JUST FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME:

A MULTIMODAL INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF FONT CONSUMPTION

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Doctor of Philosophy in Marketing

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Dedication

To my nieces and nephews.

Thank you for helping me see the world

through your eyes.

Abstract

Purpose/research questions The purpose of this study is to understand more fully individuals' conscious and unconscious lived experiences with font consumption. More specifically, this research asks how relationships with mundane products like typefaces can be described analytically and how individuals consume fonts to construct their identities.

Design/methodology/approach The study employs an inductive, multimethod qualitative research design. It uses an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009) to generate and analyse 48 data sets from 16 diverse typeface users, who were purposefully recruited to reflect the increasingly diverse font user. Data comprise visual (collage), written (narrative) and verbal (interview) texts.

Results Consumers form (parasocial) relationships with typefaces that are shaped by their degree of 'connoisseurship'. This is a new temporally dynamic and multi-layered concept comprising five facets: Apprehending, involvement, hunting and gathering, knowing, and gatekeeping. Ultimately, the study suggests that fonts must be apprehended as commodities in their own right to become part of identity construction processes and to facilitate the creation of person-object relationships.

Originality/value This study makes several theoretical and methodological contributions. First, it reconceptualizes connoisseurship by employing a rhetoric device and offers an integrated model of the construct. Second, it extends marketing literature on consumer-object and parasocial relationships by proposing a connoisseurship trajectories framework. Third, it enriches methodological literature by introducing the collage construction method in multimodal IPA research.

Practical implications The need for identifying dynamic segments in the typeface market, establishing competitive positioning and co-creating value are highlighted.

Future research This study encourages further research that, for example, applies the connoisseurship trajectories framework to other contexts like polymorphic person-object relationships or explores font consumption from alternative perspectives (e.g. brand and sales managers).

Keywords Font consumption; Connoisseurship; Multimodal interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA); Projective techniques; Consumer psychology

Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

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Acknowledgements

Brief contents

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Abbreviations

ACR   Association for Consumer Research

BA   Bachelor of Arts

COL   Collage

EULA   End User License Agreement

GET   Group Experiential Theme

INT   Interview

IPA   Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

NAR   Narrative

PET   Personal Experiential Theme

PhD   Doctor of Philosophy

QDA   Qualitative Data Analysis

RQ   Research Question

RTF   Relationship Trajectories Framework

Glossary

Character "A symbol, sign, or mark in a language system." (Carter, Maxa, Sanders, Meggs, & Day, 2018, p. 322)

Character set All characters included in a particlar typeface.

Digital type(face) "Type stored electronically as digital dot or stroke patterns rather than as photographic images." (Carter et al., 2018, p. 323)

Font "In metal typesetting days, a font was a complete character set of a typeface [cast in metal] in one point size and style–12-point Centaur roman, for example …. Digitally speaking, font refers to a computer file that makes a typeface available for use and production." (Cullen, 2012, p. 43)

Foundry "A company that designs, manufactures and/or distribute fonts." (Coles, 2013, p. 9)

Glyph "Glyphs comprise all marks in a typeface from letterforms and numerals to punctuation and symbols. For instance, a diacritic (accent mark) is a glyph, not a character. It combines with a letterform to create a character, as in ´ (acute) + e = é." (Cullen, 2012, p. 33)

Kerning "The process of adjusting space between specific pairs of characters so that the overall letterspacing appears to be even." (Carter et al., 2018, p. 324)

Latin script "A set of graphic signs, stemming mainly from three difference sources. The capitals are the descendants of Roman square capitals, the model for the lowercase was the humanistic minuscule, and the numerals were borrowd from the Arabs during the high Middle Ages." (Unger, 2018, p. 223)

Leading "In early typesetting, strips of lead were placed between lines of typo to increase the interline spacing, hence the term." (Carter et al., 2018, p. 324)

Legibility "The ability to distinguish one letter from another due to characteristics inherent in the typeface design." (Ambrose & Harris, 2011, p. 189)

Letterform "The shape of a letter (not only of the Lating script), either written or designed as part of a typeface." (Unger, 2018, p. 223)

Letterpress "Pinting from a raised, relief surface, traditionally from movable type, but also encompassing more recent techniques." (Unger, 2018, p. 223)

Ligature	"A typographic character produced by combining two or more letters [e.g. 'fi']." (Carter et al., 2018, p. 324)
Linespacing	"The vertical distance between two lines of typo measured from baseline to baseline. For example, '10/12' indicates 10-point type with 12 points base-to-base (that is, with 2 points of leading)." (Carter et al., 2018, p. 324)
Macrotypography	"'Macrotypography' deals with the graphic structure of the overall document" (Stöckl, 2005, p. 209)
Mesotypography	"'Mesotypography' concerns the configuration of typographic signs in lines and text blocks" (Stöckl, 2005, p. 209)
Metal type	"The collective term for any characters or glyphs cast in metal and used for letterpress printing." (Seddon, 2016, p. 83)
Microtypography	"'Microtypography' refers to fonts and individual letters." (Stöckl, 2005, p. 209)
Pangrams	"Sentence that uses every letter of a particular language's alphabet at least once." (Motyka, Suri, Grewal, & Kohli, 2016, p. 630) Example: *The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.*
Paratypography	"'Paratypography' is devoted to typographic media, i.e. surface materials and instruments for producing typographic signs." (Stöckl, 2005, p. 209)
Placeholder (filler) text	Randomly or otherwise generated text without meaning or text in different languages. Example: *Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet…*
Readability	"Readability concerns the properties of a piece of type or design that affect the ability to make it understood." (Ambrose & Harris, 2011, p. 158)
Sans serif	"A font without decorative serifs. Typically with little stroke thickness variation, a larger x-height and no stress in rounded strokes." (Ambrose & Harris, 2011, p. 189)
Serif	"A small stroke at the end of a main vertical or horizontal stroke. Also used as a classification for typefaces that contain such decorative rounded, pointed, square, or slab serif finishing strokes." (Ambrose & Harris, 2011, p. 189)
Tracking	"Tracking refers to the letterspacing applied to a full line or paragraph of text, and shouldn't be confused with kerning. Entering a positive tracking value relaxes the spacing between characters, while a negative value tightens it." (Seddon, 2016, p. 68)

Type	Short for typeface.
Typeface	"A typeface is the consistent design, or distinct visual form, of a type[face] family. It is a cohesive system of related shapes created by a type designer. Characters such as letterforms, numerals, and punctuation share formal attributes." (Cullen, 2012, p. 43) (see also: type)
Typeface family	"A collection of typefaces designed to work together and usually sharing common attributes across related variants [e.g. Arial Narrow, Arial Narrow Italic, Arial Narrow Bold, Arial Narrow Bold Italic, Arial Regular, Arial Italic, Arial Bold, Arial Bold Italic, Arial Black]." (Harkins, 2010, p. 172)
Typography	"The arrangement and detailing of text (combined with images and space)." (Unger, 2018, p. 229, as cited in Meletis & Dürscheid, 2022, p. 90)
Typography research	"The endeavour of analysing … [the] process and the products created by … [typography]." (Meletis & Dürscheid, 2022, p. 90)

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Reflexive prologue

P

"The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity."

(Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 50e; §129)

From the outset of my doctoral journey, this study was motivated by my interest in visual communication, product aesthetics and consumer psychology. A subject area that brings those elements together is typography——the arrangement of type on printed and/or electronic matter (Harkins, 2013). I believe my interest in typography in general, and in type more specifically, evolved during my professional career spanning fifteen years in the luxury fashion industry, where I held various senior positions in global brand and product licensing. Apart from the strategic tasks of my roles, a key responsibility was to ensure that all decisions related to the full marketing mix were in line with the brand's identity. Typography was thus a major thread running through my practice and extended to contexts like packaging design, advertising design, and even store design.

My background, however, is not in design but in business and marketing respectively. I earned a Master of Science (MSc) degree in Business Psychology in 2018 and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (BA) honours degree in Business Administration in 2004. As part of my postgraduate studies (Relja, 2018b), where I specialized in consumer and advertising psychology, I investigated the relationship between product involvement and centrality of visual product aesthetics (CVPA) (Bloch, Brunel, & Arnold, 2003). Upon reflection I realize how much my experiences shaped my academic interests and solidified my academic profile. As senior lecturer in marketing at the University of Gloucestershire I teach, for example, luxury brand management. Some authors contrast luxury with mundane (e.g. Zhu, Zhou, Wu, & Wang, 2022)—a juxtaposition I take issue with as it is too simplistic and—more importantly—too static.

