Tartan through the maker's lens: An Exploration of Tartans Romantic Inventions

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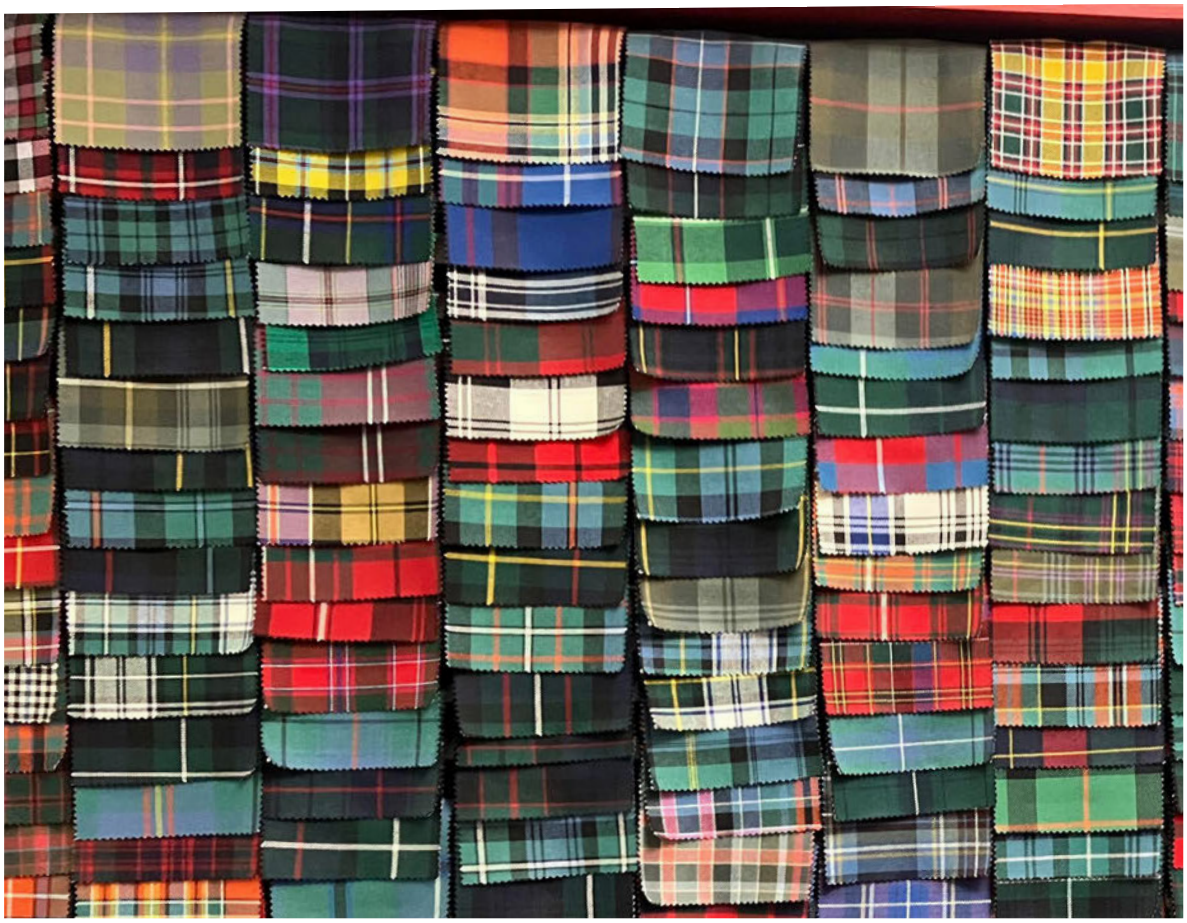

Abstract

Much of what we know about tartan and its associated symbolism is through a historical lens; in contrast, tartan exists as a fabric manufactured and used within Scotland today. This research aims to establish the relationship between tartan's narratives and how these narratives affect how tartan is made and used. By considering tartan as an ever-evolving facet of living heritage, I consider how tartans' values translate into design by centrally positioning the research on practitioners who use/make tartan, including reflections on my fashion design practice.

I present the fieldwork as a case study comprising of the following lenses: i) Heritage of Tartan, ii) Materiality and Making of Tartan iii) People who use Tartan. Within these lenses, I present several qualitative interviews with people who make and use tartan, including mill workers, tartan designers, seamstresses and fashion designers, which come together to bridge a holistic overview of motivations for using and making tartan. I analysed the data using thematic analysis, synthesising the insights through visual mapping. During the evaluation stage, I offered participants the chance to review the mapped data to clarify and reflect on their insights.

The key findings of the research highlight the narratives between tartans' Scottish symbolism and the provenance of production, tartans' Scottish values being a vehicle for sustainable production, and the emotional values of tartans adding sentimentality to design which can become lucrative commercial opportunities. The research also highlights conflicts between sustainable design and narrative and may interest researchers considering sustainable design practices within cultural settings. This research is also helpful for textile practitioners and designers interested in the role of cultural fabrics and researchers interested in exploring the role of living heritage within the textile sector.

Acknowledgements

Undertaking the M.Res has been immensely challenging, more so than I had initially anticipated; with the support of my supervisory team, I was able to navigate the last two years, and for that, I am very grateful.

I am immensely grateful to Dr Marianne McAra, for her patience and kindness. Her thoughtful insights and practical advice have helped me throughout my MRes journey, and have shaped who I am as a researcher.

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Lastly, I would like to thank Edward Barnabas and Jacob Page for sharing their creative talents to get the fashion film made. I am immensely grateful to them both.

Declaration

I Ciara Courtney, declare that this submission of part thesis and part portfolio for the award of Master of Research meets the regulations as stated in the course handbook.

I declare this submission is my own work and has not been submitted for any other academic awards.

Ciara Courtney
The Glasgow School of Art, May 2023

Prelude

In 2020, I graduated from the Manchester School of Art with a degree in fashion. During my time undertaking my degree, research became a central component of my practice. I enjoyed exploring how meanings are reflected in objects and how this can be translated into design. Prior to undertaking my degree, I had never had the chance to write academically, and I was surprised at how, through writing my dissertation, this added depth to my understanding of the clothes I was making. My final university project and my dissertation explored the construction of 'folk-practices', particularly how these practices are interpreted into beliefs, and are depicted in media. My final collection was inspired by the 1973 film 'The Wicker Man', a folk horror classic. The folk horror genre twists narratives rooted in tradition, morphing them into the mythical. The principles of folk horror have become ingrained into my design aesthetic, and this is evident in the practice aspect of my research.

While undertaking the M.Res, separately, I have collaborated with Cut-Throat production to make props for folk-horror short film 'Lacking the Boggart'. I have also collaborated with artist LODGE, for costumes for their videos. Developing a network with like-minded creatives, I drew on this interdisciplinary practice and created the short-film which is part of my Portfolio Submission.

Original Orientation of the Project

Initially, this project was situated within the Orkney Islands, exploring the relationship between residents of the Orkneys and their heritage and how this informs creative practices. And while the project was expanded to the wider Highlands region , the fundamental relationship between heritage and design remains central to the project.
The underpinnings of the original inquiry were the value of narratives, stories, and myths within heritage contexts to explore the forging of genuine connection. However, a shift in context away from Orkney has been undertaken due to several circumstances. Firstly, the pandemic posed difficulties in truly embedding into the Orkney context, digital interventions with residents of the Orkney community often felt surface level and multiple participants commented on the importance of visiting Orkney to gain a deeper understanding. This was also a time in which I considered my role not only as a maker but also as a researcher. I found it difficult to navigate my role as a researcher because of my inexperience, and because I didn't have a direct connection to the people of Orkney. I was aware I was an outsider looking into people's lives, and this was something I wanted to do with respect, honesty, and empathy. However, with the physical barriers, the impersonal nature of Zoom, and my lack of research experience, I found it hard to make an impactful connection to the research context. So, through much reflection, and the timely opportunity to be involved in a project called 'Give Back Credit (GBC)

to the Heritage communities', I decided to reconsider my research context. The research I undertook about Orkney may not have contributed to my M.Res final outcomes; however, it did ingrain into me the realities of research, the importance of reflectivity, and the value of understanding research contexts.

Give Back Credit (GBC)

I got involved with the Give Back Credit project in the Summer of 2021, I had been given the opportunity to be the resident fashion designer for this project exploring tartans living heritage. This involved undertaking a two-week trip to the Highlands to learn about tartans history in relation to tartans provenance and to meet the team at Prickly Thistle mill to understand how tartan is manufactured. The aim of the project was to collaborate with Prickly Thistle mill to create a six-piece fashion collection made of tartan. This purpose of the collaboration was to address the position of cultural craft in the design process, considering how more equitable credit can be given to cultural heritage within the fashion design system. To create the collection, I based my research around tartans heritage and developed the collection through toiling and testing garments, taking two further trips to the Prickly Thistle mill to work with their in house seamstresses. The final outcome is a six-piece fashion collection, and is set to be housed at the University of the Creative Arts archive. The collection was not a commercial venture, and was instead treated as a research opportunity to consider how relationships between heritage, craft and fashion can be developed to recognise the role of heritage communities.

Presentation of Submission Statement

This submission has been designed in three parts, The Thesis and Portfolio A and Portfolio B. I situate the role of my practice in this inquiry, in relation to other practitioners who use tartan. I have documented the development of the Give Back Credit six-piece collection in Portfolio A, this explores my creative process of researching, and developing a fashion collection based on tartans heritage. My involvement with the GBC project pre-dates my involvement with this research inquiry, instead its role shaped my initial insights into tartan. The video element of the submission, documented in Portfolio B, was made in the summer of 2022, this was created in tandem to undertaking fieldwork. The video serves to curate narratives of the GBC collection, presenting insights from my research process, scope of context and emergent insights from undertaking fieldwork. The role of the film is to embody the key themes of the collection, specifically the mythic nature of tartan. Reflecting on the weighting of the collection and output of the video of portfolio A and B, I feel the film output has as much importance as the making and development process of the collection itself. My reasoning for this is because tartan is often understood by not only how it is made but also how it is presented, with the contexts of how tartan is worn and used, adding further to the culturally loaded associations of tartan. The thesis has been designed to serve as a representation of the aesthetics of my practice, and further considers how the design of the document coincides with the practice element of the submission.

William Morris's Kelmscott press font has been used for title texts, this is a font I use regularly in my practice, as I like how William Morris reinterpreted a mediaeval typography in his present day.

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Glossary of Terms

Calico: A heavy-weave cloth made from unbleached cotton

Carding: Combing wool to untangle and align fibres in one direction

Finishing: The final process of weaving, consisting of washing, pressing, brushing, coating

Rapier Loom: Shuttle-less weaving loom in which the shed of warp yarns is carried by rapiers

Selvedge: Self finished edge of fabric, running parallel to the warp

Sett: The structure of the pattern; number of warp and weft threads per inch.

Shuttle: Carries yarn, back and forth across the loom, over and under the warp threads

Toile: The prototyping of a garment, usually made from calico

Warp: Lengthwise/Longitudinal threads held stationary on the loom

Weft: Yarn inserted under and over the warp threads

Chapter 1: Introduction

Tartan is a chequered, woven textile. This fabric carries significant values outside of its materiality, with its Scottish symbolism widely recognisable (Zaczek & Phillips, 2005; Faiers, 2021; Brown, 2010). The interwoven narratives of tartan blur fact and fiction, with much of tartans associations (such as clan tartans) being relatively recent inventions (Trevor-Roper, 1983). In this investigation, I will discuss the relationship between makers of tartan and people who use tartan (for example, fashion designers and kiltmakers), exploring how they interpret tartan's stories in their own practices.

Much of the literature surrounding tartan concerns its role and production historically; yet, it remains a fabric that continues to be made and used in the present. Tartan, as a facet of living heritage, is considered of cultural importance by heritage institutions. For example, the V&A Dundee has a forthcoming exhibition entitled 'Tartan' due to open April 2023 (Wylie, 2022). For the exhibition, the V&A hosted a 'call-out', asking the public to submit their photos, stories and tartan items with an emphasis on 'gathering personal connections' (Wylie, 2022). Similarly, this inquiry explores the relationships between people and tartan to understand the motivations for making and using this culturally significant fabric.

This research explores tartan as a living heritage and how practitioners interpret this—considering narratives which are embodied by tartan. This research employs qualitative interviews within a case study methodology to gather insights from practitioners within the tartan sector. In addition, I draw on my own fashion design practice within the case study, which enables me to consider how I implemented tartan's heritage in my designs and how this compares to other practitioners. By employing thematic analysis and thematic mapping, I present insights into the relationship between narrative, materiality and making, offering the field insights into how living heritage, and particularly tartan's emotional agency, can be used in practice.

1.1 Reorientation of Project

In August 2021, I was given the opportunity to undertake a residency as part of the Give Back Credit to the Heritage Communities project (GBC), collaborating with Prickly Thistle Mill in Evanton, in the Highlands region, to create a 6-piece collection. The first week of the residency was dedicated to research and involved visiting Culloden Battlefield, The Highland Life Museum archives, and Inverness Museum to emphasise the historical aspects of tartan particularly pertaining to The Jacobite uprising, Highland dress, and the myths surrounding tartan. The second week of the project involved going to Prickly Thistle Mill, meeting the staff there and primarily speaking to Clare Campbell, the CEO of Prickly Thistle, on her perspectives on tartan. I learned about the philosophy of Prickly Thistle, how they weave tartan on shuttle looms, and their zero-waste garment practice.
During the time of the residency, I wasn't aware that the project would pivot towards a tartan-based project, and reflectively it is during the time of this project that much of the scoping conversations and initial research about tartan was undertaken. My initial project, while a completely different context, did

did explore the idea of the emotional value of heritage. During my time speaking to people to understand tartan, the links between the literature I had been reading and tartan became clear.

1.2 Research Question, Aim and Objectives

The overarching aim of this inquiry is to develop a deep understanding of the connection between tartan's living heritage and how practitioners understand it in the present day, and to seek to address the following research question via the corresponding objectives:

Main Question: How can narratives of tartan inform how practitioners make and use tartan?

Objective 1: To conduct a holistic case study into tartan, which considers the relationship between narrative and the ways tartan is made and used.

Objective 2: To identify the diverse approaches to tartan within the tartan sector by comparing and understanding the differences between practices based on provenance, the scale of production, and making methods.

Objective 3: To reflect on my use of tartan within my fashion practice, considering how this relates to other practitioners within the tartan sector.

1.3 Thesis Structure

My inquiry is part thesis and part portfolio of practice. I have designed the portfolio in two parts, Portfolio A and Portfolio B. These are situated at the start and end of the Case-Study chapter, respectively, and I have indicated in the text when they should be read. In Chapter Two, I engage in a Scope of Context, where I draw on insights from heritage theory and the contemporary role of tartan. In Chapter Three, I set out the fieldwork design of a Case-Study, which employs embedded lenses. Chapter Four is a presentation of the Case-Study, which explores the fieldwork engagements, presenting through the lenses of i) Heritage, ii) Materiality and Making of Tartan, iii) People who use Tartan. Insights are developed in Chapter Five, and through discussion, I position key themes relating to the emotive values of tartan and address the research question. To conclude, in Chapter 6, I reflect across the entire project where I consider the limitations and propose opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2: Scope of Context

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explore the intersection between tartan fabric and heritage by examining tartan in relation to the driving factors of heritage. I critically examine the role heritage plays in the cultural consciousness of tartan, and for this I draw on Faiers (2021) as a key reference. Faiers (2021) significance stems from how he positions tartan within current society (not just historically), exploring how the complexity of tartan is interwoven with assigned values and how the historical significance of tartan and perceptions of tartan cannot be uncoupled.

Heritage, and perceptions of heritage (whether fact or fiction), play an important role in how narratives of tartan can be assembled (Faiers, 2021, Trevor-Roper 1983, Laranger & Sanders 2020). Central to this chapter is existing literature surrounding tartan and how critical heritage literature can be employed to unpack the phenomenon of tartan. Literature is integral to s how tartan is uniquely positioned as a cultural fabric that embodies broader intangible values and narratives of Scottish history. I situate tartan in the wider debates on how narratives and authenticity pertain to heritage.

