way, that can stimulate innovation and facilitate the learning process of design. Image information is used "...as an empirical source for basic cognitive design decisions" (p.10). It allows for a general understanding of the issues and physical needs involved in design decisions. Test information, however, is generally the same data as the 'image information' although used in a different way – specifically to evaluate the fitness of a design hypothesis and its alternatives (pp.9-10).

3.) *Shifting Visions of Final Product.* Design is a dynamic process whereby decisions are constantly defined and revised through a series of "creative leaps" (p.11). Other terms cited by Zeisel include 'variety reduction', 'reworking subobjectives', 'restoring balance', 'hypothesis refinement', and 'transformation'. New insight and information, combined with critical analysis throughout the design process, is a way for designers to refine projects and "...to learn, though testing, from themselves" (p.11).

4.) *Toward a Domain of Acceptable Responses.* Zeisel urges the reader to not approach design with the goal of choosing the "best" possible solution amidst the alternatives. Rather, one can assess the design outcome by its degree of fit within the given environment or "context" (i.e. "contextual responsiveness"), and

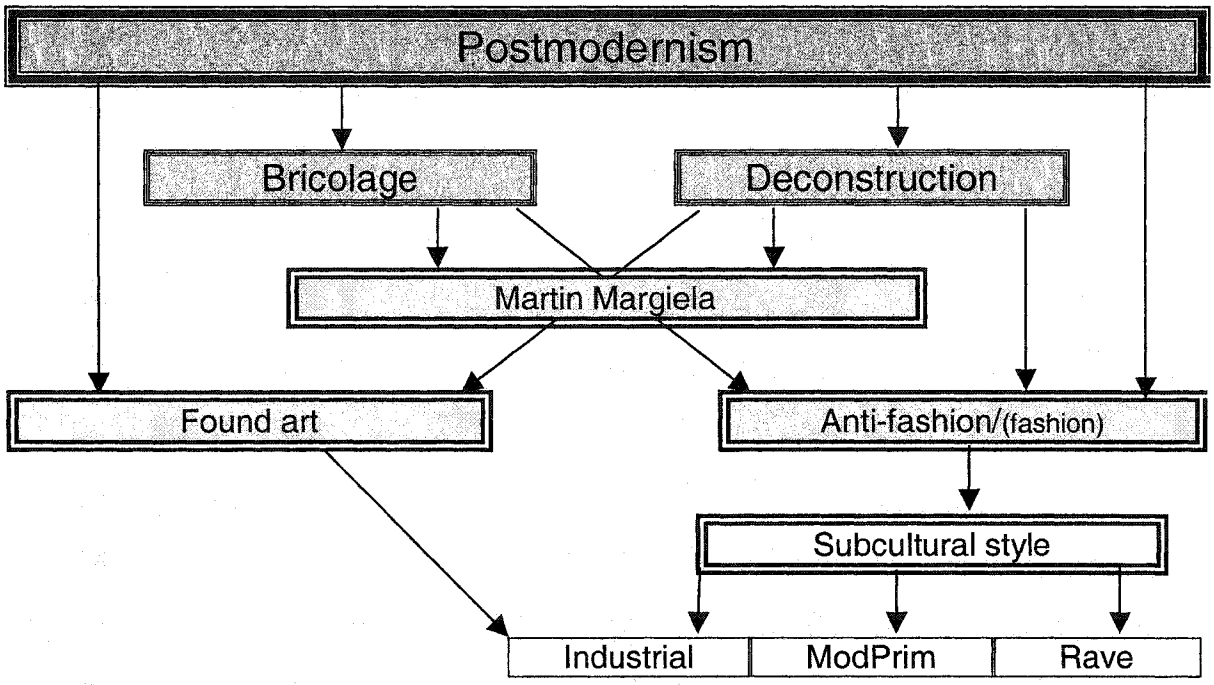
by the degree to which the constituent parts fit together as a whole or "form" (i.e. "internal coherence") (pp.12-13).

5.) *Development through Linked Cycles: A Spiral Metaphor.* Zeisel states, "Conceptual shifts and product development in design occur as the result of repeated, iterative movement through the three elementary design activities" (p.6). The designer's actions of backtracking, repeating activities with a shifting focus, and progressively linking cycles – although they may seem multidirectional or unorganized to the observer – are highly essential moves within the design process. The designer's conceptions and solutions of design problems grow through "...a process that, once started, feeds itself both by drawing on outside information and by generating additional insight and information from within" (p.16).

2.4 Influences on my creative design process

The following concepts, including postmodernism, bricolage, deconstruction, and Martin Margiela's work, should be read in the manner of a flowchart, constructed in layers (figure 2.1). Postmodernism is the catch-all concept in which both bricolage and deconstruction are found, almost like intertwined twins, and within which resides the work of Martin Margiela as a subsequent example. 'Found art' is another manifestation of postmodernity in the world of fine art, while 'anti-fashion' is an expression of the postmodern in the realm of clothing. As an example of this, I explore subcultural style, citing details and examples of

'Industrial', 'Modern Primitive' and 'rave' subcultures. A visual representation of the above concepts and their interrelations could appear as such:



[Figure 2.1. Relation of conceptual influences.]

Postmodernism

Morgado (1996) provides an exhaustive list of the characteristics of postmodernity to be found in fashion, which is superbly formatted into a table comparing Modern and Postmodern fashion. A few examples include:

> Modern Fashion: new styles are visible indicators of social progress; [versus] Postmodern Fashion: styles and looks recycled from previous periods; confused chronology; the 'sense that there is nothing new – everything has already been designed'...
>
> Modern Fashion: system of rules re: styles, colours, how items are to be worn and coordinated; [versus] Postmodern Fashion: unstable aesthetic code; intentional challenges to aesthetic codes...

> Modern Fashion: elite fashion inspires mass fashion; [versus] Postmodern Fashion: collapse of distinction between elite, mass, and street fashions... (Table 4 on p.48).

This entire article serves as a highly valuable reference for understanding postmodernism, with an emphasis on the implications and involvement of fashion.

Crane (2000) states that postmodernism, as an element of fashion and clothing design is "difficult to characterize in part because such works exhibit ambiguity and contradiction ...the postmodernist oscillates between conventional and unconventional codes" (p.156). Works of this type will contain and convey either no fixed meaning, or multiple meanings.

Bricolage

As part of Morgado's (1996) 'Terminology of Postmodernism', bricolage is defined as:

> From *bricoleur* (handyman)... the idea is that the handyman creates new objects out of found items (Lévi-Strauss, 1966); an eclectic mixing of aesthetic codes, particularly relative to fashion... (p.42).

Not only referring to a particular style, bricolage can also describe the effects that are produced by "...incongruous stylistic elements... or by the out-of-context imitation of past styles. [These] effects... are considered an important characteristic of postmodern aesthetic style" (p.46).

Evans (1997) defines *bricolage* as:

> Translated into ordinary language, bricolage means taking bits from one place and putting them into another to create a new meaning. So, for example, the

> use of swastikas by punks on tee-shirts and jackets, alongside the leather and rubber, does not mean adherence to fascism, but has been pulled away from this to mean 'transgression' of the existing order... What is important in all of this is that individual signs – the meanings attached to these objects – only make sense as part of a set of signs, and their meaning is changed through being jumbled up, re-ordered and re-contextualized next to other signs. ...And a safety-pin is not a safety-pin any more; worn through the nose it is jewellery, and the term bricolage attempts to explain this (p.173).

In other words, it is the transformation, rearrangement and subversion of meaning through things, or dress, that constitutes bricolage. It is also the main expression effected by subculturalists, achieved sometimes through combinations that are seemingly inexplicable to outsiders.

Bricolage, which can be read also as 'sampling', is a term that implies "the improvised juxtaposition of incompatible or heterogeneous fragments, often for ironic or parodic effect" (Connor, 1997, p.214). Crane (2000) describes bricolage as "...putting together different items and images to create an original costume that is meaningful to the individual" (p.190), and notes its importance to the way in which members of youth subcultures use clothing. Kaiser (1997) considers *bricoleurs* as creative, unconventional 'handypersons', "...who find tools and various odds and ends in a bag or work environment that provide design solutions. ...Bricolage is individual expression at its height. ...[Bricoleurs] make do with whatever objects are available, develop new connections among objects, and use them to 'think' about the world" (p.468-69). Central to postmodern theory, bricolage is descriptive of dress in both ModPrim and rave subcultures, and also the style of Martin Margiela's work.

Beyond this, bricolage is a technique for qualitative investigation. Neuman

(2000) states,

> Qualitative researchers are *bricoleurs*; they learn to be adept at doing many things, drawing on a variety of sources... [This] style emphasizes developing an ability to draw on a variety of skills, materials, and approaches as they may be needed... A *bricolage* technique... requires having a deep knowledge of one's materials, a collection of esoteric skills, and the capacity to combine them flexibly. ...[It is a] mixture of using diverse materials, applying disparate approaches, and assembling bits and pieces... (original emphases, pp. 147-48).

Bricolage is suitable to describe both the range of influences that informed the way that I designed my collection (including text – as already evidenced in the assortment of literature reviewed – and otherwise), as well as the overall aesthetic that will resulted from my combination of diverse materials. Moreover, the resulting thesis reads as a bricolage-type document, owing to the range of elements, interests, and skills.

Deconstruction

Gill (1998) discusses the work and aesthetic of fashion designer Martin Margiela as the epitome of 'deconstruction' in the realm of fashion. Throughout her paper, we find parallel terminology such as "Le Destroy", "anti-fashion", "recycled style", and "récuperation". She traces the origins of both the philosophical perspective and its implications into various design fields.

> The name 'Deconstruction' has been quite self-consciously embraced as a form of criticism by philosophers and literature specialists across the world as it represents for them a method of reading and writing to 'uncover' the instabilities of meaning in texts. In addition, architects, graphic designers, film-makers, multi-media designers, and media theorists have embraced deconstruction as a

mode of theoretical practice (p.26).

Gill cites that fashion journalists coined the term 'deconstruction fashion' in 1988, following the Deconstructivist Architecture exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (p.26).

Deconstruction fashion is described by Gill (1998) as an "auto-critique" of the fashion system. What is *new* about the thinking behind deconstruction in fashion is an element that Gill terms the "structur-*ing* ontology" of the garment. That is to say "...visibility is given to the simultaneous bidirectionality of the labor that the garment-maker and the clothes perform – i.e. the garment-maker is simultaneously forming and deforming, constructing and deconstructing, making and undoing clothes" (p.28). Importantly, Gill states that through deconstruction fashion, dress becomes theoretical (p.35). However, she also acknowledges that her article does not allow sufficient room for questions such as "...whether or not such an aesthetic reinforces, or contributes to the deflection of, a desire to bring transformations to consumer society and its practices of obsolescence and disposability" (p.34).

Through examining the relation – but not method – of deconstruction fashion and philosophy, Gill states that deconstruction fashion is "...an encounter neither purely *about* philosophy nor purely *about* fashion, neither simply owned by a philosophy posited as prior to its fashioned expression, nor owned by fashion as its latest innovation" (1998, p.42). Rather, deconstructive thinking is realized in the process of making, or more precisely, "*un*-doing" clothing.

Martin Margiela's work

Belgian fashion designer Martin Margiela is renowned (or "infamous" to some) for his deconstructivist fashion design extending over the last decade. Perhaps one of the most 'intellectually-driven' designers, Margiela has made his name working experimentally while also succeeding commercially. His collections, at least partially, consist of transformed second-hand or army surplus clothing, positioned for the high-fashion market, and feature "...a distinctive use of materials, deconstructions and reproductions. His predilection is for the abject – as epitomized by the second-hand or recycled – the cut-up and the one-off" (Evans, 1998, p.75).

> Margiela converts the low status of second-hand clothing into the high status of a one-off fashion piece... reposition[ing] it at the top of a hierarchy of prestige. He converts it into something that has the highest status, not just in the art world, where cultural capital is all, but equally in the fashion world, where economic capital is not insignificant (p.83).

Examples of Margiela's pieces include vintage dresses that have been cut up and re-combined into one new dress, ball gowns turned into long waist-coats, tailor's canvas dress-forms (judies) reworked into waistcoats, and woollen socks stitched together as sweaters (Evans, 1998). Seams and construction details are often revealed on the outside of garments, hems are sometimes left unfinished, and his trademark label is a blank white square with no logo, brand or name. Collections do not have names, but are rather numbered sequentially. Fashion shows are just as unconventional, and have been held in "derelict urban spaces such as car parks, warehouses and wasteland" (p.75), empty supermarkets, old dance halls and disused hospitals, in abandoned subway stations, and in outdoor

gallery installations where coloured mold is cultured to grow on the clothes displayed.

Evans (1998) states, "If Margiela chooses to work with old clothes it may be because they have a 'grain', a patina, that cannot be simulated. It is their forgotten history that he brings back to life, although one can only guess at what that history might be" (p.87). In this way, Margiela refutes and overturns the regular cycles of fashion and fashionable consumption.

Gill (1998) calls Margiela a "leading proponent of deconstructionism", and describes his dresses made from the linings of recovered vintage robes as giving these linings a chance of "...a new-old life 'on the outside', that is, as lining-dresses in their own right" (p.27). She describes his creations as garments whose secrets have been brought to the surface, listing those made from mis-matched fabrics, some with exposed inside "mechanics" such as darts, facings, and zippers, and others that have been re-cut, tacked, sewn and re-detailed from older items.

In keeping with Evans' analysis of Margiela's work, Gill (1998) says,

> ...Margiela appears to have something to say about the operations of clothing as a frame for bodies and, potentially, the influences of fashion, as a mechanism, structure or discourse, that is, as ...a 'fashion system' with vast cultural, economic and ontological effects. ...Fashion both designs and is designed by an empire of signs that propel and commutate at an ever-increasing speed, a domain into which we are all interpellated as 'fashioned people' whether we like it or not (p.27). ...Thus Margiela deconstructs the aura of the designer garment, and by extension the industry that upholds the myth of innovation, by messing with its integrity and innovation, by stitching a dialogue with the past into its future (p.31).

Margiela's work demonstrates the collapse of the hierarchical disconnect usually found between the exclusivity of designer fashion and everyday clothes.

Vinken (1997) discusses the dimension of time that Margiela plays havoc with through his collections and pieces. "One of the most interesting examples of the new way of making time and its transitoriness the fabric of fashion and of exposing it as fashion's own texture is shown by... Margiela" (p.64). She explains that his work decomposes the old idea of fashion, whereby tailoring techniques were kept hidden as interior secrets, but are now turned inside out, decodified, dissected and revivified by this designer. Vinken states that Margiela "...deconstructs the secret strategy of fashion in exposing the fetishized female body in the process of construction; he takes its slick perfection literally apart" (pp.65-66). Through his 'transgressive' method of producing clothes, Margiela illustrates the idealized and fragmented artificiality of the fashion industry.

Margiela "...toys with one of the essential tokens of fashion: the eternal return of the new..." (Vinken, 1997, p.66). The author points out, however, that Margiela's efforts are aesthetic rather than ecological. She states,

> One should not confuse [his] procedure with ecological recycling or other pragmatic aims; whereas recycling remakes the new in reusing the old, the novelty here consists in showing the old *as* old – an entirely aesthetic manoeuvre. [...] Margiela does not revive historical models to make them look new, but uses old material to turn them into something more radically new. Fashion has thereby regained something lost for quite a time; the fascination of the unique (p.66).

With the integration of time in his creations, the designer attempts to make the clothing more complete through aging. "They should age like paintings" (p.66).

This approach creates a space in fashion that comes from an entirely different direction than the usual ephemerality we see throughout the industry.

Another aspect that sets this designer apart from his peers is his enigmatic attitude toward his personal identity, which marks a striking reversal from the 'cult of personality' that most other designers attempt to construct for themselves. Rather than working to construct an image for himself with whom customers can relate, "Margiela the man is shrouded in mystery" (Rotterdam Museum website). He does not give interviews, appear in public, comment on his work, or advertise. "This behaviour is not an attempt to build up a myth around his person. Margiela maintains that his appearance and private life are irrelevant to his work. The designs are paramount" (website).

Found art

Following my personal belief that 'Art' should not be treated as an elitist or intellectualist form of spectator sport, my design philosophy similarly calls for apparel design that is accessible to the average person. It need not appeal to every person's taste; however, it should not be treated in an overly 'precious' manner. To that end, garments should be wearable within most socially constructed environments (as opposed to natural climates), and constructed from everyday materials. In Jencks' discussion of postmodern architecture (Mitchell, 1993, p.14), he states, "There is an inevitable disjunction between the elites who create the environment and the various publics that inhabit and use it. Post-Modern[ism]... has grown in power to overcome this disjunction". I argue that

clothing, like architecture, can work as an inhabitable, accommodating and functional environment for all. The materials out of which garments are made should reflect this philosophy.

As a certain segment of 'Artists' have turned to the use of *found objects* for the materials of their creations, so have a small number of clothing designers (such as Margiela). To successfully integrate post-consumer materials in an aesthetically pleasing and functional way was a primary goal in the creation of my collection. Herman (1998) states that

> ...while most of us were throwing away [things]... and before recycling became public policy – artists and craftspeople were already seeing the creative possibilities in refuse. Everyone's family probably has a cherished quilt made from scrap fabrics, or a woven or braided rag rug, but in the last few decades creative people have increasingly made a deliberate choice to make art – whether functional or merely beautiful or surprising – from discards (p.8).

Herman (1998) continues to discuss artists' reasons for using found objects in making their new work, stating that the material, meaning and memory are inherently important to the creation that results. Either the found object is preferable for its aesthetic properties (such as surface appearance or shape), or it is valuable for its "original meaning to tell stories in the objects... [made] from it" (p.22), that is, the value 'appropriated' by the artist. Artists that employ found objects into their art often do so, according to Herman, due to the interesting textures, surfaces or forms that the media may already possess. The qualities of these recycled materials "...are less intimidating to [artists] than the proverbial blank sheet of expensive paper. Experimentation is easier if the material is cheap, or free" (p.39).

Van Hinte (1997) discusses the continual increase we see in the use of recycled materials through the concept of a 'life-cycle' of manufactured goods. This includes various stages within a "...whole system of designing, producing, using and ultimately breaking down objects of desire" (p.10). He states, "Product developers should be concerned with all of [a product's] stages, 'from the cradle to the grave'" (p.12).

The aesthetic implications of incorporating recycled materials into design are important, and can act as a source of inspiration. In the attempt to transform used or found objects into new products, van Hinte (1997) states that not only are designers trying to spare the environment, but they also are "...discovering new aesthetic properties and new ways to add value, thus contributing to the quality of our surroundings" (p.18).

Recycling, however, is still an industry that requires energy for processing, which can therefore still pollute the environment. While durable products may last longer for the user, they may also be much harder to break down after use. Van Hinte (1997) says, "required properties for a long product life can be contradictory to the demands for recyclability" (p.10). Herein lies the challenge of endeavouring to design *responsibly*.

Fashion/ 'Anti-fashion'

Although it would be useful to provide a simple definition of *'fashion'* for my study, this has proven to be a difficult task, due to the innumerable discourses and strategies voiced by various interest groups on the topic. Crane (2000)

states, "Today, fashion has several diverse and inconsistent agendas..." (p.19). Even Webster's Dictionary falls short in supplying an adequate description. To define 'fashion' is useful for finding a good working definition of 'anti-fashion', which has been a fundamental element to my design philosophy and to the creative process taken for my collection.

Crane's (2000) definition of fashion incorporates "...strong norms about appropriate appearances at a particular point in time" (p.1), which are marked visibly through clothing choices. She elsewhere states, "Fashion is generally thought to refer to phenomena that are new but that are rapidly and widely accepted, implying that their acceptance does not require a major shift in worldview on the part of the public" (p.154). Kaiser (1997) defines fashion as: "A dynamic social *process* by which new styles are created, introduced to a consuming public, and popularly accepted by that public; *as object*: a style accepted by a large group of people at a particular time" (p.4; original emphases).

To define *'anti-fashion'*, then, is not an entirely straightforward task either. Kaiser's (1997) definition of Wearable Art reflects one kind of anti-fashion: "Use of clothing as a medium for artistic communication, to reflect the uniqueness and personal creativity of the artist and designer; a strong movement in the United States growing out of the attitude of the 1960s that rejected anonymous mass production" (p.4).

Another approach to anti-fashion appeared in the early punk aesthetic in late-1970s Britain, and was probably one of the first identifiable instances of

bricolage, or 'DIY' ('do-it-yourself') style. Punk outfits were created by individuals for themselves as a form of style revolt. These were meant to be a "mockery of the established fashion industry's dictates... [whereby] the whole idea of fashion was turned upside down as objects 'borrowed from the most sordid of contexts found a place in the punks' ensembles'" (Kaiser, 1997, p.467). Found objects such as safety pins and lavatory chains were used – "...common, everyday objects that were never intended initially for purposes of appearance management" (p.468-69).

Yet another type of anti-fashion is found in the creations of certain avant-garde clothing designers, many of them Japanese, such as Yojhi Yamamoto, Rei Kawakubo for 'Comme des Garçons', and Issey Miyake. These creators use techniques to create garments and images that are "...oriented toward disrupting the orderly evolution of fashion change" (Crane, 2000, p.154). They created much attention by showing garments that were sometimes asymmetrical, full of holes, unfinished in some seams or hems, rumpled or unkempt looking, made of unusual fabrics, and in atypical colour palettes. Crane (2000) describes Kawakubo's 1980s work as "express[ing] the antithesis of values created in the tradition of haute couture... both outrageous and important [in the world of fashion design, and] ...an out-and-out assault on the very idea of fashion" (p.155).

Subcultural style

In her examination of fashion as related to class throughout various eras, Crane (2000) sees current westernized society as increasingly fragmented.

"Hyper-segmentation", where each lifestyle type is isolated in its own special niche, characterizes contemporary life, meaning that "...lifestyles have begun to resemble 'image tribes', nonoverlapping segments of the population whose members have distinct 'problems, allegiances, and interests'" (p.10). Crane states that, as a person changes over a lifetime, the characteristics of lifestyles also evolve, which prompts changes to interests and patterns of consumption (and vice versa, one could assume). Thus, a sense of self-identity is constructed through a process of (re)assessment, deconstruction and (re)construction. These 'image tribes', elsewhere termed "style tribes" (Polhemus, 1996), are the very definition of *subcultures*, and are seen by Crane (2000) to be the logical outcome of postmodernity. "In postmodern culture, consumption is conceptualized as a form of role-playing, as consumers seek to project conceptions of identity that are continually evolving" (p.11).

Evans (1997) defines *subculture*, a term coined in the 1940s, as "a group with common interests whose identity and social status are, somehow, against the grain – marginal rather than central, in opposition to, and disenfranchised from the mainstream" (p.169). In the study of subcultures, one does not have to look far for examples of dress as being a central component to an individual's self-identity.

- Modern Primitive subculture

Dress acts centrally as a tool for affiliation with like-minded others, and as a marker of disaffiliation with those from the mainstream. This is highly evident in

the sub- or counter-culture of the Modern Primitives (Vale & Juno, 1989). Alternative nomenclature for this group includes "neo-tribalists" (Pitts, 1999; Dartnell, 1997; Eubanks, 1996; Maffesoli, 1996), "technoshamanists" (Mizrach website), "urban aboriginals" (Pitts, 1999), and "ModPrims" (Mizrach website; Rosenblatt, 1997; Vale & Juno, 1989). From hereon all such groups shall be referred to by the term *ModPrim*.

My reason for including ModPrim subculture here is due to the group's distaste for regular cycles of fashion, and their use of 'bricolage' (discussed previously) in appearance-making – both elements that are integral to my design philosophy. A fundamental aspect of 'authentic' ModPrim style is its expressed desire for non-conformity to regular cycles of fashion - a declaration of independence from mainstream commodities and consumer society (Rosenblatt, 1997, p.323).

In choosing permanent body alterations, ModPrims attempt to state disaffection with the relentlessly changing mainstream 'fashion apparatus'. This group exists as a representational rejection of the capitalistic efforts of 'planned obsolescence' inherent in the fashion industry, and as a resistance to being classified as a market segment. Polhemus and Housk (1996) state that a growing number of people in our contemporary society are

> ...shifting away from fashion's capricious [dictating] imperative of constant change - choosing instead to stick to a chosen appearance style year in and year out... More radically [than choosing a 'seasonless' suit or pair of Levi's], permanent alterations of the body... are employed to render the customized body a truly timeless creation (p.9).