I do recall that at some point in my life, luxury became mundane. While I admit that this statement is somewhat provocative, its spirit certainly rings true for me. It epitomizes Wittgenstein's (1958) quote presented at the beginning of this prologue. I was so enmeshed in the luxury world, that all those aspects that made it special to me in the first place moved to the background and became concealed. However, my way of *being-in-the-world* (Heidegger, 1927/1962) did something else, too. It shed light on other things that were previously hidden from me, like for example typefaces.

Type is everywhere. We encounter it in our everyday, ordinary lives. We use it to communicate, and it has the power to influence our behaviour. I began to wonder. How come we do not pay more attention to typefaces? Is it because of their simplicity and/or familiarity, as Wittgenstein (1958) would argue? Could the latter explain why we start to care about type when brands, for instance, change their

logos and feel alien to us (e.g. Griner, 2018; R. Walker, 2018)? Type is unquestionably an integral part of a brand's visual identity and marketers use it to shape brand perceptions. It is, therefore, fair to suggest that mundane products like typefaces can embody luxuriousness. I wanted to understand typeface consumption more fully and decided to study fonts as commodities in their own right.

I would like to reiterate that my description of luxury as mundane was meant to challenge the implied rigid dichotomy between the two constructs, and I hope it will not be considered presumptuous. Indeed, as the second of five children of working-class immigrants from the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, I am mindful of the many privileges I had.

I am a white male in my early forties. Born in Germany, I was socialized into both, the German and Croatian culture. After I had earned my undergraduate degree, I moved to Switzerland and to France, where I worked for Hugo Boss and Kenzo respectively. Presently, I am living in the United Kingdom, where I am teaching marketing at undergraduate and postgraduate level and lead an undergraduate honours programme in Digital Marketing, while undertaking the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

I am drawn to meeting new people and to explore new cultures and countries. I was fortunate to gain personal, professional, and academic experiences around the globe. My way of engaging with the world led me to invite individuals with different professional, educational, and socio-cultural backgrounds from various parts of the world to participate in my research. I feel advantaged to speak four languages, namely German, Croatian, English and French. This allowed me not only to move easily across cultures, but also to conduct my research in English and to switch to other languages when needed. My lifelong fascination with languages might also explain the attraction Gadamer's phenomenological hermeneutics had for me. He claims that "*being that can be understood is language*" (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 474; emphasis in original). This does not mean, as Gadamer (2007b, p. 417) specified in an interview with Jean Grondin, "that everything is language." Rather, it emphasizes the ontological and linguistic status of understanding (Schmidt, 2006).

I recognize that I share many attributes with the individuals who agreed to participate in my research, not just language. This makes it impossible for me to self-identify as "insider or outsider, both or neither" (Mullings, 1999, p. 337). But then again, I do not think that such a classification is particularly

helpful. I believe that knowledge is constructed in the space between, which eventually provides a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, 2018).

Looking back on my doctoral journey, I realize how important the entire process was. This research challenged me intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. It invited me to question existing and new knowledge, as well as my core beliefs. It helped me to find my own voice and to occupy the space between with confidence. Ultimately, it allowed me to establish an elevated level of quality in my work (J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Yardley, 2000, 2017). I am pleased to present this study to you as the outcome of my journey.

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"Wouldn't it be interesting if there were only one typeface in the world?"

(Erik Kessels, as cited in Ambrose & Harris, 2011, p. 66)

Situating the research

Fonts as everyday commodities

In our everyday lives, we are constantly engaging with typefaces and fonts. *Typefaces* are the visual representations of character shapes (e.g. letters), making it possible, for example, to recognize and interpret written text (Coles, 2013). The term *font*, on the other hand, stands for the medium used to write the text, such as metal type or software (Lupton, 2010). While I acknowledge the critical differences between typographic terms, I will use them interchangeably, as is commonly done in everyday usage as well as in the context of marketing and consumer research (see Appendix 1, p. 321). A more detailed discussion of typographic terms can be found in e.g. Seddon (2016).

Today, fonts are predominantly created, distributed and consumed digitally (Cahalan, 2004/2007). The term *digital typeface* includes, for instance, *system typefaces*. These are fonts bundled with other software—like *Microsoft Office* or *LibreOffice*—and are typically made available through dropdown lists in font menus. Those of us working with Microsoft Office software might be familiar with its current *default* font called *Calibri*. Strictly speaking, Calibri is the name of the *typeface family*. The latter comprises individual *typeface designs* such as *Calibri Regular or Calibri Bold Italic*. It might be helpful to draw an analogy to other consumption objects to better understand the implied hierarchy of those terms as they become relevant in Chapter 2 (p. 42).

Table 1 (p. 3) compares font and car offerings at three distinct levels. It shows that *fonts* represent the product category, whereas for instance *Calibri* (typeface family) signifies the brand (e.g. BMW). *CalibriBold Italic* (typeface design), on the other hand, epitomizes the *product variant* (e.g. BMW X3).

Table 1

Comparison of font and car offerings at three different levels

Fonts example		Car example	
Product category	Fonts	Product category	Cars
Typeface family	Calibri	Brand	BMW
Typeface design	Calibri Bold Italic	Product variant	BMW X3

Note. The terminology used in the car example is based on Mugge (2007, p. 15).

Last year, Microsoft invited the public to help the company choose a new default font, which would eventually replace Calibri after nearly 15 years (Microsoft, 2021a). The Microsoft design team had commissioned five new fonts and asked the public to experiment with and comment on the new typefaces. Microsoft's decision to replace Calibri and involve the public in the software development process was picked up not only by special interest platforms in the field of technology (e.g. Hachman, 2021; Pardes, 2021) and design (e.g. Coggan, 2021; H. Wong, 2021), but also by business (e.g. Collins, 2021; Reuter, 2021) and mainstream press (e.g. Morrow, 2021; A. Smith, 2021) to name a few. At the time of writing, Microsoft's new *face* has not yet been revealed.

While choosing one typeface from a shortlist of five fonts may feel like a manageable task for most of us, choosing a font from a seemingly infinite dropdown list may not (O'Donovan, Lībeks, Agarwala, & Hertzmann, 2014). Some might even feel faint hearing that the worldwide number of type-faces rose from approximately 30,000 in 1999 to around 300,000 in 2019 (see Figure 1, p. 4). Cahalan (2004/2007) and Post and Lentjes (2015) see the causes for this development in several factors, which are all facilitated by continuous technological advances: digitization and democratization of typefaces as well as changed roles of market participants in the typeface industries as a result thereof.

With the advent of computers and related technologies, formerly analogous typefaces could be digitized, were installed on computers, and thus made available to a broader user base (Evamy, 2012). Software developments reformed the work of type designers, typographers and printers in that they required new skill sets, but at the same time, granted access to typographic matters to non-experts. Today, the latter group has the capacity to create, manipulate and distribute their own typefaces and/or

to design their own typographic work using the relevant software—a development, that shares characteristics of the do-it-yourself culture (e.g. Doane, 2015; Lupton, 2006).

Figure 1
Estimated number of available typefaces worldwide between 1999 and 2019
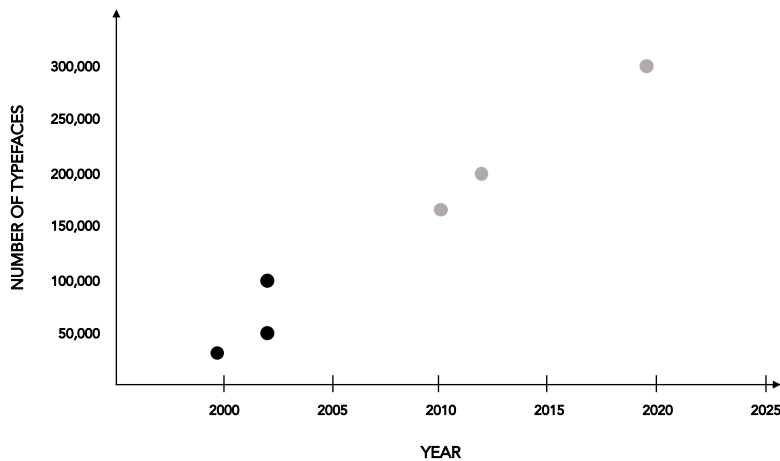
Note. Black circles (●) represent estimates adapted from Cahalan (2004/2007, p. 190). Grey circles (●) show estimates from Phinney (2019), Saltz (2012, p. 4) and Strizver (2010, p. 45).

Post and Lentjes (2015, p. 240; emphasis in original) argue that the "digitisation completes the transformation of the typographer into an all-round graphic designer *and* the 'semi-professionalisation' of the amateur," drawing comparisons to, for instance, the prosumer movement. The term *prosumer* was originally coined by Toffler (1980) to describe the phenomenon of shifting roles of market participants (for a review, see e.g. Boesel & Jurgenson, 2015; Kotler, 1986).