The Scope of Context has is six sections: 1) Heritage and Tartan, which explores the similarities of heritage discourse and tartan; 2) The Material Factors of Tartan, which examines tartan weaving; 3) Romantic Inventions of Tartan, outlining the myths surrounding tartan; 4) The Pop Culture of Tartan; 5) Tartan and Clothes, which outlines tartans uses in traditional and contemporary settings; and 6)The Emotional Value of Heritage, which considers the dynamics of tartans emotive power.

It is beyond the scope of this inquiry to chart the history of tartan, and this has already been done extensively by several scholars including Trevor-Roper (1983), Cheape (1991) and Waine (2022). However, I will explore how history and heritage are interwoven with present understandings of tartan and the roles these play in a shared cultural understanding of tartan.

2.2 Heritage and Tartan

Heritage, which resides in both tangible and intangible forms (Harrison, 2013), comes together in tartan to physically manifest a fabric that has interwoven values, spanning from rebellion to conformity, oppression to tradition (Faiers, 2022). The broad values placed upon tartan could similarly be noted to hold similarities in how heritage can be used on a broader socio-political scale. Heritage can shapeshift and expand into the various facets of cultural life, mobilised for and by multiple agendas – most prominently 'national identity' (Harrison 2013; Crooke 2010; Smith 2021).

Another way heritage can be defined centres on the active qualities of living heritage – the distinct processes in which heritage assembles and builds narratives that are reflections of the present (Smith 2006; Harrison et al 2020). Through positioning tartan, and perceptions of tartan, as the active embodiment of values of heritage, I will begin to shape how tartan can be understood as a fabric deeply enlaced with cultural values,

positioning tartan as the vessel which, arguably, upholds narratives and ideals of Scottish identity (Trevor-Roper, 1983).

2.3 The material factors of Tartan

The meanings of tartan are ambiguous and emotive (Brown, 2010), with the intangible meanings associated with tartan being defined in the same parameters as thread count and colour. The Scottish Register places tartan into nine different categories:

- Clan
- Individual/Family
- District (i.e., city, country etc)
- Corporate (organisations)
- Commemorative
- Military
- Royal
- Fashion
- and Other.

These broad distinctions of tartan, cover a whole spectrum of different meanings – essentially a tartan can be officially recognised for anything. While tartan can broadly be defined by ever ambiguous 'official' meanings; to become certified tartan, it needs to adhere to some basic principles set out by The Scottish Register:

> *"A tartan is a design which is capable of being woven consisting of two or more alternating-coloured stripes which combine vertically and horizontally to form a repeated chequered pattern"* (Scottish Register of Tartans Act, 2008).

This broad definition means that there are potentially endless possibilities for the creation of tartan designs (Brown, 2010). However, tartan does have some conventions, which, while not rules, are often employed in the weaving of tartan today such as symmetry, with identical warps and wefts (Faiers, 2021). The thread count of tartan is understood in setts, which is the number of yarns to an inch, and essential to weaving tartan is understanding how to repeat the sett to produce a length of fabric, making it a highly skilled craft (Sutton and Carr, 1984). While tartan is most often woven as a twill, it is not limited to just twills and can be woven in other styles such as herringbone (see Figure 1).

The production of tartan has gone through phases, with it initially being made by hand in the Highlands region on vertical looms (Zaczek &Phillips, 2005; Rae, 2019; Faiers 2021). By the 19th century, weavers employed horizontal looms, which had a treadle operated warp thread, meaning the person weaving the fabric could more easily throw the shuttle (Rae, 2019, see Figure 2). During this time, the production of tartan centred on a cottage industry in the Lowlands in places such as Kilbarchan and Comrie (Sutton & Carr, 1983, Faiers, 2021). By the mid-19th century, power looms became widespread (Faiers 2021), (see Figure 3), and today digitally operated, high-speed, rapier-looms (see Figure 4) are most often used in the production of tartan. I emphasise the progression of production techniques, because at each stage of the progression in technology in the weaving process a human element in the production of tartan has been lost, and the geographical locations of tartan production have shifted from the Highlands region to primarily the lowlands.

(Right Page) FIGURE 1: Navygrey Tartan made by Prickly Thistle Mills, a herringbone weave. Prickly Thistle (2022).

FIGURE 2: Power Shuttle c1858-1862. Science Museum Group

FIGURE 3: Shuttle Loom. Prickly Thistle Mill (2022).

FIGURE 4: Rapier Loom. Locharron mill (2019).

As part of the scope of context, in Figure 5 I have compiled a map of tartan mills in Scotland (see right page); however, this is not necessarily an exhaustive list as I found it difficult to confirm where tartan mills are located (I did attempt to engage with the Tartan Authority but did not receive a reply). Further adding to the uncertainty of mapping tartan mills in Scotland is the nature of the industry itself, with some tartan brands using manufacturers to weave their cloth (such as House of Edgar and Isle Mill both using McNortons Holdings Ltd mill in Keith). Most mills are located in the Scottish Borders.

FIGURE 5: Map of Scotland's tartan mills (Researchers own, 2022).

2.4 Romantic Inventions of Tartan

To understand narratives of tartan, it is important to understand the historical context of tartan, which is often referenced in the present, as justification for today's uses of tartan. Stories are bound up in all facets of heritage, whether that is in the considered intangible value of heritage (Smith, 2006) or the ways in which heritage is presented to an audience. Tartan has been given an identity that is rooted within the Scottish symbols of identity (Faiers 2021), yet this loaded fabric is one laced in uncertainty (Brown, 2010). In many ways the larger Highland myth, developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, embodies much of what we understand about tartan today. However, Waine (2022) contests that Highland dress is entirely 'invented', and instead positions Highland narratives as reflective of a 'living tradition' which has adapted over time to reflect different socio-political contexts.

In 2019, the National Museum of Scotland hosted the exhibition Wild and Majestic: Romantic Visions of Scotland. Dr Patrick Watt, the exhibition curator, described the context of the exhibition stating:

> *"This is a contested, complex history, and also a fascinating one. There are competing claims, still, over the extent to which those symbols of Scotland we see today are* ***romantic inventions****, or authentic expressions of an ancient cultural identity."* (National Museum of Scotland [online], 2019, bold added for emphasis).

While tartan today is firmly linked to identity, it has not always been this way. Tartan design evolved in the late 18th and early 19th century as something reactionary and reflective of trends and tastes, with the design of tartan fluidly revolving around consumer demand (Waine, 2022).

The blurred lines between fact and fiction demonstrate how the intangible values of tartan have become ingrained with invented traditions (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983). Tartan has been used as a tool for political narratives, both historical and in the present day, with the historical rewritings of tartan's history becoming unquestioned narratives in the present day (Nicholson 2005). The myths that surround tartan, like the antiquity of Clan tartan (Trevor-Roper 1983, Nicholson 2005), have become so prevalent that questioning them can conflict with people's perception of Scottish identity (Brown, 2010).

2.5 Pop Culture of Tartan

Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) describe how many of the heritage beliefs that are often considered as authentic are in fact often social constructs loosely held together by emotive responses for greater political and cultural gain. Narratives of living heritages can morph and operate within a whole variety of cultural contexts (Crooke, 2010). Tartan equally holds emotional value for the people who encounter it, with it being used throughout history and equally in today's popular culture to symbolise a sense of Scottish identity.

However, tartans symbolism as Scottish has, arguably, ventured into the stereotypical. In a research study,

Marella-Hood (2019) explored Scottish fashion Instagram influencers' perceptions of Scottish identity. Marella-Hood found that many of the participants distinguished tartan as a symbol of Scotland but not as a reflection of modern-day Scottish style.

The idea that heritage needs to embody authenticity has led to a shift in how heritage is curated in a way that not only presents past narratives, but encourages heritage to be an experience (Harrison, 2013). In the case of tartan, this is often a deeply emotional experience. Bryman (2004) charts the shift towards the 'Disneyfication' of heritage, where the material embodiments of heritage are narrated in a way that is often devoid of their history and function, but instead portray idealised narratives. Furthermore, as Zumkhawla- Cook (2008) argues, the Highland myth has been upheld by the white-middle classes (mainly American) to promote an imagined fantasy of Scotland detached from reality.

Film and TV that depict historical Scottish events often use tartan as a cue to embody Scottishness and a sense of nationalism, often inaccurately (Faiers ,2021). An example of this is the inaccurate depiction of Scottish history in the 1995 film Braveheart (Figure 6) (Faiers, 2021, Brown, 2010). A more recent example is the TV series Outlander (2014), which merchandises tartan in the National Trusts for Scotland's Culloden Battlefield gift shop (see Figure 7).

The 'Braveheart effect' has extended to people's perceptions of Scottishness, particularly among members of the Scottish diaspora who reside in the United States (Brown, 2010). Further, the Scottish tourism industry is largely catered towards people tracing their Scottish roots, which can reinforce nationalist beliefs (Bhandari, 2016). Tartan, as a symbol of Scottishness, is positioned as representative of authentic Scottish identity, which has (as illustrated below) afforded lucrative opportunities for commercial gain (Chhabra et al, 2003; Shone-Nichols and Sanders, 2020).

FIGURE 6 - Still taken from Braveheart depicting William Wallace in tartan and English Soldiers. Braveheart, Paramount

FIGURE 7: National Trust for Scotland's Culloden Battlefield giftshop, depicting Outlander merchandise, TripAdvisor (2017).

2.6 Tartan and Clothing

Tartan is often synonymous with Highland wear, and perhaps most famously the kilt. Reid (2013) compares the trajectory of Scottish dress to other nations 'folk dress', from its origin as practical garments for working people, to the present day where Highland dress is more commonly worn for special occasions. Highland dress itself has a complex and contested history (Faires, 2021; Trevor-Roper, 1983). Much of what we know as Highland dress today was originated by the upper-class of London's Highland Society, which was established in 1778, thirty-years post-Jacobite uprising (Wicholson, 2005). The kilt has gone through a transformation from its origins in the Highlands as the 'great-plaid' (see Figure 8), which was essentially a large rectangular cloth held together with a belt. Today, kilts are more commonly made by a process of sewing-down pleats (see Figure 9). Loranger and Sanders differentiate the kilt as separate from apparel design, instead describing it as 'traditional indigenous knowledge' (2021: page 474), because it is a craft taught through passing on knowledge.

Tartan has also been adopted within other clothing contexts and subcultures, famously being worn by punks in the 1970s, popularised by fashion designer Vivienne Westwood. Fashion designer, Alexander McQueen also used 'McQueen' clan tartan in his collections, which reference The Highlands history: notably Highland Rape (A/W 95/96, see Figure 11), inspired by the Highland Clearances; and Widows of Culloden (A/W 06/07, see Figure 12), inspired by the Jacobite uprising of 1745. . McQueen described his motivations for the Highland Rape

FIGURE 8: Illustration of Highland Soldiers in the 'great kilt' circa 1775-76, National Galleries of Scotland.

FIGURE 9: Man wearing a Modern 'Small-Kilt', Tie the knot Scotland (2020). Tartan has also been adopted within other

collection and the appropriation of Scottish clothing:

> *"[Highland Rape collection] was a shout against English designers… doing flamboyant Scottish clothes. My father's family originates from the Isle of Skye, and I'd studied the history of the Scottish upheavals and the Clearances".* (McQueen, Time out, 1997, cited in Savage Beauty, MET, 2011).

Similarly to McQueen, Scottish fashion designer Charles Jeffrey's brand LOVERBOY developed a custom tartan, which is used as a symbol of the brand's identity while also being a personal reflection of the designer's heritage (Figure 13). These more contemporary examples illustrate how tartan has been used as a symbol of personal and brand identity, negotiating the associations to the fabric with brand image.

FIGURE 10: McQueen Tartan outfit from the Highland Rape Collection.

FIGURE 11: McQueen Tartan dress, from Widows of Culloden collection, Alexander McQueen, MET (2006).

FIGURE 12: Charles Jeffrey LOVERBOY Tartan outfit, Fall 2022 Collection, Vogue Runway (2022).

2.7 The emotional value of Heritage

Human connections to heritage are innately subjective. Exploring the emotional values of heritage can shed light on the upheld values and parameters which heritage is often understood in, and perhaps more poignantly we can begin to understand why heritage has the power to elicit emotional responses (Wetherwell et al, 2018).

Scottishness is often drawn on as a branding tool within the Scottish textile industry, embedding ideals into the emotional value of the fabric and perceptions of quality as outlined by Stewart:

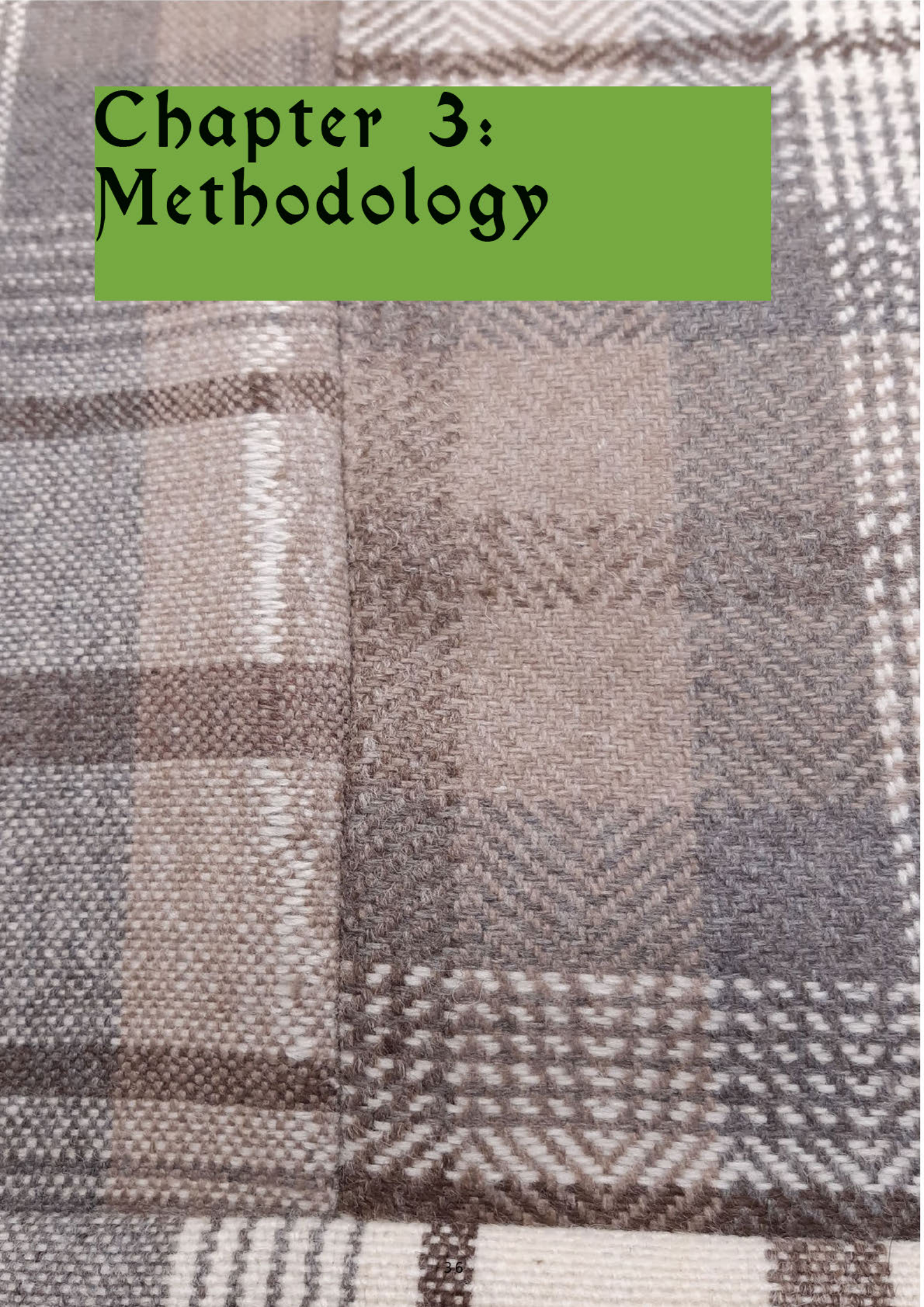
> *"Favourable Scottish associations (e.g. traditional, honest, authentic, landscape etc.) suited to the sector are repeatedly used to embed associations of quality and authenticity, thus building positive provenance"*. (Stewart, 2019, p12).