Falk (1995) states that the fashion apparatus is both a product and a part of

the system that produces postmodern society. The constant acquisition of material goods, including cars, houses, and clothing is said to reflect the modern desire to acquire a certain status and identity *through* these objects of fashion. She argues,

> The bodies moving from one position to another and the material signs revolving around them are united into a continuous movement. [Fashion]... creates a new kind of temporally restricting code: what is in today goes out tomorrow. Fashion is the production of changing sign systems and thus the production of change within the sign system, 'an aesthetics of repetition' (p.103).

Following this idea, then, the individual's image and concept of self is turned into a caricature in our present society. It is against this fast-paced, impermanent, shallow sense of expression and experience that 'true' ModPrims strive towards a timeless identity. "It is precisely these 'needs' - for meaning, fulfillment, and experiences that can confirm the existence of a genuine self - that drive modern primitives to reject consumer society and to valorize the primitive" (Rosenblatt, 1997, p.323).

- Rave/ 'techno' subculture

Another subculture coming under much recent study is *rave* (or 'techno') culture (Evans, 1997). This group's inclusion here is relevant in the manner by which the individuals operate collaboratively in an alternative and sustainable mini-economy (McRobbie, 1998). She argues that rave culture in the 1990s is unique in that there is a close dialogue between producers and consumers due to a tightly shared cultural milieu (p.287). "...Some of the attraction of the club

scene lies in its capacity to provide an economic as well as symbolic model for a more engaged sense of community than that offered by mainstream capitalist consumerism" (p.288). In an environment where designers are often also the producers of collections in small-scale studios, the garments are an "...integral part of the club circuit... [due to] the active role of the original consumers who contribute directly to the vitality of the subculture" (p.288). McRobbie comments that these designers manage to survive for a few reasons: they share the same cultural values and have a more personal relationship with the consumers – often sharing the same dance-floor, and share close connections within the rave community with musicians, disc jockeys (DJs), producers and promoters "...who in turn often put up the capital from club profits to set the designers up in business" (p.287). There is evidence that a similar close community is already well formed in Edmonton (www.etownravepage.com, 2002; personal observation).

Evans (1997) discusses rave culture in terms of identity projects and consumerism, and admonishes that subcultures should be viewed as "...cultures that are 'becoming' [i.e. are fluid in nature], [and] processes rather than products" (p.185). Rave culture, says Evans, is not concerned so much with resistance and feelings of alienation as were older subcultures – most notably punk – but rather with personal taste, and the search for a sense of community or social cohesion (pp.171-72). "...In late capitalism, our lives are dominated not so much by ethics as by esthetics in the importance we give to the commodity form in the making of meaning" (p.172).

Evans' (1997) treatment of rave culture's core attitude and movement is subtle and well read. Describing the subculture's manner as one of avoidance rather than resistance, she outlines various ways in which this 'tribe' has attempted to exist beyond the reaches of co-opting media representation. She states,

> It would be easy to interpret this style of dress as just another 'version' of lifestyle, except that this would be to underestimate the sophistication of the wearers' motives. Many ravers [in 1980s U.K.] were aware of the pitfalls of punk; they had seen how rapidly punk style was co-opted by the mainstream ...and were determined not to make the same mistakes. ...Far from being a sign of sartorial failure they were sophisticated exercises in negative semiotics. No one could object to them – and no one would therefore want to co-opt them (p.178).

In the end, we understand that Evans does see ravers' seemingly apolitical avoidance as a form of resistance tactic in our information age, always alert to be "...one step ahead of the taxonomists" (p.178).

- Industrial music subculture

With roots predating both Modern Primitive (Vale & Juno, 1989) and rave (Hilker website) subcultures, the Industrial music subculture should be mentioned here. Industrial music, with its accompanying audio/ visual aesthetic and theoretical basis, arose through various means. Although a band called Throbbing Gristle, formed in Britain in 1975, could be claimed by some to be the first 'real' Industrial group (Duguid, 1995 website, introduction), they were not the only innovators. Composers and musicians had been experimenting with electronic music as early as 1874, when Elisha Gray invented what he called a

'musical telegraph' – a type of electronic organ (Duguid, section 4.i.). By the end of the 1950's, synthesizers were being regularly developed and used in avant-garde musical composition and techniques, which, according to Duguid (section 4.i.), was fundamental in the creation of the Industrial music movement.

Not only did the Industrial subculture form through technological innovation; experimental and counterculture literature, peaking in the 1960's, was highly influential. Further, Industrial subculture borrowed heavily from the avant-garde performance art movements of Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism (Duguid, 1995 website, section 2). Common themes include fetishization and pessimism regarding technology, cynicism towards conventional society, social indoctrination and commercialization, fascination with chaos and noise, and the desire for authenticity via primitivism. However, most industrial groups "...distrusted all conventional politics, of whatever wing. [They] ...all saw society as a whole to be too corrupt for conventional politics to be worth bothering with" (Duguid).

> ...Industrial music's attempts to smash received musical values and rules, to tear down conventional notions of taste and to seek pleasure in brutal ugliness, were... a reaction against the political control that most music mirrored, both in its overall aesthetic and in its means of production. [...] The concern of industrial music was to find an adequate response to a post-collapse society, a society that had yet to understand quite how empty its core had become. (Duguid, section 4.ii.).

Although I could not find any academic material on the Industrial subculture, and very little exists in print beyond that – except for the Industrial Culture Handbook (to be discussed later) – I played a small but dedicated part in

Toronto's Industrial scene between 1992-1998. I am aware that a small contingent exists at the time of this writing in Edmonton, with minimal nightclub offerings and occasional performances in the city. One will, however, find a profusion of Industrial subculture information and worldwide events on the Internet. I must mainly draw from my experience in Toronto to distinguish and identify with the sound of Industrial music, the visual aesthetic of those within the subculture, and the attitudes and ideologies of this group.

The closest published documentation I found to describe the 'look' of an Industrial subculturalist is Ted Polhemus' reference to a category he terms 'Technos and Cyberpunks' (1994, pp.124-27).

> Like their ear-splitting, mechanical music, their clothing styles resisted fashionable imitation. Dressed in anti-radiation suits and masks, flak jackets and urban commando camouflage, the Technos looked like something out of a sci-fi disaster movie. Hard and foreboding, their SAS-like image perfectly matched their 'difficult' music. (p.124).

While Polhemus references early electronic music pioneers, he also asserts that this group is a direct offshoot of rave subculture. While this may have been true in particular locations around the world at certain times, I found instead that the emerging Industrial subculture of 1990s Toronto had much more in common with punk, gothic, fetish and avant-garde electronic communities.

Cyberpunks, on the other hand – according to Polhemus (1994) – were most influenced by a science-fiction literary genre, and in the mid-1980s had no particular style but were noted for their keen interest in computers and technology. In the early 1990s, however, one could see

> ...the beginnings of a new breed of Cyberpunk. They look like a cross between

> *Mad Max* and *Blade Runner* [sci-fi movies]. Using the same bricolage techniques as the Punks, they juxtapose 'found' industrial waste (hubcaps, gasmasks, rubber tubing) with state-of-the-art technology and holographic fabrics (p.127).

Designers, subcultural 'movements', segments of theory; all of the above are included to provide the reader with a quick sketch of elements that have played into the formation of my work. While other elements arose and were documented during my stages of design and creation, the literature review provides the reader with a current contextual map of my *starting place.* "...We must focus our attention on the process of becoming if we wish to see our moment in time as it really is and to expand upon it" (Higgins, 1997, p.21). Perhaps 'descriptive prelude' would be a more suitable term for the preceding review, when viewed that it was intended as a launching pad for my study on the 'process of becoming' as a designer. The range of topics should reinforce that creativity is not a singular activity, mindset or capability, but rather an evolving accumulation of inspiration from various life experiences and their personal interpretations and effects.

Chapter 3

We need to know how to focus on the process of broadening our horizons.
Higgins, *Modernism Since Postmodernism*

Method(s) of Inquiry

3.1 Problem Statement

I explored and documented the evolution of my personal design philosophy as it informed the development of a collection of garments. The overarching inquiry addressed the way(s) in which creativity is generated and generative. My research strategy incorporated Gruber and Wallace's (1999) 'evolving systems approach' in order to understand how multivariate elements can influence an individual's (i.e. my own) creative process.

Specifically, the study included: ① journaled reflections during the design process, ② a consideration of past and present influences, and ③ a literature review embodying a range of theories, methods and instances that informed my approach to designing and creating the collection. I documented the creative process, within both the duration and aftermath of the design/production phases, utilizing written and visual techniques. For example, diagrams and photographs helped in the final analysis of the collection, from the earliest (emerging) to the final (resulting) stages of the creative process.

3.2 Strategies of Inquiry

The study was best served by a *bricolage* approach of qualitative methods. Neuman (2000) states that this kind of research requires one to be adept at drawing on a variety of sources, and "...emphasizes developing an ability to draw

on a variety of skills, materials, and approaches as they may be needed" (pp.147-48). Thus, the researcher may come to understand the question under study by combining diverse and disparate approaches and materials. Due to the nature of the proposed study – to track and analyze the conjoining of elements in a designer's aesthetic- and life-experience into a collection of creative work – which is by nature a conglomeration of elements, interests, and skills, this approach proved to be most appropriate to utilize an array of techniques for investigation.

Methods employed were mixed in a bricolage style to include 'life history', 'testimonio', 'auto-ethnography', and 'hermeneutic phenomenology'. Overlaying these bricolaged techniques was my usage of an *emic* account. Rorty [1985] makes the distinction between *emic* and *etic* accounts, "...where the former are personal or collective 'stories' and the latter are representations given by a supposedly objective observer based on empirical evidence" (Beverly, 2000, p.564).

1) Life History Research

I approached my study and provided documentation using a first person narrative style, following the life history technique. This technique, according to Watson [1976] "...is a commentary of the individual's very personal view of his own experience as he understands it" (Tierney, 2000, p.539). Tierney explains that life history is a type of biographical account, is retrospective in nature, and involves some form of narrative statement (p.539).

This approach seemed particularly suited to my study in that the life history method is, according to Tierney (2000), "...a culturally produced artefact in one light and an interpretive document in another" (p.539). These two qualities were salient to both the subject of my research, and to the way in which I oriented myself and the reader to the process and outcome(s) of the study.

2) Testimonio Research

The method of *testimonio* is a subset of *life history*, differing in a few key ways. While certain features of this method are highly relevant to my study, not *all* aspects were useful. Hence, using an overall bricolage technique extracted those elements from the testimonio technique that assisted in relaying parts of my study.

Specifically, testimonio is useful for researchers who want to

> ...disavow any idea of 'discovering' data as if it were waiting 'out there' to be found; instead, data are created. A danger is that each condition is not well understood, and a certain authorial narcissism is capable of overpowering a text... Because writers are embarking on uncharted methodological terrain, they do not have a map of the research design; nevertheless, a sense of general direction becomes apparent... (Tierney, 2000, p.547).

Testimonio differs from life history in that it does not give a written statement that has been gathered through accounts given by interviewees in order to gain understanding of cultural notions (as does life history). Rather, testimonio aims to tell a life story in order to move a reader to action. It not only supports the use of writing in the first person, but also promotes the writer to assume a voice of vulnerability in order to "...shed the role of the disengaged observer who records

data from afar..." (Tierney, 2000, pp.548-9). As Tierney and Lincoln (1997) discuss, I will be situating myself – the researcher – as a prime 'actor' in the study in order to present a map of reality to the reader.

Testimonio is situated within postmodernism, and is informed by critical theory. "The challenge becomes the desire to change the more oppressive aspects of life that silence and marginalize some and privilege others" (p.549). This particular element of testimonio is relevant to portions of my personal design philosophy regarding the fashion industry, which certainly was reflected in the way that I approached my collection and thesis.

Where testimonio diverges from my methodological aims is related to its use, according to some authors, to provide an activist's account of a politically tinged predicament and to examine individuals' agency therein. Beverly (2000), for example, describes testimonio in different terms than Tierney (above), stating that it is

> ...an 'emergency' narrative – involving a problem of repression, poverty, marginality, exploitation, or simply survival... The predominant formal aspect of the *testimonio* is the voice that speaks to the reader through the text in the form of an I that demands to be recognized, that wants or needs to stake a claim to our attention (p.556).

3) Auto-Ethnographic Research

Also considered a form or sub-genre of the *life history* method, auto-ethnography is seen by many as an 'updated' way for an anthropologist to tell a life story. While many definitions exist to describe the working forms that auto-ethnography takes (Reed-Danahay, 1997), most appear to address some form of

insider/ outsider dichotomy particular to the researcher's topic. The researcher, in most interpretations, is 'native' to the group, area or situation under study. Thus, "self-documentation" (p.8) is an appropriate term to describe a core activity within the auto-ethnographic method.

Reed-Danahay (1997) defines auto-ethnography as

> ...a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context. It is both a method and a text... Autoethnography can be done by either an anthropologist who is doing 'home' or 'native' ethnography or by a non-anthropologist/ ethnographer. It can also be done by an autobiographer who places the story of his or her life within a story of the social context in which it occurs (p.9).

The fact that autoethnography is suitable for those to tell a personal story from within an environment of disenfranchisement (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p.4) made the technique attractive for my own study. I have been both an insider and an outsider of the fashion industry (or 'apparatus'), and drew on my personal experience to examine my thesis question and to tell my story.

4) Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research

Van Manen (1990) addresses the question of how we can pursue human science research. Reduced to its elemental methodical structure, he shows hermeneutic phenomenological research as a dynamic interplay among six research activities:

1. turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;

4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. balancing the research context by considering parts and whole (pp.29-31).

In formulating a research question, and a consequent strategy to carry out the work, Van Manen (1990) contrasts the differences between 'typical' 'scientific' research with the kind of work that I did:

> ...In most forms of research, the question that animates the research is stated unequivocally. ...In much social and human science research, it is assumed that a productive research question is formulated in such a clear-cut and prosaic manner that any competent and 'disinterested' social or behavioural scientist can deal with the question. That is why so much research can be contracted out or delegated to assistants, research teams or agencies (p.44).

And this also helps to explain the strength of my research approach in studying the issue of sources of creative impetus, using myself as both observer and subject.

3.3 Procedures for the Study

Many different elements comprised my research, due to the numerous sources that proved to be involved in this study of the influences of creativity in clothing design. One end result of my work was the production of a small collection of women's clothing. Many other phases were necessary, however, in the stages before, during, and after the collection came together, especially due to the fact that the collection was a *means* rather than an *end* to the investigation. Temporality played an interesting role within my study, as I was looking into the past as well as at the present, paying attention to the way in which the two tenses interacted and evolved into a tangible collection. Higgins (1997) stated,

> Through developing our own hermeneutic processes we can find ourselves in... areas of culture as well as art, can tune into the shifts to which we can become more sensitive by balancing our focus on our own horizons, those from the past and any others we can find in the middle. If we reject the past, even the immediate past, we are also rejecting the present. For what else is the present but a moment in the process of passing by? Thus, we must focus our attention on the *process of becoming* if we wish to see our moment in time as it really is... (p.21, emphasis added).

In order to understand my "process of becoming" as a designer, my study included the following:

① Literature review embodying a range of theories, methods and instances informing my approach to designing and creating the collection.

② Consideration of past influences. This included journaled reflections of my fashion industry experiences, participation in subcultures, and family/ upbringing principles and practices (e.g. hand-me-downs, home sewing, conservation, recycling, perceptions of 'waste', and values regarding possessions and materialism). Other topics included the issue of planned obsolescence and the meaning(s) of dress.

③ Personal design philosophy. This was further developed throughout the designing and production phases, and examined to understand how they informed my own creative approach. Included was a discussion of Martin Margiela's design philosophy/ process; a discussion of *bricolage* and deconstructivist/postmodern aesthetics; a discussion of 'anti-fashion' and 'anti-corporate' clothing and a look at subcultural examples.

④ Journaled reflections during the design process. This included found images, scanned pictures from books, magazines and the Internet, relevant information

from various media, past collection (1996) ideation sketches, new (i.e. current) ideation sketches, and fabric/ materials swatches.

⑤ Reflections during the design and construction phases of the collection. I considered processes of production, and attempted to document the instances where materials affected design, or vice versa.

⑥ Critique of collection. This discussion critically outlined the degree to which I effectively implemented my design philosophy, and examined the collection to discern its level of success along various levels. These included final aesthetic appeal, wearability, and functionality in terms of production.

⑦ 'Yarn' diagram. I visually presented a three-dimensional map including the elements that made an impression upon my individual experience that translated into my role as a designer, and have influenced my creative process to varying degrees and at various times. This diagram helps to explicate the main research question in a visual format. Efforts were made to create this map on the computer, so that the viewer/ reader may see a cross-section, or view the 'yarn' in its entirety.

⑧ Gallery exhibit of the final collection pieces, to take place September 13-25, 2002.

Thesis work was written following point #7 (above).

Chapter 4

Descartes was wrong when he said "Cogito, ergo sum"... I find myself rather as essentially a unity of emotions, of enjoyment, of hopes, of fears, of regrets, valuations of alternatives, decisions... My unity which is Descartes' "I am" is my process of shaping this welter of material into a consistent pattern of feelings.

May, citing Whitehead, *The Courage to Create*

The Design Process and Discussion

4.1 Overall themes/ influences/ forces

In this study on the evolving creative endeavour I have traced my own process of the amalgamation of many elements that have formed a specific collection of creative work. As stated in previous chapters, the development of my collection of clothing was a *means* rather than an *end* to my investigation, in order to understand the way in which a creative endeavour evolves along its process. Following is an outline of the main themes, influences and forces that were explored and developed for the collection, in no particular chronological order.

Bio/technology interface

The accompanying thesis collection was strongly influenced by my interest in the topic of bio/technology interface. I have encountered many concepts related to this broad premise through experiences in subcultures, and via many mediums, all of which are examined below. On a literal level, the collection juxtaposes "old-world" textiles, techniques and histories through the use of old

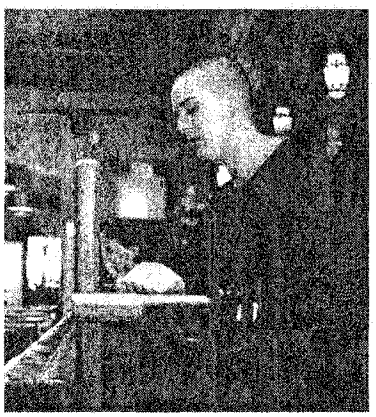
garments with the "new-world", via bits of technology and its waste. That is, the collection "...deconstructs *old-world* and *future-world* items, techniques, silhouettes, and products to create for the *now*, that is, to bring them together (synthesize)" (Journaling, 09 Jan 2002).

- Ryerson Experiences and Emerging Design Philosophy

Between the years of 1992 to 1998 I lived in downtown Toronto, a move from Edmonton that was necessary to study fashion design and earn a Bachelor of Applied Arts degree from Ryerson University. Following the four years of school, I worked in the fashion industry for two years. During those six years, I was fortunate to meet many creative individuals in the fashion industry and also through connections made into various subcultures, often via friendships with various DJs (disc jockeys) in the alternative nightclub and music scene. Since the gothic and industrial music communities in Toronto were relatively small, it seemed that friendships formed with a DJ only encouraged further friendships with other DJs, record store owners and main 'players' in the alternative community.

> Although I had been interested in people watching from a very young age, in Toronto I truly learned to be a voyeur. I was intrigued as much by the range of fascinating people at concerts and in the nightclubs as I was by the music and style of dancing, and over time began to know a few of the 'regulars' in the scene. As I 'learned the style' better, going out to concerts and clubs provided a fun challenge to continually choose and manipulate my own appearance. Although Toronto had a few stores that catered to the gothic and industrial aesthetic(s), I took pride in creating my own clothes and accessories. I was free to experiment with whom I was and wanted to be, and took the opportunity

to do so (Journaling, 13 Nov 2001).



[Figure 4.1. Picture of me, by John Pires. Toronto, 1993. Reprinted with permission.]

My 'learning' of alternative style was certainly reflected in the design work I was doing during my student days at Ryerson, and I explored this new Industrial-type aesthetic through unusual garment construction, silhouette, materials, colours, and source materials. The difference of my developing design aesthetic was especially highlighted against the work being produced by the majority of my Ryerson peers, whose projects largely reflected mainstream fashion trends. In my own design work, not only did I play off of the hard-edged look of the alternative scene, but I also tried to reflect the experimental and sometimes 'difficult' aural aesthetic of Industrial music.

Other inspiration for my design aesthetic came from science fiction films (e.g. *Blade Runner, Dune, The City of Lost Children* – with costumes designed by Jean-Paul Gaultier), music videos (e.g. recording artists Skinny Puppy, Ministry, Leæther Strip), and written sources addressing the human-machine "cyborg" interface (e.g. William Gibson's (1984) *Neuromancer*, *IndustrialNation* magazine,

and Juno & Vale's (1983) *Re/Search #6/7: Industrial Culture Handbook*). My favorite multi-media artist and music video director named Floria Sigismondi had a profound impact on me through her unsettling, surrealistic photography and music video direction, and continues to hold my fascination to this day (www.floriasigismondi.com).

[Figure 4.2. Cyberpunk-inspired latex *InsideOut* award winning garments, Andrea Schuld, 1996.]

The time I spent as a design student (1992-98) in Toronto brought me into contact with a range of many fascinating individuals involved in various scenes, many of whom made a lasting impression on my creative sensibilities. Such people included artists, designers, DJs and club promoters, musicians, tattooists/ piercers, dancers, film-makers and writers.

These people had a great effect on me due to their originality and clarity of self-

> expression, their devotion to an extraordinary and artistic way of life, and their courage to look, with an open mind, beneath the surface of themselves and others (Journaling, 28 Dec 2001).

In my current design work, I find that the experiences I had and the interests I developed while in Toronto remain the most influential on my world-view and the accompanying aesthetic that I have come to appreciate and to generate in my creative work.

- Industrial Subculture

Already having been introduced to a small, general 'alternative' scene in Edmonton, I found much more opportunity to experience various subcultures in Toronto. The pervasive style, in the early 1990s, included an almost-exclusive palette of black and some silver, materials such as metal, leather, vinyl, and PVC, and articles such as military pants, military commando boots, Flak jackets, and generally futuristic looking articles with a machine-made aesthetic. Some of the overall aesthetic borrowed from fetish and punk styles, with an element of "found objects" used for jewelry or embellishment. There was some tattooing and a bit of piercing, although not to the extreme of the Modern Primitives. Avoided was anything too 'romantic' looking (e.g. too much lace and velvet, frilly shirts, etc) to dodge the overly soft, nostalgic Victorian look seen in the related but different gothic subculture. Rather, Industrial subculture was all about portraying a Spartan, 'hard-edged' look.

An interesting element of the Industrial aesthetic was its chameleon-like possibilities, which is to say that one's Industrial look or identity could be hidden,

(i.e. out of necessity for the work-place). Therefore, I found that there was a higher percentage of Industrial subculturalists working in offices and professional careers. This is compared to all-out commitment necessary for engaging in the ModPrim aesthetic and identity, with stretched earlobes, multiple facial piercings and extensive tattooing that are nearly impossible to hide from the public.