Most recently, Lang, Dolan, Kemper, and Northey (2021, p. 178; emphasis in original) highlighted the ambiguity of the term *prosumers* used in the business literature, and proposed to define prosumers "*as individuals who consume and produce value, either for self-consumption or consumption by others, and can receive implicit or explicit incentives from organizations involved in the exchange.*" Following this conceptualization, consumers and graphic designers producing their own fonts using software like *Glyphs Mini 2* (Schriftgestaltung, 2020) could be considered prosumers. Similarly, Microsoft's decision to involve participants in the choice of its new default typeface—and hence in the software

development process—can also be understood as a form of prosumption. These examples demonstrate that the boundaries between producer (e.g. type designer or type foundry), intermediates (e.g. graphic designers, software companies, distributors or retailers) as well as end-consumers—as they are known in the unidirectional value chain (see e.g. Bruns, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2016)—become blurred very quickly and language gets fuzzy.

For this research, it is worth recalling that typefaces are more than just visual cues. Digital type-faces—more precisely fonts—are intangible commodities that are central to a highly specialized industry (Cahalan, 2004/2007; Heller & Fili, 1999; K. Henderson & Saltz, 2012). Here, the notion of intangibility is used as heuristic to underline the immaterial form (digital code) of the commodity and to demarcate it from, for instance, metal type. This differentiation seems sensible, as at least one study participant makes explicit reference to metal type (see Chapter 7, p. 216). However, the proposed distinction makes no claims concerning their respective ontological state and acknowledges the inherent fluidity evident, for instance, in the possibility to digitize material and rematerialize digital typefaces (e.g. print outs) (Denegri-Knott, Watkins, & Wood, 2012; Kedzior, 2014; Watkins, 2015).

Like their tangible counterparts, intangible artefacts too offer utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic benefits and thus motives for consumption (Visconti, 2015). The current marketing literature extends the tripartite benefit concept to product designs (e.g. Bloch, 2011; Kumar & Noble, 2016). Practitioners (e.g. Carter et al., 2018; Crisp & Temple, 2012; Hyndman, 2016) and academics (e.g. Bachfischer, 2007; Pochun, Brennan, & Parker, 2018; Spitzmüller, 2012) alike find that typefaces have utilitarian (e.g. read-ability and legibility), hedonic (e.g. evoke emotions and provide pleasure) and symbolic value (e.g. ex-pression of personal or collective identity). Marketing literature indicates that the three dimensions are not mutually exclusive but that their magnitude as well as their impact on consumer behaviour varies (Homburg, Schwemmle, & Kuehnl, 2015). The latter covers aspects such as psychological and behav-ioural responses to typefaces prior, during and after the acquisition of artefacts (Bloch, 1995; Crilly, Moultrie, & Clarkson, 2004; Luchs & Swan, 2011; Luchs, Swan, & Creusen, 2016).

Drawing on the above cited literature, it appears that consumer decision-making models such as the one proposed by e.g. Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1968) lend themselves as a heuristic device for identifying and structuring consumption activities related to typefaces. Consumer decision-making models have been discussed and critically reviewed elsewhere (e.g. Kotler, Armstrong, & Opresnik,

2018; Milner & Rosenstreich, 2013; Stankevich, 2017). For that reason, I will refrain from a detailed discussion thereof and refer to existing literature instead. In the following subsection, I sketch out diverse ways in which typefaces can be consumed and deepen the discussion of key concepts in Chapter 2.

Ways to consume typefaces

As established earlier, typefaces are intrinsically visual in nature. It is therefore fair to say that typefaces can be consumed visually (Schroeder, 2002), for instance, by reading or viewing/seeing texts (McCoy, 1990). Based on previous publications (e.g. Bachfischer & Robertson, 2005), these terms will be used as follows in this study. In the former case, we read text in a consecutive order without paying attention to the design of typefaces. However, when we view/see typefaces, our intention is directed towards their designs/form. This does not mean that the content of the text is being ignored. It simply signifies that there has been an intentional shift.

Bachfischer and Robertson (2005) identified a third mode of consuming typefaces, namely by using text (see also Bachfischer, Robertson, & Zmijewska, 2006b). The authors argue that with the advent of computers and related technologies, we are now able to interact with text. Examples range from using hypertexts (i.e. links) that disrupt linear reading to interaction with text by controlling its motion in space and time (Bachfischer, 2007). While this conceptualization of typeface usage has its merits, it does not fully capture the traditional sense of usage employed in consumer behaviour literature I wish to adopt here (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, 2018). That is, understanding fonts as commodities in their own right that are consumed in more ways than just visually. As illustrated in Table 2 (p. 7), the decision-making process can be divided into three phases: pre-acquisition, acquisition and post-acquisition, whereas each phase comprises different stages (e.g. Kotler et al., 2018; Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018).

Pre-acquisition phase

According to decision-making models, consumer behaviour starts with *need recognition*, which triggers information search and evaluation of alternatives. Let us imagine you received a wedding invitation from your friend (external stimulus), and you love the typeface (e.g. Soulmate) so much, that you absolutely must have it (need recognition). You may ask your friend for the name of the typeface, but he is busy

with his wedding preparations. Thus, you decide to use the application WhatTheFont (MyFonts, 2019), that is installed on your smartphone. It compares the photograph you took of the typeface with the fonts stored in its database and provides you with a list of typefaces that are most similar to the one you are looking for. Using an app allows you not only to search for the typeface but also to evaluate alternatives and acquire it using a link provided in the app. Now that you have found the typeface you like so much, you may decide to acquire it.

I acknowledge the important distinction of information search categories (pre-acquisition versus ongoing) and sources of information searches (internal versus external) discussed in consumer behaviour literature (e.g. Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgway, 1986; Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995; Guo, 2001; Newman, 1977). Consequently, information search can also be an indicator for the meaning typefaces have for individuals. Time investment and a tendency towards ongoing search, for instance, can be indicators for stronger involvement with typefaces (e.g. Bloch et al., 1986).

Table 2
Consuming typeface designs: A perspective from the consumer decision model

Pre-acquisition	Acquisition	Post-acquisition
Need recognition	Acquisition	Usage
Pre-acquisition information search	*Legally*	*Selection*
Internally	*Illegally*	*Creation*
Externally		*Storage*
Evaluation of alternatives		*Organization*
Purchase intention		Disposition
Purchase decision		*Keeping*
		Permanent disposition
Ongoing information search (internal/external)		
↑	↑	↑
Situational, personal and social influences		

Note. Based on Bloch et al. (1986); Heller (2015); Hoyer et al. (2018); Jacoby, Berning, and Dietvorst (1977)

Acquisition phase

Analogous to digital music (Sinclair & Tinson, 2017), typefaces can be acquired legally (e.g. type found-ries) or illegally (e.g. piracy) (Heller, 2015). In the case of Microsoft's system typeface Calibri, we have acquired a license to use the font together with the Microsoft Office software (see Chapter 2). The way we acquire typefaces can also provide information about our relationship with them. What does it mean if we are (not) willing to pay for typefaces? How is deviant behaviour (e.g. theft) to be understood from a consumer behaviour perspective? These questions will be addressed in Chapter 2 in the context of legal and psychological ownership.

Post-acquisition phase

It is fair to suggest that we predominantly use fonts (e.g. Soulmate) to create new artefacts (e.g. wedding invitations) and ultimately to communicate. I opted for the term *creation*, because it is broad enough to cover emails we write, as well as any sophisticated works we design. To create, we need software such as Microsoft Word or Adobe InDesign that enables us to *select* and *use* fonts stored on our computers.

In essence, we can select fonts in at least four distinct ways. Firstly, we may use the default typeface (e.g. Calibri). In this case, not changing the standard font is also considered a choice—whether it is conscious or not. Secondly, we may have a handful of preferred fonts we regularly choose from. That is typefaces we like, know or are familiar with (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Thirdly, we might have some sort of heuristic we apply when selecting typefaces. Research suggests that the latter choices have an important *tacit dimension* (Polanyi, 1966) as they are often based on intuition (Brumberger, 2004). Finally, we might engage in a more elaborate decision-making process (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018). Interestingly, many professional and non-professional users still find the selection of typefaces rather difficult. O'Donovan et al. (2014) rightly state that...

> surprisingly, the standard interface for selecting fonts – a long list of font names – has not changed in decades, and often overwhelms users with too many choices and too little guidance. As a result, users often proceed with the default font, or stick with a few familiar, but poor, choices. (p. 2)

Similar observations were made by Y. W. Wu, Gilbert, and Churchill (2019) in the case of web fonts. The authors conducted a study to understand the selection criteria and processes applied by practition-ers when choosing web fonts (e.g. Google Fonts). Their research suggests that the quality of

participants' experience of choosing typefaces is reduced due to the endless browsing needed to find the perfect typeface. This suggests that platforms might not cater to users' needs.