Tartan's relationship with Scottishness infuses it with perceived Scottish Values, further conveying its commercial value.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter I have outlined how tartan and heritage are deeply entwined, exploring the role heritage plays not only in the production of tartan, but also how it is presented culturally and understood emotionally. I situate my approach to tartan as not only a materially produced fabric, but one that is deeply entwined with 'Invented Traditions' (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983), or perhaps a better way to define it is romantic inventions (Watt, 2019). Either Way, the perceptions of tartan have the power to blur the lines between fact and fiction. In the Methodology Chapter, I will outline the relations between romantic invention and production, centrally positioning practitioners' perspectives as the principal component of the inquiry.

Chapter 3: Methodology



3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have explored the relationship between heritage and tartan, outlining the 'romantic inventions', which trace the parameters of how heritage can be understood concerning tartan. In this chapter, I outline how the research is aligned to a constructivist perspective, based on the value of how meanings are constructed without placing truth over myth, history over 'invented tradition'. Furthermore, the methodology outlines how using an embedded case study approach allows for a holistic view of tartan through a series of qualitative interviews.

3.2 Epistemology: Constructivism

This research inquiry is underpinned epistemologically by Constructivism, which presupposes that experience is socially constructed and needs to be understood in a cultural and historical context (Kim, 2001). Central to this idea is the concept of fluid meaning, a relationist perspective of there being no single truth rather multiple truths that pertain to different people. By acknowledging multiple 'truths', this research project will allow me to position tartan in the context of how it is perceived by individuals, pursuing ideas surrounding how tartan is understood in relation to perceived cultural values. Further, by positioning the historical contexts of tartan as inherited knowledge that pertains to Scottish culture, I can begin to build up a textural understanding of the various values placed on perceptions of tartan on a collective level (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Kim (2001) emphasises the importance of understanding the assumptions that underline the critical concepts of constructivism; I, in turn, have applied these assumptions specifically to tartan (see Figure 13). Through positioning these assumptions in relation to my research question and aims (Ritchie et al, 2014), I have used this to shape my subsequent research design. The research design is focused on exploring the relationship between perceptions of tartan and how this relates to the production and uses of tartan, with the understanding that it is the human relationship between tartan and meaning that gives it its socio-cultural currency. I have also explored my own assumptions and reflections that have been formed through my engagement with tartan in the Give Back Credit (GBC) residency, which informed the embedded case study lenses, outlined in section 3.5.

Continues on Next Page

Kim's (2001) Assumptions of Social Constructivism	Researchers Assumptions of Tartan
"For the Social constructivist, reality cannot be discovered: it does not exist prior to social invention". Page 3	Tartan's meanings are socially constructed.
"Individuals create meanings through their interaction with each other and the environment ". Page 3	Understandings of tartan may differ based on geographical location and individual experience.
"Social constructivists view learnings as a social process. It does not take place only within an individual […] Meaning learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities". Page 3	Meanings are learned on a community level.

FIGURE 13-Table of Assumptions based on Kim's assumptions of Constructivism (Authors

3.3 Recruitment

Yin (2009; 2018) writes about planning as part of Case Study research, emphasising the importance of accessing the viability and richness of the context. My contextual understanding of the research has been shaped by my experiences with tartan, specifically from working as a resident fashion designer for the GBC project. These insights from my professional life have given me access to a context of tartan in spheres of heritage and production and built rapport with a range of people involved in the sector. Kumar (2014) emphasises the importance of building rapport with participants in communities before collecting information about them. By using my professional network to recruit for the project, I have an existing rapport with many of the participants and an understanding of their workplace roles and practices.

The decision was made to recruit participants from professional backgrounds relating to two categories: i) Production of Tartan and ii) People who use Tartan. I made this decision because they have expert knowledge that will add richness and depth to the insights of the project (Gillham, 2000). There were seven participants recruited for the project, and the small sample size is reflective of the single case methodology (Malterud et al, 2016), which values in-depth insights.

3.4 Case Study

I have chosen to conduct a single case study as it allows me to gain not only in-depth and detailed insights into how tartan is used but also a more holistic

understanding of the intricacies of the perceptions of tartan in Scottish society (Tight, 2017). Further, because the boundaries between the phenomena and context of tartan are deeply entwined, this approach affords an inquiry into the real-world nature of tartan and its various facets, which can be understood in relation to one another (Yin, 2018, Yin, 2012).

Studying tartan holistically through a single case study and developing qualitative data enabled me to create an overall narrative of tartan (Savmiki, 2018; Kumar, 2014). The qualitative nature of the inquiry built in-depth relationship between tartan and perception without limitations of linearity (Kumar, 2014); that is, understanding tartan from multiple perspectives pertaining to both past and present.

I had considered conducting multiple case studies within one research design to gain deeper, more comparable data sets (Yin, 2009, Yin, 2018; Savmiki, 2018; Gillham, 2000). However, the nature of tartan, with its complex history, which blurs fact and fiction and its precarious position as a fabric loaded with symbolic meaning (Trevor-Roper 1982, Fairers 2022), lends itself to a singular case study due to its unusual nature (Yin, 2018). Whilst my design practice was harnessed in the research, it is not participatory, nor is it action research based. Instead, this research aims to give an overall contextual view of perceptions of tartan and how this can influence the uses of tartan - a precursor to possible impact-based research in the future.

The case study pertains to how tartan is culturally understood through three lenses: i) Heritage of Tartan, ii) Material and Making of Tartan, iii) People who use Tartan. These lenses have been chosen as, when combined, they create a holistic yet focused overview of the relationship between perceptions of tartan and how it is made and used (Yin, 2018).

The selection of these lenses sprang from my engagement with the creation of the GBC collection, which was informed by tartan and the negation of how heritage informed the making process. The GBC collection played a key role in developing my approach in the inquiry, and subsequent engagement with the Scope of Context, which further shaped the lenses. Unpicking and synthesising the themes through analysis (see section 3.7), rather than seeing them as separate entities, allowed me to explore and understand the interrelationship between each theme. While participants have been chosen because of their professional practice, (i.e., a fashion designer), this does not mean their insights necessarily pertain to only one theme. Further, considering my practice as parallel to these themes supported my understanding of the textual relationship between the embedded themes within my own work. In the next three sub sections, I will unpack each lens in more detail.

Lens 1: Heritage

Sarvimaki (2018) describes how historical context can have implications for the present; in other words, while tartan's history may have started long ago, its historical narratives influence current perceptions, narratives and interpretations. I position tartan's heritage,

, not as homage to the past, but as an act of 'living heritage', exploring how tartan's heritage is assembled in the present day (Smith, 2006, Harrison et al 2020). Specifically, I explore how tartans heritage is connected to identity in relation to Clan tartans, family connections and storytelling, as a basis to explore the other lenses of how tartan is made and used.

Lens 2: Materiality and Making of Tartan

This lens explores both the production of tartan and the design of tartan; it is an exploration of the people who make tartan, and the community which surrounds its production. Further, I position this lens as delving into how the production of tartan relates to provenance, social impact, and relationships to machinery. This lens primarily focused on engagements with two different mills, Prickly Thistle Mill and Lochcarron of Scotland. Both tartan mills operate on different scales of production and in different regions, giving a broader insight into the current state of the tartan sector.

Lens 3: People who use Tartan

The third lens centres on the varied nature of the people who use tartan. Equally, people who use tartan to make garments may not associate with the term fashion designer. There are diverse types of knowledges that pertain to the uses of tartan. For example, Loranger and Sanders (2021) describe how kiltmaking employs traditional indigenous knowledge, differentiating it to apparel design in both processes but also how kiltmakers define themselves. Similarly, Prickly Thistle Mill (2022) describe the products they make as not part of fashion but instead 'clothes' because of the unsustainable and elitist connotations of the fashion industry.

3.5 Methods

3.5.1 Semi—Structured Interviews

The design of the Case Study follows a process of unpicking knowledge, gathering the data, and seeing how the insights pertain to one another. Central to the research was semi-structured interviews (Kallio et al, 2016, Kim, 2015), with many participants having a prior rapport with myself. In my role as an interviewer, I did not just receive information but appreciated the participants' perspectives and formed relationships where the participant is valued (Harrison, 2013) by approaching the interviews from the standpoint of flexibility and open-mindedness (Kim, 2015). Because the participants have a vested interest in the tartan industry due to their professional practice and their specialist knowledge, this shaped how I approached the interviews. By appreciating that the participants have a wider knowledge in their fields than I do, the semi-structured interviews offered participants the chance to guide me towards information they felt was relevant (Gillham, 2000). The interviews were then systematically analysed using thematic analysis (see section 3.7).

The interviews took place over both remotely (using Zoom) and in-person between May to August 2022. Each interview began by asking the participants to describe their practice and/ or role, and from there I catered questions to what the participants had said. The questions broadly related to how they approach design, changes in production methods, and their emotional attachments to tartan

(see Appendix 8.3 for the topic guide).

3.5.2 Role of Practice and Portfolio

In this inquiry, I have also drawn on my own fashion practice to develop complementary insights into uses of tartan, documenting the practice of making a six-piece tartan collection for the GBC project in the portfolio. Here I have explored the initial conception of the collection in the form of the residency sketchbook work and subsequent development work of the collection. Reflecting on my own engagement with tartan through practice enabled me to further consider how my practice holds similarities and differences with other practitioners in the case study.

The portfolio has been designed in two parts, portfolio A and portfolio B, and they are situated to be read at the start and end of the case-study, as outlined in the Presentation of Submission statement. Portfolio A gives insights into my practice using tartan and how I developed the collection from research, design, toiling and making.

Portfolio B has been designed to be read at the end of the case study; it features a fashion film using the finished GBC collection. I position the film as the culmination of my insights from both the making of the collection but also engagement with literature surrounding tartan in the Scope of Context.

3.6 Analysis

To analyse the data from the interviews and the portfolio of work produced, I employed thematic analysis (TA), combined with mind-mapping techniques to visually represent the data. Ling-Yuan (2019) outlines how TA lends itself well to practice-based research to bridge the different realms of knowledge, practice and research. Because of TA's flexibility (Braun and Clark 2006; 2013), it is easily integrated with the interdependent nature of the case study lenses.

Each interview was transcribed using Otter.ai software, which I then reviewed to check for accuracy. I printed out the transcripts, and through a second reading, began to highlight emergent themes and generate initial codes (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Finally, I created mind maps of each individual interview and its emerging themes using the software Miro (See Figure 15). Meirer (2007) describes how mind maps can work well with thematic analysis stating:

> *"[…] mind-maps afford a great level of flexibility when thematically analysing qualitative data, as they are rapidly drawn and revised - particularly useful for the iterative processes of qualitative analysis"* (Meirer, 2007, p9).

From these mind maps of entail codes, I further analysed the data and refined the themes and then began synthesising and colour-coding themes across the data sets. These themes were then narrowed down, which led to a set of final insights set out in chapter 5.

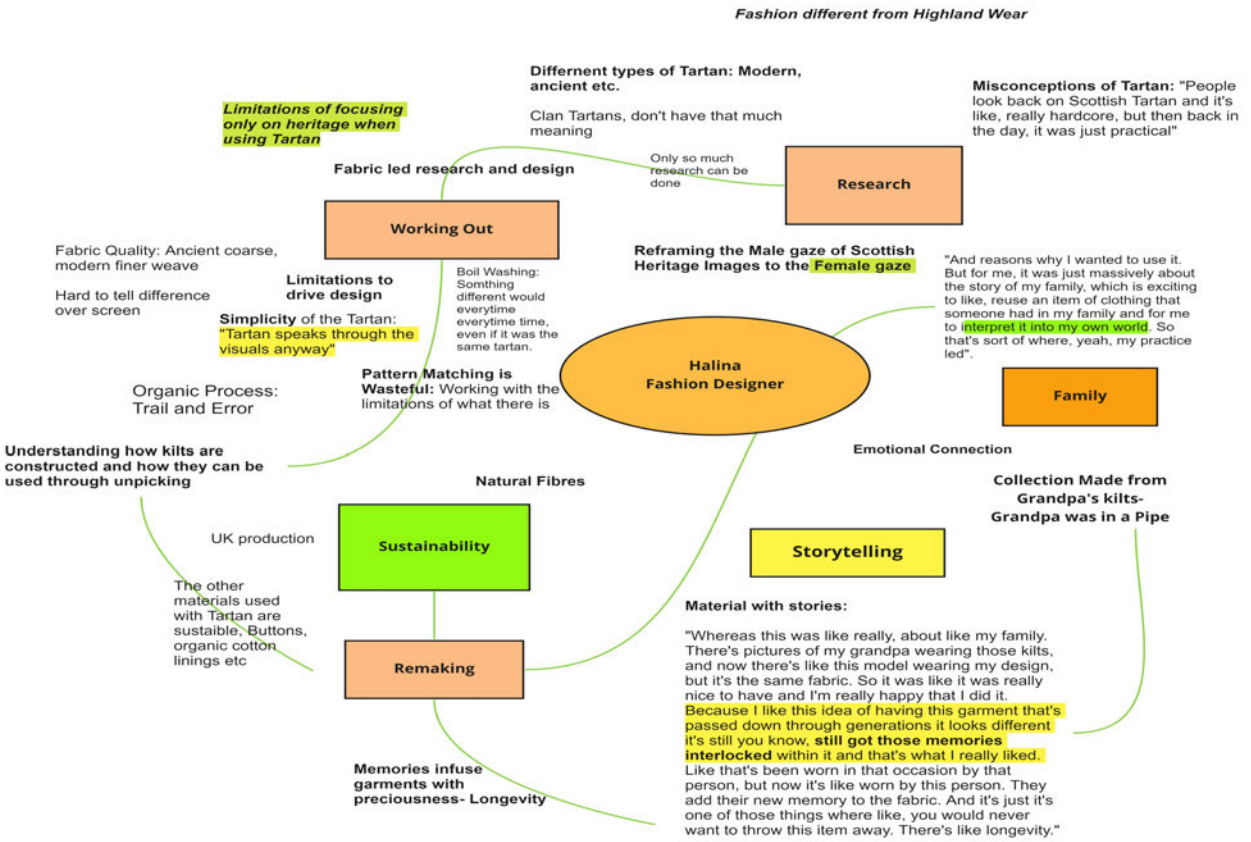


FIGURE 15: Interview map depicting emergent interview insights (Authors own, 2022).

3.7 Feedback

To sense check the insights from the inquiry, participants were given the chance to review the thematic maps, transcripts, and the video created as part of the portfolio. Because of the visual nature of the maps, this offered participants the opportunity to consider how I interpreted their insights (Meirer, 2007). The video offered the participants the chance to review my interpretation of tartan, giving them the opportunity to look at the insights from a new perspective (Gillham, 2000).

3.8 Ethics

This inquiry went through an enhanced ethical review because of the nature of the in-person engagements post Covid-19. I used a hybrid approach to conduct interviews, over both Zoom and in person. In some cases, the decision to speak to people in person was made because of my previous interactions with staff at Prickly Thistle Mill and their reservations about digital methods of communication. All engagements took place at the participants' places of work. Written informed consent was sought (see Appendix 8.1 and 8.2 for an example consent form and information sheet), as well as taking verbal consent again prior to each interview. The interviews were recorded using the Zoom record function or a Dictaphone. Once transcribed, the participants were given the option to redact any information. The participants

were given the option to redact any information. The participants were also given the option to either remain anonymous or not. The rationale for offering the option to be anonymised stemmed from the participants' professional background and in some cases, brand identities, which are closely interlinked to their practices and industry.