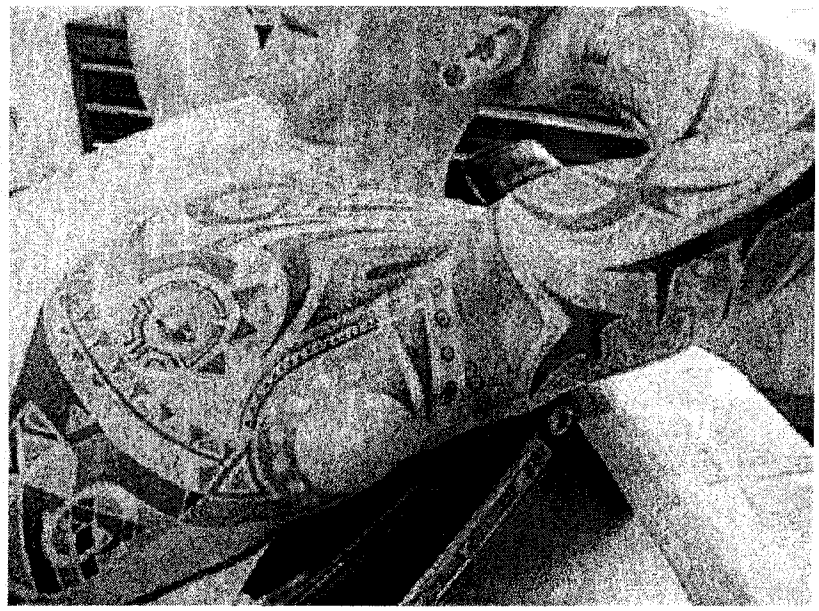
[Figure 4.3. Vinyl dress inspired by *Dune* movie and Industrial subculture, Andrea Schuld, 1994.]

- Modern Primitive Subculture

My initial awareness of Modern Primitivism was due to finding a book called *Modern Primitives* in a downtown bookstore in Toronto around 1993. This volume has become an invaluable sourcebook for me, and through lending it to acquaintances, it has sparked much interest in many others. From the book's rich descriptions and pictures, I could quickly identify individuals on the streets

and in the nightclubs of downtown Toronto as appearing to be part of the subculture.

In my second year of Ryerson, I accompanied a roommate to a tattooing studio where he was having a new tattoo finished. The name of the studio was Urban Primitive, and I had the opportunity to talk at length with the main artist and owner named Daemon Rowanchilde, as well as to browse through his extensive collection of books on tattoo styles of the world. At the time of that visit, I did not realize the importance of this trip, but am now aware that Rowanchilde is known internationally as one of the foremost artists of tribal (or ModPrim) styles.



[Figure 4.4. "Daemonic Energy Wave" tattoo by Daemon Rowanchilde, copyright 2001. Reprinted with permission. Available HTTP: www.urbanprimitive.com.]

A general description of the ModPrim aesthetic would include more experimentation with body modification than with clothing styles, compared to those in the Industrial subculture, although this is not exclusively the rule. While

some ModPrims wore Industrial style, not all Industrial people were ModPrims. The choice to appear in "true" ModPrim style would require a more extreme commitment, and many of the most heavily-decorated ModPrims I met were piercers, tattooists, musicians or artists, or self-employed.

As can be summarized from the discussion on ModPrims in Chapter Two's literature review (pp. 43-45), this group places high value on one's freedom of personal philosophy and lifestyle choices. This became especially evident to me during a discussion in the mid-1990s with a friend named Greg Gallant – a 'ModPrim' and Industrial DJ – regarding his dystopian views on capitalism, the globalized marketplace, and its disastrous effects. A similar, distrustful view of big business, technology, and progress at the expense of marginalized groups is a common sentiment expressed throughout ModPrim subculture. Generally, this group embraces indigenous cultures' ways of knowing and living, which was echoed in the fairly tight-knit community of ModPrims in Toronto.

Rejection of globalized brands/ 'fashion apparatus'

At the same time that I was growing weary of the incessant drive of my high-school peers to own designer-brand, status-declaring wardrobes, my real interest in fashion design began in the early teenage years upon encountering a boutique in downtown Edmonton called *Urban Renewal for Women* that sold almost entirely Canadian-designed, non-mainstream women's clothing.

> On each visit I was literally compelled to look at every new piece of clothing that I hadn't seen on a previous visit, pouring over fabrics, silhouettes, details, and labels – all of which (I believe) were Canadian. Labels included Comrags,

> Zapata, Bent Boys, Loucas, Clothesline and others. These garments, to me, were the ultimate in good apparel design, not only because they were so magnificently designed and crafted, but also because *they were made by Canadian design groups* (Journaling, 02 Dec 2001).

Although unable to afford anything for sale at the time, I gained inspiration not only from the unusual clothes on display, but also from an emerging notion that perhaps I, too, could one day launch my own independent line of clothing.

> These garments and their designers... helped me to realize, over a few years, that not only was there a space for slightly "weirder", creative kinds of clothing in some stores, but that perhaps I too, as a young Canadian, could someday have my creations included on these same racks for sale (Journaling, 02 Dec 2001).

Upon finishing my degree at Ryerson University's School of Fashion in Toronto, with some experience under my belt, I had already begun to realize that I did not want to participate in the fashion industry as a 'typical' designer – pandering to the whims of trend-conscious consumers. I believed instead that I could exist at the perimeters of the industry creating unusual clothing for those more 'artistically minded'.

A lack of backing capital to launch my own studio and label led me to work in the industry for a few years. I landed a job at the headquarters of Hudson's Bay Company as a production assistant in the private brands division. I then moved on to an assistant production manager position at Arrow Shirts. With these jobs came a growing distaste for the apparatus of fashion and its accompanying secret, ugly feature of knock-offs and exploitative mass production overseas. Klein (2000), states

> The branded multinationals may talk diversity, but the visible result of their

> actions is an army of teen clones marching – in "uniform", as the marketers say – into the global mall. ...[M]arket driven globalization doesn't want diversity; quite the opposite. Its enemies are national habits, local brands and distinctive regional tastes. Fewer interests control ever more of the landscape (p.129).

In my desire to 'learn the industry', I found myself selling out to it and turning a blind eye to unjust business practices, and eventually discerned that my only option at the time was to drop out of the game.

McRobbie (1998) discusses the equivalent plight of young designers in the U.K. (pp.78-101). Aspiring to run independent studios and labels, these individuals must face the choice between hiring themselves out to large fashion marketers/ producers to finance their own collections, or to truly suffer for their art through self-employment. The latter choice typically means working staggering numbers of hours in poor conditions while barely surviving on the dole. McRobbie states that the fashion graduate

> ...is caught in a no-win situation. ...Producing 'own label' work... runs the risk of accumulating huge debts and being forced to work at such a pace that illness and exhaustion are almost inevitable (p.100).

Although I discontinued my career in the fashion industry in 1998, I continued making clothes for friends and myself at my own pace. Through the efforts of design for personal use I was able to rejuvenate and expand my original love for the creation of clothing, and to develop a deeper appreciation of its capacity for self-expression.

- Anti-fashion/ un-fashionability

Through the process of journaling prior to designing the collection, I was able

to recall several important aspects that led to the evolution of my current design philosophy and work. Below is an excerpt that highlights my early interest in 'different' clothing and appearance, leading inevitably to a love for anti-fashion.

> An invaluable skill was *learning to sew* at the age of 12, as taught by my mother. Being able to make my own garments not only gave me a sense of accomplishment, but also allowed me to feel somewhat special in that no other classmate could ever own the same item that I wore. It was not so much a sense of snobbery, but rather a feeling of contentment that I was not chasing down and wearing all the trendy items that my classmates owned or wanted to own. (At times, however, I did wish to "fit in" more than I did.) This must have created an early (i.e. junior high school) feeling of individuality through my appearance, which was something that became more important to me the older I became (28 Oct 2001).

From my mother, who was an adept seamstress from before the time I was born, I also learned to appreciate home-sewn original garments. One inherited value became my personal preference for a few well-made things (including items beyond clothing) rather than the ownership of many mediocre things (Journaling, 28 Oct 2001). Over time, as I became more interested in clothing and more accomplished as a seamstress, the qualities of timelessness and longevity built into garments became increasingly important to me, and remain to this day.

During my teenage years I discovered the weekly TV show *Fashion Television*, which I would religiously videotape every Sunday, then pour over all the fascinating details shown on garments created by the world's top designers. It was around this time, in the mid-1980s, that Japanese avant-garde fashion was coming to the fore, featuring designers such as Yohji Yamamoto, Rei Kawakubo

for Comme des Garçons and Issey Miyake. Another designer gaining attention at the time was Belgian Martin Margiela. These designers were carving out a unique and powerful niche in fashion – with their flavour of 'deconstructivism' – which had a profound impact on the way I began to view the possibilities of appearing *different*.

With these new ideas about appearance and fashion in my head, my sewing took a turn as I gradually rejected the preppy and coveted brands of those in my high school. Instead of trying to fit in with others through my appearance, I began searching out and preferring unusual fabrics to work with, which I usually found in the discount "unknown fibres" bins at Fabricland. I began to grow an interest in the few fringe groups and people (punks, etc.) in my high school and on downtown streets, and appreciated the 'outsider' sense of identity that they seemed to accomplish through their appearance (Journaling, 07 Nov 2001).

I felt an immense sense of disappointment at finding so many 'normal' looking fashion students when I first arrived in Toronto.

> I was somewhat dismayed at the general level of 'normalcy' in my fellow students upon arrival at Ryerson's School of Fashion. My dreams of going to Toronto to study design had been accompanied with a mixture of dream and expectation that I would find all sorts of wonderful, strange, broad-thinking creative people. What I found, however, was largely a mainstream-taste group, not much unlike people with whom I had grown up in suburban Edmonton. I was disappointed, but soon found that there was a small handful of other "freaks" (a good label within the group; an unfavourable label coming from someone outside) beside myself (Journaling, 16 Dec 2001).

As the few creative 'misfits' in our classes began to read each other's aesthetic styles, we gravitated toward each other during lectures and labs during the first

year, and eventually came to spend time together outside of school hours. This small collective, I believe, became very important for us as individuals in that it provided a feeling of belonging to something, and alleviation from feelings of isolation in a city where most of us were new-comers. The ability to experiment with my appearance provided the opportunity to evolve and define my self-identity.

- Recycling/ re-using garments

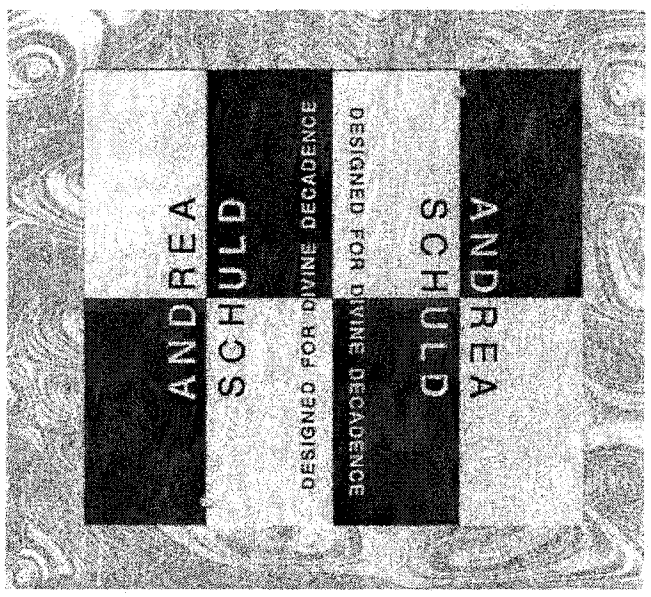
Reifying what others typically consider 'junk' into useful, unique apparel and jewellery has been a major inspiration and influence on my evolving design aesthetic over the years. Through allocating new life and meaning into previous cast-offs, my ability and desire to subvert regular western notions of 'value' and 'taste' has become ever more significant to me. Following, I shall trace the development of this influence and its outcomes through various means.

From an early age, my mother taught me the importance of conservation of resources, and passed on an appreciation of the special-ness of handmade rather than mass-produced goods. Not only did she provide the best possible construction and fabrics, but also was able to reconfigure and extend the life of handed-down garments (from my older sister) for my use.

- Working at Divine

I was hired in 1991 by a store based in Edmonton called Divine Decadence (now simply called "Divine"), as the in-house designer. Through recycling and

combining garments and scraps to make new garments for sale I discovered an appreciation for military garments/ quality fabrics and construction techniques (Journaling, 07 Nov 2001). I was also given the chance to visit Bali with the owner of Divine to produce and oversee the production of a collection of in-house garments. The responsibility of this position greatly increased my confidence in my abilities as a designer, as well as my sense of independence.



[Figure 4.5. Hangtags for Divine Decadence garments, 1991-92.]

- Being a Ryerson student

During my early twenties, away from 'home' and at Ryerson as a design student, I felt a fundamental drive to look "like a fashion design student", but had a very tight budget on which to do this.

> Both the necessity and the freedom to 'look like a fashion design student' increased quickly. To differentiate myself from the 'regular' students, and to also uphold – in a sense – my different-ness via personal appearance as well as the design style I was developing, I felt both compelled and somehow privileged to continually push my aesthetic direction(s). On some days,

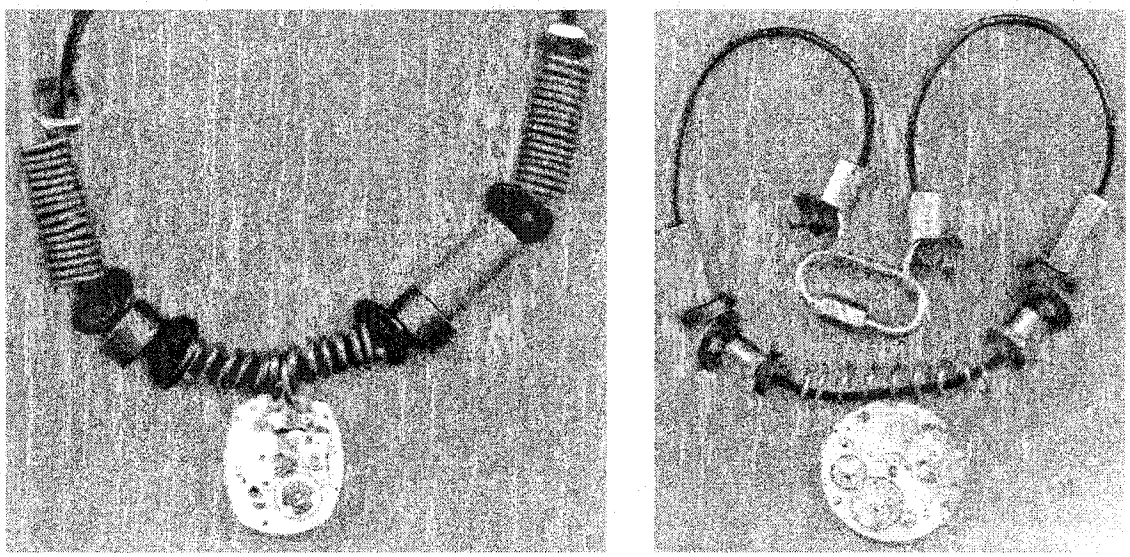
> especially when the demands of school were high, it seemed a bit of a burden to present myself 'interestingly' in public when I wished to simply show up at school in sweat-pants and runners like many other students. However, most of the time I was pleased to have others notice my look, and have high-powered businessmen move out of my way on the sidewalk (Journaling, 16 Dec 2001).

I was quick to discover ways in which I could change and expand my personal aesthetic without spending much. The abundance of inexpensive fabric and upholstery stores on Toronto's Queen Street were a treasure trove, typically selling ends of the bolt and other unwanted textiles from the nearby fashion district. When I had exhausted my options to manipulate the already-purchased items in my wardrobe, or simply ran out of time to sew new items, I would shop at army surplus stores and second-hand stores for unusual garments. Sometimes I would alter these garments via sewing, dyeing, or otherwise transforming, and at other times I would simply wear the garments in their regular state.

- *'Junk' Jewellery*

During my student days in Toronto, I discovered a store on Queen Street that sold used, strange pieces and scraps from a variety of electronic and machine parts. Initially, I was intrigued by the possibility to make my own notions for garments, such as one-of-a-kind buttons, but soon realized that this odd store could provide a wealth of parts for making unconventional jewellery. I added the insides of discarded watches (those from my own and friends' worn-out collections), after cracking open the cases and revealing the intricate beauty of the parts hidden inside. Another project included the construction of chain mail jewellery made laboriously by hand from a coil of found metal wire. I was even

able to sell pieces of this "junk jewellery" in Toronto and Edmonton, which has encouraged me to continue this work when time permits.



[Figure 4.6. Handmade jewellery, Andrea Schuld – 1994 (left) and 2000 (right).]

- Hand-made ('imperfect') vs. machine-made (identical)

The normality of most Ryerson fashion students and their design aesthetic further pushed my own unique developing style. I found satisfaction in creating unusual garments for myself that I could use as a test-bed for design assignments.

> I had grown tired of the mainstream, 'acceptable' aesthetic I found all around me – one of prettiness and tidiness, appropriateness for career- or society-climbing women, squashing of a person's sense of individuality, reflecting the latest colours and silhouettes for the season, and ultimately saleable and tasteful to the masses (Journaling, 12 Dec 2001).

While other students were attempting to imitate garments found in the pages of Vogue and Elle magazines, by the end of my first year of design school I had already discovered a growing distaste for the lust and over-consumption I felt to

be running rampant in fashion and 'fashionable' circles.

> By this point I had stopped buying and reading the regular fashion magazines... and only took in printed material that I deemed to be underground or cutting-edge. I did not want to be at all influenced in my creative design process by 'fashionable' goods and marketing, and felt a bit better about the fashion industry in general by not supporting mainstream manufacturers and image-makers (e.g. Nike, The Gap, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren). I would search out small-scale, locally designed and made labels sold in private retail stores, such as could be found on Toronto's Queen Street West in the early 1990s (Journaling, 12 Dec 2001).

In contrast to the 'regular' fashions in magazines and emulated by my peers in their design-work, I pushed my own design skills in order to produce garments that circumvented the 'safe' North American, sportswear aesthetic. I became very interested in the work of a small handful of designers labelled as "intellectuals" or "thinkers" by the media, notably the Japanese designers Rei Kawakubo for 'Comme des Garcons' and Issey Miyake, certain Belgian designers, such as Martin Margiela, and Viktor & Rolfe of the Netherlands.

> It seems to me that, with the label of 'intellectualist designer' comes general acceptance that these designers push the boundaries of *normal* apparel design. On second thought, is it because these designers experiment so heavily within their work that they are allowed the label of 'intellectual'? (Journaling, 03 Dec 2001).

These designers created asymmetrical, sometimes shapeless, unusual garments, often with 'unfashionable' colour-palettes, fabrics and silhouettes, and even incorporated previously used clothing and scraps into new designs. Margiela used blank white squares of fabric as garment labels.

Colour, Texture, Fabrics, Motifs

My earlier experiences of sewing for myself as a teenager, designing for Ryerson assignments, and producing garments for others have greatly influenced my current aesthetic, process(es), philosophy and goals in design work. As my appreciation for the unusual deepened with experiences in Toronto, so too did my love for atypical materials with which to create, leading me to experiment with a range of 'difficult' materials for my final collection at Ryerson.

> Although fabric selection was much better in Toronto as compared to Edmonton, I still felt the need to purchase most of my (rather unusual) fabrics in New York City during a few-day trip in 1995. These included odd vinyl, latex, bizarrely quilted nylons, and end-of-the-roll fuzzy wool/mohair. Back in Toronto, to complete my materials requirements, I purchased cheap wool and boiled it in a large pot at home, and found coated sailing nylons at a marine supply store. A mosquito net and an army blanket from army-surplus stores were turned into a skirt and an oversized jacket, respectively. Most oversized and industrial fastenings came from odd stores carrying notions for outerwear and luggage (Journaling, 12 Dec 2001).

Although I was aware of – and in awe of – Martin Margiela's re-designing methods in the mid-1990s, to design in a similar manner for my fourth-year collection would have been too much of a struggle. Barriers to do this type of work in Ryerson would have included a struggle for acceptance from my instructors, a lack of time, and a skill-level that I had not quite attained. For the current thesis collection I wanted to further push my experimentation with materials. This, combined with my growing sense of responsibility as a producer of *things*, and my concern to not perpetuate the fashion apparatus' lust of over-consumption, led me to reprocess previously used garments and other items.

Furthermore, unlike my Ryerson collection I have had the freedom now to design without the constraint of defining a target market (i.e. removing commercialism from the equation), and to approach the designing process as I have wished.

I started to prefer darker colours in high school during the time that I was discovering my distaste for trends. Not only did a darker palette allow me to feel more inconspicuous and therefore more comfortable, moving towards an all-black wardrobe in my early twenties was

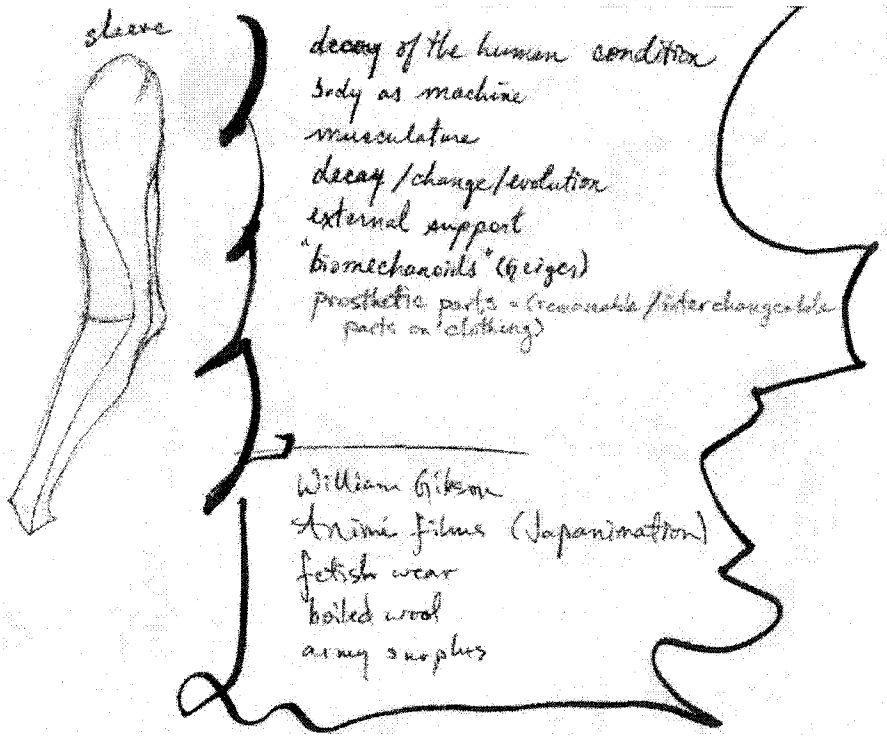
> ...the easiest to wear in combinations of garments, the easiest to care for and to purchase. Textures and their combinations became more important in my own wardrobe than using other colours for a while (Journaling, 07 Jan 2002).

Small uses of army green were gradually introduced into my personal and design aesthetic as my discovery and love of army surplus clothing increased. In keeping with the small amounts of colour found in Gothic and Industrial subcultures, I also included dark reds (particularly my hair colour), blue-purples and some greys. Although I do not particularly resemble my early- to mid-twenties "Industrial image", these colours have continued to be my favourites, most likely due to the psychological comfort and security I feel when wearing them. I feel the most genuinely "me" in these dark, deep hues and therefore am most content when I can incorporate them into my design work.

One can observe from the list of "Things I need for my collection" (Appendix A, p.146) that my preference for darker colours continues to this day, as well as enjoyment derived from designing and creating new garments out of atypical kinds of textiles. This list was circulated by email to instructors and students within the department of Human Ecology, and to outside friends as well.

Including some preamble in order to explain my thesis and collection work, the goal of the email was to solicit and gather a good amount of used clothing and textile products from which to design my collection.

General motifs that can be found in the accompanying thesis collection closely reflect some of the themes that influenced my earlier Ryerson design work. In a 1995/96 ideation/ sketchbook, I listed things such as "decay of the human condition... musculature... prosthetic parts = removable/ interchangeable parts on clothing..." These elements can be seen in my current collection through the integration of a somewhat deconstructed aesthetic, external seaming and darting, parts of clothing that can be removed or added, and an interchangeability between garments so that one can wear the pieces in almost any combination.



[Figure 4.7. This page out of my 'ideas-book', May 1995, is surprisingly consistent with current interests and inspirations.]

Other motifs that are current to the thesis collection include a combination of a red tree leaf found in Vancouver on a summer vacation (2001) and ModPrim ("tribal") tattooing style, both of which I find very beautiful. ModPrim tattoos are evocative – to me – of both an organic *and* a machine-like aesthetic, which is an effect I wanted to convey in my collection.