Font storage can be *organized* by our operating system (e.g. Microsoft), special software (e.g. Apple Font Book), or by ourselves applying various criteria. Despite existing industry norms, there is no universally accepted classification system for typefaces (Ambrose & Harris, 2011; Coles, 2013). Typeface classification seems to be a challenging endeavour, not only because categories might be too rigid (some typefaces would easily fit into multiple categories), but also because classification systems can have different objectives, such as historical accuracy (historians), pragmatism (designers), and commercial interest (type foundries) just to name a view of them (Crisp & Temple, 2012; Tselentis, 2012). This suggests two things: First, the organization and storage of typefaces by adapting a categorization system is a somewhat idiographic undertaking and second, it requires time and mental energy (Belk, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Consequently, it is likely that those who organize typefaces themselves will have different relationships with typefaces than those who do not (see Chapter 2).

Let us imagine you have acquired the typeface from the wedding invitation that you liked so much (e.g. Soulmate). While using it, you realize that it somehow does not work as intended. It is not legible and/or readable at the point size you want to use it, or you feel that some of the characters just do not look nice. What will you do? Jacoby et al. (1977) suggest we have three principal options, however, only two of them seem to be applicable for typefaces: we could keep the typeface on our computer, or we could delete it permanently. Providing someone with a copy of the digital file (for free or for sale) appears a more likely alternative to the third option, namely temporal disposition (e.g. rental or loan) of typefaces. A caveat is needed here. Issues regarding property and/or ownership rights may arise with the unauthorised use of typefaces. While I acknowledge them and agree with Heller (2015) that this matter is of serious concern, treatment of these issues lies outside the scope of this research.

Situational, personal and social influences

There are various situational (e.g. time), personal (e.g. values), and social factors (e.g. norms) that may affect font consumption (Dibb, Simkin, Pride, & Ferrel, 2012; Solomon, 2018). Influences include type-specific resources such as typography books (e.g. Carter et al., 2018; Coles, 2013; Crisp & Temple,

2012; Cullen, 2012; Strizver, 2014), design magazines (e.g. Eye Magazine; https://www.eyemagazine.com/), typography blogs (e.g. Typewolf; http://www.typewolf.com) and typography communities (e.g. TypeThursday; https://www.typethursday.org) to name a few. These resources shape users' decision-making processes, for instance by defining rules, providing inspiration, offering information, giving advice, or by creating a space to share experiences with type.

Prior research on typeface designs

While academic research on typography in general and typefaces in particular dates back a whole century (e.g. Berliner, 1920), interest from consumer and marketing researchers developed only slowly at the beginning of the 20th century (Doyle & Bottomley, 2004, 2006). However, during the past few years, the body of typographic research extended steadily, especially within the disciplines of marketing/consumer research and psychology. Velasco and Spence (2019) as well as Schroll, Schnurr, and Grewal (2018) provide more recent reviews of select typographic studies situated at the intersection of consumer behaviour, marketing, and psychology.

My own literature review shows, that this intersection is very broad, comprising contexts such as e.g. tourism (Amar, Droulers, & Legohérel, 2017; Yunhui Huang, Wu, & Shi, 2018), hospitality (Liu, Choi, & Mattila, 2019; Meyrick & Taffe, 2019; Velasco, Hyndman, & Spence, 2018), retailing (Mead, Richerson, & Li, 2020) and extends to other scholarly disciplines such as, for instance, visual communication and design (Brownie, 2013; Brumberger, 2003b; Koch, 2011; Rath, 2016; Van Leeuwen, 2006), linguistics (Maia, 2018), literature (Gallagher, 2018), music (Vestergaard, 2016), computer science (Y. W. Wu et al., 2019), economics (Ma, Wang, Zhang, Shim, & Ratti, 2019), accounting (Rennekamp, 2012), and law (Fry, 2009; Lipton, 2009). Overall, these examples show that typographic research is very much multidisciplinary, and this development seems to be in line with the overall status of consumer behaviour research (MacInnis & Folkes, 2010). Bringing those multiple voices together and informing my research through different theories from various academic disciplines makes my research multidisciplinary, too.

Another indicator for increased research interest in typographic topics is the spread of research across different publication types. Firstly, there is a large body of literature published in periodicals. The

number of academic journal articles mentioning typefaces (or alternative wordings, such as e.g. fonts) continues to rise (see examples in Table 3, p. 12). Secondly, there are publications in book chapters. Toros Ntapiapis and Özkardeşler (2020), for example, investigate the impact of typefaces on consumer behaviour from a neuromarketing perspective. Another example is the book chapter written by Velasco and Spence (2019), which discusses the role of typefaces in the context of packaging design. Thirdly, there are conferences and symposia, where typefaces are discussed. As the examples in Table 4 (p. 13) suggest, the number of contributions to conferences and symposia also rose since 2000. For instance, during the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Conference in Atlanta, GA, United States in 2019, there were three contributions related to typeface (N. Chen, Jiao, & Fan, 2019; Deng & Fligner, 2019; Y. Zhao & Huang, 2019). Finally, doctoral students from various disciplines express a continuous interest in typographic research (e.g. Bachfischer, 2007; Beier, 2009; Cahalan, 2004/2007; Donev, 2015; Gallagher, 2018; Koch, 2011; Maia, 2018; Norton, 2018; Puškarević, 2018; Shaikh, 2007; Straatsma, 2009). My own research can be placed in this group.

Looking at the subjects of typographic research, I suggest that extant studies can further be organized by type of consumer responses evoked by typefaces. This research clusters prior studies into cognitive, affective, as well as conative and behavioural responses. I appreciate the possibility of alternative and even more fine-grained categorizations, but for the purpose of this study, I have opted for an unprocessed classification, allowing me to demonstrate observations that are relevant for my study. Furthermore, I recognize that there are different views on how to conceptualize constructs—in particular in relation to affective responses (e.g. Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Peter & Olson, 2008). Here, I adopt the position of J. B. Cohen, Pham, and Andrade (2008, pp. 297-298), who state that "consistent with most recent scholarly discussions, we reserve the term 'affect' to describe an internal feeling state." These authors explicitly distinguish affects (*internal feeling states*) from attitudes (*evaluations*), that is cognitions.

Table 3

Examples of typographic research published in academic journals (2000 to present)