3.9 Summary

In summary, this inquiry followed a case study approach using semi-structured interviews to construct qualitative data. Complementary to this was the role of my own creative practice. I drew on thematic analysis, combined with thematic mapping, to develop key themes to address the research question, which is discussed in Chapter 5. In the next chapter, I present the case study through the lenses of Heritage; Materiality and Making; and People who use Tartan.

Chapter 4: Case Study

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, following the framework set out in the methodology, I chart the phases of the case study and how these were implemented in the field, in conjunction with exploring my practice as part of the Give Back Credit Project (GBC). This case study charts how tartan is culturally understood through the lenses of the Heritage of Tartan, Materiality and Making of Tartan, and People who use Tartan.

I have designed the portfolio in two parts; Part A engages with the research and design process of the GBC collection, and Part B documents the fashion film. Readers should engage with Part A before reading the rest of the Case Study chapter, and Part B should be engaged with at the end of this chapter. I have indicated in the text when to read them.

Read Portfolio A

4.2 Participants

Figure 15 charts the participants, their careers, and how they relate to one another. I have designed the figure to be referred to throughout the chapter. The roots of the tree are the Scope of Context and GBC residency, which shaped the selection of the participants. I also place my practice for the GBC project (Part A of the portfolio) in the tree, as it is a facet of the case study, which should be viewed in relation to the other participants and not as a reflection of my engagement with the fieldwork.

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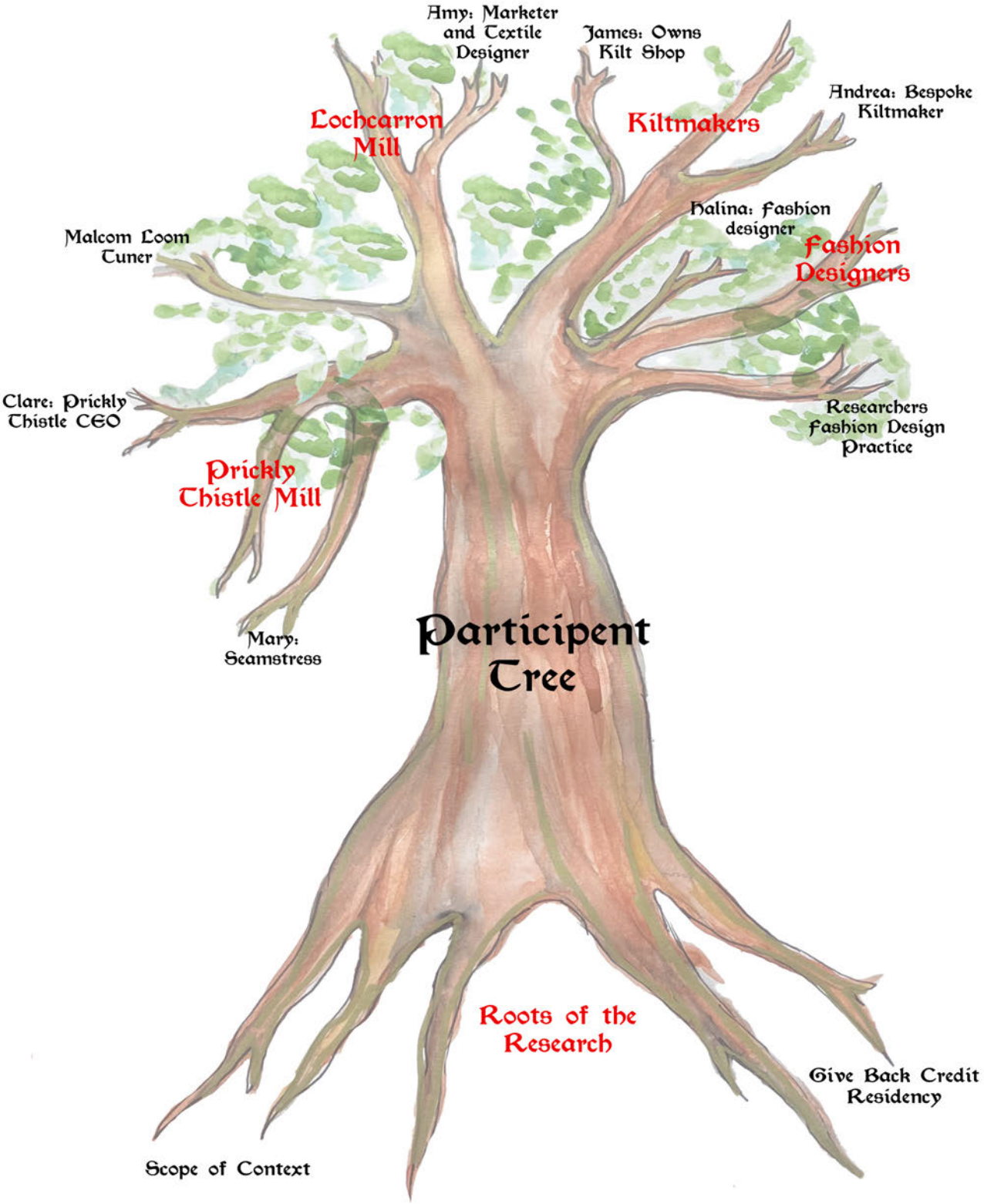

FIGURE 15: Tree of participants (Researcher own, 2022).

4.3 Heritage of Tartan

For this lens of the inquiry, I explore how the participants situated ideas of 'living heritage' in their practice and within the wider tartan sector, highlighting the ways this connects historical narratives to the present day.

4.3.1 Tartans associations

Tartan's cultural values were discussed across various interviews, with an awareness of what tartan stands for concerning Scottishness. James, who runs a family kilt-making shop, described the inherent ability to recognise Highland dress as Scottish:

> James: *"…The good thing about kilts and Highland wear, is it's a unique product. Anybody wearing a kilt anywhere in the world, folk know they are Scottish."*

Similarly, an awareness of how tartan is perceived, in terms of Scottishness and its subsequent values and connections to people, was further expressed by Clare, CEO of Prickly Thistle Mill, who described that tartan in the Highlands region has symbolic meaning:

> Clare: *"I think tartan is very symbolic of the spirit of the people. And that was that you supported your local community, your local community supported you."*

In contrast, Andrea, a kiltmaker, described how she preferred to use different fabrics to tartan because of tartan's associations, stating:

> Andrea*: "Because I think Tweed is more historic and has a wider variant of designs […] So it has all the qualities of tartan with fewer associations with it".*

Halina North, a fashion designer, also described how it was tartan's heritage which inspired her research. However, she did explain that tartan's heritage associations, and the constraints of male-dominated Highland dress imagery created boundaries to her womenswear designs.

4.3.2 Clan Tartans

Participants referenced clan tartans and their associated rules. James spoke about the stagnation surrounding clan leaders:

> James: *"But some clan chiefs think, you know, McDonalds tartans has gotta be a McDonald, they can't be changed, but they have always had variations of colours, whether that be ancient, modern, hunting or dress tartans".*

Here, James explains how tartans have always been reinvented, with reinterpretations of tartan having a long history. However, there is pressure to maintain and preserve tartans designs and to not erode tartan traditions.

In contrast, Amy, a textile designer and marketer for Lochcarron of Scotland tartan mill, described how clan tartans are not copyrighted, so anyone can weave them. She further explained that to be a clan tartan, the fabric is defined by the sett not the colour:

> Amy: *"We can take a tartan that has been around for thousands of years, that might be looking a bit drab, and it's just been overused, and we can, just by changing*

the colours, let's say red and pink, it makes it more feminine".

An example of innovating clan tartan can be seen in variations of the Buchanan tartan from Lochcarron's range (see Figure 16- the Buchanan Modern tartan, and Figure 17 - the Buchanan Blue tartan). The only change is the colours; the sett remains the same. Amy described how "the possibilities are almost endless", in tartan design and how by changing a colour or line, a new tartan can be made.

4.3.3 Tartans Emotional Connections

Participants often shared similar sentiments about emotional connections to tartan, particularly surrounding themes of family and connection to other people. On a more personal level, kiltmaker Andrea and fashion designer Halina spoke about repurposing or upcycling their grandfathers' kilts, which are family heirlooms. Going on, Andrea, spoke about how she works with clients to make kilts, selecting fabrics based on stories and emotional connections:

> Andrea: *"...asking for your own Tartan that exists already, there would be a story of yours in relation to that cloth and relation to that garment. And relation to why you are making that garment in the first place".*

Halina similarly expressed the idea that tartan has a connection to storytelling, describing using her grandfather's kilts in terms of its power to interlocking new memories into the garments:

> Halina: *"I like this idea of having this garment that's passed down through generations, it looks different; it's still got those memories interlocked within it [...] They add their new memory to the fabric".*

Here, Halina describes that creating a new garment out of a sentimental one elevates the garment to something that embodies memories for future generations.

FIGURE 16: Buchanan Modern, Lochcarron of Scotland (2022).

FIGURE 17: Buchanan Blue, Lochcarron of Scotland (2022).

4.3.4 Reinterpreting Tartans Heritage

Participants described how they reference the past of tartan, particularly its past production in the present-day. James described the strong community around weaving, and the role the Weavers Guild held in supporting the community by placing a levy on unsatisfactory work. Building on this, in the present day, James explained how he believes a similar levy should be in place in the form of a tartan mark, like the Harris Tweed mark:

> James: *"A Levy put on every piece of Tartan, the levy would come into a pot, it would pay for protectionism, promotion and education".*

However, unlike Harris Tweed, which has clear geographical boundaries, James believes a tartan mark should be in place for the whole of the UK, not just Scotland, in reflection of the interconnectedness of the weaving industry in the UK. However, he did say there are some people within the tartan industry who had expressed that they believe it should be for only Scotland.

Likewise, Clare interpreted tartan's history into present-day values. She described the people who made and used tartan in Highland's region pre-Culloden, and how their histories weren't recorded. Clare went on to describe the values she feels the people of the Highlands historically embodied, and how these values can shape how tartan is made today through valuing: "functionality, kindness, equitability and being reciprocal." She also went onto further express how Prickly Thistle is connected to values:

> Clare: *"So we're very much bound of the values of tartan, and what that means, but doing it [in a way], for the future history and that's what we're making today".*

> By equating tartan's history to values, this emphasises the relationship between time and how these values can influence tartan production today, and for the future.

4.3.5 Summary

I have explored the heritage of tartan, specifically tartan as an aspect of living heritage, its deep entwinement with the past, and the perceptions of tartan's Scottishness in the present day, particularly its links to clan tartans and communities. Common across the interviews was a focus on how narratives of tartan uphold sentimental connections, with personalised connections being interpreted in the present day for the future. Furthermore, I have begun to outline how tartan's heritage can influence the making process, which I will explain further in the next section .

4.4 Materiality and Making of Tartan

This lens will outline the materiality and making of tartan, exploring the production of tartan, and its connection to provenance and design. In this section, I draw on my visit to Lochcarron of Scotland Mill in Selkirk and my experience working with Prickly Thistle Mill in Evanston, in the Highlands. I have compared both mills (see Figure 18), to emphasise the differences in scales of production, with both mills representing

Prickly Thistle Mill	Lochcarron Mill
Evanton: Highlands Region	Selkirk: Scottish Borders
Established 2018	Established 1947
Small scale production, small product range, in house production of garments	Large scale production, with in house dye facilities and in house production of garments
Fabric is not for sale by the metre, available as garments	Range of over 500 tartans, available by the metre and as accessories/furnishings
Only makes bespoke tartans, designed in house	Makes Clan tartans

FIGURE 18: table comparing Prickly Thistle Mill to Lochcarron of Scotlands Mill, (Authors Own, 2022)

4.4.1 Provenance

Through the previous lens, I began to outline how the historic textile sector in Scotland was deeply entwined with the broader communities surrounding tartan. Since then, the industry has drastically changed, with a turning point being industrialisation and the progression of technology. However, since World War II, the Scottish textile industry has declined in employment rates (Scott, 2022). Presently in the Highlands Council region, there is only one mill, Prickly Thistle Scotland. The Prickly Thistle website describes the province of weaving in the Highlands as:

> *"[…] We are the only tartan weaving mill in the Highland region of Scotland. Many say that this is the ancestral home for Tartan, so where else would be the most perfect place to weave your bespoke tartan."* (2022, online).

When asked about this connection to the Highlands, considering that industrial-scale tartan mills never existed in the Highlands region, Clare reflected on how tartan is connected to this context:

> Clare: *"… I realised we were the only mill and I thought well, how ironic is that when tartan is quite often referred to as Highland dress and how the provenance relates to Highland Games, Highland fling, you know, there's so much kind of romantic links…"*

Building on this, Clare described how the lack of weaving infrastructure in the North of Scotland is indicative of industrialisation being politically motivated to mainly benefit the central belt, and how the residual impact is still felt in the North's present-day economy. Similarly other tartan brands make claims of being deeply connected to tartan's heritage. Locharron's website claims to make over "500 authentic tartans" (2022,

, online, see Figure 19), however, it does not elaborate on what it is that makes them authentic. When I spoke to Amy, who works for Lochcarron, she described how Lochcarron is the world's "leading manufacturer of tartan'', and while Locharran is not the biggest manufacturer, it is well known for its use by high-end fashion brands. More broadly, Lochcarron's brand name, 'Lochcarron of Scotland', was further emphasised by Amy who expressed that it was important that Lochcarron lived up to its name, by trying to "…keep as much [production] as we can in Britain".

I will further expand on how both mills operate in the next section (4.4.3), considering the impact this has on people, and the relationship between machinery and motivations for production.

4.4.2 People and Machines

The role machinery plays in making tartan is deeply connected to people and their skills to operate the machinery. Malcolm,

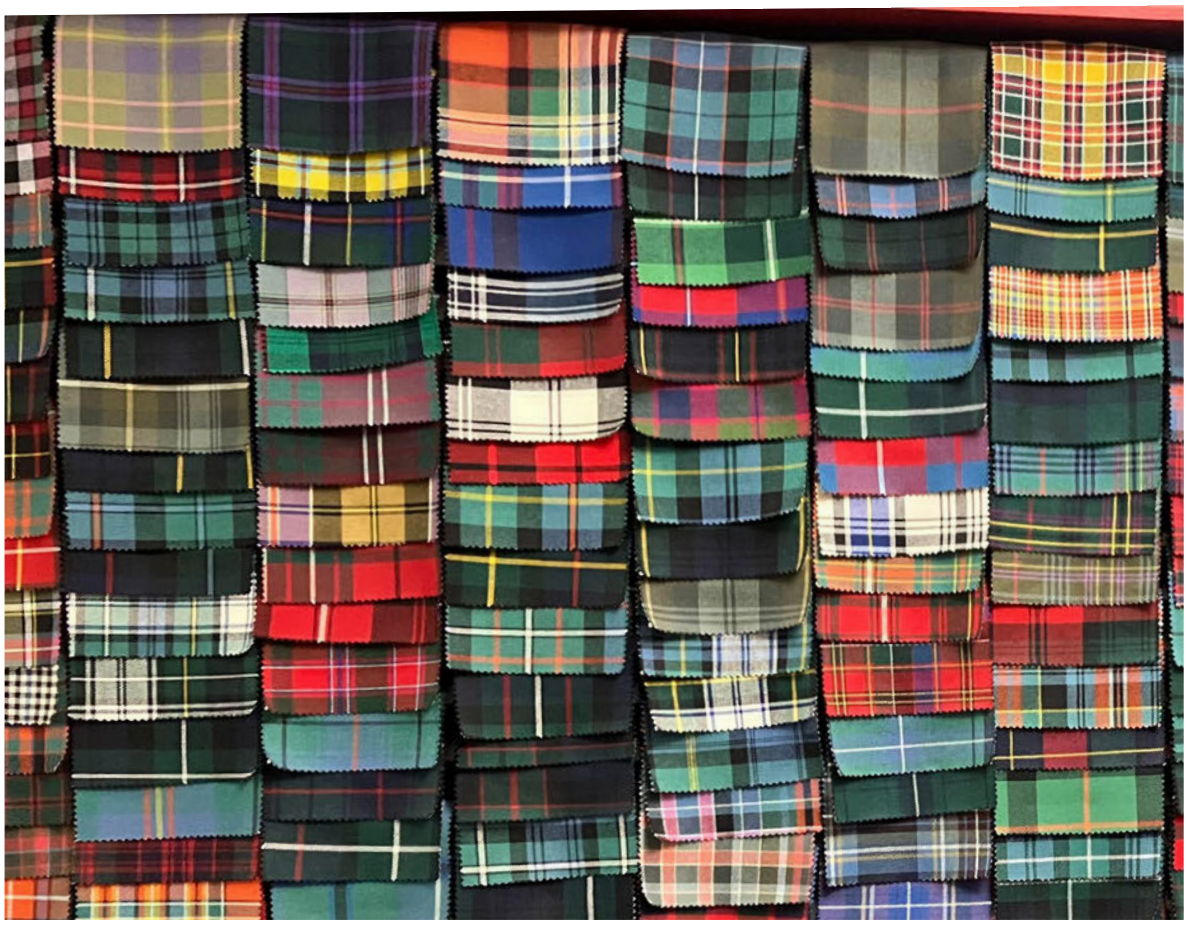

FIGURE 19: Lochcarron of Scotlands tartan range (Researchers own, 2022).