> I have been wondering during the design process of this collection as to how I would be able to integrate a sense of the ModPrim aesthetic.
>
> The two – **leaves + ModPrim** – have come together via free hand sketching using CorelDraw... by trying to abstract a leaf-like motif. To my eyes, the first bunch of images and their combinations DO evoke some ModPrim tattoos that I have seen (Journaling, 05 Feb 2002).

[Figure 4.8. Detail of "tribal-style" tattoo, adapted from Internet, artist unknown.]

[Figure 4.9. Scanned leaves found in Vancouver, summer 2001.]

[Figure 4.10. Leaf-motif 'flash', Andrea Schuld, 05 Jan 2002.]

4.2 'Traditional' clothing design process vs. my non-traditional approach

As taught to me in Ryerson's Fashion Design program, as experienced in my work in the fashion industry in Toronto, and according to texts on the subject, the fashion design process reads like a linear, step-by-step recipe for creating clothing. Tate (1999) traces the usual steps of a designer's creative process as such:

1. Research fashion and consumer trends. This includes colour trends and the selection of a colour story for the collection.
2. Select fabric or "piece goods". Tate says fabric is "...a great source of inspiration, and the excitement it generates starts the creative process" (p.56).
3. Create styles for the line. Many designers "...visualize an 'ideal customer'..." at this point in order to focus design work towards ultimate marketability

(p.59). Important points of consideration – according to Tate – are A) *aesthetic appeal*, especially so that each garment will be suitable for a certain kind of occasion; B) *price*, so that each garment will compete favourably in the market-place and will not be more expensive than another garment with similar fabric or print; C) *timing*, which is tied to trends and sales of a garment; and D) *fit*, which is crucial for sales. Tate says, "The customer wants the garment to fit and make her look taller and more slender. ...The garment that conceals figure problems, flatters the face and body, fits well, and is pleasingly proportioned will be a success..." (p.62). A designer must also create variety of styles within a collection, where "a certain portion of the line will be conservative staples, and a certain portion will be more fashionable" (p.63).

4. Develop the line. The designer creates a working sketch to guide assistants with pattern making and costing. Some designers will then further develop a style by draping on a dress-form, or work via flat pattern making.

Tate (1999) reports, "Successful designers do not design commercial garments for themselves. Designers create a product for a specific customer and are usually most successful when they view the customer objectively and do not impose personal design restrictions on their product" (p.79). This resonates with my experience as a design student at Ryerson, where

> ...I found there to be little emphasis on the student designers' thought processes, and little encouragement to include a sense of philosophy within the design process. This could have been due to an already overly-rigorous course of studies, or perhaps due to instructors' lack of importance placed on such pursuits *beyond* the garment itself (Journaling, 03 Dec 2001).

A major problem with Tate's (1999) procedure outlined above is that it does not allow room for a designer's experimentation or development of creativity within his/ her work. Because the model is so tied to commercialism, albeit important when fashion is viewed primarily as a business, innovation and deviation from the norm cannot be encouraged. Thus, most design houses remain as manufacturers of mass 'taste'; the fashion cycle remains stagnant and redundant, with any *change* deriving only from regularly infused, formulaic trends fed to the consumer. The steps of 'design' above describe an uninspired, repetitive, business-generating process, and have nothing to do with dynamism, creativity and aesthetic significance. In Tate's (1999) model, the designer may as well be replaced by Klein's (2000) "cool-hunters", and work directly with marketers to manufacture material 'taste' every season.

In marked contrast, the process that I pursued to create the current thesis collection does not resemble the 'traditional' design process described above. A major difference is the fact that the collection's inception resulted from the decision to re-use salvaged goods – clothing or otherwise – as raw 'piece goods', rather than bolts of purchased fabrics and trims. Due to the very nature of the eclectic group of garments and materials that were donated by others, I encountered a very different process of designing and editing the collection.

The traditional procedure above describes an overall sequential progression of tasks, whereas my collection evolved in a much less straightforward manner. I realized at the beginning of my creative work that,

> This will be no 'regular' mode or flow of designing a collection from what I have done before. That is, it will definitely NOT be a linear process (e.g. ideation

> sketches – editing to final sketches – technical sketches – determining colour palette – shopping for fabric – pattern drafting – cutting – putting together.) This time, I think that by nature of the diverse, already-made goods (for the most part) that I'll be working within a framework *(?)* of *organized chaos*. There will be likely a lot of back and forth movement to how I work... much experimentation, re-attempts, and influence/ germination of ideas between techniques and results as time passes. Describing in advance this possible work-flow of ideas and steps reminds me of memetics, as well as the punk D.I.Y. ("Do-It-Yourself") aesthetic of evolving bits and pieces that form – eventually – into a somewhat catastrophic but recognizable look (Journaling, 15 Jan 2002).

My creative process deviated from Tate's (1999) description of the 'traditional' design process, illustrated by a contrast to her points listed above.

1. *Research fashion and consumer trends.* I purposefully avoided this kind of research, as my aim was to produce a collection that was unique from other collections already in the marketplace. Rather, the overall aesthetic was developed from my personal taste – which emerged from the many life influences I have outlined above. The choice of materials on hand necessitated and narrowed the colour story, and influenced the intermix of possible elements that would work together as a final grouping.
2. *Select fabric or "piece goods".* It was not possible to proceed with selection of piece goods as a second step to the process, due to the fact that fabrics were already made into garments of a particular colour, size, texture and shape. At various stages of the collection's progress, I would include or exclude particular materials as they became available, and as they related to the evolving whole of the collection.

Tate (1999) states that the inspiration of fabric starts the creative process,

whereas I believe the creative process was in development long before the start of the thesis collection. Inspiration for creative work can derive from any possible source, depending on the designer and to what extent he/ she is willing to search for creative inspiration. For example, inspiration could come from something as specific as a favourite flower, or from something as broad as an individual's outlook on life. During my time as a student at Ryerson, I felt a lack of intellectual challenge, and...

> I found myself often wandering into 'The World's Biggest Bookstore' near to the Ryerson campus whenever I had a spare moment, drawn to the socio-cultural and philosophy sections of the store. I created my own time to read up on such authors as Nietzsche and Sartre. Although I didn't fully understand all of the material at the time, these works did have an impact on my thought processes, and helped to create a broader outlook on life and my place in the world (especially Nietzsche's *The Will to Power*). I found myself drawn to Steve Gibson's fictional 'cyber-punk' works, and alternative cinema. These descriptions of fantastic, futuristic worlds had a profound impact on developing my overall design aesthetic (Journaling, 03 Dec 2001).

3. *Create styles for the line.* The creative and constructive work on each garment in the collection was reflexive upon the other pieces and evolved over time to compose a whole. I began the design work keeping in mind a total of five or six complete looks that could be interchanged. The collection gradually fell into place like pieces of a puzzle; some pieces seemed to instinctively evolve from manipulation of the materials I had gathered, while other pieces needed to be worked over more thoroughly via sketching, re-sketching, draping, editing, and problem solving by starting over again with a fresh idea.

As part of the evolving nature of my collection, an important early task was to sort through the materials donated, and evaluate their possible usage for the design work. At that time I wrote,

> There are almost too many items on hand, meaning that these materials, put into anyone's hands for the purpose of composing a collection, could result in a million different possibilities depending on their combination (Journaling, 15 Jan 2002).

Compared to Tate's (1999) description of the process of designing, I approached the elements of *aesthetic appeal*, *price*, *timing*, and *fit* in a different manner. In keeping with my personal design philosophy (see chapter one), A) I espoused the creative ideals of timelessness and seasonlessness. B) I did not focus on the issue of *price-point* commercial fit, but rather on the collection's artistic and creative value. C) I attempted to create a collection that would not fall into regular fashion cycles, thereby circumventing the planned obsolescence and fast-paced schedule of constant change rampant within the fashion apparatus. D) Wherever possible, I made garments that fit a range of women's sizes through the use of adjustable closures and silhouettes suitable for various figure types.

4. *Develop the line.* In contrast to Tate's (1999) chronicle of design activities, the development of my line was fundamental to – and inseparable from – all design activities. Where Tate states that inspiration arrives first (from fabrics) and development happens much later, I found instead that inspiration, materialization, creation, and development were entirely intertwined activities that constantly and reflexively effected all elements of the design process.

My current design process, compared to my previous experience in the fashion industry and educational system, allowed me to consider an intellectual/

philosophical meaning and reason within the creative work. I believe it is of utmost importance in the training of designers, whether in fashion or some other creative field, to push the mind's flexibility in order to expand capacity for creative freedom.

Communicating one's inner vision of the world to an external audience is a tangible and insightful end result of exploring the design process. To express one's vision, a beneficial approach may be to explore accumulated life experiences and apply them to design. In the next section I describe the application of my experiences and design philosophy to the creation of a collection of garments.

4.3 Evolution of the collection

1. *'Uptown Scrap'* leather dress.

The dress evolved from a mid-calf-length 1980s ladies batwing-style leather coat. At the beginning of its transformation, I saw its contrasting leather piecing as a disadvantage. Through the process of draping this garment into a dress shape, however, I began to appreciate the potential of these contrasting pieces for cutouts and reverse cutouts.

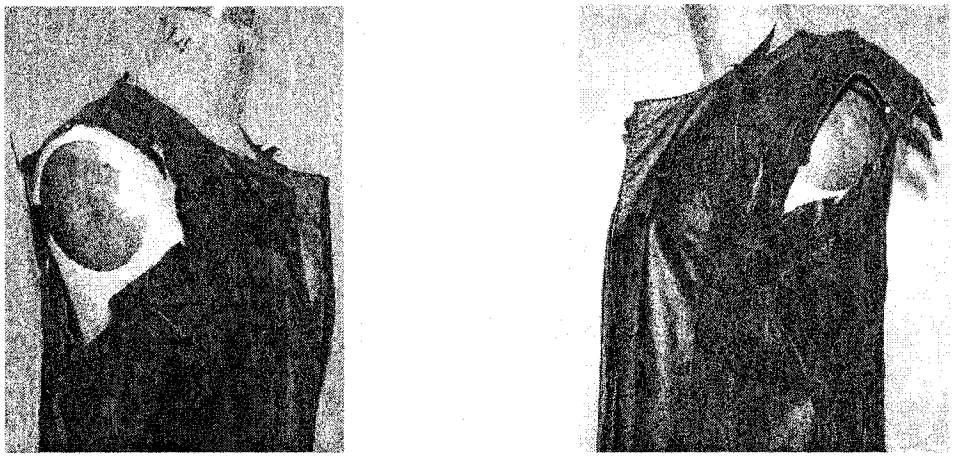
[Figure 4.11. Original coat for *'Uptown Scrap'*.]

[Figure 4.12. Detail of leather piecing.]

After developing two 'leaf-motif' stencils of various sizes suitable for the dress (see figure 4.10, p. 80), I was able to utilize the layers of contrasting leather piecing to highlight the cutout and applied leaf shapes.

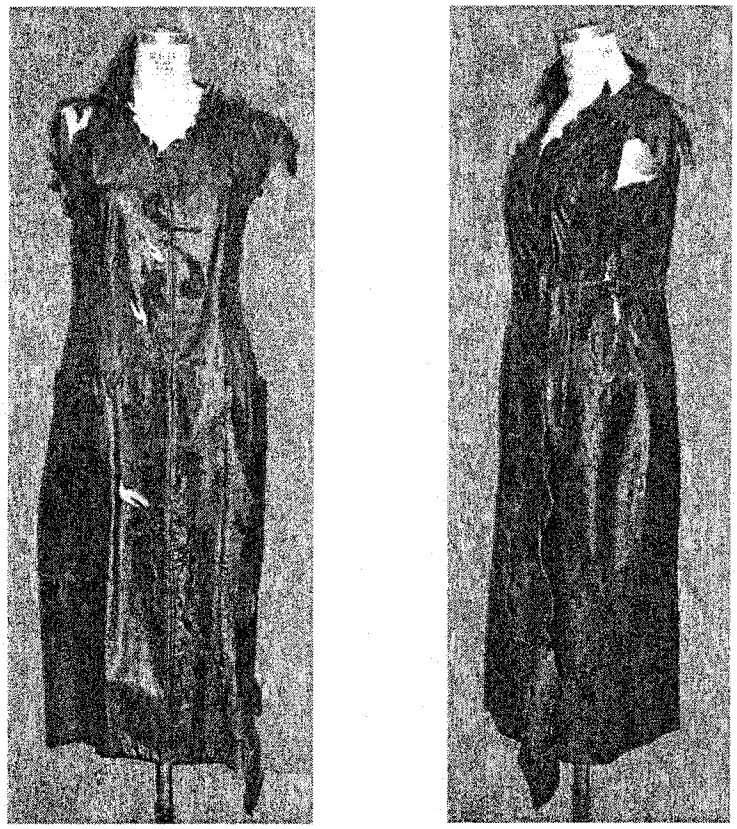
> I will experiment with both cutouts and appliqués of these leaf shapes on leather, using black and dark red interchangeably. Leather will be effective, I think, due to the fact that I won't have to finish edges cleanly. This should also add to the overall 'leafiness' and hand-done look. I should have enough variation in red toned leather pieces to create several interesting effects on a few garments (Journaling, 05 Feb 2002).

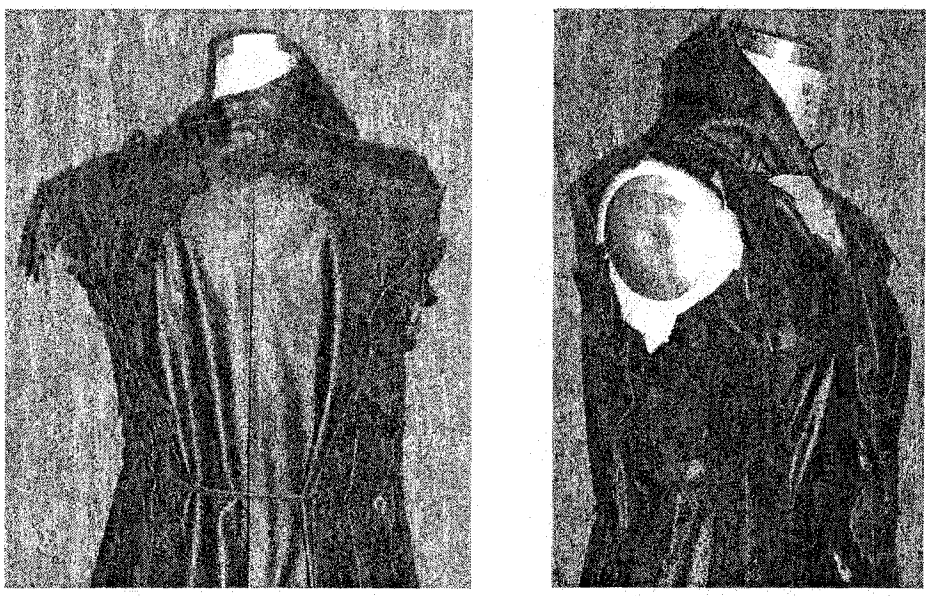
The use of black and red together also occurred in subsequent garments and became predominant in the collection. Since there were already contrasting leather pieces on the original garment (i.e. the 1980s coat), I did not wish to overstate the red leaf motif on the dress.



[Figure 4.13. Early stages of draping and cutting to evoke leaf motif – side views.]

To make the garment wearable for a range of sizes, a wrapped front and an adjustable tie closure were incorporated. Careful attention was paid to the armhole shape, to ensure it was suitable and aesthetically pleasing for a range of arm sizes.





[Figure 4.14. Final garment – *Uptown Scrap*, front, side and details.]

2. Red and black leather skirt.

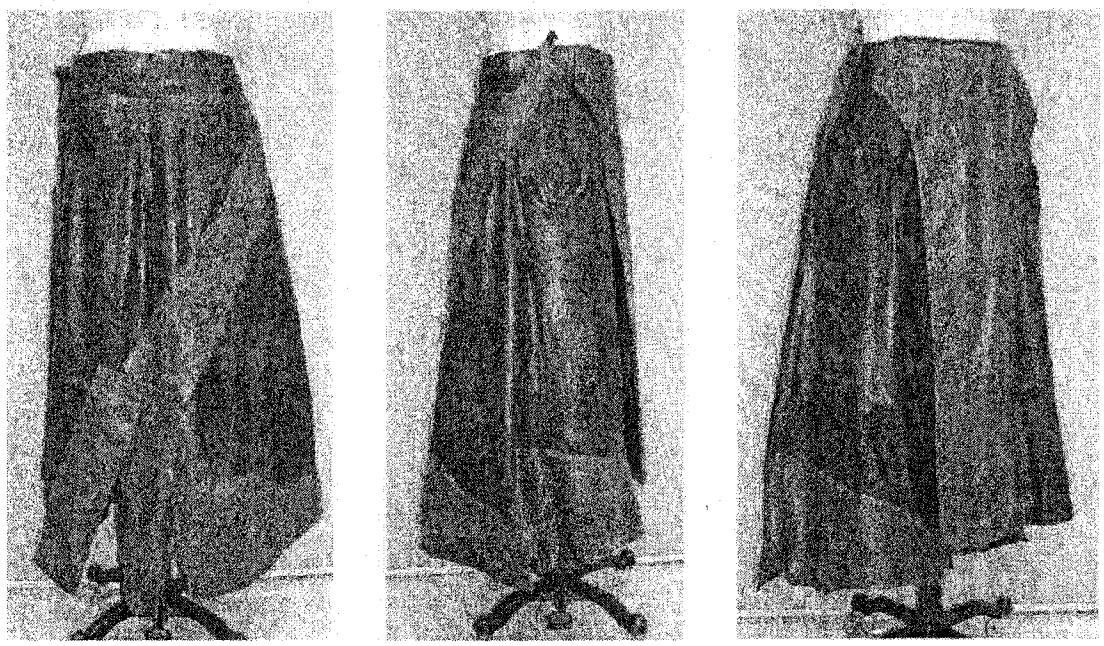
A 1970s calf-length black leather coat was the basis of this design.

[Figure 4.15. Original garment used for red and black skirt.]

[Figure 4.16. Early stages of draping for skirt silhouette.]

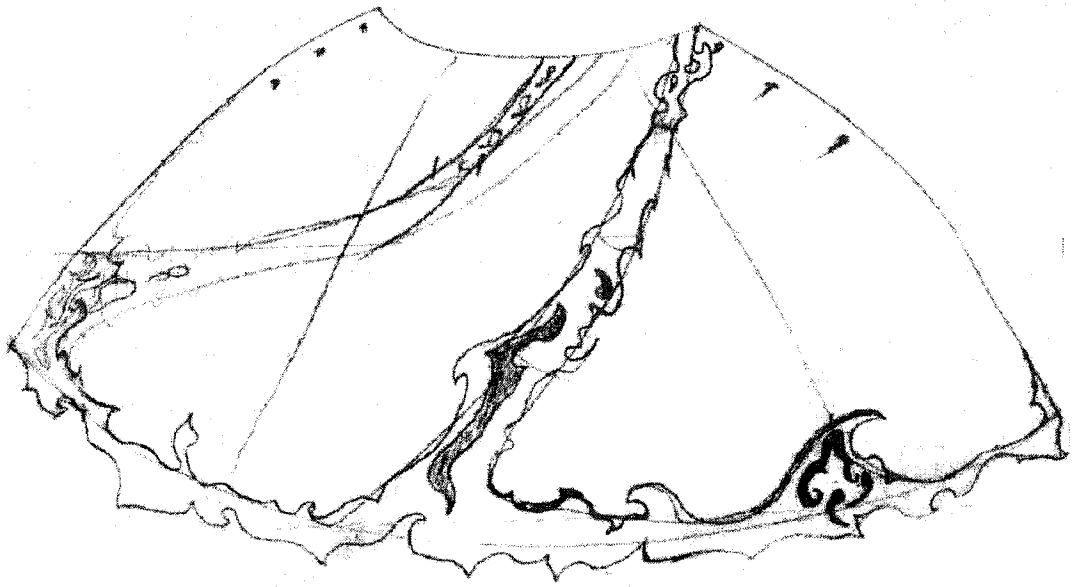
A secondary garment incorporated was a 1960s or 70s cherry-coloured

leather jacket, used to expand the relatively small size of the original black coat. The secondary (cherry) leather pieces were added to the center-front and spliced into a diagonal back panel, and were used in the decorative cutwork along the hem.



[Figure 4.17. Skirt draping in progress – back, side, and front.]

As I became comfortable with cutting leaf motifs freehand out of leather in the previous black leather dress, I gradually abandoned the use of stencils. This marked an evolution in my design work, as the cut shapes were still reminiscent of the leaf motifs, yet became different via increasingly intricate and scroll-like cutwork.

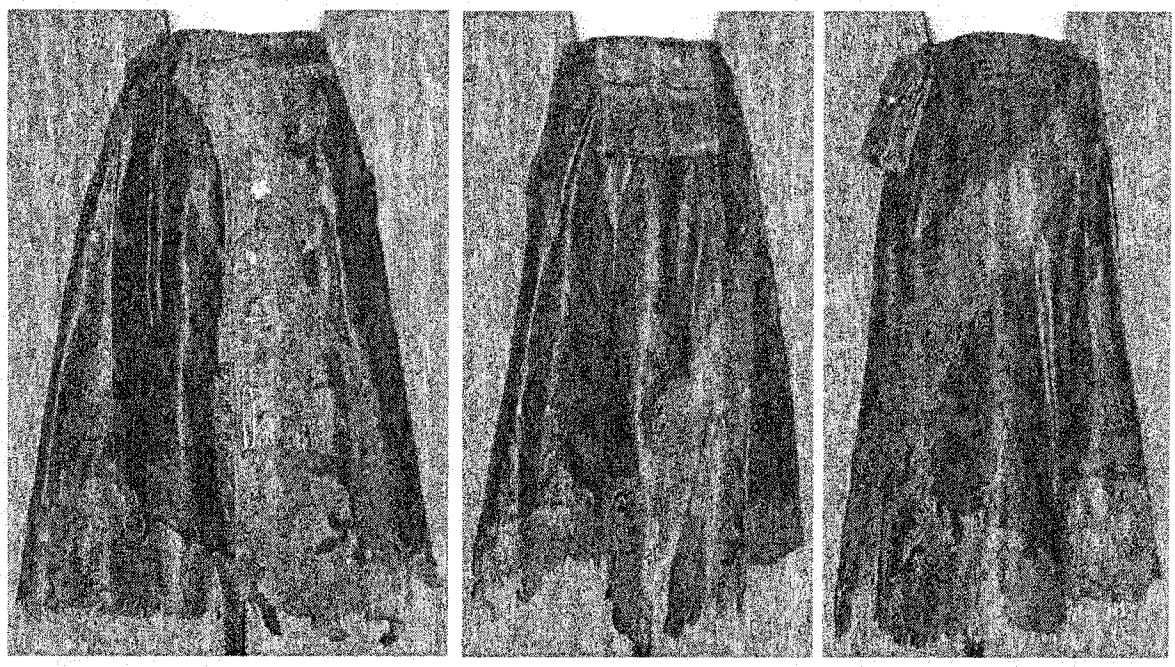


[Figure 4.18. Working sketch for cutout details.]

In my desire to make the skirt wearable for a range of sizes, I retained the coat's original belt-loops and tied belt to allow the wearer the option of wearing the skirt at the natural waist, cinched above the waistline, or lower on the hips. The addition of a back slit at the hem, which was originally a vent in the cherry leather jacket, was added to provide walking ease.

The center front closure – originally a lapel from the cherry leather jacket – allowed the garment to be worn folded back as a "regular-looking" lapel or folded flat for a different look. As well, the purse could be attached to the belt strap as an external pocket.

In the effort to re-use interesting materials, unusual bits of "junk" jewelry and a kilt pin were used for buttons. These pieces of "junk" include old watch parts and various metal construction pieces salvaged (a second time) from necklaces I had made many years ago.