Period	Exemplary research (author, year)
2020 – present *(number of publications: 26)*	Bertrams et al. (2020); Beyon and Cox-Boyd (2020); Chubala, Ensor, Neath, and Surprenant (2020); Coluzzi (2021); Haenschen and Tamul (2020); Haenschen, Tamul, and Collier (2021); H. Huang and Liu (2020); Izadi and Patrick (2020); Soojin Kim, Jung, and Kim (2021); Kovačević, Mešić, Užarević, and Brozović (2022); S. Li, Zeng, and Zhou (2020); Mead et al. (2020); Meletis (2021); Mo, Sun, and Yang (2021); Orth, Nickel, Böhm, and Röwe (2020); Otterbring, Rolschau, Furrebøe, and Nyhus (2022); J. Park, Velasco, and Spence (2022); Rolschau, Janice Wang, and Otterbring (2020); Staub (2020); Tang and Zhang (2020); Teng, Xie, Liu, Wang, and Foti (2021); Toros Ntapiapis and Özkardeşler (2020); Venkatesan, Wang, and Spence (2020); X. Wang, Zhang, He, Liu, and Zhang (2022); R. Wu, Han, and Kardes (2021); Yu, Huang, Liu, and Lu (2020)
2015 – 2019 *(number of publications: 44)*	Aggarwal and Vaidyanathan (2016); Amar et al. (2017); Balashova et al. (2019); Beier, Sand, and Starrfelt (2017); Bigelow (2019); Billard (2016); Celhay, Boysselle, and Cohen (2015); Celhay and Remaud (2018); Celhay and Trinquecoste (2015); Choi and Aizawa (2019); Dobres et al. (2016); Foroudi (2019); Foroudi, Melewar, and Gupta (2017); Grohmann (2016); Harkins (2015); Yunhui Huang, Li, Wu, and Lin (2018); Yunhui Huang, Wu, et al. (2018); Karnal, Machiels, Orth, and Mai (2016); Kaspar, Wehlitz, von Knobelsdorff, Wulf, and von Saldern (2015); R. Li, Qin, Zhang, Wu, and Zhou (2015); Lieven, Grohmann, Herrmann, Landwehr, and Van Tilburg (2015); Lin, Li, Zeng, and Ji (2019); Liu et al. (2019); Ma et al. (2019); Mead and Hardesty (2018); Nedeljković, Novaković, and Pinćjer (2017); Pochun et al. (2018); Puškarević, Nedeljković, Dimovski, and Možina (2016); Pušnik, Podlesek, and Možina (2016); Rath (2016); Schroll et al. (2018); Sheng Chung, Jane, and Kai-Ping (2017); Slattery, Yates, and Angele (2016); Townsend (2017); Undorf and Zimdahl (2019); Velasco, Hyndman, et al. (2018); Velasco, Woods, Hyndman, and Spence (2015); Velasco, Woods, et al. (2018); Vestergaard (2016); L. Wang, Yu, and Li (2020); K. Wong, Wadee, Ellenblum, and McCloskey (2018); Xu, Chen, and Liu (2017); Zhang, Wang, Xiao, and Luo (2017); N. Zhao, Cao, and Lau (2018)
2010 – 2014 *(number of publications: 23)*	J. J. S. Barton et al. (2010); Bayer, Sommer, and Schacht (2012); Brownie (2013); T. Childers, Griscti, and Leben (2013); Doyle and Bottomley (2011); Dyson (2011); Foroudi, Melewar, and Gupta (2014); Giese, Malkewitz, Orth, and Henderson (2014); Grohmann, Giese, and Parkman (2013); Hagtvedt (2011); Hakkı (2013); Sara Kim and Labroo (2011); Koch (2012); W.-Y. Lee and Pai (2012); Nedeljković, Novaković, Puškarević, and Tomić (2014); O'Donovan et al. (2014); Reimer et al. (2014); Rennekamp (2012); Salgado-Montejo, Velasco, Olier, Alvarado, and Spence (2014); Schorn, Brunner-Sperdin, and Ploner (2014); Tanis and Beukeboom (2011); Tsai and McGill (2011); Van Rompay and Pruyn (2011)
2005 – 2009 *(number of publications: 19)*	Ampuero and Vila (2006); Arditi and Cho (2005); Bachfischer et al. (2006b); Bachfischer, Robertson, and Zmijewska (2007); A. Chen et al. (2008); DeRosia (2008); Doyle and Bottomley (2006, 2009); Fry (2009); Gasser, Boeke, Haffernan, and Tan (2005); Juni and Gross (2008); Mackiewicz (2005); Page and Thorsteinsson (2009); Ravelli and Starfield (2008); Song and Schwarz (2008); Van Leeuwen (2005, 2006); P. Walker (2008); Woods, Davis, and Scharff (2005)
2000 – 2004 *(number of publications: 10)*	Bernard, Lida, Riley, Hackler, and Janzen (2002); Brumberger (2003a, 2003b, 2004); T. L. Childers and Jass (2002); Doyle and Bottomley (2004); P. W. Henderson, Giese, and Cote (2003, 2004); Mackiewicz (2004); McCarthy and Mothersbaugh (2002)

Table 4

Examples of typographic research contributions at conferences and symposia (2000 to present)

Period	Exemplary research (author, year)
2020 – present *(number of publications: 6)*	Chu, Tok, and Gui (2021); Yunzhi Huang and Ye (2021); Jiwon and Youn (2020); Relja (2021); Yu et al. (2020); Zimmermann-Janssen, Hütte, and Kluger (2020)
2015 – 2019 *(number of publications: 12)*	N. Chen et al. (2019); Choi, Yamasaki, and Aizawa (2016); Deng and Fligner (2019); Mak and Ho (2020); Matsuura et al. (2019); Meyrick and Taffe (2019); Puškarević, Nedeljković, Pinćjer, Franken, and Pušnik (2018); Puškarević and Uroš (2016); Relja (2018a); Y. W. Wu et al. (2019); Y. Zhao and Huang (2019); Zlokazova and Burmistrov (2017)
2010 – 2014 *(number of publications: 6)*	Amare and Manning (2012); Husk (2012); Kataria, Marchesotti, and Perronnin (2010); Y. Li and Suen (2010); Puškarević, Nedeljković, and Pinćjer (2013, 2014)
2005 – 2009 *(number of publications: 4)*	Bachfischer and Robertson (2005); Bachfischer, Robertson, and Zmijewska (2006a); D. Fox, Shaikh, and Chaparro (2007); Holm, Aaltonen, and Seppänen (2009)
2000 – 2004 *(number of publications: 2)*	Cahalan (2004); Mackiewicz (2004)

What might seem like a technicality, is indeed a much more extensive decision, considering that authors of typographic studies use terms such as *affective meaning* (Doyle & Bottomley, 2009), *affective feelings* (W.-Y. Lee & Pai, 2012) or *affective response* (Tantillo, Di Lorenzo-Aiss, & Mathisen, 1995) to describe their research problems, necessitating deliberate choices concerning their classification in my review. My rationale for adding these kinds of publications in the cognitive response cluster is based on my reading of the studies. I concluded that rather than researching affect (internal feeling states), those studies measured attitudes towards typefaces and/or asked study participants to evaluate typeface designs. Conversely, research studying the *emotions* evoked by typefaces is included in the affective response cluster. My approach seems to be supported by prior research (Koch, 2011). Having carved out that particularity, I will briefly portray the studies in the respective categories.

Cognitive response cluster

Within the cognitive response cluster, there are principally three broad research streams, namely *fluency*, *persuasion*, and *attitudes*. The former includes studies on legibility and readability (e.g. Luckiesh & Moss, 1939; Matsuura et al., 2019; Paterson & Tinker, 1929; Reimer et al., 2014; Woods et al., 2005)—two aspects that are historically at the heart of typographic research (Bachfischer et al., 2007). Closely linked, but broader in scope, are studies related to perceptual fluency (How easy is it to identify the formal qualities of an object?; Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman, 2004) and processing fluency (How easy is the processing of information perceived?; Rennekamp, 2012). Doyle and Bottomley (2004), for instance, hypothesised we might consider the choice of a typeface as more appropriate when it is easier to process. Other studies investigated the effect of fluency on memory (Undorf & Zimdahl, 2019), evaluation (Yunhui Huang, Li, et al., 2018; Kaspar et al., 2015), confidence judgments (Tsai & McGill, 2011), or effort prediction (Song & Schwarz, 2008). Referring back to discussions in the prior subsection, it is fair to say that fluency, in particular readability and legibility, is associated with utilitarian benefits of typefaces.

In the early 2000s, a parallel yet interrelated stream started to arise researching the role of typographic elements in persuasion. For instance, McCarthy and Mothersbaugh (2002) presented a theoretical framework identifying the effect of typographic choices on advertising-based persuasion. The authors suggest that typefaces, spacing and the layout of the ad (typographic dimensions) lead to various typographic outcomes (e.g. legibility). The authors propose that these outcomes are processed either directly (centrally) or indirectly (peripherally), moderated by motivations, opportunity and ability, as well as individual differences and situational factors that eventually lead to persuasion outcomes. Research indicates that typefaces operate on the peripheral route (e.g. Yunhui Huang, Li, et al., 2018; Juni & Gross, 2008; Pan & Schmitt, 1996) and suggests that typefaces have e.g. an effect on brand perception and recall of brand benefits (T. L. Childers & Jass, 2002; Xu et al., 2017), brand credibility, product attractiveness, and price expectations (Mead & Hardesty, 2018; Van Rompay & Pruyn, 2011), as well as perceived product positioning (Ampuero & Vila, 2006). A recent study conducted by Cho and Weiss (2017) supports not only the argument that typefaces are important cues for peripheral information processing, but it also suggests that typefaces affect judgments about source credibility. Lastly,

Hagtvedt's (2011) study indicates that a company using incomplete wordmarks may be perceived as more creative yet less trustworthy.

The last stream within the cognitive category comprises attitudes—an important aspect to my thesis. This is owed in large part to the theory of typeface personality. Shaikh (2007) provides a detailed review of typeface personality as part of her doctoral thesis. As I will argue in Chapter 2, the theory of typeface personality is linked to the theory of anthropomorphism and both theories help to understand why consumers form relationships with typefaces. But of course, attitudes towards typefaces per se are valuable markers for product meanings and consumer-product relationships respectively. Relevant issues are further discussed in Chapter 2.

Affective response cluster

As established earlier, our interaction with products can also evoke pleasure (Alba & Williams, 2013) and emotions (Desmet, 2012), two central aspects of hedonic benefits. Publications on various types of consumer-product relationships (e.g. Mugge, 2007; Russo, Boess, & Hekkert, 2011; Whang, Allen, Sahoury, & Zhang, 2004) suggest that an emotional bond between product and self is an essential characteristic of such relationships. My proposition—which I will elaborate further in Chapter 2—is that the form and quality of relationships we develop with typefaces is related to the meaning they have for us (Baumeister, 1991; C. L. Park, 2010; Waltersdorfer, Gericke, & Blessing, 2015). While researchers studied affective responses in the context of typeface designs (e.g. Amare & Manning, 2012; Choi et al., 2016; Koch, 2011; Pochun et al., 2018; Puškarević & Uroš, 2016), my literature review shows that—to date—no typographic research has studied typefaces in the context of product meanings and consumer-product relationships respectively. This is, therefore, the major knowledge gap I have identified. The present study seeks to contribute to addressing this lack.