the loom tuner for Prickly Thistle, shared insights into his time in the textile industry, from the 1960s to the present-day. Prickly uses shuttle looms dating from the 1920s to 1960s, which are no longer industry standard. The looms needed extensive maintenance to get into running order; Malcolm described how he was one of the only people who could fix the looms because of his endangered knowledge:

> Malcolm: *"[I worked for] Hunters of Brora, I started there in 1980 and it closed in 2000. And that was the end of me as a tuner. There was no more. So, I did other things […] And then Clare [found me and] said that she 'unearthed' me. She found me. And I was at that time, the only tuner for hundreds of miles".*

Malcolm described his job as ensuring everything was correct before the conventional loom gets handed over to the weaver. He also expressed his position as "not to worry what it looks like". However, he did say he preferred shuttle looms over rapier looms because of their 'almost handmade' quality. Similarly, when asked if weaving tartan was more complicated than other fabrics, he stated "it's all just the same". When speaking to other participants, the differentiation between tartan and other fabric types was not always clear, and a distinction between tartan and the wider textile industry was often not made.
When I toured Lochcarron Mill, the scale of production was much larger than at Prickly Thistle Mill; with the looms and the staff to loom ratio as the main differences. In Prickly Thistle, because of the nature of the shuttle looms, a weaver has to be watching the loom at all times. Lochcarron, however, only had one member of staff looking over all the rapier looms (see Figure 20), which operate on a lights-based system for when a loom needed human intervention.

I asked Clare about why Prickly Thistle still uses shuttle looms and she described how it reflected tartan's values to use machinery which employees more people:

> Clare: *"We've got a really high ratio of people to number of metres we produce, higher than anybody else, but it's something we're very proud of, because I think that's how you get a fairer distribution of wealth in a society going forward".*

Clare also went on to describe how she feels that 'fundamentally tartan is more symbolic of people than machines.' This is clearly reflected in how Prickly Thistle makes their fabric.

4.4.3 Tartan Designing

Prickly Thistle weaves tartans in different styles. Mary, a seamstress at Prickly Thistle, described how they often broke expectations - both in terms of weave style but also fabric weight - diverging from traditional twills. Furthermore, Prickly Thistle offers bespoke runs of tartans. For example, Figure 21 depicts a bespoke tartan made for Alan Cummings and Miriam Margoyles; the thread count and colours have been chosen because of their symbolism. The fabric also has a hidden message in its weave, which is a Prickly Thistle signature trait (see Figure 22). Clare described how often the conventions of tartan design lack innovation because of self-imposed rules outside of the 2008 tartan registers act, often relating to

FIGURE 20: Lochcarron of Scotlands rapier looms (Researchers own, 2022).

symmetry and weave type. Clare also expressed that she believes tartan design shouldn't reference romantic notions of the past.

In contrast, when speaking to Amy from Lochcarron about the tartan design process, she described how they create a story around the fabric, that it's as much about the marketing of the fabric as the design, and being enterprising in reflecting wider society in design. An example of this can be seen in Lochcarron's Princess Diana tartan (see Figure 23). Amy described the design process :

> Amy: *"...you do take from what's around you, and you do build a story on that. I guess you sort of have to think, what do people want, and if you do have a really nice story that sort of has that, like emotional connection will like the customer will relate to it".*

In addition, she described that Lochcarron primarily produces tartan in twill or plain weaves, because they are more longwearing.

4.4.4 Summary

I have explored the intersection between people and the making of tartan, and how the infrastructure of the wider industry affects people, as well as design. In addition, I have explored the designing of tartan, considering the conventions of tartan weaving and the bespoke market.

FIGURE 21: Aliam tartan, Bespoke tartan made for Miriam Margoyles and Alan Cumings. Prickly Thistle (2021).

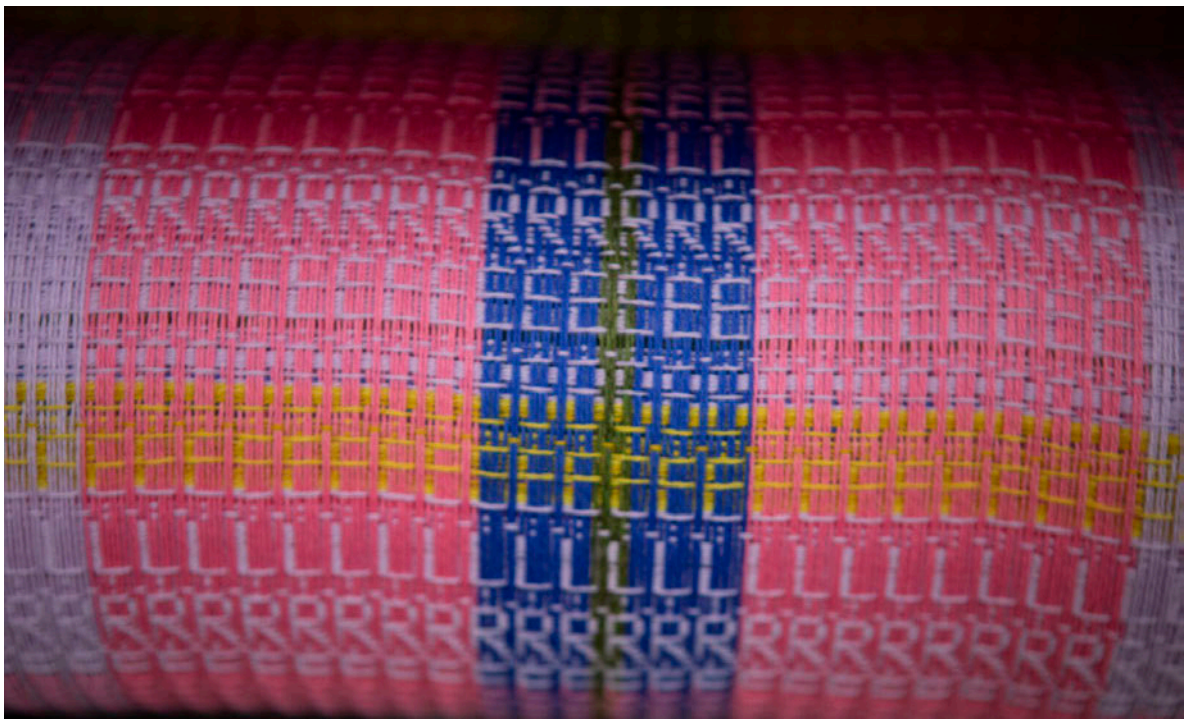

FIGURE 22: Close up of Aliam tartan, depicting the word 'rebel'. Prickly Thistle (2021).

FIGURE 23: Lochcarron of Scotland's gift shop, Princess Diana Tartan scarfs (Researchers own, 2022).

4.5 Lens 3: People who use Tartan

In this lens, I consider people who use tartan, positioning practitioners' outlooks centrally in terms of motivations, and designing, making, and using tartan. I will also consider my fashion practice and the processes I undertook to make the GBC collection, as documented in Portfolio A, while considering how this compares to other practitioners who use tartan. This lens is not confined to fashion and extends to all garment makers; kiltmaker Andrea differentiates her practice from fashion, and Prickly Thistle similarly defines their products as clothes not fashion.

4.5.1 Working Out

In my practice, tartan was the starting point for design, both in terms of the research of heritage. I explored how the qualities of tartan can be interpreted in design, particularly how the pattern of tartan could be distorted through design. An example of this can be seen in the pleating used in Figure 24. This process was developed through trial and error, testing the technique out in calico and then in a tartan of the same weight as the custom tartan for the collection.

Andrea Chapelle shared similar insights into interpretation of tartan driving the making process, describing the craft of kiltmaking using tartan as:

> Andrea: "*[Tartan] it has its own signature, you know, you are trying to respect the cloth in the way that you're building […] you're matching the stripes, you are interpreting the colourways in a sort of quite regimented way usually".*

Participants with contemporary design practices shared commonalities in design insights surrounding dynamic methods of making, which considers the qualities of the fabric in the process of making and organic design choices. Mary described how instead of design at Prickly Thistle, they approach making as working out:

> Mary: *"We don't really design things, it's more about working out. It's more about problem solving, of 'right, how are we going to make this without any waste and without using hardware'".*

Prickly Thistle exclusively makes zero-waste garments using techniques that involve folding and stitching fabric to make 3D shapes (see Figure 25), opposed to traditional pattern cutting that involves cutting into the fabric. Rissanen and Mcquillan (2016) propose zero-waste as a method to reduce textile waste to combat the current climate crisis. Mary described how limitations of zero-waste making have made her reconsider her own relationship to waste. Clare also described how, by using zero-waste, Prickly Thistle was referencing the past of tartan because the great kilt would have been zero waste:

> Clare: *"The kilt was zero waste, the modern kilt today is not zero waste […] We're more historically connected than most people think, they think we're modern, edgy, look at the shapes and all this kind of stuff […] but the zero-waste principle was there".*

4.5.2 Repurposing

Similar sentiments of 'working out' were shared by Halina North, who described her process as trial and error, working out what she could make out of her grandfather's inherited kilts, with

FIGURE 24: Tartan pleat detail, GBC collection. (Researchers own, 2022).

FIGURE 25: Zero-waste tartan hoodie. Prickly Thistle (2022).

the limitations of the quantity of fabric creating boundaries for her process. She described how, by unpicking the kilts, she gained insight into how they were made, such as the amount of fabric that went into the kilts, but also the amount of fabric cut out for the pleats (Figure 26). She also spoke about a process of manipulating the tartan fabric she had through the unpredictable process of boil washing (Figure 27). She described how the process of boil washing differed for each garment she made and changed depending on whether the tartan was a coarser Ancient Tartan or Modern Tartan.

Andrea also uses repurposed garments in her practice, along with deadstock and vintage fabrics, describing it as remaking (see Figure 28), both to be sustainable but also to create narratives:

> Andrea: *"It goes back to sourcing [fabric] that already exists, it's old. Ideally, it's always something that got a story to it".*

For the final garment I made for the GBC collection, the quilted jacket (see Figure 29), I considered repurposing in the design process. I made the jacket out of remnants of fabric leftover from the other garments; the outer layer is leftover tartan, and the lining is made from naturally dyed patchworked calico from the toiling process. Using what materials I had, not designing to set amounts, shaped how the garment was made.

4.5.3 Summary

In this lens, I have considered how people who make garments use tartan and how tartan's qualities influence the making process. Similarly, I have considered how tartan can be used sustainable through zero-waste methods and repurposing of fabric, and why tartan as a fabric lends itself to sustainability.

Read Portfolio B and Watch film

4.6 Case—Study Summary

In this case study, I examined tartan's connections to people, in terms of heritage, how tartan is made, and who uses tartan. Connecting these processes is people and how they interpreted tartan. Furthermore, I have considered tartan's living heritage and how tartan is understood in the present day. Storytelling was a prevailing theme throughout the lenses, how tartan is interpreted and reinterpreted to portray narratives, and how these narratives can be used for enterprising commodification of emotions or harnessed to communicate values.

FIGURE 26: unpicked kilt, depicted the 'cut out' pleats, which are cut out to reduce bulk. Paul Henry Kilts (2017).

FIGURE 27: Halina North Boil washed Jacket (Halina North, 2022).

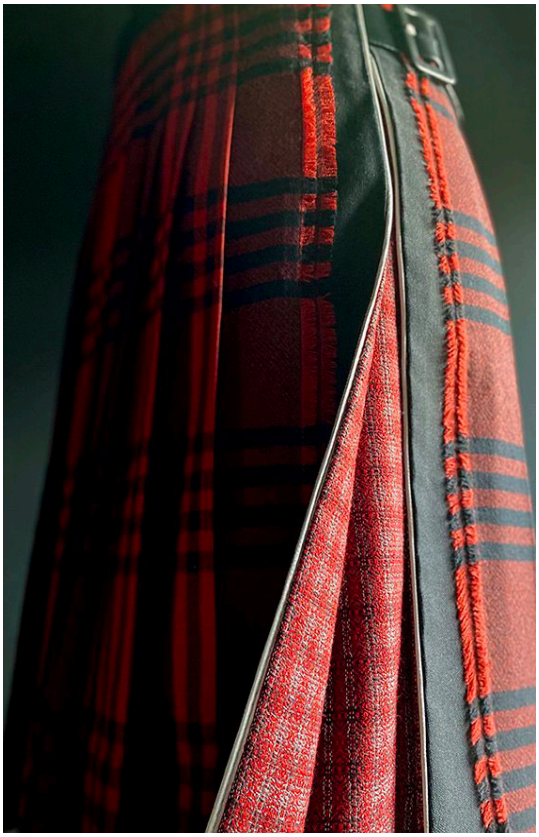

FIGURE 28: IV36: The Arnold kilt, made from a wool cape and skirt. ACME Atelier (2022).

FIGURE 29: Quilted jacket made for GBC collection, used from fabric remnants and naturally dyed, patchworked lining (2022).

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss how I analysed the interview data and how the data from the case study has been developed into a set of themes. To address the research question, I discuss my findings and frame them in relation to the tartan narratives. I will expand on critical insights into tartan's associated stories, how these shaped the ways participants made and used tartan, and how tartan, as a living heritage, can shape how meanings can be attached to the fabric.

I will firstly discuss analysis and the I will then outline themes that emerged, to answer the following research question:

> Main Question: How can narratives of tartan inform how practitioners make and use tartan?

5.2 Analysis

To analyse the interviews, I employed thematic analysis (see section 3.7) to generate an initial set of codes for the interviews (see appendix 8.3). Following this, I mapped the key quotes for each interview using Miro software. By placing the interviews next to each other, I was able to work across the data to develop themes from initial codes and identify commonalities. I then colour-coded the broader themes that began to emerge: i) production ii) sustainability iii) storytelling/narrative iiii) emotions iv) design process (see Figure 30). By visually mapping the data, I could holistically see how key themes from the interviews emerged in relation to one another.

Reflecting on this process, the data did not always fit neatly into one theme. I used connecting lines to highlight cross-cutting themes. From these, I began developing more nuanced sub themes surrounding the assembling of narratives and how this broadly related to all lenses of the case study (Heritage, Materiality and Making, and People who use Tartan).

As set out in Chapter 3, the themes have been assembled from a constructivist positioning; that is, the themes have been developed from understanding individual interpretations of tartan and how these contribute to the construction of collective interpretations of tartan. By placing emphasis on how narratives of tartan are understood by practitioners, I related the themes back to these broader collective narratives.

Before I set out the themes and present the findings through discussion, I will describe a final stage in the analysis process, which I undertook with the participants for the purposes of feedback and validation.