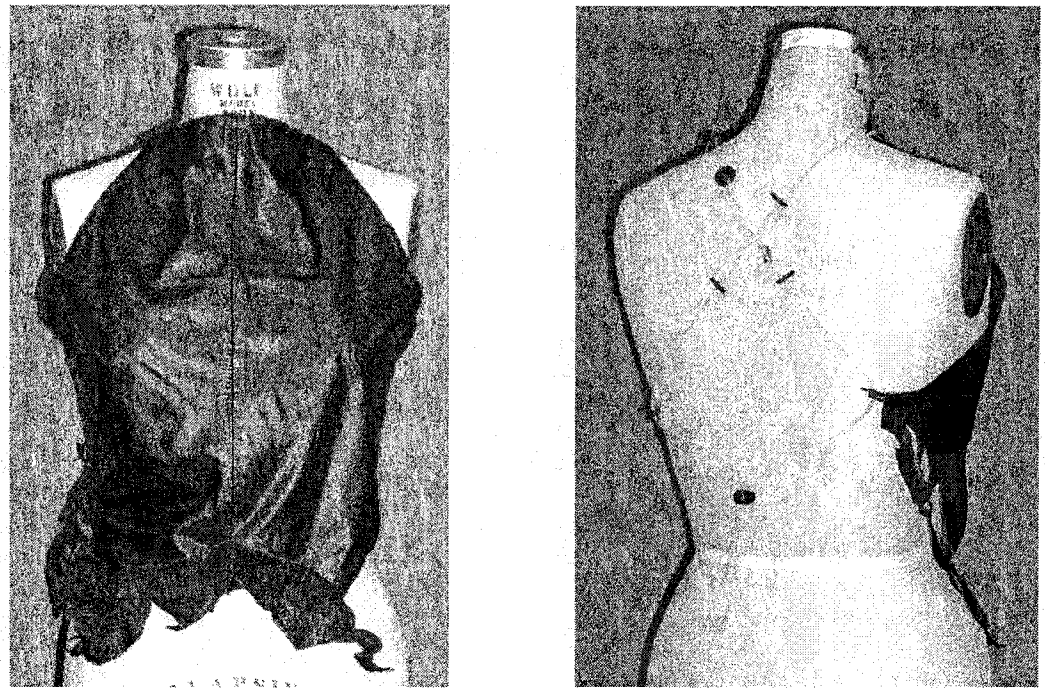
[Figure 4.19. Final garment – red and black leather skirt, front, back and side-back.]

3. Black leather halter-top (paired with #2).

The leather for this top was taken from the unused portions of the 1980s-style leather coat used for the 'Uptown Scrap' dress. A sleeve from the coat formed the single-piece top, requiring two bust darts for a proper fit. In the same manner as the leather skirt described above, the leaf-like edges and shapes were cut freehand.

[Figure 4.20. Halter-top draping in progress – front, side, and back.]

"Junk jewelry" was incorporated into the straps for the back of the halter-top. While figure 4.20 shows a red strap taken from a purse for the back straps of the halter-top, I ended up using some stretchy rubber cording and a sliding outerwear toggle closure at the bottom to allow for adjustability. The stretchy cord also allows the garment to be worn high on the neck and flat against it, or lower and gathered, to accommodate various sizes.

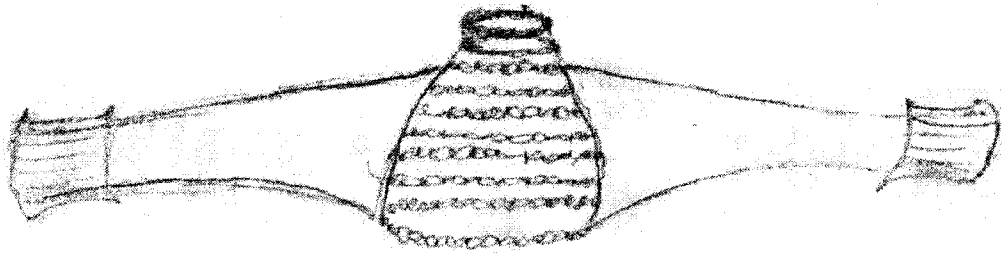


[Figure 4.21. Final garment – leather halter top, front and back.]

4. Black wool and cassette-tape jacket.

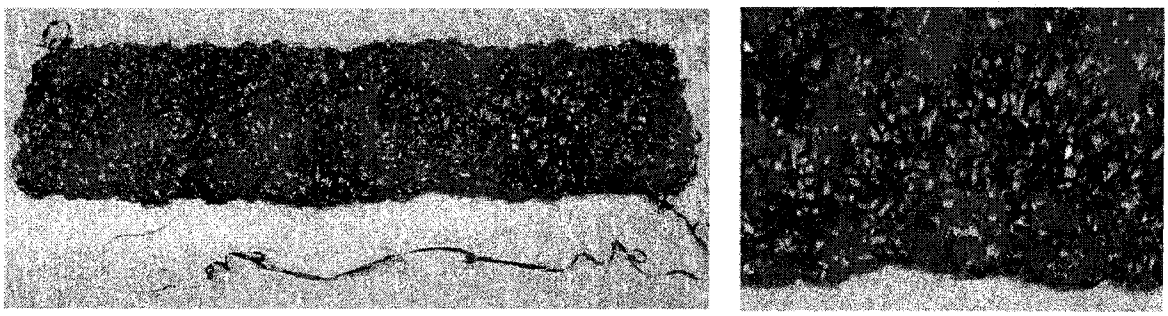
This garment, along with the black wool and rubber top (#6 below), required more re-working and evolution than most other garments. Originally, the idea was to create a short "shrug" type of garment consisting of two long sleeves, a short back and no front piece. I had planned to work with either a knit or woven wool for the sleeves and a back piece made from either knit or crocheted

cassette-tape. Early in the design process – and even prior to this thesis collection – I had wanted to experiment with the possibilities of using cassette-tape as an alternative material.



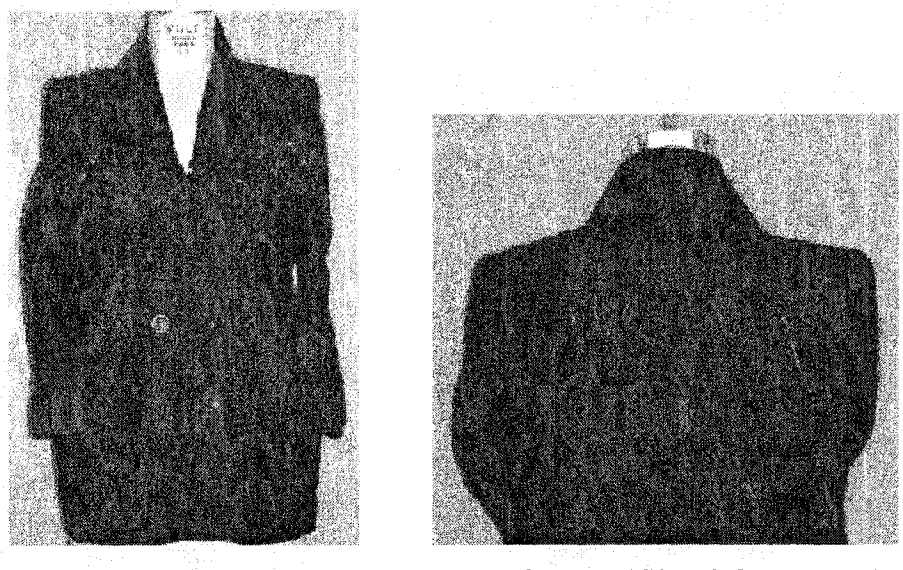
[Figure 4.22. Initial sketch for shrug.]

As I discussed the fabrication of this cassette-tape piece with my knitter (Professor Linda Capjack), the overall shape of the garment changed due to the difficulty or working with the tape "yarn". The most feasible construction was to knit one long, flat rectangle piece.



[Figure 4.23. Cassette tape – finished piece and detail.]

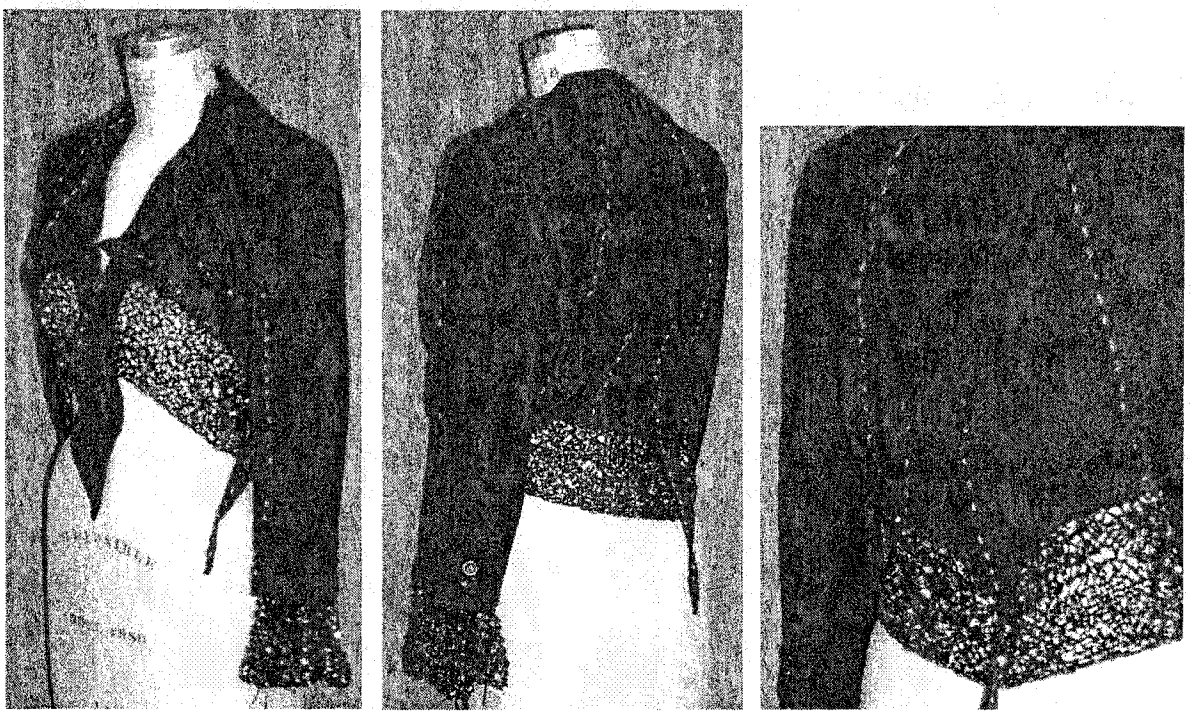
Wishing to keep with the overall theme of a leaf-like motif and a sense of organic shapes, the design of the body shape evolved as I began to drape with a boxy-shaped black wool ladies dress jacket. The emerging jacket shape, with its exaggerated outward-facing darting, evoked the essence of veins and lines of plant growth.



[Figure 4.24. Wool jacket draping in progress – front and back.]

Center front closure panels reminiscent of leaves and long, irregularly spaced 'fronds' of wool echoed the organic theme. The outward seams paid homage to Japanese and Belgian deconstructivist designers. Large hand stitching in burgundy and silver yarn along the seams on the jacket's surface form the outward darting, revealing typically hidden construction elements – a common element in deconstructive design.

To make the garment wearable for a wider range of sizes, knit cassette cuffs that could be flipped up or down were added to decrease or increase the length of sleeves. The stretch factor of the knit cassette tape incorporated around the lower part of the jacket fits multiple waist sizes, and kilt pins at the center front closure add adjustability for tighter or looser wearing.

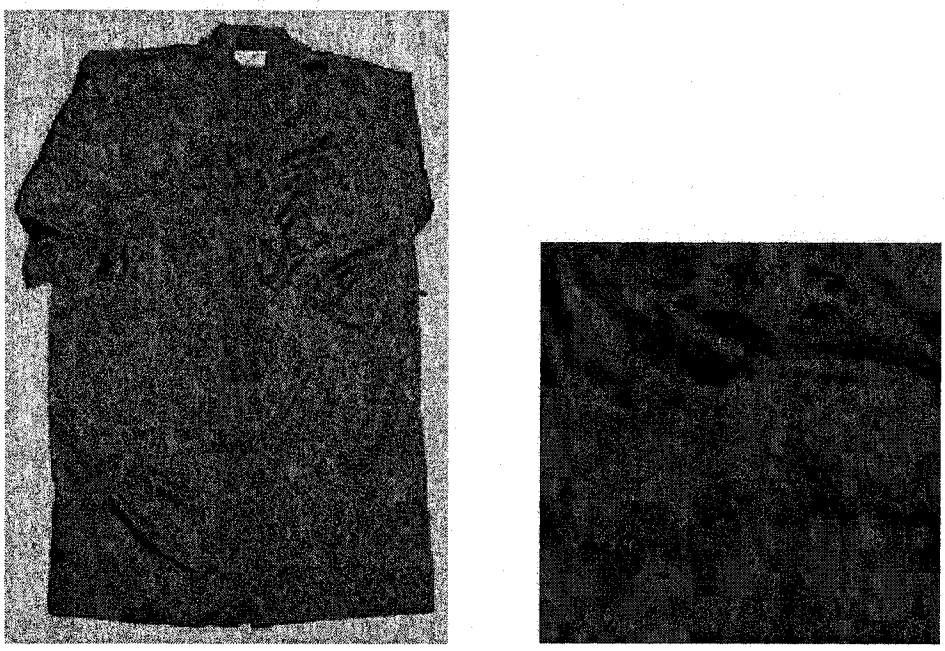


[Figure 4.25. Final garment – wool and cassette jacket, front, side-back and detail.]

5. Red satin pants (paired with #4).

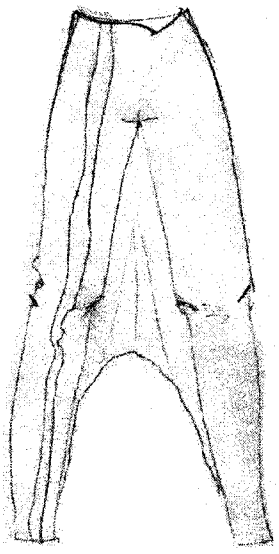
The initial inspiration for this garment came after viewing Yohji Yamamoto's Spring 2002 women's collection (CBC television, aired early March 2002), where garments had been designed to give a very free, simple, and flowing silhouette. In my design work, a comfortable and sensuous, yet also deceptively restrictive aesthetic creates a garment of contradictions that, unlike Yamamoto's collection, was visibly lovely but at the same time would not allow the wearer a sense of freedom.

Both the fabrics used and the fit of the garment contribute to the juxtaposition of free versus restrictive. A red silk robe/ kimono was used for the main part of the pants, while an inset piece of black wool from a pair of women's dress pants was used between the legs.



[Figure 4.26. Original satin robe and center front detail.]

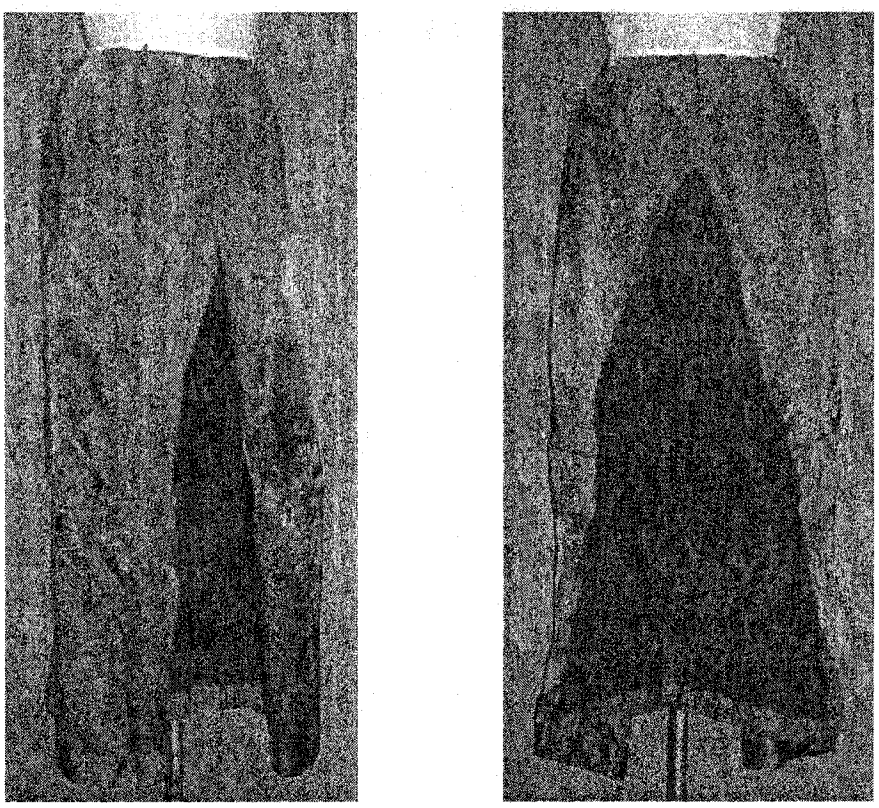
While I had originally intended to hand-sew "pin-stripes" onto the black piece, I instead pulled out threads to contribute to a subtly deconstructed "pin-striped" look. The black wool panel appears as a skirt piece from the back, but is reminiscent of bondage pants sometimes worn by those in the Industrial subculture.



[Figure 4.27. Working sketch for red satin pants.]

The concept conveyed by the contradiction of materials and the overall structure of the garment addresses the manner in which so many women are *supposed* to appear in our world: Business-like yet feminine, successful but not domineering, pretty but not overtly sexy, able to move in a man's world but still remembering she is the "weaker sex". The garment's shape effects a tailor-cut pant, perhaps meant for the office, yet reins in the wearer's legs by the movement-constricting skirt-like piece. The leaf motif is again evoked through the shaping of the waistline, but is further contradicted by the boldness of a strip of silk sewn down one leg.

During my design process for this garment, I had considered making the black 'skirt' portion removable for wearability in different ways, but realized that the inclusion of zippers down the back of the pants would truly create discomfort for the wearer when sitting. To make the garment wearable for a wider range of sizes, the waistline of the pants is cut below its natural position so that a larger person can wear the garment closer to the natural waistline and a smaller person can wear the pants lower on the hips.

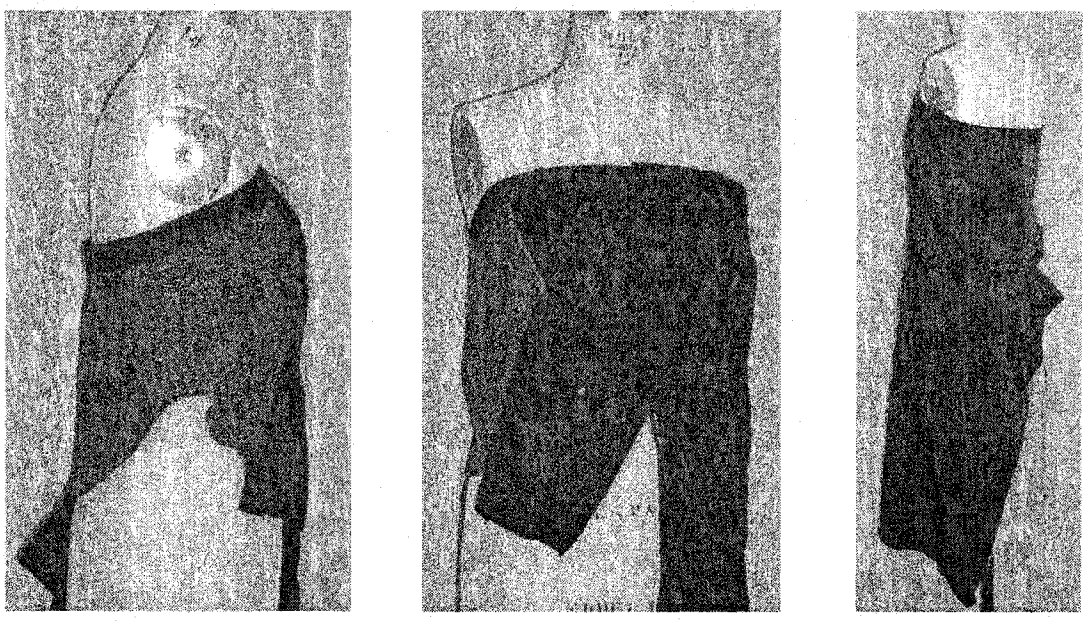


[Figure 4.28. Final garment – red satin pants, front and back.]

6. Black wool and rubber top.

This garment underwent the greatest number of design/ styling changes and is probably the most 'evolved' design in the collection, due to its many revisions.

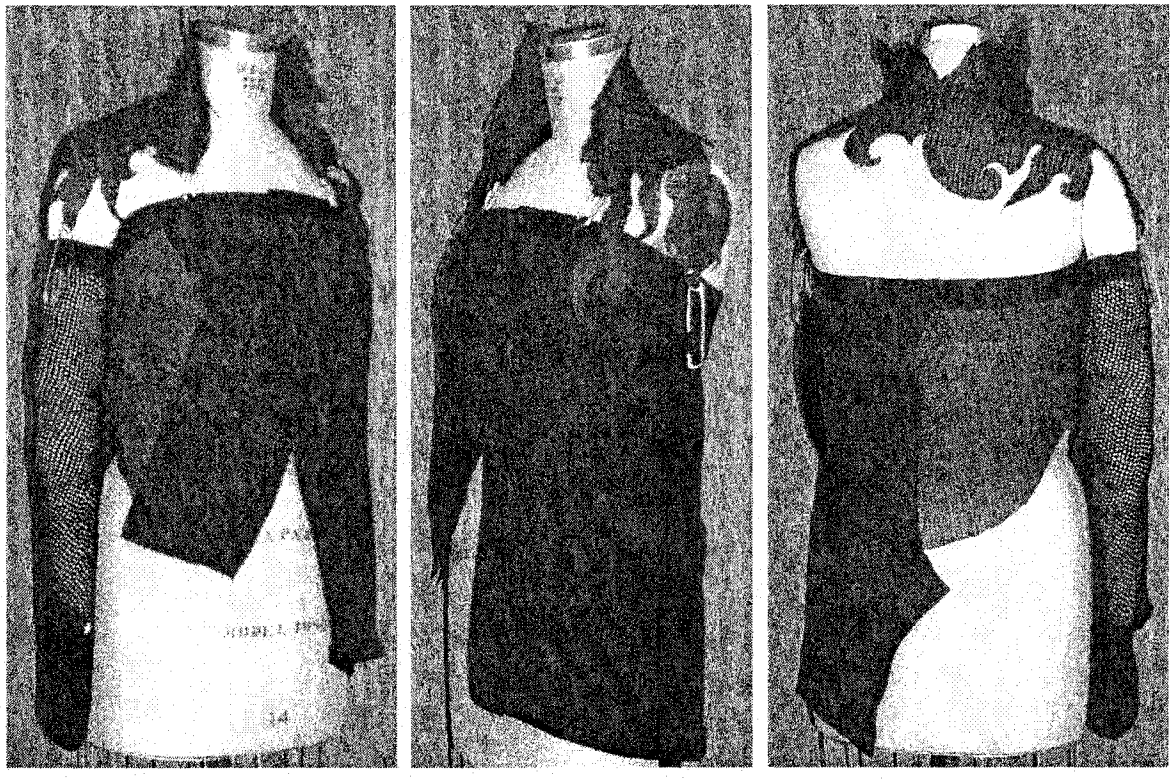
[Figure 4.29. Initial rough working sketch for rubber top – front and back.]



[Figure 4.30. Wool and rubber top draping in progress – side, front and back.]

Plain black wool from women's dress-pants was juxtaposed with a rubber fabric typically used for lining grocery-store produce bins, connoting a contradiction of elements not unlike the satin and wool used in the pants (figure 4.28). Evoking an aesthetic of contradictions, the 'organic' shaping of seams and hems contrasts with the overtly artificial look of the rubber. The asymmetry of the garment along with machine-made and hand-worked elements provides different views from any angle. The use of kilt pins and detachable "garter" sleeves (made out of long socks) is reminiscent of accessories from the Industrial subculture.

To provide wearing versatility, the halter piece and the sleeves are each detachable to suit the wearer's desired aesthetic.