Conative and behavioural response cluster

Going back to the consumer response clusters, the existing body of typographic literature has furthermore studied conative and behavioural responses to typefaces. For instance, studies suggest that typefaces can influence motivation (Song & Schwarz, 2008), willingness to pay (Yunhui Huang, Wu, et al., 2018), and willingness to donate (Giese et al., 2014, study 1; Townsend, 2017). Schorn et al. (2014)

conclude, that the weight of a typeface can e.g. increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Doyle and Bottomley (2004) conducted a series of experiments concluding—among other things—that brands and products were chosen more often if the typeface was perceived appropriate. Similarly, Schroll et al. (2018) found that products (crispbread in study 1a and chocolate in study 1b) displayed in a handwritten-like (script) typeface are purchased more often than the same products using a non-script typeface as the products are being evaluated more positively. Izadi and Patrick (2020) suggest that typeface design (script vs. non-script) can affect haptic engagement with certain product categories (low vs. high-risk). Finally, Mead et al. (2020) conclude that typefaces can impact frequency of store visits as well as purchase intentions.

Conclusions from review of typographic research

Reviewing the literature, it became apparent to me that fundamentally all studies share some commonalities about the role typefaces play in the research and in the way typefaces are studied. While all researchers have appropriated typefaces to fit the purpose of their study, research on typefaces as commodities (e.g. Cahalan, 2004/2007) is scarce. The body of literature tends to use typefaces as visual cues that are evaluated employing standardised scales or by manipulating typefaces as independent variable. Being situated mainly at the intersection of consumer/marketing and psychology research, this seems in line with the dominant philosophical underpinnings in mainstream consumer and psychological research, which is nomothetic and reductionist in nature, trying to explain causal relationships (Langdridge, 2007; Riley et al., 2019; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008; Solomon, 2018). Prior research also found that both, consumer and typographic research, is predominantly interested in cognitive issues (Doyle & Bottomley, 2006; Simonson, Carmon, Dhar, & Drolet, 2001). My own review suggests this trend continues. I acknowledge that the above approaches have their merits. However, as outlined in the next section, their research purposes are different from mine.

Research aim and questions

As sketched out in earlier parts of this chapter, the previously highly specialized type industry is facing disruptive changes induced by the digitisation and democratization of fonts. One consequence is the

blurring of traditional roles and therefore identities: with the emergence of the prosumer culture in the type industry, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between producers, intermediaries and consumers. Cahalan (2004/2007, p. 195) claims that "it is now of greater interest to question what meaning [why] type [what] has to the increasingly diverse group of users of type [who]."

This study addresses this call. It does so by conceptualizing fonts as ordinary everyday commodities. This seems sensible because fonts are fundamentally mundane objects that individuals consume "while and as an integral part of negotiating … daily life-tasks" (R. E. Kleine, III, Kleine, & Kernan, 1992, p. 411). Undoubtedly, the latter encompass activities like reading and writing, two essential modes of communicating and thus of engaging with our world. Data produced in this study provide further support for this idea (see Chapter 5, p. 158).

It is argued in Chapter 2 that meanings are generated in our interactions—that is, lived experiences—with fonts. Prior research indicates that we use mundane products (e.g. R. E. Kleine, III, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993) and consumption objects more generally (e.g. E. J. Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Hogg & Michell, 1996) to construct identities. Building on Belk's (1987) work, Lastovicka and Sirianni (2013, p. 53) explain that identity development is possible because product meanings are "polysemous (or multiple) and idiosyncratic," which, in fact, allows us to form relationships with objects.

Person-object relationships are also influenced by our lived experiences with consumption objects (e.g. Franzen & Moriarty, 2009) and can take different gestalts like attachment, avoidance, love, and hate (for a review see e.g. Khan & Lee, 2014). As such, they can be described with different attributes like weak or strong, positive or negative, and even passionate (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016). It is, therefore, proposed that person-object relationships can be understood as embodied product meanings.

Acknowledging the central role that lived experiences play in the construction of product meanings and relationships with consumption objects respectively, this research aims to explore the lived experiences diverse individuals have with font consumption. The following research questions were devised to answer that aim:

1. How can relationships between individuals and fonts be described analytically?

2. How do mundane products like fonts contribute to the construction of identities?

Thesis outline

This study is organized in seven chapters, that are enclosed by a reflexive prologue and reflexive epilogue. Chapter titles, as well as the structure of this work, are loosely inspired by theatre plays, for no specific reason other than it severed the unfolding of the research narrative.

The first chapter sets the scene. It conceptualizes fonts as commodities and situates the research at the intersection of marketing, psychology, and design. A review of relevant literature highlights gaps in our current understanding of the research phenomenon. Furthermore, it articulates the research aim as well as objectives of this research and provides an overview of its structure. Chapter 2 offers a critical overview of the three central themes studied in this research: product meanings, self-identity and person-object relationships. Insights were used to refine the research questions and informed methodological decisions. Philosophical, theoretical, methodological and ethical considerations underpinning this study are considered in Chapter 3. Implications for research design, data generation and analysis, as well as presentation of results are outlined. Chapter 4 introduces the cast of this study, provides information about research settings and offers participants' explanations of the collages they had created for this research. This affords the reader to contextualize participants' lived experiences with font consumption. The results of this research are presented as two main themes (acts) in Chapters 5 and 6, where they are discussed in relation to extant academic literature. Both chapters integrate the results into a novel theory of connoisseurship, proposing new theoretical models like the connoisseurship trajectories framework. Chapter 7 concludes this study by summarising the research, reviewing the research questions, and reconceptualizing connoisseurship. An integrated model of connoisseurship is presented. Implications for theory and practice are derived, recommendations for future research are articulated, and the research is evaluated.

The purpose of the reflexive chapters is to position myself in this study. I acknowledge that I am not only the 'playwright', but also a member of the cast, who must engage and lose himself in the play so that meaning can be generated (Gadamer, 1960/1989).

Summary

A key purpose of this chapter was to conceptualize fonts as commodities. Many of us will consume typefaces unconsciously—they are ordinary everyday products that disappear in the background while we engage with our world. Furthermore, as demonstrated in this chapter, most researchers (and very likely non-researchers too) treat typefaces essentially as visual cues. This reduces our understanding of consumer behaviour in the context of typefaces to visual font consumption. By aiming to understand lived experiences with font consumption more fully, this research sets out to enhance our knowledge. Explaining font consumption along the different phases of the consumer decision-making process constitutes a first step in that direction.

2

"**People often buy products not for what they do, but for what they mean.**"

(Solomon, 2018, pp. 39-40)

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce concepts relevant to the research questions set out in the previous chapter. It begins with the discussion of product meanings arising from I-Thou encounters, followed by two meta-concepts, namely product involvement and ownership. The former refers to the relevance or importance consumption objects have for individuals and could be therefore an indicator of product meaning. Ownership (legal versus psychological), on the other hand, represents an interesting background for the discussion of consumer behaviour (e.g. deviant behaviour in the case of legal ownership). Psychological ownership is then linked to identity, which can be described along four facets: personal, relational, collective and material self. It is argued that experiences must be integrated into our identities to become meaningful. Various processes and motives facilitating the integration of experiences are reviewed and the role of identity in consumption contexts discussed. Finally, different relationship theories are juxtaposed, situating my own research. A conceptual framework is introduced at the end of this chapter.

The product

Product meanings

Typefaces have a peculiar feature. As Celhay et al. (2015, p. 169) explain based on their reading of prior literature, typefaces are "simultaneously verbal and visual signs," and they convey denotative and connotative (or semantic) meanings (see Celhay et al., 2015 for a review). In simple terms, the former represents the lexical (literal) meaning of typographic character or word, whereas the latter refers to our associations with typefaces' visual designs that manifest at different typographic levels (e.g. individual letter shape versus advertising layout; see also p. 45 below) (Stöckl, 2005). Acknowledging the co-existence of denotative and conative meanings, this and prior research (e.g. Koch, 2011) sought to bypass automatic connections by making deliberate choices concerning the presentation of stimuli (see pp. 82-84 below).

However, as I argue later, a person's capacity to manipulate typographic features and meanings (see, for example, p. 32 below) can provide important cues about their relationship with fonts. And so

too can the connotative meanings evident be associated with typefaces more generally. To explain this further, I use the theories of anthropomorphism and product personality in the later part of this chapter (p. 45). Here—rather than looking at the visual level—I want to remain on a more abstract level and ask what meaning typefaces as commodities can have for us. To do so, I offer a working definition of product meaning, and discuss prior literature concerning dimensions and typologies of product meanings.