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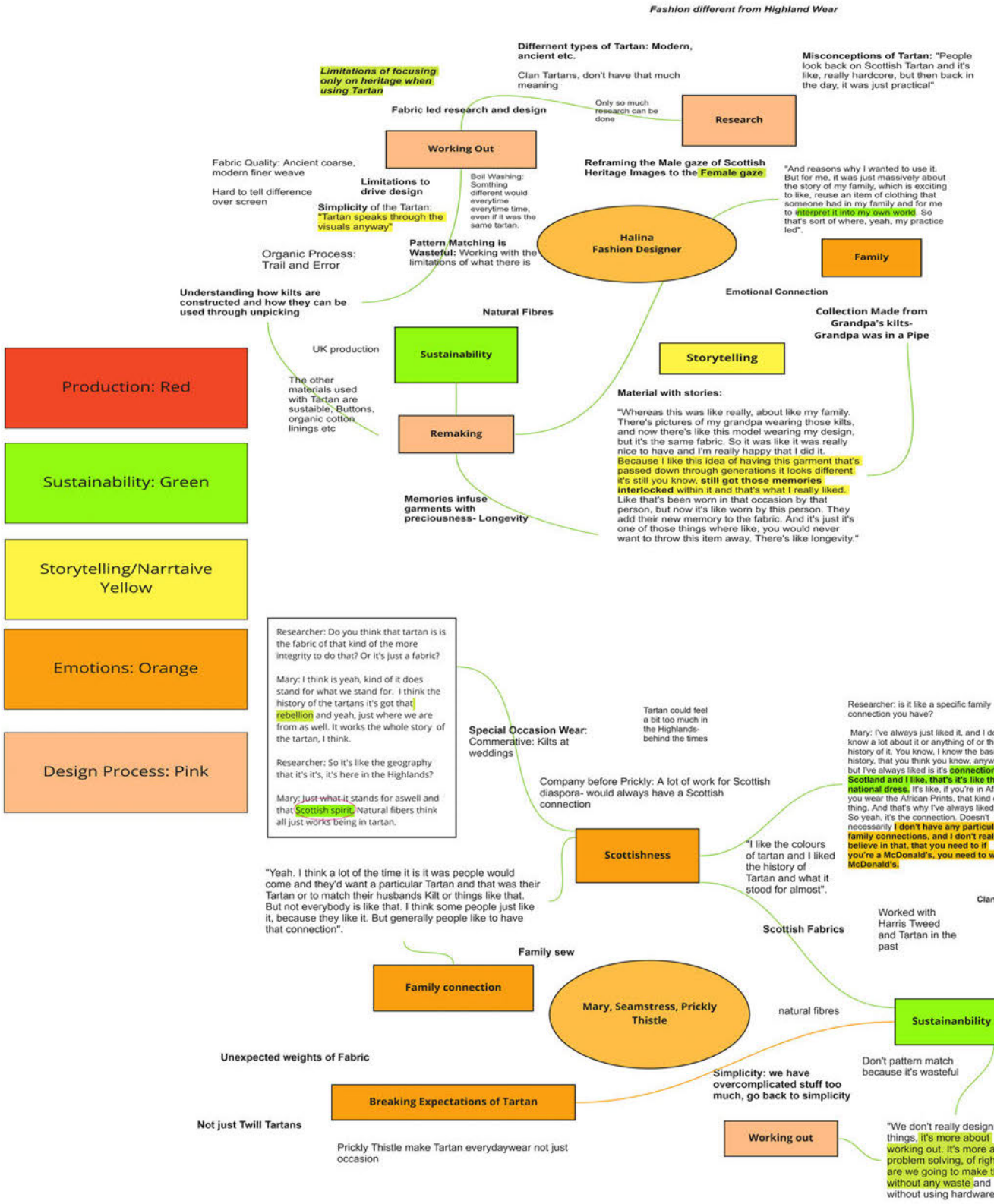
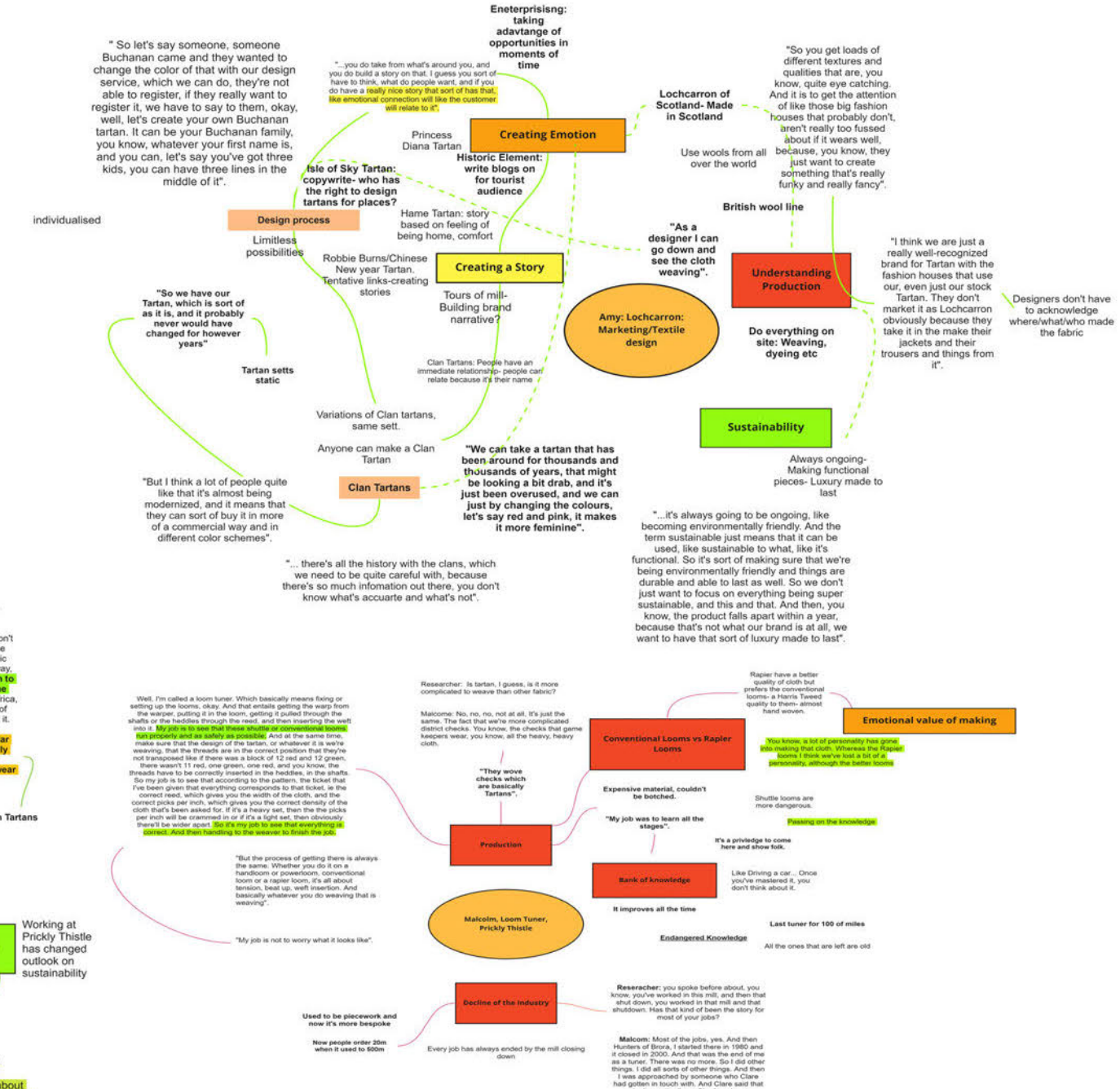


Figure 30: Analysis Map, Researchers Own 2022


" So let's say someone, someone Buchanan came and they wanted to change the color of that with our design service, which we can do, they're not able to register, if they really want to register it, we have to say to them, okay, well, let's create your own Buchanan tartan. It can be your Buchanan family, you know, whatever your first name is, and you can, let's say you've got three kids, you can have three lines in the middle of it".
Eneterprisisng: taking adavtange of opportunities in moments of time
"...you do take from what's around you, and you do build a story on that. I guess you sort of have to think, what do people want, and if you do have a really nice story that sort of has that, like emotional connection will like the customer will relate to it".
Creating Emotion
Princess Diana Tartan
Historic Element: write blogs on for tourist audience
Isle of Sky Tartan: copywrite- who has the right to design tartans for places?
Design process
individualised
Limitless possibilities
Hame Tartan: story based on feeling of being home, comfort
Robbie Burns/Chinese New year Tartan. Tentative links-creating stories
Creating a Story
Tours of mill- Building brand narrative?
Clan Tartans: People have an immediate relationship- people can relate because it's their name
Variations of Clan tartans, same sett.
Anyone can make a Clan Tartan
"So we have our Tartan, which is sort of as it is, and it probably never would have changed for however years"
Tartan setts static
"But I think a lot of people quite like that it's almost being modernized, and it means that they can sort of buy it in more of a commercial way and in different color schemes".
Clan Tartans
"We can take a tartan that has been around for thousands and thousands of years, that might be looking a bit drab, and it's just been overused, and we can just by changing the colours, let's say red and pink, it makes it more feminine".
"... there's all the history with the clans, which we need to be quite careful with, because there's so much infomation out there, you don't know what's accuarte and what's not".
Lochcarron of Scotland- Made in Scotland
Use wools from all over the world
"So you get loads of different textures and qualities that are, you know, quite eye catching. And it is to get the attention of like those big fashion houses that probably don't, aren't really too fussed about if it wears well, because, you know, they just want to create something that's really funky and really fancy".
British wool line
"As a designer I can go down and see the cloth weaving".
Understanding Production
Amy: Lochcarron: Marketing/Textile design
Do everything on site: Weaving, dyeing etc
"I think we are just a really well-recognized brand for Tartan with the fashion houses that use our, even just our stock Tartan. They don't market it as Lochcarron obviously because they take it in the make their jackets and their trousers and things from it".
Designers don't have to acknowledge where/what/who made the fabric
Sustainability
Always ongoing- Making functional pieces- Luxury made to last
"...it's always going to be ongoing, like becoming environmentally friendly. And the term sustainable just means that it can be used, like sustainable to what, like it's functional. So it's sort of making sure that we're being environmentally friendly and things are durable and able to last as well. So we don't just want to focus on everything being super sustainable, and this and that. And then, you know, the product falls apart within a year, because that's not what our brand is at all, we want to have that sort of luxury made to last".
Researcher: Is tartan, I guess, is it more complicated to weave than other fabric?
Malcome: No, no, no, not at all. It's just the same. The fact that we're more complicated district checks. You know, the checks that game keepers wear, you know, all the heavy, heavy cloth.
Rapier have a better quality of cloth but prefers the conventional looms- a Harris Tweed quality to them- almost hand woven.
Emotional value of making
Conventional Looms vs Rapier Looms
You know, a lot of personality has gone into making that cloth. Whereas the Rapier looms I think we've lost a bit of a personality, although the better looms
"They wove checks which are basically Tartans".
Expensive material, couldn't be botched.
Shuttle looms are more dangerous.
Passing on the knowledge
"My job was to learn all the stages".
It's a priviedge to come here and show folk.
Production
Bank of knowledge
Like Driving a car... Once you've mastered it, you don't think about it.
It improves all the time
Malcolm, Loom Tuner, Prickly Thistle
Last tuner for 100 of miles
Endangered Knowledge
All the ones that are left are old
Well, I'm called a loom tuner. Which basically means fixing or setting up the looms, okay. And that entails getting the warp from the warper, putting it in the loom, getting it pulled through the shafts or the heddles through the reed, and then inserting the weft into it. My job is to see that these shuttle or conventional looms run properly and as safely as possible. And at the same time, make sure that the design of the tartan, or whatever it is we're weaving, that the threads are in the correct position that they're not transposed like if there was a block of 12 red and 12 green, there wasn't 11 red, one green, one red, and you know, the threads have to be correctly inserted in the heddles, in the shafts. So my job is to see that according to the pattern, the ticket that I've been given that everything corresponds to that ticket, ie the correct reed, which gives you the width of the cloth, and the correct picks per inch, which gives you the correct density of the cloth that's been asked for. If it's a heavy set, then the the picks per inch will be crammed in or if it's a light set, then obviously there'll be wider apart. So it's my job to see that everything is correct. And then handing to the weaver to finish the job.
"But the process of getting there is always the same. Whether you do it on a handloom or powerloom, conventional loom or a rapier loom, it's all about tension, beat up, weft insertion. And basically whatever you do weaving that is weaving".
"My job is not to worry what it looks like".
Decline of the Industry
Reseracher: you spoke before about, you know, you've worked in this mill, and then that shut down, you worked in that mill and that shutdown. Has that kind of been the story for most of your jobs?
Used to be piecework and now it's more bespoke
Now people order 20m when it used to 600m
Every job has always ended by the mill closing down
Malcom: Most of the jobs, yes. And then Hunters of Brora, I started there in 1980 and it closed in 2000. And that was the end of me as a tuner. There was no more. So I did other things. I did all sorts of other things. And then I was approached by someone who Clare had gotten in touch with. And Clare said that she 'unearthed' me. She found me.

5.3 Feedback

To create a feedback loop, I offered participants the chance to review the maps, the interview transcriptions and the fashion film documented in Portfolio B. This allowed participants to reflect on my interpretations of the interview and sense check the maps, giving participants further autonomy to consider how their practice is situated in the research. Clare, Prickly Thistle CEO, responded to the map stating:

> Clare: *"[…]interesting to see things that way – what we are all about and why – past, present, future".*

This insight reflects on how the presentation of the insights from our interview pertains to a larger picture and offers an inside look into how Clare understood the positioning of her practice. By asking her for feedback on the fashion film, this also allowed her to reflect on themes of the fashion collection and how it was presented in the film. This engagement with the research assets created further dialogue between myself and Clare on how the relationship between tartan and narrative are presented:

> Clare: *"The film is really amazing – very strong! What was the overall message you were looking to convey, is it injustice, silencing? Inequality when looking up to grand buildings? Some may even think KKK with the hood – given that I think it was largely founded with Scottish connections. The garments look amazing – natural, simple, everyday people, they don't play to the 'gentry tailored vibe' which I think is brilliant".*

> Researcher: *"The overall message is connected to the idea of time, and myth, particularly around how tartan conveys these myths of 'antiquity' which are often misconstrued, much like the Wallace Monument, a Victorian invention for a historical figure […] I liked the idea of inventing a new narrative of tartan, which is linked to both the past and present- while questioning tartan's connection to the past. Your take on injustice is interesting, because while not overtly referencing this, the myth of the 'Highlands' and how this has been produced has led to narratives that benefit the capitalist system profiteering on the romantic notion [of] Highlands away from the people in the Highlands region.*
> *The hood definitely isn't referencing the KKK but I can see how that inference could be made. Ultimately any sort of covering is for masking identity, and it felt apt because tartan is so linked to identity. Similarly, the tartan had been designed to blend into the scenery and by covering the person in tartan, it further added to this blending of the scenery- Tartan camo! On a practical level I was determined to use the 'leftovers', using as much of the fabric as possible".*

While the video was used to create further discussion, this dialogue also highlighted abrasive aspects of the film, and how inferences could be made from the presence of the hood. The feedback also highlighted the potential of the fashion film to highlight social commentary in relation to tartan and provenance. The fashion collection was interpreted as challenging Highland dress by reinterpreting it through simple design.

5.4 Themes

To answer the research question, I will first establish the themes that emerged

from the case study, identifying how narratives were constructed and how these impacted making and using tartan. The themes identified are reflective of the mapping process outlined in section 5.2 and have been further explored through reflecting on the case study, considering the nuances of tartan's entanglements:

1. Scottishness and Provenance
2. Tartan's Values
3. Commerciality
4. Embedding Emotions through Making
5. Respecting the Cloth

5.4.1 Theme 1: Scottishness and Provenance

The case study highlighted ways in which provenance, particularly tartan's inextricable link to Scottishness, is deeply connected to tartan. For example, Highland wear, notably the kilt, was described by one of the participants as innately Scottish.