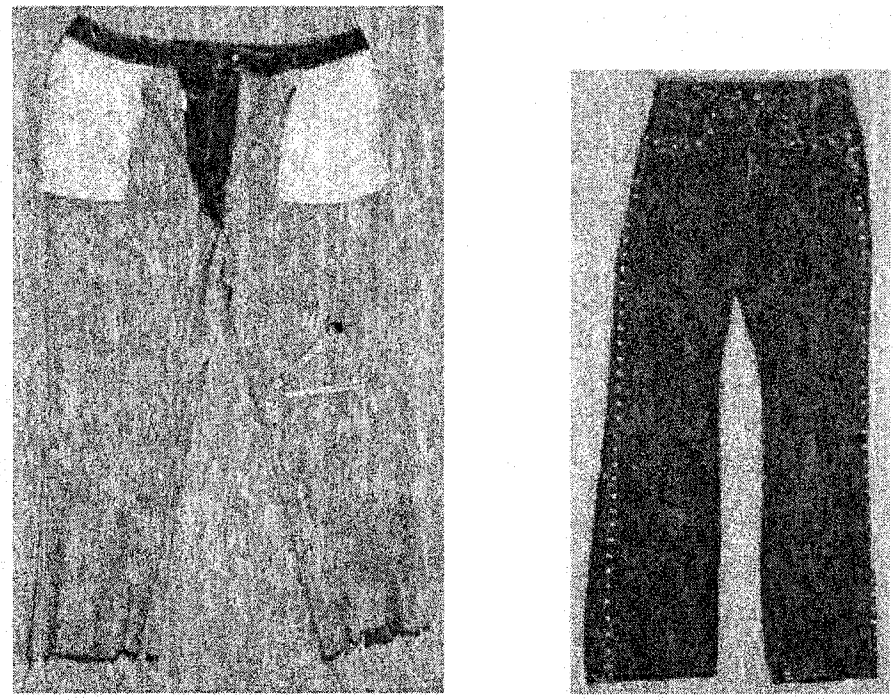


[Figure 4.31. Final garment – wool and rubber top, side-fronts and back.]

7. Jean skirt (paired with #6).

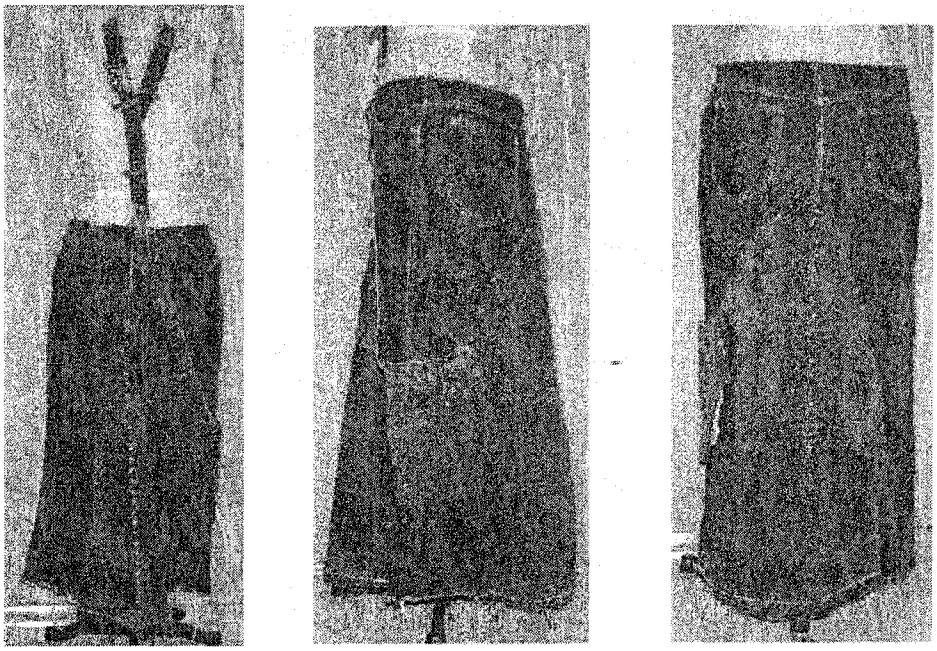
I have been creating and wearing re-configured jeans and pants as *skirts* for many years, and can recall the first pair I made around 1995 in Toronto. I had previously not seen this treatment of pants anywhere, and loved the versatility and durability of the garment, made initially from chemical warfare pants purchased from an army surplus shop. Part of my desire to create a skirt was for a better fit and to provide walking ease, because, although I love the utility of army pants, they are made to fit men (i.e. very straight-cut through the waist and hips) and are therefore uncomfortable for me to wear. I have always preferred wearing skirts to pants due to their comfort level. This first pair of military pants was expertly sewn, had a staggering number of pockets – which is not typically

found in women's wear – and was the perfect item to wear to three-day, outdoor raves in rural Ontario. I wore this first pair/skirt until it fell apart from use.



[Figure 4.32. Main pair of jeans inside out, with second pair for detailing.]

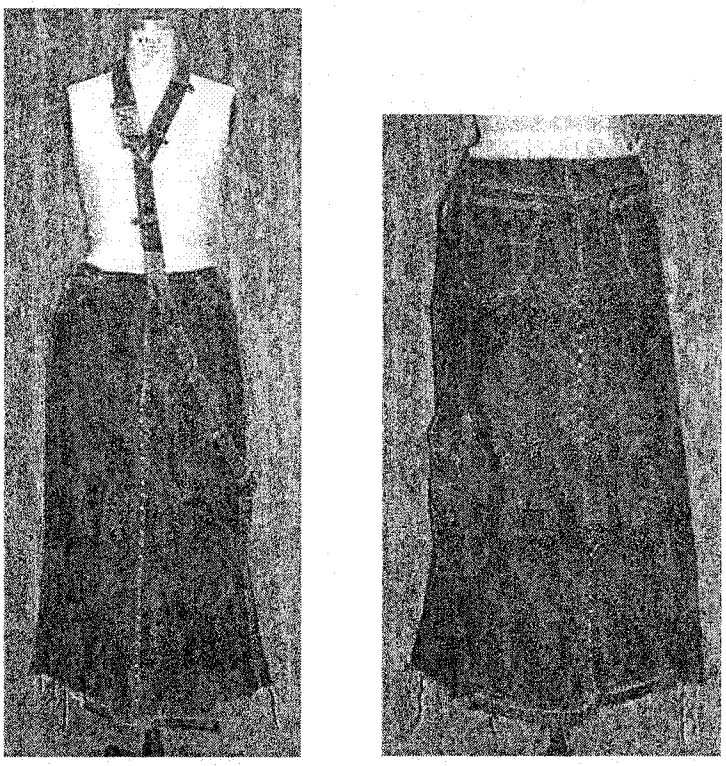
Over the past few years, one has been able to purchase skirts that appear to have been made from jeans in mainstream stores (such as the Gap), although I sincerely doubt that the company uses or re-uses old or back-stocked jeans. Since I still love to transform jeans and pants into skirts, but want to avoid a trendy look in my collection, I went through a period of consideration in the design process to circumvent the 'Gap look'. My solution was to implement a neck strap and a hanging pocket-strap that are purposefully reminiscent of accessories worn by those in the Industrial subculture. Through the draping process, asymmetry and a hand-worked aesthetic were achieved by shaping seams into 'organic', leaf-like lines.



[Figure 4.33. Jean skirt draping in progress – front, side and back.]

This garment was created in direct response to the mass production (often overseas in sweat-shop conditions) of staggering quantities of blue jeans manufactured every year, and my generally pessimistic view of jeans as a basic, uninspired uniform worn around the world.

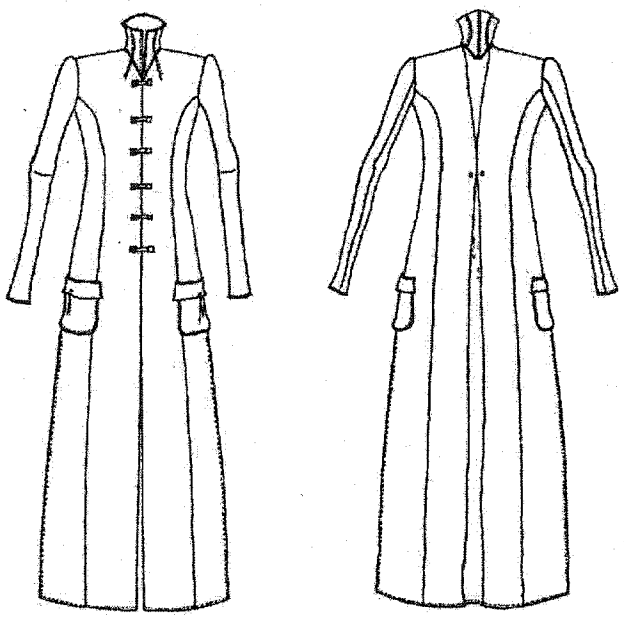
A low-cut waistline accommodates size variations, and built-in adjustability of the neck-strap is also meant to accommodate a range of sizes.



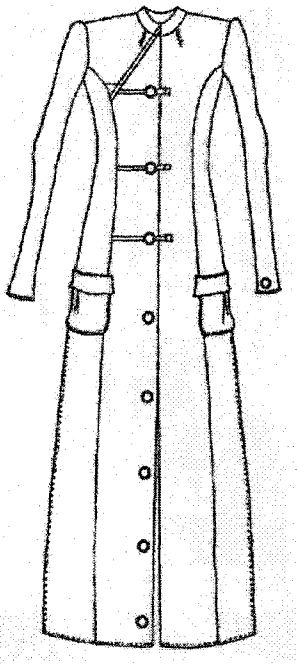
[Figure 4.34. Final garment – jean skirt, front and back.]

8. Silver shower curtain coat.

The shower curtain coat was the only piece in the collection to have been re-designed and cut from an already-existing pattern, which was originally part of my fourth-year Ryerson collection. The original inspiration for the Ryerson garment was a mid-1990's coat designed by street-wear designer Xüly Bet, which appeared to be made entirely from a puffy sleeping bag. I had hoped that someone would donate an old sleeping bag or tent, from which to make this garment, but had to settle for a shower curtain instead.



[Figure 4.35. Original sketch of Ryerson fourth-year collection coat, Andrea Schuld, 1996 – front and back.]



[Figure 4.36. Working sketch of shower curtain coat.]

Outerwear clasps at the center front and many pockets – both visible and hidden in seams – is reminiscent of garments worn by those in the Industrial

subculture, as well as the detailing of military wear. The fabric, which appears more synthetic and obviously silver than I had originally intended, also evokes the techno-type fabrics worn by those in the Industrial subculture. Seams sewn to the outside provide a hint of deconstructivism. The shower curtain's plastic rings lend to the 'found object' aesthetic. To make the garment multi-sized, sliding, adjustable hardware from a backpack was attached to webbing along the center front closure, the back, and even at the neck.

[Figure 4.37. Final garment – shower curtain coat, front and back.]

4.4 Gestalt evolution of collection

This section discusses *concepts* that became illuminated through the creative process of designing the collection. While I was aware of certain

elements prior to the creative work, the exercise of journaling combined with designing stimulated the germination of a deeper synthesis of concepts, and a better overall understanding of the way in which I transform internal ideas into external expressions.

> Especially art and film that has intrigued me – and continues to intrigue today – has a common thread that has worked to fascinate me and inspire my own creativity. These endeavours all hold a certain nightmarish, otherworldly, yet sometimes fragile and bewildered quality. It is the translation of this *essence* that I try to convey within my own creations of clothing, and is the way in which I have come to translate and therefore understand my surroundings. This must be how I experience my inner world through outer experience, and therefore take and forge my inner experience to create *outwardly*, back into the world. ...A personal moebius strip between my inner and outer self (Journaling, 28 Dec 2001).

The "Value of Limits"

The overall aesthetic of my collection was greatly affected by the nature of the donated materials. While the selection of my 'raw matter' constricted the design choices, it also allowed me to implement unusual treatments of the materials. One could say that the materials influenced the design process *and* the process influenced the materials. What initially seemed to be a constraint actually fed the creative problem solving process.

A personal theory developed out of a discussion with a friend in Toronto, that creativity is perhaps due to an individual's relative isolation. This friend, Jason Amm, who is now an internationally recognized musician and owner of a record label, related to me the immense amount of time he spent on his own learning to make music in his parent's suburban basement. He believes that having been

generally cut off as a teenager from the prevailing trends and styles of music that were becoming popular in larger cities resulted in the development of his own highly unique musical aesthetic, prevalent today in his recordings.

During my years in Toronto, I came to notice that the most unique, creative, and unusual artists (I use the term broadly) often came to Toronto in their early adult years from small, isolated towns throughout the country. I believe that an increased sense of commitment to these individual's creative eclecticism may have been a result of their disconnected, solitary life at a younger age. It may be that a paucity of materials and narrowed limits of resourceful options born out of necessity can push creative experimentation and the resulting design work. This state of narrowed options can be contrasted to a designer's or artist's wide-open liberty with materials and resources with which to create. I propose that constraints may in fact challenge and ignite one's creativity, as I discovered again though designing the collection.

Industrial & ModPrim aesthetics and ideologies

As I came to know Toronto's Industrial subcutlure and its players in the 1990s, I found that a common interest in technology existed. For example, science fiction films and television shows were generally popular with this group, especially those dealing with cyborgs. Most individuals were highly computer- and Internet-literate and felt compelled to own the latest model of computer, stereo and recording equipment.

At first glance, this "techno-fetishism" does seem to refute Duguid's (1995)

writings on Industrial subculture's distrust of technology. He states, "In general, industrial music drew upon a much more cynical view of science's contribution to history" (website). On closer inspection, the music – vital to the subculture – deals entirely with the manipulation and deconstruction of machine noises. Some of the earliest pioneers of the musical genre, such as Germany's Einstürzende Neubauten (translated as "Collapsing New Buildings"), experimented heavily with "found" percussion instruments, such as garbage cans and pipes, electrical wires and jackhammers used even in performances (personal observation, Toronto concert, 1992). Duguid states that industrial musicians "...wanted to mirror their environment, but... were motivated by a comprehensively critical revulsion against that environment".

Perhaps the seeming incongruity between my perception of Industrial subculture's fetishism of technology and the writings of Duguid can best be explained by Graeme Revell's (1983) theorizing, found in the seminal text *Industrial Culture Handbook.* He states,

> We are living at the beginning of an epoch which history will come to know as another Dark Age. But unlike the first one characterized by the concealment of information, we suffer from an almost opposite problem: information overload. The demand for more information is not radical: it is to demand exactly what the system already inundates us with...
>
> The role of messages is no longer information but a test – of success at interpreting according to the code for the perpetuation of the code. Thus the CONTROL problem is not one of surveillance, propaganda or paranoia. It is one of subjective influence, consent and extension to all possible spheres of life. The incorporation of the code into the corpse itself.

Currently, Modern Primitivism steps in with a utopian-hued answer to living in a technologized world at the same site where the Industrial subculture continues with its cynical critique. ModPrim does make some use of technology, and sometimes shares a similar aesthetic with Industrial. The difference, however, can be found along a few axes: Where Industrial reaches further into a 'science-fiction' future to grasp the present, ModPrim approaches the present by searching for a 'mythical' authenticity from past cultures. Power is viewed differently by the two groups. Industrialists could be described as 'alienated', yet still attempt to furtively master *progress* via Western society's channels of influence. ModPrim, on the other hand, could be termed 'disenfranchised', but its members communally attempt to find or make meaning, often refuting Western institutions and customs. Broadly, using Revell's (1983) terms, the Industrial world works to 'control the code'; the ModPrim way is to reject and replace it.

Appropriation/ sampling

Through my studies and experience in both the realms of fashion industry practices and the ideologies of subcultures – particularly ModPrim – I have become sensitive to issues of appropriation, sampling, 'knocking-off', and borrowing as a means to creative productivity. Crane (2000) has posited that everything in fashion has already been done – a statement that supports much of the literature I have surveyed on the topic of creativity. An exception is Boden's (1994) suggestion that creative ideas are characterized by their novelty, and are unique in that they have not been – and *could not* have been – done before.

This statement, seemingly absolute in its scope, may however be read in a broader context. What is not clear in Boden's writings is whether or not a unique *combination of elements* previously untried can be considered "novel". In contrast to Boden, and in keeping with Crane, memetic theory on creativity embraces the gathering of ideas into a new whole, which can then be propagated in a distinctive, unique way.

Naomi Klein (2000) has discussed the "cool-hunting" practices of clothing (cloning) manufacturers. In the effort to capture and re-create youth styles for production and eventual deployment into the marketplace, corporations with "...the tentacles of branding [are] reaching into every crevice of youth culture, leaching brand-image content not only out of street styles... but psychological attitudes like ironic detachment..." (p.79). This is happening via corporations' hiring of "cool shoppers" in order to "...search out pockets of cutting-edge lifestyle, capture them on videotape and return to clients like Reebok, Absolut Vodka and Levi's with such bold pronouncements as 'Monks are cool'" (p.72).

> On the off chance of Brand X becoming the next Nike, many corporations have been more than willing to pay up. And so, armed with their change agents and their cool hunters, the superbrands became the perennial teenage followers, trailing the scent of cool wherever it led (p.73).

This type of appropriation, although potentially lucrative for its practitioners, reeks of a new kind of colonialism, where young peoples' efforts to express an emerging identity through personal expression becomes fodder for a hungry capitalist machine.

While an audience of my collection of clothing – and accompanying design process – could judge my work to be a small-scale act of plagiarism, I believe

that I have gently and carefully borrowed from various sources in order to create a new whole. Just as I believe individuals (and clothing manufacturers) should tread lightly on the environment, I feel that designers should tread lightly on their source-material. A designer's *interpretation* of his/her influences is key to the evolution of a creative statement. It is not to say that one should only be allowed to borrow from a source if he/she is fully immersed or well versed in that particular element, such as being able to proclaim full subcultural membership for example. Rather, one should take the effort and be conscientious in order to understand what it is from which one borrows in order to avoid an inauthentic appropriative act within the design process.

I have included within the thesis collection the heavy influence of both ModPrim and Industrial subcultures. It is a fine line that separates the two, certainly not to be found in much printed text. Rather, it is from my own personal experience of the two subcultures – and knowledge of some members' beliefs and ways of life – that I draw my experience and translate my understanding through aesthetic means.

Dis-inclusion of certain things

Although I had originally listed rave/techno subculture as important to the direction I would take with the development of my design work, at the completion of my collection I realized that it had been largely discarded along the way. There are likely two explanations for this. The first is that Industrial and ModPrim subcultures provided much more inspiration than rave subculture and aesthetics.

The second explanation is that, while I still appreciate the rave scene, including its history and sense of community, I feel that it has become over-commercialized, and co-opted into the trendy, fast-paced cycle of the fashion apparatus. One only has to look at the merchandise being sold in fairly mainstream youth-catering stores in shopping malls – Canada's *Le Chateau* serving as a prime example. Naomi Klein (2000) has written,

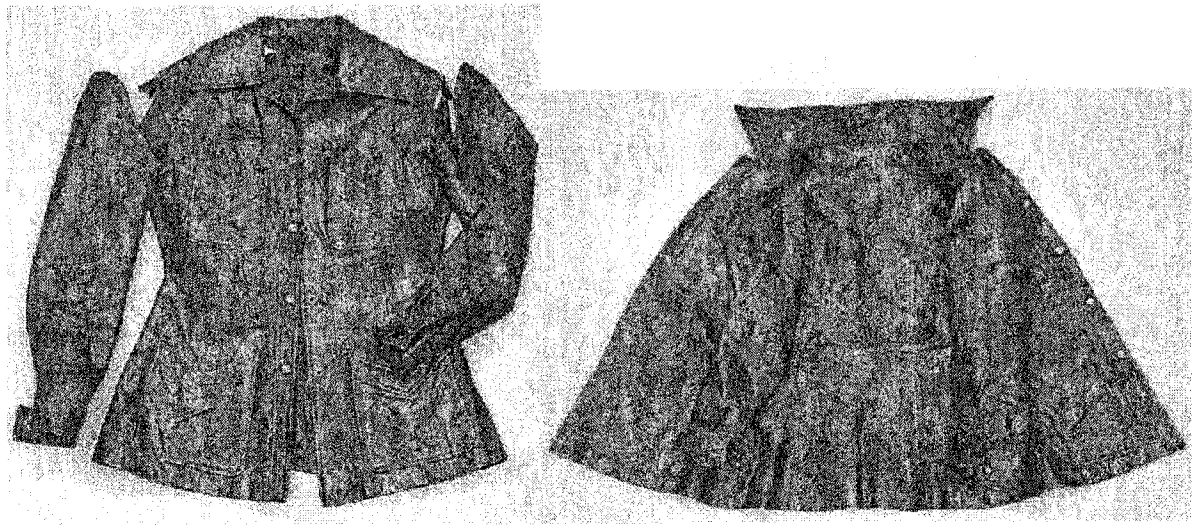
> The effect, if not always the original intent, of advanced branding is to nudge the hosting culture into the background and make the brand the star. It is not to sponsor culture but to *be* the culture. ...If brands are not products but ideas, attitudes, values and experiences, why can't they be culture too? (P.30).

The complete 'raver' look and identity can now be purchased. A sense of membership in the subculture can be bought from your local retailer, rendering authenticity to be somewhat redundant. The substance of the subculture is gradually being sucked out of its own scene by corporate 'style-makers'.

It seems, however, that the Industrial and ModPrim subcultures, which have been in existence for over twenty years each, have been largely passed over (with a few exceptions), which has allowed these groups to preserve their fundamental nature and meaning. Klein (2000) states that the test of a subculture's authenticity is – if having been singled out as the latest fad – whether it continues afterward as though nothing has happened, or if it "...spawns an industry of speculation about whether movement X has lost its 'edge'" (p.85). If the latter is the case, Klein suggests that its adherents should be "looking for a sharper utensil" (p.85).

Another important element that was not included in the final collection was an orphaned red leather jacket, found at the bottom of a filing cabinet at the

university. I took ownership of it when no one else would claim it, and was immediately inspired by its colour, the construction method utilizing many red-toned scraps of leather, and its potential for experimentation and transformation.



[Figure 4.38. 'Filing Cabinet Jacket' – front and back views.]

This garment had a profound early influence on me, and brought me to the realization that I could pursue a thesis topic based on design/ re-design and its process. With further reflection on my range of seemingly eclectic academic pursuits and other topics of interest (e.g. street-wear through to social theory), it became clear that these could all be integrated into a meaningful whole via thesis work.

While I intend to use the 'filing cabinet jacket' in future design work, the decision to not use it in the collection was based on my on-going evaluation of the combination and number of garments already included in the lineup. I felt that I had sufficiently explored both the transformation of leather garments as well as the de- and re-construction of jackets and coats.

4.5 New design philosophy objectives discovered through process

Through the evolving process of designing the thesis collection, my personal design philosophy evolved as well. Some points were consciously acknowledged for the first time, while others were revived and fortified as I recognized their importance to my design process. On the whole, these objectives had already been subjected to a range of germination in my mind – some of them for years and others more recently – but truly came to the fore while exploring the creative process for designing the collection.

Several 'new' design philosophy objectives emerged:

1) To create multi-sized garments to accommodate individuals of varying sizes;
2) To create seasonless garments that circumvent fashion trends and are wearable for many years;
3) To create garments that can be worn in a multiple of ways;
4) To create garments out of necessity, that is, to promote innovative solutions and stimulate richness in one's creativity with a paucity of resources;
5) To 'borrow' carefully and responsibly in the design process. Great care needs to be taken by designers when borrowing ideas and aesthetics from subcultures, which are like delicate ecosystems. Thus, a designer needs to 'tread lightly' on a subculture's environment to not upset the balance of that group's lifestyle and inherent essence.

Chapter 5

Feel a million flurries of now, a million intangibles of the present moment, an infinite permutation of what could be... In the data cloud of collective consciousness, it's one of those issues that just seems to keep popping up. Where did I start? Where did I end? First and foremost, it's that flash of insight, a way of looking at the fragments of time.

Paul D. Miller, *Material memories: Time and the cinematic image.*

Conceptual Model

5.1 Discussion of the model and its evolution

My goal to visually represent the cross-fertilization and flow of ideas originated during earlier course-work on the topic of memetics, whereby I had thought to trace the influence or 'contamination' of ideas within a subcultural community. With the eventual formation of a thesis topic addressing the evolutionary design process, I realized that such a visual representation would facilitate the study. Not only would it help to organize a broad range of thoughts, experiences, beliefs and preferences into a manageable framework, it would also clarify the inter-connectedness of its many elements.