Research on product meanings is not new. Prior research aimed to understand the concept of product meaning (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Friedmann, 1986; R. E. Kleine, III & Kernan, 1988), its structure (e.g. Fournier, 1991; Helfenstein, 2005), its formation (e.g. DeBerry-Spence, 2008; R. E. Kleine, III & Kernan, 1991), as well as its determinants and consequences (e.g. Ligas, 2000; Waltersdorfer et al., 2015). For the purpose of this study, I build on prior research and define product meaning as an individual's interpretation of typefaces, proposing that product meanings are actively constructed by individuals during their engagement with typefaces and are polysemic and context-dependent (Crilly, Good, Matravers, & Clarkson, 2008; Fournier, 1991; R. E. Kleine, III & Kernan, 1988, 1991).

This definition acknowledges the active role individuals play in the creation of meaning and places product meanings in the space between individuals and typefaces. It is therefore sensible to argue that product meanings arise in a *dialogical* encounter between *I* (individual) and *Thou* (typefaces) (Gadamer, 1960/1989) and are hence the force that unites them (Baumeister, 1991). Furthermore, it affirms that typefaces can have multiple meanings. Recalling the earlier discussion of product benefits, a typeface (font) might be considered a tool (utilitarian value), or a source for pleasure (hedonic value) as well as a means to express our identities (symbolic value). Finally, it proposes that meanings can vary between contexts. Take the example of the typeface used on the wedding invitation introduced in the previous chapter (Soulmate). The meaning of that typeface is probably different for the couple than it is for the wedding guests or for you. Researchers like Fournier (1991) and Mugge (2007) identified various forms of product meanings and created a typology of product meanings (see Table 5, p. 24). As I argue in the following text, classifications and structures do overlap and vary depending on their respective conceptualizations.

Table 5

Typologies of product meanings – A comparison

Fournier (1991)	Mugge (2007)
Objects of personal identity	Objects of personal identity
Objects of position and role	Objects of personal history
Objects of appreciation	Objects of connectedness
Ritual enhancers	Objects of culture and religion
Objects of action	Objects of appreciation (product attributes)
Objects of childhood	Objects of pleasure (hedonism)
Objects of transition	Objects of financial investment
Objects of utility	Objects of personification (anthropomorphism)
	Objects of utility

Note. This overview adopts and extends Fournier's (1991) typology to Mugge (2007) for ease of comparison.

Thirty years ago, Fournier (1991) introduced a framework for the classification of eight types of consumption objects (see Table 5, p. 24). It is based on three dimensions: Tangibility (subjective/objective), emotionality (low/high intensity), and commonality (personal/cultural). Although presented as dichotomies, the author conceptualized them as continuous dimensions. In terms of tangibility, the author argues that products can have symbolic (subjective) and utilitarian (objective) value, yet it was likely that for a specific person and object, only one benefit will be salient in a specific consumption context. More recent research discussed in Chapter 1, as well as the definition of product meaning, seem to support this proposition. Furthermore, Fournier (1991) suggests that our interactions with consumptions objects evoke different emotions, which range from low (as in the case of attitudes) to high (as in the case of internal feeling states). Since I have addressed the distinction between attitudes and emotions already, I will not discuss this issue further, but instead recognize the conceptual difference between Fournier's (1991) and my work in the following discussion. As stated in Chapter 1, the hedonic benefits a consumption object offers is an important source for affective responses.

Finally, commonality indicates the origin of product meanings. Based on prior literature (e.g. McCracken, 1986), Fournier (1991) discusses the source (culture versus individual) and e.g. temporal dimension of product meanings (e.g. family heirlooms). The typeface *Helvetica* (launched in the 1950s) is a good example of how type designers and marketers respectively capture the zeitgeist of their time

in the typeface design, the application of the typeface in marketing contexts, and how that meaning eventually prevailed seven decades (Cahalan, 2004/2007; Hustwit, 2007; Monotype, n.d.; Nedeljković et al., 2014). Conversely, the aesthetic characteristics of typefaces such as *Courier* might remind me of my late childhood, when I used my typewriter for school essays. In those cases, typefaces "are simply imbued with feelings of familiarity and, as a consequence, enjoy a favourable predisposition for response" (Fournier, 1991, p. 740).

In her study of product attachment, i.e. the affective bond between an individual and a particular object, Mugge (2007) proposed four determinants specific to product attachment: Self-expression, group affiliation, memories and pleasure. These clusters are the result of a literature review conducted by Mugge (2007), where she identified nine types of product meanings, but excluded those meanings from the clusters that were not relevant to product attachment (e.g. utilitarian product meanings)—see Table 5 (p. 24) above. Acknowledging her focus lies on the affective relationship between I and Thou, it is fair to say that the dimensions presented by Mugge (2007), nevertheless, share important commonalities with those offered by Fournier (1991).

On an aggregate level, they represent one end of the continua proposed by Fournier (1991). Self-expression and group affiliation are symbolic values (tangibility), pleasure concerns the hedonic aspect (emotionality) and memories are idiographic (commonality). Disregarding the context of product attachment and looking at all nine types of product meanings Mugge (2007) identified in her research, substantial overlaps with Fournier's (1991) eight meaning categories as well as weaknesses inherent in both classifications become apparent.

Overlaps can be observed in three areas. Firstly, both authors acknowledge the utilitarian meaning products may have for individuals. Secondly, there is agreement about the hedonic benefits consumption objects offer (objects of appreciation: Fournier, 1991; aesthetic qualities and enjoyment respectively: Mugge, 2007). Thirdly, the authors concur that products can express identity. However, this is where the concepts become indistinct and the boundaries blur. There are many types of product meanings that could be linked to identity but were not. Take for instance Fournier's (1991) *objects of transition* (e.g. old college sweater) and *objects of childhood* (e.g. brand my mother always purchased), which—according to the author—have objective/tangible meanings originating from a personal level. These could be easily labelled as products representing *personal history* and, as such, subsumed in

Mugge's (2007) memories cluster. Conversely, *objects of position and role* (Fournier, 1991) are proposed to have subjective/intangible meanings with their origins located in culture. Expressing our status through consumption objects (e.g. Tesla car) is emblematic for conspicuous consumption (Goenka & Thomas, 2020). It could represent our motive for self-enhancement (see p. 39) or express our interest in aesthetically pleasing products or our on-going concern for the environment, which would all fall into the identity cluster. Because of its premium price, we could also assign a *finance-related meaning* (Mugge, 2007) to it.

As I explain later in this chapter, identity can be described along different facets and has a strong temporal component (see pp. 36, 39). The college sweater, for instance, can express multiple facets of our past (e.g. alumna), present (e.g. student), and future self (e.g. prospect), or it can signal our preference for casual or functional clothes. The example illustrates too that meaning is not 'stuck' in time; for the alumna, the old college sweater can be reminiscent of her past but also signify her present group affiliation with the university's community. Grouping product meanings by acknowledging the multi-faceted and temporal concept of identity underlines the relationship between product and identity even more. Neither Fournier (1991) nor Mugge (2007) establish this link formally. The issue could be due to the proposition, that product meanings are based on idiographic perceptions and not on objective product characteristics (Fournier, 1991). This in turn raises the question, whether the definition of standardised typologies is feasible after all.

Furthermore, I argue that Fournier's (1991) distinction between culture and person as the source of meaning is not helpful, because meaning arises from multiple sources (C. T. Allen, Fournier, & Miller, 2008; Claiborne & Ozanne, 1990; Fournier, Solomon, & Englis, 2008; Peter & Olson, 2008). Moreover, the differentiation between objective and subjective meaning does not seem to be as straightforward as Fournier (1991) suggests. I find it difficult to comprehend why the meaning of an old college sweater (object of transition) is considered as tangible (objective) rather than symbolic (subjective). I wonder if there is anything more subjective and personal than "steadfast reminders of happy times" (Fournier, 1991, p. 739).

Yet, the biggest challenge I see in both studies (Fournier, 1991; Mugge, 2007) is the hidden assumption that product meanings can be easily articulated. My argument is based on the observation that neither of the two authors clearly addresses the issue that product meanings—understood as

interpretations—are both, explicit and implicit (Brinkmann, 2008; Rosa, 2004). Acknowledging these shortcomings, I seek to overcome them in my own research.

Fournier's work (1991), furthermore, suggests that our subjective feelings of familiarity and knowledge (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; C. W. Park & Lessig, 1981), as well as our ongoing involvement with consumption objects (e.g. Bloch, 1981) intensify the closer objects move towards the personal level (e.g. collecting typefaces to satisfy personal needs or interests) and the more frequently we engage with these objects (e.g. reviewing and/or reorganizing typefaces regularly).