> James: *"[…]It's a unique product. Anybody wearing a kilt anywhere in the world, folk know they are Scottish".*

Through emphasising the distinctiveness of Highland wear, concerning its recognisability as a Scottish product, insights emerge about the interconnectedness of national identity and fabric. Additionally, while other meanings may be attributed to tartan, this was often through the lens of Scottishness serving as its main attribute, influencing perceptions of its other narratives. For example, through their connection to Scottishness, clan tartans represent broader ideas relating to family heritage.

Similarly, the tartan mills investigated presented their tartans as authentic because they produce tartan in Scotland, or in Prickly Thistle's case, specifically the Highlands. However, despite tartan's associations with the Highlands, there's only one tartan mill in the Highlands council region. This creates a contradiction between the narratives of tartan being distinctive to the Highlands and the reality of where it is made.
In some instances, tartan's connection to Scottishness outweighs the provenance of where it has been geographically made. For example, James explained how he gets his tartan produced in England and believes that there should be protections in place for the UK tartan weaving industry, not just Scotland. It seems that, arguably, regardless of where tartan is made, it remains representative of Scottishness.

Tartan's associations with Scottishness also created possibilities to create connection with place through curated stories. Acknowledging the relationship between Scotland and tartan, designers in the case study considered this in their design processes, with one participant preferring to use other fabrics because of 'tartan's associations'. This demonstrates that people who use tartan are also investing in a narrative of Scottishness, and the act of making with tartan cannot be separated from associations of Scottishness. In parallel, I explored this insight visually in the Portfolio B component of the case study. The video was designed to centre Scottish landscapes, cementing the relationship between Scotland and tartan by emphasising the relationship between landscape and cloth.

5.4.2 Theme 2: Tartans Values

The second theme positions tartan as a vehicle to uphold values; that is, through tartan's associations with Scottish people, other related values emerge. Tartans' associations with positive values are in line with Stewart (2019), who describes how Scottishness is used to market associations of authenticity and quality. However, associations were also positioned as a method to deliver change, whereby tartans' Scottish symbolism can be synthesised to reflect broader societal issues. Prickly Thistle interprets the communities that lived in the Highlands pre-Culloden as representing: "functionality, kindness, equitability and being reciprocal", which Prickly Thistle follows in the present-day in how they conduct their mill. Using these values also validates their claims to authenticity in connection to Highland's provenance and approaches to using tartan, such as zero-waste design.

The connection to values of the past, which is reflected in the present to support the future, is further evident in conversations with Clare, CEO of Prickly Thistle:

> Clare: *"So we're very much bound by the values of tartan and what that means but doing it [in a way] for the future history, and that's what we're making today".*

Common across the interviews was a focus on how narratives of tartan can embody personal and emotional connections, with personalised connections to the fabric being interpreted in the present, but with consideration for how it will live on in the future. For example, repurposing tartan garments with sentimental value creates garments with legacy, which can be passed on to future generations.

5.4.3 Theme 3: Commerciality

The case study highlighted ways in which tartan's entwined relationship with clan identity adds further opportunity for tartan to operate as a commercial asset. The loose definitions of clan tartan classification, which recognises tartans by sett, not colour or weave type, adds to tartans discursive commercial possibilities. Changing clan tartan's aesthetics and colours creates opportunities to appeal to a wider customer base. The iterations of clan tartans and, more broadly, the standardisation of tartan design within the confines of twill weaves and symmetry leads to a lack of variant in designs and oversaturation of variations of the same tartan. This aligns with Brown (2010), who remarks on the endless possibilities for tartan. However, whilst seemingly endless, many tartans are not an embodiment of different possibilities but instead repeated designs that have been slightly altered. For example, Lochcarron mill produces high quantities of tartan, which are often variants of one another and are indicative of design approaches, which do not generate new designs; they are instead reinterpreting commercially viable tartan designs. Additionally, meaning is attributed to the variants of tartan through marketing by creating emotive stories for consumers to buy into. For example, a variant of a clan tartan can be completely different from its original design yet will still appeal to customers because it has been branded with the clan's name.

5.4.4 Theme 4: Embedding emotions through making

Building on the previous theme, bespoke tartans offer lucrative opportunities to translate emotive themes into design choices, reflecting meaning onto colour, weave type and thread counts. The opportunity to make variants of weave types, such as Prickly Thistle's tartans with hidden messages, adds further possibilities to create emotive tartans. However, the bespoke market is reflective of a consumer's financial position and desire to commission a custom tartan, with most consumers investing in pre-existing tartans.

Broadly, pre-existing tartans are positioned as embedded with personalised meanings and consumers invested into tartans not because of their design, but instead their perceived meanings. This was evident in how kiltmaker Andrea described tartan:

> Andrea: *"...asking for your own Tartan that exists already, there would be a story of yours in relation to that cloth and relation to that garment. And relation to why you are making that garment in the first place".*

The act of investing in a tartan, and subsequently tartan garments, was positioned as a reflection of emotional attachment. This was also evident in examples of repurposing pre-existing tartan. The fabric, embedded with memories and stories, influenced the creation process and was often positioned as carrying on a legacy, particularly in relation to family heritage. Furthermore, the emotional attachments to fabric selection suggest that through making with tartan, this can create a relationship between personal narratives and the wider romanticism of tartan serves to further validate tartan's power to carry emotive narratives.

5.4.5 Theme 5: Respecting the cloth

Using tartan to make garments was considered in relation to respecting the cloth because of its position as an embodiment of living heritage. Respecting tartan's values was demonstrated through sustainable approaches to design such as zero-waste or creating circular design practices that incorporate 'waste'. Tartan was described by participants as a medium to 'work out as you go along' as opposed to traditional pattern-cutting methods. Working out is inherently connected to kiltmaking as it does not involve pattern cutting but instead relies on working out pleats based on measurements – a process of pattern interpretation. Likewise, zero-waste design employed similar methods to kiltmaking and was situated as being in tune with historical kilts, where the fabric would not have been cut into.

Considering tartan's physical qualities, such as yarn type and weave, also contributed to how makers in the case study used tartan. Methods of 'working out' were explored within fashion contexts, with a central component being understanding the qualities of tartan's yarns and weave types. Fashion designers used techniques like natural dye, which was positioned as invoking the past production of tartan and boil washing and was noted to be unpredictable. Instilling unpredictability into the making process of using tartan allowed the fabric to 'speak

for itself'; that is, the tartan fabric became actively involved in its own making process.

5.5 Addressing the Research Question

Drawing together the themes and reflecting on key learning, I will now return to and address the research question. I will then conclude this chapter by repositioning the findings back into the field, highlighting the values and key implications for practitioners who make and use tartan.

Overarching Research Question:
How can narratives of tartan inform how practitioners make and use tartan?

Narratives are a motivating factor for using tartan, and inherently connected to the making or using of tartan are narratives of Scottishness. Affirmations of Scottish narratives can be perpetuated through making and design, for example, of clan tartans. Similarly, affirming tartan's associations also creates lucrative commercial opportunities, particularly by adding official meanings to tartans through marketing, or altering existing tartans which can then be sold as existing tartan variants.

However, the narratives of tartan also create opportunities to disrupt and play with tartan's perceived associations, for example, through reinterpreting tartan's past in the present through garment design. This can be seen in the case of Highland dress exposing relationships between class and provenance, or to considering family legacy. Positioning tartan as symbolic of values can also influence how the cloth is constructed and used by emphasising that tartan would have historically been functional and sustainable. Interpreting tartan's symbolic values as action can also result in equitable approaches to weaving, promoting job creation and the use of sustainable models of practice. Moreover, using shuttle looms to weave tartan employs endangered knowledge thus promoting the protection of the past of the weaving industry in the present and for the future.

Sustainable practices were used by all garment makers, either as a primary purpose of using tartan, or a secondary purpose to add further sentimentality to the garments. For example, by exclusively using zero-waste garment design, sustainability is the garments' primary purpose; this also plays homage to tartan's zero-waste past in the tradition of kilts. In comparison, using repurposed tartans to make new garments is motivated by a desire to create emotional connections to the fabric as its primary purpose, while also being inherently sustainable.

When designing garments, particularly within fashion contexts that employ creative research processes, tartan heritage was employed as a strand of research. That is, by using tartan as the starting point for fashion design, the context of tartan's heritage was used as inspiration for the design of the garments themselves. Being led by the fabric differs from other ways of designing that would use research as a starting point and then select fabric in keeping with the research inspiration. However, limiting tartan to research inspiration from its historical uses can also create potential boundaries to practice and can be difficult to interpret through a

through a modern lens.

Through making and using tartan in the present day, practitioners are navigating and negotiating tartans associated values, and in certain cases, it could be argued, practitioners are monopolising on these values to add legitimacy to their practices. By piecing together narratives of tartan, makers are constructing their own interpretations of tartan, creating new narratives that are reflective of social and emotional values. By making with tartan's narratives, practitioners are also considering the legacy of tartan and how it will live on for the future. Tartan is evocative of meanings deeper than its materiality. It has the potential to create rich narratives that influence and shape the ways it is made and used.

Considering tartans' values through reinterpretation gave way to possibilities of using tartans in new and innovative ways. For example, Prickly Thistle centres their practice on values, and by responding to these values, they use them to drive design and guide mill operations. For instance, Prickly Thistle produces innovative, zero-waste garments by interpreting the equitability of resources and design functionality, using values to drive innovation. Aligning tartan's values with garment production led to unexpected uses of tartan, which innovated from recognisable interpretations of tartan such as Highland dress. Not directly referencing the uses of tartan aesthetically led to innovative design approaches.

Similarly, diverging from tartans design conventions of twill weaves and symmetrical patterns gave way to innovative tartan design, such as tartan that incorporates hidden messages. Diverging from self-imposed rules of tartan created an opportunity to deviate from tradition, to make tartans further reflective of personalised meanings and embody innovative values in the ways it is designed and made.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the analysis of the data, considering the use of TA aligned with thematic mapping to develop themes. Furthermore, I have outlined themes surrounding narrative and how these related back to the initial research question, offering insights into how tartan can embody emotions and values; to drive design and possible innovation. In the following chapter I will outline the implications of this research for other practitioners within the textile and heritage sector, considering limitations for the research and possible future research.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I will present my findings and outline how this research pertains to the wider heritage textile sector. I will set out my reflections on the inquiry, consider the limitations and constraints and identify potential avenues of future research.

6.1 The Findings and Implications for the Field

This research endeavoured to answer the following questions:

Overarching Research Question:

How can narratives of tartan inform how practitioners make and use tartan?

The findings of this research pertain to the gap between narratives of tartan's heritage and how tartan is made and used. The key finding for this inquiry pertains to the emotional value of tartan and how its associations influence design and can be harnessed for the making and uses of tartan.

Emphasising the relationship between material and narrative, this research offers insights into how living heritage can be considered by textile practitioners. This work offers insights for textile practitioners interested in using fabric with cultural associations, such as fabrics deeply connected to provenance like tweed and paisley. The research engages with how to embed and use narratives in practice. It is useful for researchers who are interested in the assembling of narratives from a heritage perspective, offering insights into how innovative future heritage can be produced. By considering tartan as an aspect of living heritage, and using the values tartan represents to drive practice, this offers possible futures for tartan.
This work lies in the intersection of heritage and textiles, with insights pertinent to how living heritage is both understood within the making and uses of tartan. Waine (2022) proposed that Highland dress was reflective of 'living tradition', which has adapted to socio-political landscapes. This research proposes that as living heritage, tartan can not only adapt to socio-political climates, but by reinterpreting tartan's values, can also convey narratives of the socio-political landscape.

Understanding tartan as containing the active qualities of how heritage is assembled (Smith, 2006, Harrison et al 2020) has directly translated into understandings of how heritage can be created by makers. By positioning making through a lens of heritage, it offers the opportunity to create living heritage, which can not only reflect cultural narratives but also actively engage in the communities it is made in, reflecting emotive legacies for future generations.

6.2 Reflections

At the heart of this research was my curiosity to understand how narratives are negotiated, the entrenched ideas that shape design, and the fundamental associations I have often taken for granted in my practice. This research started as a desire to understand heritage and how stories can blur fiction and reality, pivoting towards tartan because of a timely opportunity to undertake the GBC residency. The unintentional way this project unfolded has led me to negotiate the project's intentions repeatedly and challenged me to develop greater research skills. By reflexively responding

to opportunities and learning to narrow my focus, I can now understand what fundamentally interests me about tartan: it has the power to convey emotions and create connections between materiality and people.

Reflecting on the development of my practice and how this changed through undertaking this research project, I feel I further built on my pre-existing 'folk-horror' aesthetics, but considered how this could be done in a way which builds genuine connections. That is, I wanted the in-depth nature of the research, and relationships I had built with Prickly Thistle mill, to be reflected both in the making of the clothes and how the clothes were presented through film.

While undertaking this project, I have also reconsidered my approach to design and how this can be more aligned with sustainable values, particularly when confronted with the way Prickly Thistle operates. My practice in comparison to Prickly Thistle's zero-waste philosophy highlighted how toiling, testing, and narratives can conflict with sustainability. Coming to the end of the project has also led me to reconsider my own practice and how I would incorporate key insights from this work into my practice if I were to make a collection with tartan again. I would be braver in terms of embracing tartan's ability to embed emotions and engage with tartan's power as a fabric bound in associations. These associations are powerful tools for design, and I feel offer valuable insights for other practitioners who use tartan.

By making the video, parallel to engaging with fieldwork, I had a chance to conceptualise my emerging interpretations of tartan and further reinterpret tartan's narratives. Because tartan is so embedded with associations, the opportunity to further curate narratives of garments through film offers makers the autonomy to curate how tartan can be interpreted.
The implications of this research has changed the way I understand the life of material. Engaging with the context of material has changed how I consider my research processes. Considering tartans embodied narratives during the making process has made me further consider how I value the material I use and the ways in which I can respect fabric's narratives and materiality.

6.3 Limitations and Constraints

The work is limited because of the contained nature of the contexts I worked in. By only engaging with two mills, this is a small-scale inquiry into the tartan sector. I had also initially planned to have a focus group element to the research, to report back findings and create further dialogue; however, when engaging with participants, it became evident that continued engagement would be difficult to maintain because of their busy schedules.

A shortcoming of the study was a lack of participant engagement with the feedback process. When I emailed participants copies of their thematic maps, asking for reflections, many did not respond. If I implement mapping into future research within the context of tartan, collaborative mapping may offer participants further opportunities to clarify and sense-check their insights as an interview activity. Because of the constraints of the research,

, the limited context did not consider the tourism implications of tartan, nor the relationship between tartan and heritage institutions. This offers possibilities for future research, which holistically considers tartan as a product of Scotland and an aspect of tourism, which is considered in the following section.

6.4 Opportunities for Future Research

I believe this work offers opportunities for future research related to the broader textile industry, particularly for fabrics of cultural significance and garments of cultural importance, such as kilts. The case study model of using embedded lenses has created a holistic overview of both tartan production and the making and using of tartan. By positioning production and making in relation to heritage, I believe this offers the groundwork for avenues of future action-orientated research. By further considering the insights from this inquiry, they could be used as the framework for workshops to create dialogues between practitioners.

Clare, (the CEO of Prickly Thistle), and I plan to build on the outcomes of the Give Back Credit Collection, and how this can inform how designers/makers understand cultural heritage and sustainability. We are both eager for the insights gained from the collaborative process to be shared with the wider Highlands region community, potentially within an exhibition setting with the view that the work's impact does not have to end with the completion of the Give Back Credit project.
Reflectively, the Give Back Credit 6-piece collection raised issues between narrative design processes and how this can conflict with sustainability. Prickly Thistle is conceptually driven. They design based on problem-solving and use zero-waste methods of making; in contrast to the narrative-driven collection I created. I used calico toiling to test out methods of making, and this is in direct conflict with waste reduction. This offers avenues of potential future research, which consider how experimentation, testing, and narrative design can be implemented into sustainable design processes.