Since a network is a difficult concept to depict intelligibly to another reader, the visual "...articulation of parts, both in structure and function is the most important thing the case study method allows and is completely absent from the most sophisticated techniques of measurement and statistical inference..." (Gruber and Wallace, 1999, p.112). As the authors acknowledge in their study, the objective of my conceptual model is not to *unerringly* map all influential elements, but rather to "...get an overall view of the creative person at work and to discover interesting lines for further study. Sometimes simplification is

appropriate" (p.105).

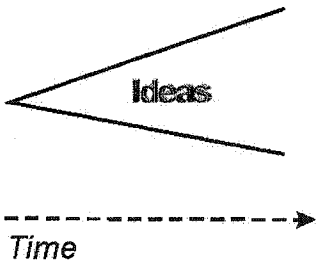
Before discussing the visual model and its inter-related components, it is useful to consider various ways of creative thinking and problem solving, all of which have a place in the final model. Further, we should view the individual as an open system existing within various contexts and structures in order to analyze and appreciate the numerous, often ambiguous influences to which the individual is subjected.

5.2 Diagrams of alternative ways of knowing

Divergent thinking

Wallace and Gruber (1999) state that an individual's ability to think *divergently* – in other words to generate a number of ideas – does not necessarily correlate to that individual's creative capacity. "...There is remarkably little evidence concerning divergent thinking in highly creative people. [Also]... it is not self-evident how the ability to produce many ideas is related to the ability to produce a few superb ones" (p.95).

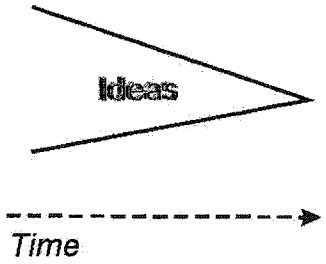
This type of thinking relates to one's capacity to produce multiple ideas, or to take a central idea and then expand upon its range of possible permutations. It includes the process of generalizing and broadening.



[Figure 5.1. Graphic portrayal of divergent thinking.]

Convergent thinking

This type of thought process involves an individual's ability to take a range of concepts and narrow or reduce them to the essentials. It includes the process of specifying, diluting and editing ideas.



[Figure 5.2. Graphic portrayal of convergent thinking.]

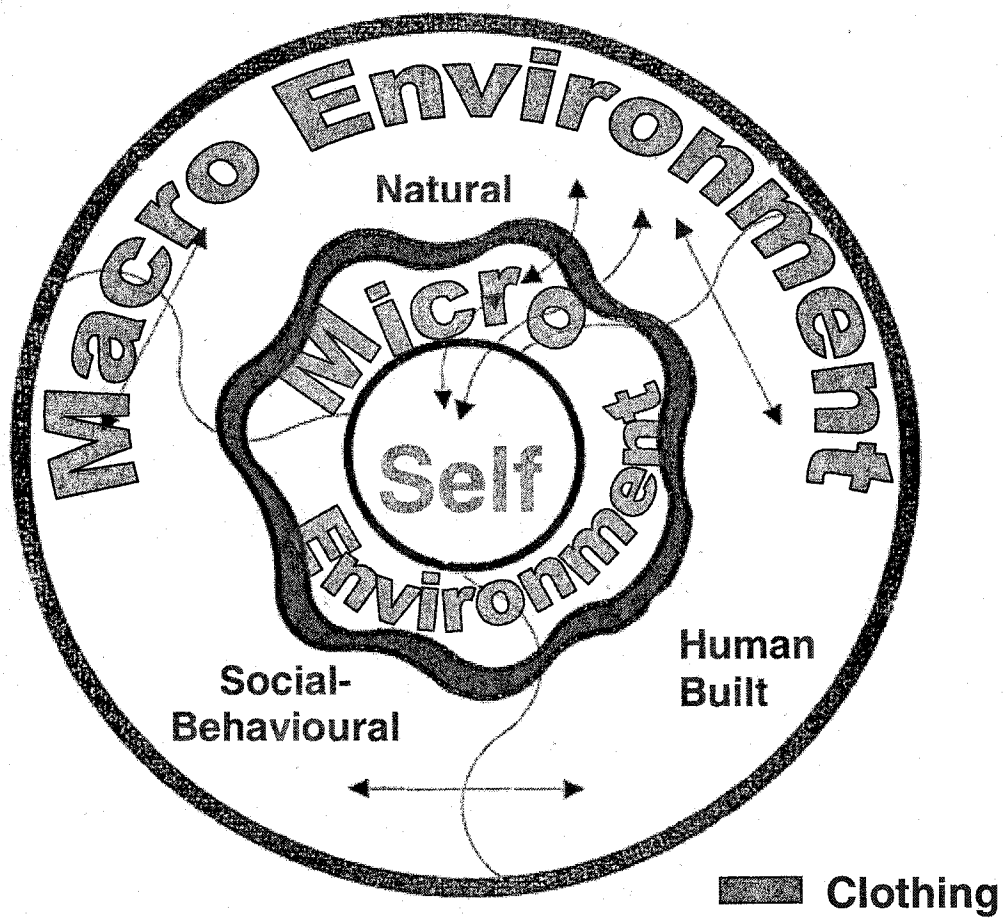
In creative work it is crucial for the creator to function in both divergent and convergent manners of thinking in order to produce interesting and attainable end results. Each creative act or project may include one or many cycles of divergent/convergent planning, just as every creator will possess a varying emphasis and balance of divergent and convergent courses of action. Both convergence and divergence are necessary to some degree within the creative process in order to generate enough good ideas to prompt action, but also to narrow down those ideas to the extent that they become workable.

Creativity, according to Wallace and Gruber (1999), is a result of an inquisitive individual's efforts to solve problems. Typically, "...people think in order to solve problems. ...It may be apt to say that the creator sets him- or herself problems in order to think" (pp.108-09). Creative work, though, is more than a problem-solving exercise; "It is always a many-faceted undertaking" (p.100). The models of divergent and convergent thinking, then, are insufficient

to portray little more than one dimension of the creative process.

The Human Ecology Framework

This framework, as adapted by Dr. Betty Crown (after Kilsdonk [1983]), provides a visual metaphor for viewing the way in which an individual is situated within his/her life context. The model includes concentric distinctions of *self*, *micro environment*, and *clothing* as a form of boundary-line before the *macro environment*. It also illustrates the important tripartite features of Social-Behavioural, Human Built, and Natural environments. (A version of this model appears in McFadyen, Capjack & Crown, 1998, p.123 – figure 1.)



[Figure 5.3. Clothing as Near Environment – Two-dimensional. Developed from Crown's Human Ecology model.]

Crown's model is important because it identifies the realms of influence (i.e. Social-Behavioural, Human Built, and Natural) that play a massive role in shaping an individual's personality and worldview *('Weltanschauung')*. These realms comprise what Bourdieu (1992) calls *habitus*, defined as

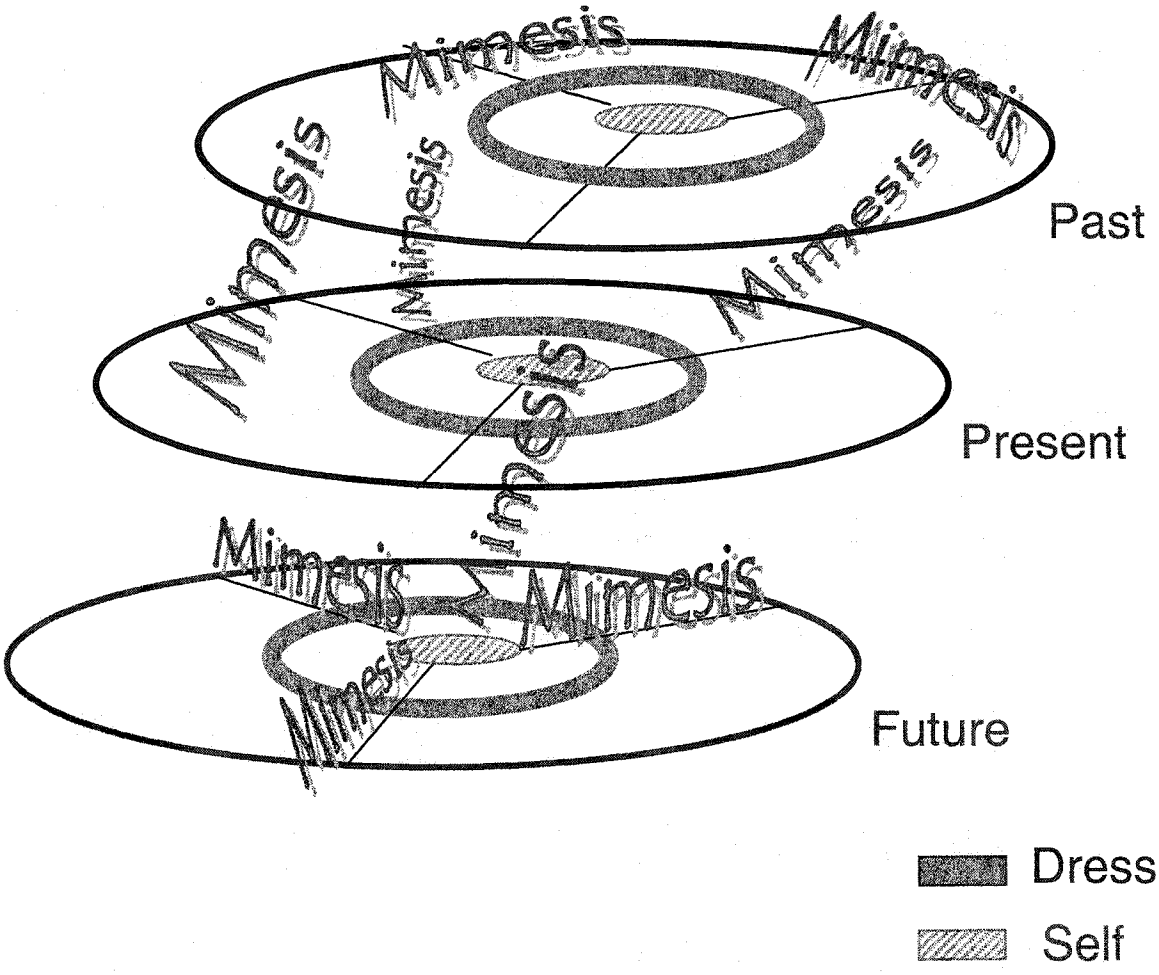
> ...a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks. ...Habitus is creative, inventive, but within the limits of its structures, which are the embodied sedimentation of the social structures which produced it (pp.18-19).

The significant difference between the original two-dimensional model [figure 5.3] and the three-dimensional model that I have constructed [figure 5.4] is that *channels of interaction* between components and the element of *temporality* (past, present and future) are highlighted in greater depth, affording a sense of *context* and *history*. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) discuss the concept of *field* that collaborates with *habitus*, which is helpful to explain the required three-dimensionality in figure 5.4 (and 5.5 following).

> A field is not simply a dead structure, a set of "empty places"... but a *space of play...* There is action, and history, and conservation or transformation of structures only because there are agents, but agents who are acting and efficacious only because they are not reduced to what is ordinarily put under the notion of individual and who... are endowed with an ensemble of dispositions which imply both the propensity and the ability to get into and to play the game (p.19).

Figure 5.4, therefore, is an expanded model that illustrates not only *habitus*, as in figure 5.3, but *field* as well. It shows a dynamic view of the individual situated

within a framework that allows for evolution.



[Figure 5.4. Mimesis Operating in Context of Dress – Three-dimensional. Developed by Andrea Schuld (2001), adapted from Crown's Human Ecology model.]

I propose that this slightly altered metatheory (i.e. figure 5.4) is necessary to better understand the mechanisms involved in the creative design process. It comes closer to illustrating the many inter-related elements operating within an evolving systems approach, as per Wallace and Gruber (1999). Its drawback for the purpose of this thesis, however, is that it represents only a framework and

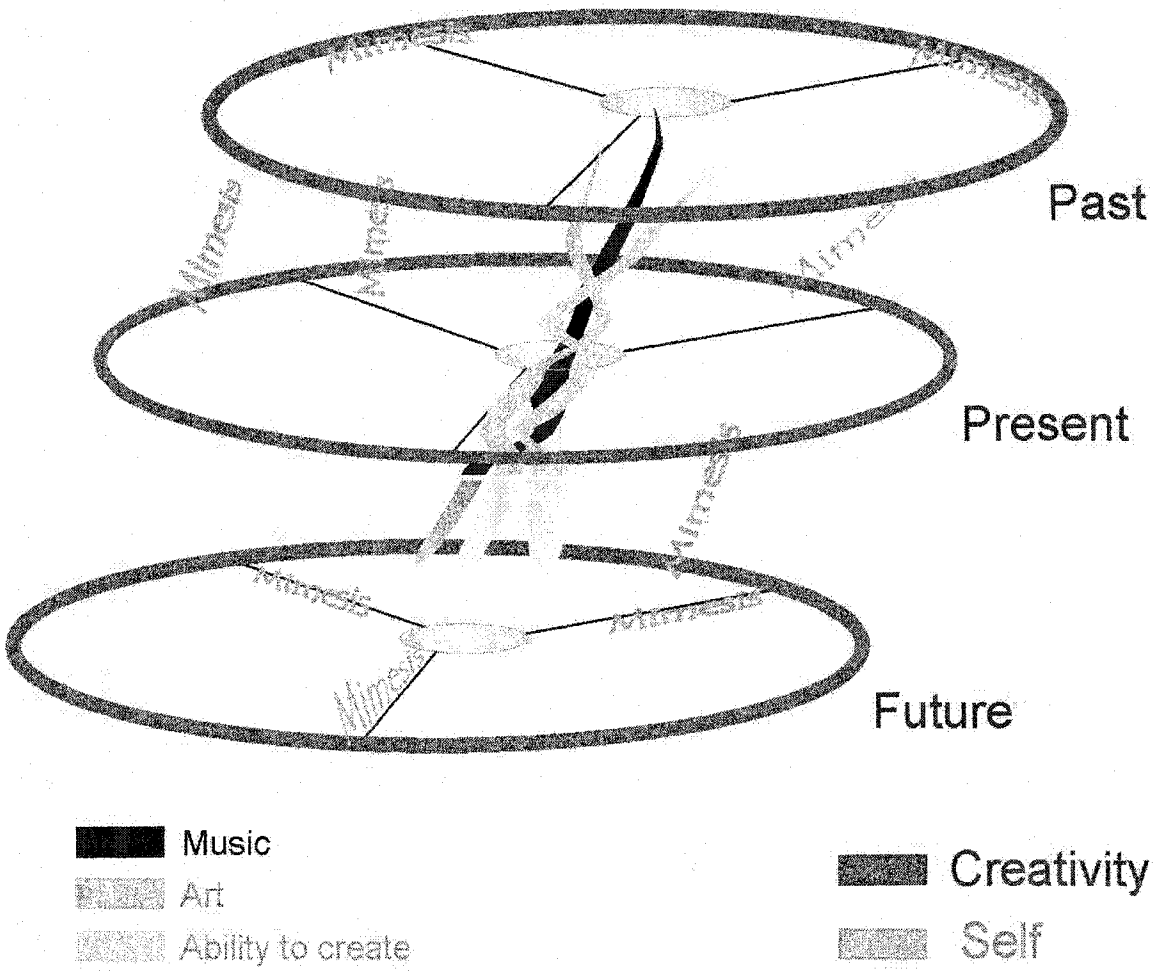
proposes no specific substance.

5.3 Diagrams of model

The centrally important conceptual models, shown in figures 5.6 and 5.7, are intended as visual metaphors to explicate my creative process that has evolved up to the present. Not only do they illustrate various life influences longitudinally, but they also provide a cross-sectional view of my current creative milieu.

In the process of studying my creative influences and considering the best way to graphically represent them, I have noticed that certain elements vary in their strength or importance at different times, even becoming dormant for periods. I have grappled with how best to portray these fluctuating elements, which has in turn effected an evolution in the model's form itself. Previous illustrations of my design process have shown many rotations or coils of an element's path around the whole group to illustrate where it has been most active during a particular time frame. Due to the twisting nature of these filaments of influence, the model was dubbed "The Yarn Diagram".

A further-evolved model based on the framework of figure 5.4 illustrates more specifically the elements that influenced my creative design process that occurred in designing the collection. For the sake of simplicity, only a few major filaments – and their inter-twining relationships – are shown.



[Figure 5.5. Mimesis Operating in Context of Creativity – Three-dimensional. Developed by Andrea Schuld (2002), adapted from Crown's Human Ecology model.]

This coiling 'yarn' was abandoned due to the difficulty in clearly illustrating such a complex structure three-dimensionally and instead, I chose to illustrate the conceptual model two-dimensionally, in a flat flow-chart manner. One can best read this flat diagram as if a tube or pipe had been split down its length at some point, and then laid flat. Where elements need to be highlighted for their relative importance at a particular time, the thickness of the filament is varied.

Figure 5.6 implicitly includes many cycles of *convergent* and *divergent*

thinking, as evidenced by each element's varying thickness or thinness. For example, music has been a central evolving force in my personal development. One can see a varying thickness of importance/ influence of this element at various ages. At age two, I was gaining an appreciation for classical music from my mother's influence, which is shown on the diagram to be widening, or *diverging* in other terms. At the age of four I began taking private violin lessons, shown by a further bulge in the width of the filament to indicate that I began to develop many more ideas about music. *Convergence* along the music filament can be seen around the age of sixteen and seventeen, shown by its thinning, at which point my pursuit of classical music and interest in violin instruction began to wane. The thickness of the music filament increased *(diverged)* again as I became aware of other kinds of music by exposure in nightclubs, and as I learned to appreciate Industrial, Gothic, and Techno music through my experiences and contacts made in Toronto. This divergence on the conceptual influence of music can be seen between the approximate ages of nineteen and twenty-five.

Both the lifetime and the current vignette models include the following elements, grouped in various categories for easier understanding, as shown with their corresponding colour codes as used below:

Subcultures:

Gothic

Industrial

Modern Primitive

Rave

Appreciation of:

Re-use (clothing)

Different-ness

Quality

Timeless-ness

Agency/ ability to create

Visual self-expression:

Inspiration from:

Music

Film

Art

Fashion design
(Belgian and Japanese)

Tattoo design

Concepts:

Anti-globalization

Anti-appropriation

Bio-mechanical interface

Body politics

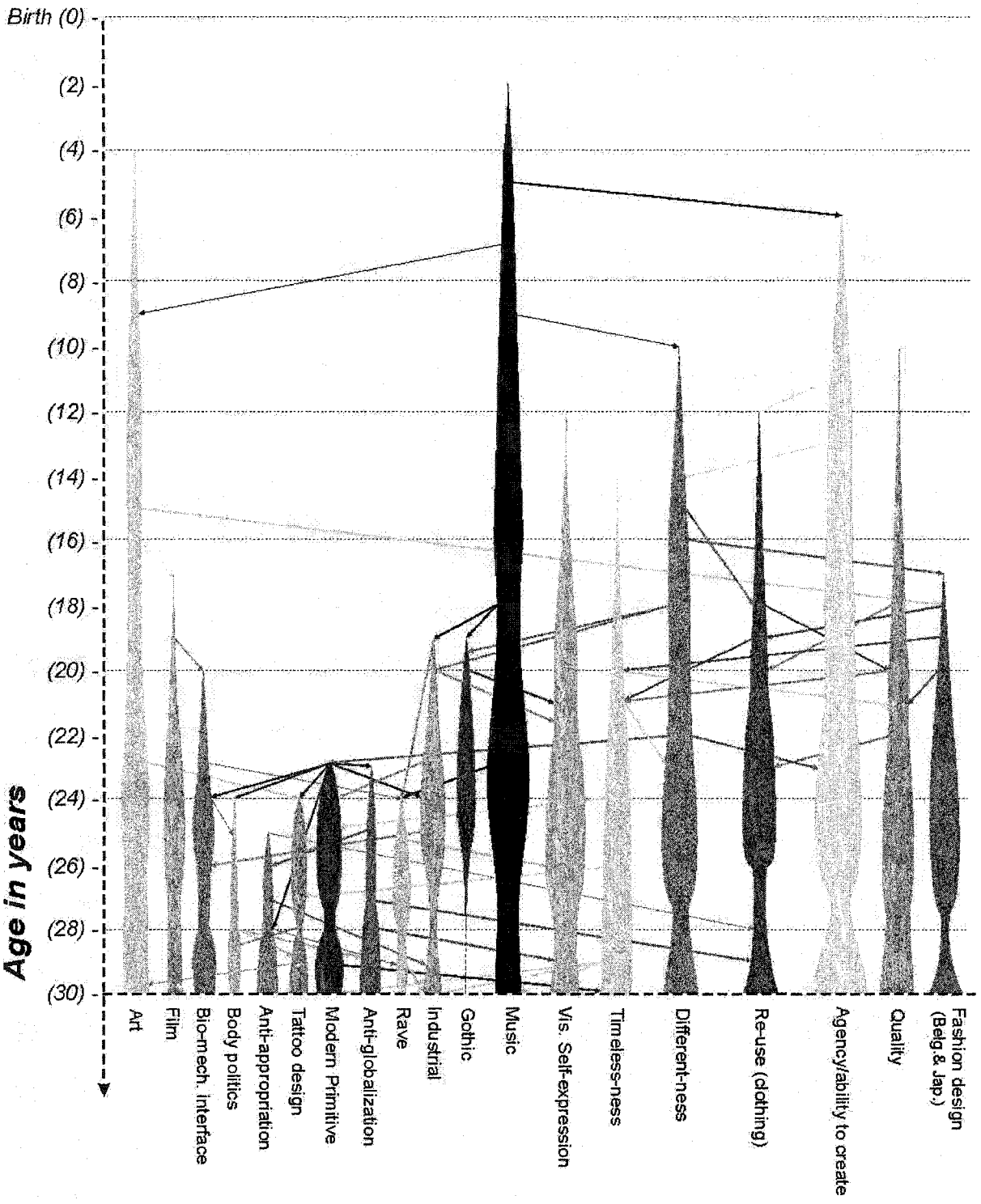
Gestalt:

Memetics/ Evolution

The element of *'Memetics/ Evolution'* is shown in figures 5.5 and 5.7, but not in figure 5.6. The reason is that figure 5.7 shows a current cross-sectional view of influences that have come together in the last few months of creating the collection and documenting the inter-relationshionships of my many influences. It is this memetic/ evolutionary 'element' that bonds together all other influencing filaments; it is a kind of nourishing protoplasm that provides for the inter-connection of all filaments. This is especially evident if one reads figure 5.7 as a snapshot in time of a cellular entity.