Furthermore, I believe the use of video to represent curated narratives could be used to elicit responses on a larger scale, such as within exhibition settings, offering insights into how textile's heritage is understood on a broader societal level. The relationship between tartan and heritage institutions offers exciting opportunities to explore tartan from the perspective of how Scottish cultural institutions have an investment in portraying narratives of tartan. The relationship between tartan and tourism offers further dynamics to how tartans heritage is understood.

Continues on Next Page

6.5 Summary

This research offers insights into how associations and values can be embodied in the fabric of tartan, while also considering how these associations and values can shape the way the fabric is used and made. Considering narratives of living heritage in practice can propose new dynamic methods of making. Tartan's connections to people embeds it with meaning and offers possibilities for how fabrics of cultural importance can be considered and used. This work offers an overview of tartan's relationship to narrative, and by considering tartans present narratives, I believe this work ould offer possibilities for future, action-orientated research with practitioners who make and use cultural fabrics.

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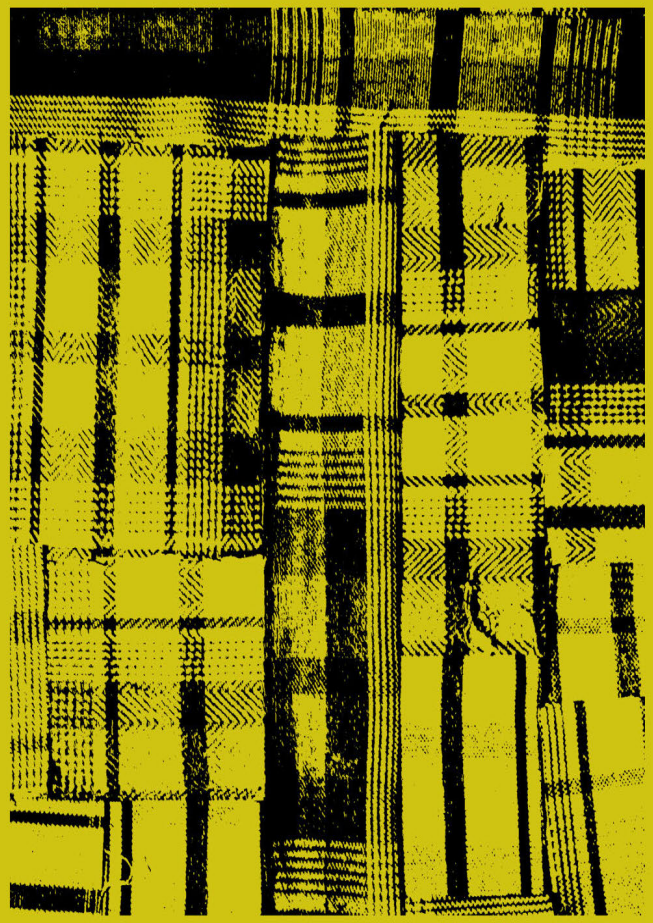
8. Appendix

8.1 Participant Information Sheet

Participant information sheet



Hello! My name is Ciara Courtney and I am current student at Glasgow School of Art, undertaking this project as part of my MRes project. This project is exploring tartan, looking at multiple perspectives from how tartan is presented in historical contexts, the current manufacturing of tartan and people who use tartan to make clothes. I am undertaking this research, as I want to explore how the history of tartan can inform the future of tartan, and how as a fashion designer, we can thoughtfully use tartan in new and innovative ways.

Before you decide whether to take part it is important that you carefully read over this sheet and the consent form, and fully understand what this project will involve. You will also have one week to look over the consent form, to decide if you would like to take part. You will need to complete the consent form to take part in the study.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this study because you have been identified as a someone who can offer unique insights into tartan. It is important that I speak to people like yourself, so that the project reflects a range of different insights into tartan.

Do I have to take part?

No participation is fully voluntary, and you are free to stop participating at any time. If you do decide to take part and then withdraw from the project, all your data will be withdrawn unless you give express consent that it can still be used.

What will taking part involve?

You will be interviewed as part of the research; this interview will take around 1 hour. These will be audio recorded either using the record function on Zoom or a Dictaphone if in person. These interviews will explore subjects relating to tartan and prior to the interview you will be sent the key topics we'll be discussing so you know what to expect. These will either take place face to face or if preferred, over Zoom. If undertaking in person interviews, all advice from the Scottish Government will be followed: https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/

Over email I will ask if you would prefer to speak to me in person, or over Zoom and arrangements will be made.

If you wish you may also take part in the second part of the study, please indicate if you would like to be contacted about it on the consent form

This will be the opportunity to hear about and evaluate the outcomes of the project through taking part in a focus group with the other participants.

The focus group will be around two hours, with a 15-minute break. This will be with other participants I have interviewed, so with other professionals who have insight into tartan or the heritage of tartan. The will be a maximum of 10 participants.

You will also be sent a 'dissemination pack' over email, which will consist of the findings for you to keep.

If you take part in the focus group be aware you will be identifiable to the other participants.

Will I remain anonymous?

You may remain anonymous if you wish to, please indicate on the consent form.

I am aware that you may want to not be anonymous for the research, for example if you run a brand, work for a professional organisation etc. If so, please be aware that you will be identifiable as part of the research and carefully consider that the research will be accessible to the public.

Before the thesis is published, you will have the chance to look over the thesis and decide again if you would like to anonymise your contributions.

Once the interviews have been transcribed, I will send the transcript for you to look over and have the chance to decide if you would like to redact any information.

The full interviews will not be shared with anyone outside of the research and supervisory team. However extracts of the transcriptions may feature as part of the thesis which will be publicly available.

The information you provide, will be kept for a maximum of 10 years. Hard copies of consent to be digitised and stored and original copies securely destroyed. Information from the interviews will be Stored on a secure, password protected hard drive. Upon completing the M.Res, these will be printed and securely stored in the locked ethics cabinet in the Innovation School office on GSA campus. Digital copies will then be deleted from my personal device.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By taking part you will sharing important insights into tartan, helping contribute to a body of research which will explore ways that designers can thoughtfully use tartan in the future.

What are the risks of taking part?

The is a risk you may be identifiable in the research, even if you do choose to remain anonymous. This is because of the close-knit nature of the communities surrounding tartan, and because I may also be interviewing people you know.

To mitigate this risk, interviews will be conducted in well ventilated rooms or preferably outdoors- following the advice of: https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/.

Prior to our interview I will also take a Lateral flow test.

If any adjustments need to be made for you to take part of the research, please advise me via email (details below).

What if I have further questions, or if something goes wrong?

If this study has harmed you in any way or if you wish to make a complaint about the conduct of the study you can contact GSA using the details below for further advice and information:

Prof Lynn-Sayers McHattie at

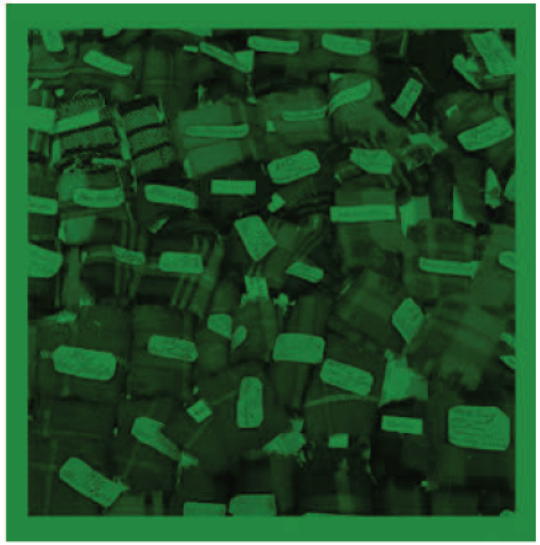
1.r
01

What will the research go towards?

Your research insights will also be used towards a thesis and portfolio, which will be made available on Glasgow School of Arts Radar website which can be accessed here: http://radar.gsa.ac.uk/

Who should I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact me using the following contact details: Email: C.Courtney1@student.gsa.ac.uk



8.2 Consent Form

Research Consent Form

Research Project Title : Invention to drive Innovation: An Exploration of Tartan

Lead Researcher: Ciara Courtney

Contact Details: [redacted]

Please initial boxes

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for the above study; ☐
2. I have had an opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily; ☐
3. Would you like to remain anonymous in this study? YES/NO (delete where appropriate). If you choose to waive your anonymity in the study, please refer to the participant information sheet to understand the full implications of this.
4. I consent to be audio recorded as part of the research and understand that these will not be shared in full but will be transcribed as part of the thesis. ☐
5. I agree to the extracts of transcriptions from the audio recordings being made publicly available in publications, presentations, reports or examinable format (dissertation or thesis) for the purposes of research and teaching – I understand that these will remain anonymous; if you choose to keep your anonymity. ☐
6. I agree to the results being used for *future* research or teaching purposes; ☐
7. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐
8. I am happy to be contacted about any future studies and agree that my personal contact details can be retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 ☐
9. If you would like to be contacted to take part in the dissemination Focus Group (outlined in the participant information sheet), please write your contact email:

Complaints about the conduct of this research should be raised with: P [redacted]

8.3 Topic Guide

Thank you for agreeing to take part in an interview. The interview will be 'semi-structured' - this means I will ask you some questions but it will feel more informal, like a conversation. The interview will last around one hour. In order to gain deeper insights into tartan, I have included below is a guide of the key topics that will frame our discussion. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at c.courtney1@student.gsa.ac.uk

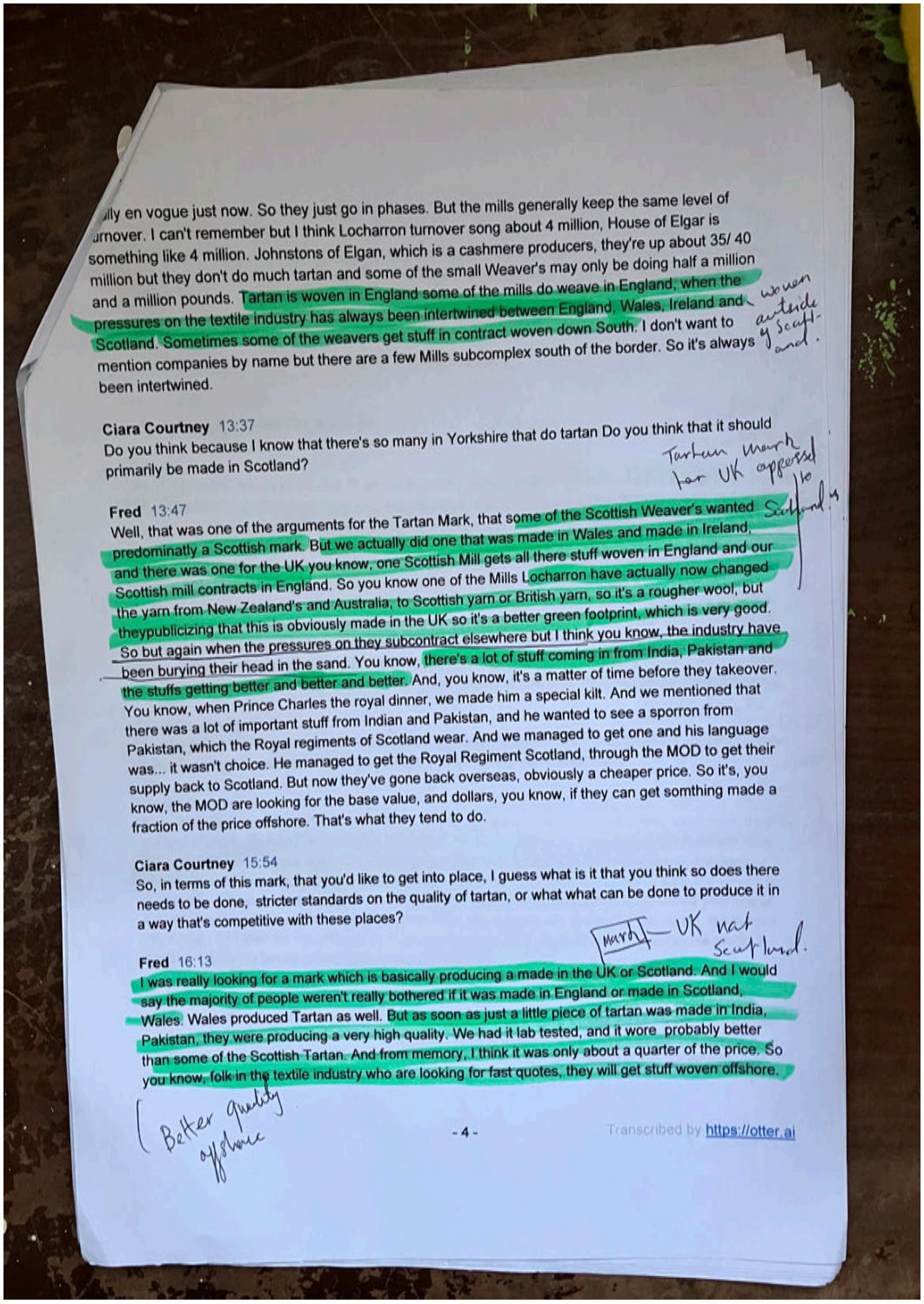
Topics:

Your Practice

Sourcing of Tartan/ Scottish Textile industry

Your relationship to Tartans History/Heritage

8.4 Interview Transcript, initial codes



lly en vogue just now. So they just go in phases. But the mills generally keep the same level of urnover. I can't remember but I think Locharron turnover song about 4 million, House of Elgar is something like 4 million. Johnstons of Elgan, which is a cashmere producers, they're up about 35/ 40 million but they don't do much tartan and some of the small Weaver's may only be doing half a million and a million pounds. Tartan is woven in England some of the mills do weave in England, when the pressures on the textile industry has always been intertwined between England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland. Sometimes some of the weavers get stuff in contract woven down South. I don't want to mention companies by name but there are a few Mills subcomplex south of the border. So it's always been intertwined.

Ciara Courtney 13:37
Do you think because I know that there's so many in Yorkshire that do tartan Do you think that it should primarily be made in Scotland?

Fred 13:47
Well, that was one of the arguments for the Tartan Mark, that some of the Scottish Weaver's wanted predominatly a Scottish mark. But we actually did one that was made in Wales and made in Ireland, and there was one for the UK you know, one Scottish Mill gets all there stuff woven in England and our Scottish mill contracts in England. So you know one of the Mills Locharron have actually now changed the yarn from New Zealand's and Australia, to Scottish yarn or British yarn, so it's a rougher wool, but theypublicizing that this is obviously made in the UK so it's a better green footprint, which is very good. So but again when the pressures on they subcontract elsewhere but I think you know, the industry have been burying their head in the sand. You know, there's a lot of stuff coming in from India, Pakistan and the stuffs getting better and better and better. And, you know, it's a matter of time before they takeover. You know, when Prince Charles the royal dinner, we made him a special kilt. And we mentioned that there was a lot of important stuff from Indian and Pakistan, and he wanted to see a sporron from Pakistan, which the Royal regiments of Scotland wear. And we managed to get one and his language was... it wasn't choice. He managed to get the Royal Regiment Scotland, through the MOD to get their supply back to Scotland. But now they've gone back overseas, obviously a cheaper price. So it's, you know, the MOD are looking for the base value, and dollars, you know, if they can get somthing made a fraction of the price offshore. That's what they tend to do.

Ciara Courtney 15:54
So, in terms of this mark, that you'd like to get into place, I guess what is it that you think so does there needs to be done, stricter standards on the quality of tartan, or what what can be done to produce it in a way that's competitive with these places?

Fred 16:13
I was really looking for a mark which is basically producing a made in the UK or Scotland. And I would say the majority of people weren't really bothered if it was made in England or made in Scotland, Wales. Wales produced Tartan as well. But as soon as just a little piece of tartan was made in India, Pakistan, they were producing a very high quality. We had it lab tested, and it wore probably better than some of the Scottish Tartan. And from memory, I think it was only about a quarter of the price. So you know, folk in the textile industry who are looking for fast quotes, they will get stuff woven offshore.