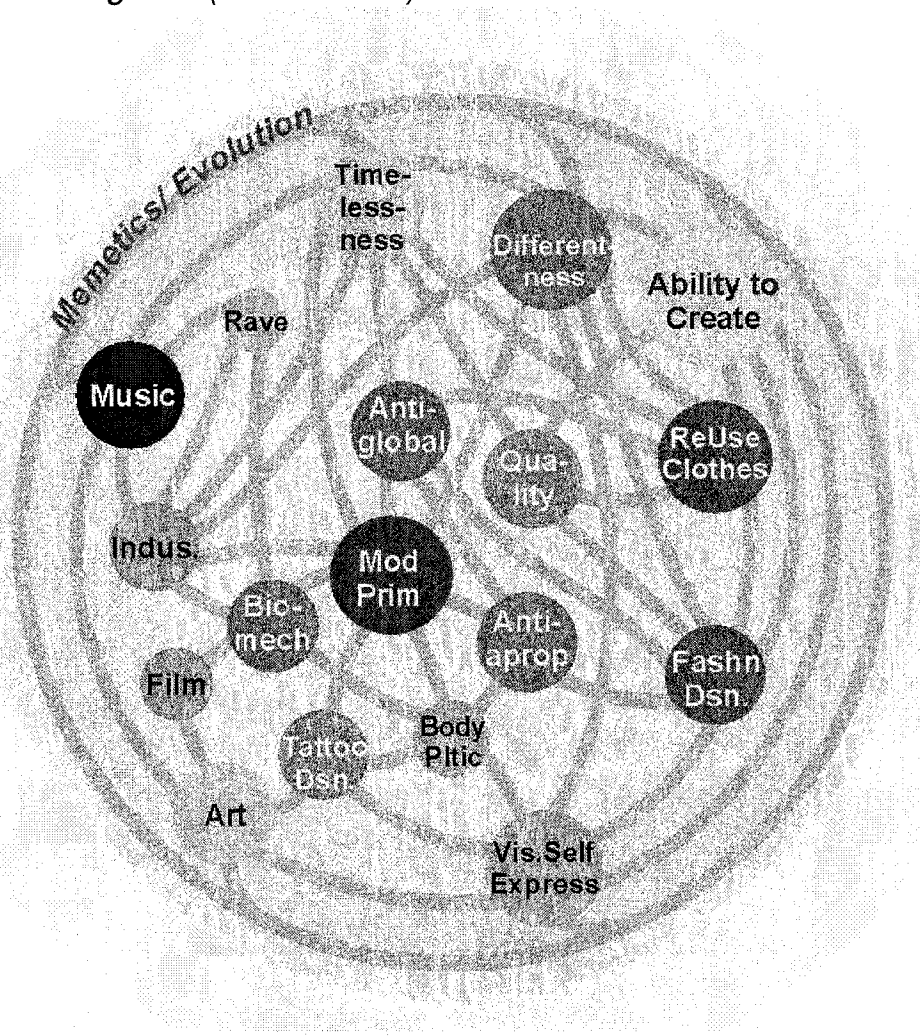
Instead of illustrating the memetic/ evolutionary element as a single colour in figure 5.6, I have chosen instead to show individual memetic flows between filaments as colour-coded and directional paths of influence. Every line connecting various filaments together denotes an approximate timeframe of connection between filaments, and each arrowhead indicates the direction of influence from one filament to the next, i.e. from the *'influencer'* to the *'influenced'*. Figure 5.7 does not show arrowheads due to the fact that the model should be viewed as a snapshot at the time of writing this discussion – age 30.

Lifetime model.



[Figure 5.6. Conceptual model of my life influences.]

Current phase vignette (cross-section).



[Figure 5.7. Cross-sectional view of my current design influences.]

The 'snapshot' view and the longitudinal view of my design influences are useful tools with which I can understand my creative disposition. These can be used as mind-maps in order to better discern my way forward in creative work, and also to retrospectively gain clarity of insight into my life events as they have informed my personal development. An exercise of this type can be an invaluable tool for any creative individual in search of self-awareness. By illuminating elements that have transpired and cross-fertilized, this method helps to nurture one's own creative direction.

Chapter 6

There is a grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.

Charles Darwin, *On the origin of species.*

Summary and Conclusions

Gruber and Wallace (1999) generated essential points of insight for understanding the process of creative development. It relates closely to the concept of *memetics* (discussed by many researchers), which is also effective for studying the manner by which elements interact and evolve to form the uniqueness of an individual's orientation, artistic or otherwise. The missing element central to the effectiveness of such study, however, has been the example of a specific case study to explicate the authors' theory. I have combined the evolving systems approach with memetics to show how such theory appears in practice for one individual case study.

Warwick and Cavallaro (1998) state,

> Dress is implicated in complex dynamics of both projection and introjection. It visibly embodies... ejection of internal states and absorption of external ones through which the subject aims at fashioning a satisfying identity (p.39).

The same can be said for the process of design; one can substitute 'design' where Warwick and Cavallaro have used the term 'dress'. The process of design can thus be understood to act as a fertile locus of interaction between an individual's past and his/her evolving future – including experiences, beliefs and

Weltanschauung. It can be viewed as a rich membrane, much like figure 5.7 (page 128), where internal elements gain meaning and direction in order to evolve into external expressions. Since the self is an open system of growth and change, new experiences will constantly affect one's inner 'structure', through either reinforcement or modification. This can be seen as an ongoing cycle – a moebius strip of coming to know the evolving self both inwardly and outwardly.

6.1 Self-critique of collection

I feel that I adhered closely to the objectives within the design process of each garment, such as producing the best possible end-use of materials collected, and creating a cohesive collection of garments that overall are functional, wearable, comfortable and original. Other objectives were also met as a result of defining the creative design process and developing a visual model to elucidate the description of this process.

An important objective was to document the creative process as it happened, including life influences, design philosophy, and personal beliefs. While I was careful to keep a record of these elements, I could have illuminated my personal beliefs to a deeper extent. As Tierney (2000) states, *testimonio* research engages the writer to assume a voice of vulnerability and tell all. There were certainly times of deep reflection that were triggered and memories that resurfaced during the journaling phase. My reason for not explicitly detailing certain points throughout the thesis relates to the fact that I cherish my freedom to keep personal experiences, opinions and values *private*, and to pursue a way

of life that is intimately meaningful. I did not discard these 'vulnerable' elements when they arose, but rather drew on them in personal reflection, which in turn benefited the integrity of design and my fundamental satisfaction with the process.

In the overall aesthetic of the collection, I wanted to portray stronger elements of technology and its waste in order to explore dystopian sentiments akin to those of the Industrial subculture. Limitations were placed on the type of creations possible due to the constraints of time and the assortment of materials collected. This was further enforced by my desire to make all pieces wearable, comfortable, and interchangeable. Fabrications could not meet original concepts to the fullest extent.

Specifically, my initial design objectives (see pp.4-5) included the goal to work with used materials from construction, the medical and military fields, work-wear, and home décor. For example, in my call for donations (see appendix A, p.145) I had requested many non-wearable articles such as sleeping bags, tarps, mosquito netting and tents, luggage and bags, and watches. I had wished to combine these 'difficult' materials with computer chips, wires from TVs and monitors, strips of film and videocassette tape, and small machine pieces that I had already collected. Most of what I received in donated goods, however, consisted of dressy ladies suits and casual ladies and children's garments, thereby somewhat affecting my design process and greatly affecting the final aesthetic.

One objective, before designing the collection, was to evaluate the

production process in terms of workability/ feasibility, and functionality. As the work progressed, I became less concerned about issues of the collection's production and decided to concentrate more on the *process*, *influences* and their *effect* on the aesthetic whole. I have determined that the collection would not be suitable for mass production due to the nature of the materials used. Specifically, working with used textiles from many sources required much handwork in ripping apart old items and re-assembling them, using a wide range of unique techniques specific to each end-garment. Instead, such design work is more germane to "wearable art", custom "one-off" garment production, or "short-run" (i.e. small collection) work for a specialty boutique or gallery.

Documenting my creative design process helped me to explore and strengthen the inter-relationships between my various 'filaments' of influences. Having undergone the process of mapping my evolving systems approach will likely assist me more with future design work than it did during the current collection. On the whole, the process of creating the current collection was solely intended as a *means* for uncovering my life influences and evolving systems approach, and not as a trial to apply the results of what I have learned via documenting my process.

6.2 Application of the research

One of the best applications for the type of study proposed here would be its integration into creative educational programs. Subjects that it would benefit are design-specific, such as fashion, fine arts, graphic design and architecture.

Others include landscape and interior design, and creative writing. On a broader scope, application into sociology, psychology and philosophy would be beneficial, especially in the realm of qualitative study of the self. Such areas might include childhood development, phenomenology, ontology and existentialism.

Outside of the purely academic realm, use of the evolving systems approach could be useful for artists, musicians, biographers, writers for film and theatre, counselors/ therapists, and curriculum planners. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) state that analysis can produce

> ...an awakening of consciousness and a form of 'self-work' that enables the individual to get a handle on his or her dispositions... The possibility and efficacy of this kind of self-analysis is itself determined in part by the original structures of the habitus in question, [and] in part by the objective conditions under which the awakening of self-consciousness takes place... (p.133).

The exercise of mapping one's evolving system would be suitable for use across a range of ages, and could be made as simple or elaborate as one might desire.

The prime use of such an approach would be to stimulate personal creative development and awareness for artists and designers:

> ...Students of creative work may profit by being sensitive to what they can learn from their cases. In the case study method the narrative is a jumping-off point for reflective thought. The case study method is... an approach that may help us to enrich our repertoires for understanding the many ways of creative work (Gruber and Wallace, 1999, p.102).

By tracing one's life influences and their inter-relationships, an individual could look back at work that has gone dormant, that is, a period of incubation, in order to instigate new work at a later time. Both active and dormant elements in one's personal repertoire can support the maintenance of a unique self-identity, which

is necessary to nurture an inspired, creative outlook. This, in turn, helps to ascertain one's goals, and to establish the continuation of creative efforts.

In an area where there is customarily no manual to guide the individual into creativity, the act of mapping one's personal network of life influences can provide positive feedback via the discernment of interesting deviations and novelties, which may prompt further insightfulness and productivity. Gruber and Wallace (1999) state, "The main point is to develop a new point of view, a perspective from which new problems are seen and old ones are seen in a new light" (p.109). One does not need to be versatile, eloquent or brilliant to design creatively. Instead, one should learn to "...develop a new point view and the determination to reexamine every problem from that perspective" (p.109). After all,

> *How [else] is the artist to nourish himself* (sic), spiritually as well as materially, in an age whose values are market values and whose commerce consists almost exclusively in the purchase and sale of commodities? (Lewis Hyde, quoted in Wallace and Gruber, p.110. My emphasis added).

6.3 Recommendations for further study

Through the process of preparing the collection and formalizing my results, I have discerned a wide range of directions that could warrant further investigation. Some of these run closely alongside the family of issues surrounding the design process while others run farther afield.

It may be revealing to study the evolving creative process pertaining to a range of particular *contexts* in which an individual or group has developed. These could include the family, teachers, friends and peers that have influenced

the shaping of a character. Beyond these, one could study the evolving creative process from the standpoint of how a community, school environment or workplace has had an effect. The contexts of social class or race relations could also profoundly influence one's development, and would merit further study. For example, how would an individual's creativity be affected by growing up in a setting of financial or emotional poverty, as opposed to a setting of no such constraints? As Gruber and Wallace (1999) state, "...there are various ways of parceling out a creative life into the societal arrangements within which it unfolds" (p.99).

Another angle rich for study would be the alteration of *timescales*, such as a longitudinal evaluation of an individual's evolution. The subject could either be continuously followed through a certain period of time, or could be intermittently studied to view his/ her creative development. It would be useful to have access to the creative individual for at least ten years, if possible, due to the "ten-year rule", mentioned by Wallace and Gruber (1999). This is "...the finding that it takes about ten years for an individual or small group to effect significant revision in their own ways of thought" (p.111).

In contrast, a study could examine a designer's creative flurry of activity and then map out the preceding ideas that instigated the creative work. It would be interesting to do this shortly following the burst of creativity, and then again much later, after the designer has had time to reflect upon what has been personally forming up until that point. This would allow for both an immediate 'snapshot' of consciousness, plus a 'time-released', emergent image of a deeper conscious

and sub-conscious process, which might reveal incubated ideas.

It would be valuable to conduct a comparative study of the curriculum of leading fashion design schools, such as Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London, and Parsons School of Design and the Fashion Institute of Technology, both in New York. All of these schools are renowned for producing the world's leading, innovative designers, and can declare the greatest number of successful alumni. How do these schools teach the process of design? How do their graduates come to hold such long and influential careers in the industry, and is this related to particular methods of teaching the design process?

Another area – which I have generally avoided discussing – that would benefit from analysis based on the evolving systems approach is the subject of mental health and wellness. In particular, most filaments diagrammed in figure 5.6 (see p.127) were affected by a period of grieving, depression, and loss of self-identity that I went through around the age of twenty-seven and twenty-eight. This had a profound effect on my evolving outlook, and prompted a re-evaluation of my place in the world and the things I hold to be important. In many ways, it was a time of re-generation that allowed me to pursue interests such as design, creativity and self-identity that have been discussed here.

Because the exercise of tracing my life influences had such a positive and strengthening personal effect, I believe that such an endeavour could have great impact for other studies into mental health and the evolving self. This could be approached via study on one's changing dimensions of creativity over time through periods of varying mental health; it could be administered as a

rehabilitating task through an episode of relative poor mental health, to an individual or a group; it could be used to trace the effectiveness of art therapy as an individual or group evolves over time.

Conclusions

Having experienced numerous design courses as a student, and now having instructed many more such courses as a teaching assistant, I am well familiar with the struggles of *learning how to design*. I have seen innumerable students frustrated with projects before even starting, not knowing how to approach a design problem. Having been exposed to the incessant work routines of design professionals, and having experienced this on a personal basis, I further appreciate the often-taxing effort that is required to be assiduously creative throughout one's career. I have discussed with top Canadian designers (e.g. Lucas; Brenda Bent of Bent Boys) the issue of creative fatigue that eventually led to voluntary termination of their businesses.

While creative work can be highly gratifying, the costs of pursuing such a lifestyle and career can outweigh the benefits gained. This can be due to lack of support, personally and financially, and – while a designer may be extremely talented – the strain of having to be continually 'inspired' can lead to burn-out. Especially after a designer's formal education is finished, one needs a tool to encourage a life-long process of learning and expressing ideas, or in other words, taking in and putting out. The creative individual requires on-going resources to foster creative development and become more adept at

understanding and *doing design*.

Creativity does not exist in a vacuum – it is entirely related to the sights, sounds, and experiences that we take into ourselves from other sources, and subsequently modify through a personal lens to either change or strengthen our worldview. (I.e. *memetics*.) The process of mapping personal life influences is key to understanding 'what makes you tick', and to stimulating future creativity. It should be taught as a fundamental part of design education, and utilized by the designer thereafter as a means to continue a life-long process of productivity through creative evolution.

Bibliography

Beverly, J. (2000). Testimonio, subalternity, and narrative authority. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2nd Ed.* (pp.555-565). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bevlin, M.E. (1994). *Design through discovery: An introduction to art and design*, 6th edition. Toronto: Harcourt Brace College Publishers. ISBN: 0-03-076547-1.

Blackmore, S. (1999). *The meme machine.* New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0-19-850365-2.

Boden, M.A. (1997). What is creativity? In Boden, M.A. (Ed.). *Dimensions of creativity.* Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, L.J.D. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Brink, A. (2000). *The creative matrix: Anxiety and the origin of creativity.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Connor, S. (1997). Postmodernism and popular culture – Style and fashion (chapter 7), in *Postmodernist Culture* (2nd ed.). Baltimore, MA: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Crane, D. (2000). *Fashion and its social agendas: Class, gender, and identity in clothing.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Crimp, D. & Rolston, A. (1997). AIDS activist graphics: a demonstration [1990]. In Gelder, K. & Thornton, S. (Eds.) *The subcultures reader.* New York: Routledge.

Damhorst, M., Miller, K. & Michelman, S. (Eds.). (1999). *The meanings of dress.* New York: Fairchild Publications.

Dartnell, M. (1997). Where do angels hang in the cybernetic nineties? In Kroker, A. & Kroker, M. (Eds.), *Digital Delirium* (chapter). New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Dawkins, R. (1976). *The selfish gene.* Toronto: Oxford University Press. [Especially pp.203-215]. ISBN: 0-19-857519-X.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research,* 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Digital sampling, the memetic impulse and appropriation in modern art. In *The Journal for the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States, 9:1,* April 1994. [On-line]. Available HTTP: http://home.pon.net/quin/dqseamus.html. [Accessed April 2000].

Duguid, B. (1995). *A prehistory of industrial music.* Available HTTP: www.hyperreal.org/intersection/zines/est/articles.html. [Accessed 13 Nov 2001].

Eubanks, V. (1996). Zones of dither: Writing the postmodern body. *Body & Society, 2:3,* pp.73-88.

Evans, C. (1997). Dreams that only money can buy... Or, the shy tribe in flight from discourse. *Fashion Theory, 1:2,* pp.169-188.

Evans, C. (1998). The golden dustman: A critical evaluation of the work of Martin Margiela and a review of *Martin Margiela: Exhibition (9/4/1615). Fashion Theory, 2:1,* pp.73-94.

Falk, P. (1995). Written in the flesh. *Body & Society, 1:1,* pp.95-105.

Gabora, L. (1997). The origin and evolution of culture and creativity. In *Journal of Memetics – Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission, Vol. 1.* [On-line]. Available HTTP: http://www.cpm.mmu.ac.uk/jom-emit/1997/vol1/gabora 1.html.

Gedo, J.E. (1996). *The artist and the emotional world: Creativity and personality.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Gelder, K. & Thornton, S. (Eds.). (1997). *The subcultures reader.* New York: Routledge.

Gill, A. (1998). Deconstruction fashion: The making of unfinished, decomposing and re-assembled clothes. *Fashion Theory, 2:1,* pp.25-50.

Gruber, H.E. & Wallace, D.B. (1999). The case study method and evolving systems approach for understanding unique creative people at work. In Sternberg, R.J. (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity* (pp.93-115). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Herman, L.E. (1998). *Trashformations: Recycled materials in contemporary American art and design.* Seattle: Whatcom Museum of History and Art.

Higgins, D. (1997). *Modernism since postmodernism: Essays on intermedia.* San Diego, CA: San Diego State University Press. ISBN 1-879691-43-4.

Hilker, C. (No date). [On-line]. Available HTTP: http://hyperreal.com/raves/altraveFAQ.htm. (Last modified 05/08/94).

Jenkins, H. (1997). Television fans, poachers, nomads [1992]. In Gelder, K. & Thornton, S. (Eds.) *The subcultures reader.* New York: Routledge.

Jordan, T. (1997). Collective bodies: Raving and the politics of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *Body and Society, 1:1,* pp.125-144.

Kaiser, S.B. (1997). *The social psychology of clothing: Symbolic appearances in context,* 2nd edition revised. New York: Fairchild Publications. ISBN: 1-56367-107-7.

Kaiser, S.B. (1999). Identity, postmodernity, and the global apparel marketplace. Pp. 106-115. In Damhorst, M., Miller, K., & Michelman, S. (Eds.). *The meanings of dress.* New York: Fairchild Publications.

Klein, N. (2000). *No logo: Taking aim at the brand bullies.* Toronto: Vintage Canada.

Lao Tzu. (1989). *Tao Teh Ching,* trans. John C.H.Wu. Boston: Shambhala.

Leitch, V.B. (1996). Costly compensations: Postmodern fashion, politics, identity. *Modern Fiction Studies, 42, Spring 1996,* pp.111-128.

Lynch, A. (1996). *Thought contagion: How belief spreads through society.* New York: Basic Books – Harper Collins Publishers. ISBN: 0-465-08466-4.

Maffesoli, M. (1996). *The Time of the tribes: The Decline of individualism in mass society.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Martin Margiela, 9/4/1615. Website for *Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.* [On-line]. Available HTTP: www.boijmans.rotterdam.nl/engels/agenda/archief/margiel.htm. [Accessed May 2001].

May, R. (1975). *The courage to create.* Toronto: George J. McLead

Limited.

McFadyen, K., Capjack, L., & Crown, B. (1998). The business of secondhand clothing: Environmental and ethical issues. *Canadian Home Economics Journal, 48:4,* pp.121-126.

McRobbie, A. (1998). *British fashion design: Rag trade or image industry?* New York: Routledge.

Miller, P.D. (a.k.a. DJ Spooky). (2001). Material memories: Time and the cinematic image. *CTHEORY: Theory, technology and culture, 24:1-2, Article 94.*

Mitchell, C.T. (1993). *Redefining designing: From form to experience.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Mizrach, S. (a.k.a. Seeker1). (No date.) *"Modern primitives": The Accelerating collision of past and future in the postmodern era.* [On-line]. Available HTTP: http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/seekerl/cyberanthro/Modern_Primitives.html

Morgado, M.A. (1996). Coming to terms with *Postmodern*: Theories and concepts of contemporary culture and their implications for apparel scholars. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 14:1,* pp.41-53.

Neuman, W.L. (2000). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*, 4th edition. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon.

Pitts, V.L. (1999). *Body strategies: Signifying the body in subculture.* (Doctoral dissertation, Brandeis University). UMI Dissertation Services: Item 9927237.

Polhemus, T. (1994). *Street style: From sidewalk to catwalk.* New York: Thames and Hudson.

Polhemus, T. (1996). *Style surfing: What to wear in the third millennium.* London: Thames and Hudson.

Polhemus, T. & Housk, R. (1996). *The customized body.* New York: Serpent's Tail.

Reed-Danahay, D.E. (Ed.). (1997). *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social.* New York: Berg. ISBN: 1-85973-975-X.

Revell, G. (1983). The Post-industrial strategy. In Vale, V. & Juno, A. (Eds.), *Re/Search #6/7: Industrial culture handbook.* San Francisco, CA: Re/Search Publications. ISBN: 0-965046966. [On-line]. Available HTTP: http://hamp.hampshire.edu/~cmnF93/spk.txt. [Accessed April 2002].

Rosenblatt, D. (1997). The Antisocial skin: Structure, resistance, and "Modern primitive" adornment in the United States. *Cultural Anthropology, 12:3,* pp.287-334.

Straw, W. (1997). Communities and scenes in popular music [1991]. In Gelder, K. & Thornton, S. (Eds.) *The subcultures reader.* New York: Routledge.

Tate, S.L. (1999). *Inside fashion design*, 4th edition. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Thornton, S. (1997). *The subcultures reader.* New York: Routledge.

Tierney, W.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). (1997). *Representation and the text: Re-framing the narrative voice.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. ISBN: 0-7914-3472-9.

Tierney, W.G. (2000). Undaunted courage: Life history and the postmodern challenge. In *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2nd Ed.* (pp.537-553).

Tupas, R. (1996-2002). *E-townRavePage.* [On-line]. Available HTTP: www.etownravepage.com. [Last accessed July 2002].

Vale, V. & Juno, A. (Eds.). (1989). *Re/Search #12: Modern Primitives, an investigation of contemporary adornment and ritual.* San Francisco, CA: Re/Search Publications. [On-line]. Available HTTP: http://www.vsearchmedia.com/intros/primitive_intro.html or, http://www.vsearchmedia.com/books/primprod.html.

Van Hinte, E. (1997). The image of recycling. In Drabbe, N. (Ed.), *refuse: Making the most of what we have.* Utrecht, Netherlands: Cultural Connections. ISBN: 90-803635-1-0.

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* London, Canada: The Althouse Press. ISBN: 0-920354-25-4.

Vernon, P.E. (Ed.). (1970). *Creativity.* Markham, ON: Penguin Books. (Penguin Modern Psychology Readings).

Vinken, B. (1997). Eternity – A frill on the dress. *Fashion Theory, 1:1,* pp.59-68.

Warwick, A. & Cavallaro, D. (1998). *Fashioning the frame: Boundaries, dress and the body.* New York: Berg.

Webster's Dictionary. (1992). New York: Pamco Publishing Company, Inc.

Zeisel, J. (1984). *Inquiry by design: Tools for environment-behavior research.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix A.

Things I need for my collection:

1. Old curtains, bedspreads and duvets.

Colours: black, grey, navy, blue, purple, plum, burgundy and red. Holes or blemishes are fine as I can always work around these.

2. Sleeping bags – preferably not too heavy, in any of the colours listed above.
3. Old tents and mosquito netting – preferably in the colours above, and also dark green or white.
4. Old boat coverings, barbeque covers, pool covers, tarps.
5. Any used fur or leather – either pieces or full garments (any size) would be useful. Especially, I would like red and black or dark grey. Leather gloves too!
6. Old jeans – preferably plain blue or black denim, any size.
7. Old lace tablecloths. Again, holes are fine.
8. Old knit winter scarves and mittens – preferably in the colours listed in #1.
9. Leftover knitting yarn and ribbons – preferably in the colours listed in #1.
10. Out-of-commission backpacks or bags. No suitcases though.
11. Men's suit jackets and dress pants – preferably no brown tones. Any size.
12. Men's or women's winter coats – preferably in the colours listed in #1, although other colours would be fine too.
13. Men's or women's sweaters – preferably in the colours listed in #1, turtle-necks would be great but not totally necessary, and nothing too small in size.
14. Old watches or non-digital clocks (i.e. with moving hands and parts).
15. Anything else you would like to let go of, and think could be useful to my project. I'm sure there are many interesting items I haven't considered!

I will either give the unused articles to the Mustard Seed, a group downtown that aids people in all ways who are in need, or I can return unused articles you if desired, if you so indicate by pinning a note to your item(s).

Thank-you sincerely for any help you can give.

Andrea Schuld (Human Ecology Master of Arts student.)