This in turn reduces the psychological distance between individuals and typefaces (see Xu et al., 2017 for a review) induced by the temporal distance (Liberman, Trope, & Stephan, 2007). Psychological distance is a subjectively felt experience indicating the closeness between I and Thou; it is based on the meaning typefaces (Thou) have for us (Hess, 2003). It can furthermore foster psychological ownership (Claus, Vanhouche, Dewitte, & Warlop, 2012), i.e. the subjectively felt experience of ownership (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2001). This reveals the interconnectedness of these concepts and their relevance for consumer-product relationships becomes more evident. I therefore discuss them more in detail in the next sections.

Perceived relevance: the question of product involvement

Early research on involvement dates back to the 1960s and has since then steadily gained relevance in consumer research (see e.g. Hourigan & Bougoure, 2012 for a review). Literature proposes different types (e.g. financial or psychological risk; Percy & Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2016) and conceptualizations of involvement (e.g. process, trait or internal state variable) (for a review, see e.g. E. Day, Stafford, & Camacho, 1995). For the purpose of this study, I adopt Zaichkowsky's (1985, p. 342) conceptualization and define involvement as "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests," whereas involvement has an affective and cognitive dimension (Zaichkowsky, 1987, 1994). This definition comprises at least three important aspects. Firstly, it asks how central or important (Evrard & Aurier, 1996) the object is for the individual. Secondly, the object refers to a category rather than a specific exemplar (Mugge, 2007). Using the sweatshirt example introduced earlier, this would mean that an individual is involved with fashion clothing in general (e.g. Hourigan & Bougoure, 2012)

rather than with a particular fashion item (college sweater). Thirdly, it acknowledges its idiographic character, as needs, values, et cetera vary between individuals (Bloch, 1981). Following Bloch, Commuri, and Arnold (2009), a fourth element can be added, namely temporality. The authors explored the origins of involvement and suggest that involvement is enduring, yet dynamic, and proposed a model outlining origins and development of involvement (see Figure 2, p. 28).

Their model proposes three sources initiating and/or facilitating the development of product involvement, namely parents (taking over interests from parents), peers (being introduced to areas of special interest) and product design (e.g. falling in love with a product) (Bloch et al., 2009).

Figure 2
Model of EI [enduring involvement] origins and development (Bloch et al., 2009)
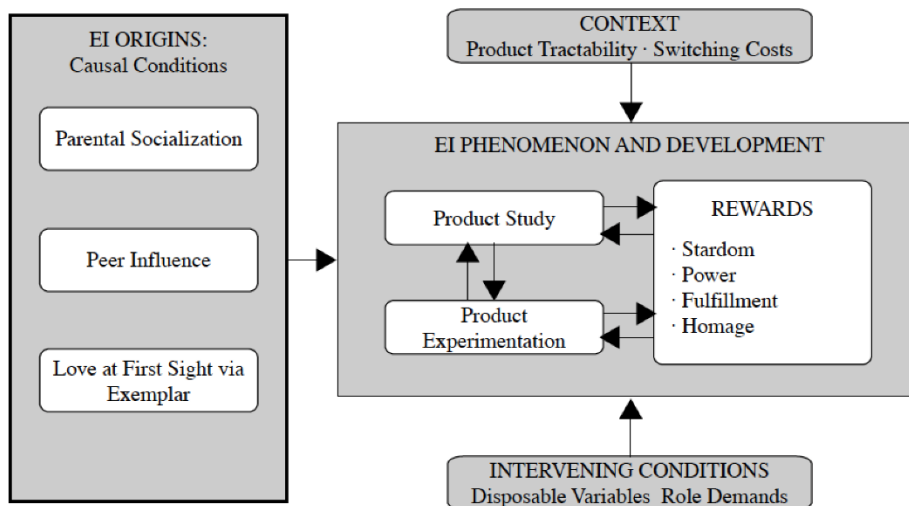
Note. The term 'EI' signifies 'enduring involvement'. From "Exploring the origins of enduring product involvement," by P. H. Bloch, S. Commuri, and T. J. Arnold, 2009, Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 12(1), p. 57 (https://doi.org/10/c4swrp). © Emerald Publishing Limited all rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

The authors furthermore identified three conditions, that keep the level of involvement high. Highly involved persons, for instance, spend time to study the object. Furthermore, they experiment with products by playing around with them and by actively discovering their features or by even personalizing them (Bloch et al., 2009). Finally, the behaviour of highly involved persons is reinforced and rewarded in various ways: Firstly, our expertise might be acknowledged when choosing very special and rare

typefaces (stardom); secondly we might feel a sense of mastery of the subject matter (power); thirdly we might experience fulfilment since we have achieved something that was meaningful to us; and lastly, by engaging with products we can honour them (homage), particularly those that have gained personal or historical significance (Bloch et al., 2009). The authors also recognize the role of context and other factors on the development of involvement.

At first glance, it seems the model focusses on explicit factors only. It is fair to say that studying and experimentation, for instance, increase mastery and hence declarative and procedural knowledge (Alba & Williams, 2013; J. R. Anderson, 1976). However, Bloch et al. (2009) specify that particularly the ongoing involvement with intangible objects depended on a wealth of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966). I agree with Mugge (2007) that product involvement (e.g. fashion involvement) may not be needed to form an affective bond (e.g. attachment) with a particular product exemplar (e.g. college sweater); equally, it is conceivable consumers who are highly involved in a product category (e.g. fonts) may assign special meanings to typeface exemplars they own (e.g. Soulmate). Our ongoing engagement with typefaces could also explain the reduced psychological distance mentioned before. Consequently, product involvement allows a more differentiated understanding of meanings typefaces have for individuals as well as the relationships they form with objects in general and possessions in particular.

Mine or not mine: the question of typeface ownership

Fundamentals

Consumer researchers distinguish between legal and psychological ownership, explaining that the former is based on objective criteria (e.g. laws) defining property and ownership rights, whereas the latter merely requires a person's subjective feeling of ownership and thus the *claim* of ownership over tangible or intangible artefacts (see e.g. Pierce et al., 2001, 2003 for a review). While conceptually different, both types of ownership can affect consumption and be taken as indicators for the relationship individuals have with typefaces.

I refrain from a detailed discussion of legal ownership of typefaces as it would be outside the scope of my work. I believe it suffices to understand that fonts (e.g. software or metal type) and typefaces (actual design of a glyph) are covered—to varying degrees—by different laws (e.g. design, trademark

or copyright law), and that legal protection might vary by country (e.g. copyrighted in the UK but not in the USA) (Fry, 2009; Lipton, 2009; Liss & Adin, 2012; Yeluri & Siddhartha, 2018). In any case, digital typefaces usually come with an *end user license agreement* (EULA) defining rights and obligations for the use of digital typefaces in different contexts (e.g. desktop versus web font), which are most likely to differ between foundries and designers respectively (Kimbarovsky, 2019; Monotype, 2019). An example of the desktop EULA for the font *Arquitecta* (published by *Latinotype* and sold by *MyFonts*) is provided in Appendix 2 (p. 322). It shows how questions regarding e.g. use, diffusion and alterations of digital typefaces are being regulated and thus *may* impact consumer behaviour. I have highlighted the word *may*, as buyers generally tend not to read 'the small print' (D'Agostino & Seidmann, 2016). We have probably all been in similar situations: We use software (e.g. *Microsoft Office*), buy products online (e.g. the last pair of shoes I was longing for) or agree to updated terms and conditions of service providers (e.g. *Apple Music*) without reading the agreements. Some individuals might not even know that fonts on computers come with strings attached. Other individuals might know about EULAs for typefaces, but they simply do not care and/or perceive the risk of their legal offence as low. Pierce, Jussila, and Cummings (2009) explain that psychological ownership may lead to deviant behaviour. For me as consumer researcher, the (dis)obeyance of legal rights can be a potential indicator for the meaning artefacts have for individuals. I shall next briefly outline sources of psychological ownership and sketch out how psychological ownership develops (drivers). This knowledge is also useful when discussing the concept of *material identity* in the subsection thereafter.

Sources

Literature suggests that we develop psychological ownership to satisfy three motives (see Pierce et al., 2003 for a review). First, our engagement with consumption objects makes us feel competent and efficacious allowing us to control our environment. Although in this case objects seem to have a purely instrumental character, we nevertheless become closely acquainted and connected with them and consequently develop feelings of ownership of these objects. Second, artefacts have—as discussed earlier—symbolic value. They can become a source of self-discovery, or vehicles through which we communicate our identity to others, or threads that connect our identities across time (e.g. collage sweater).

Their proximity to our identity facilitates the experience of psychological ownership. Finally, objects we call ours root us in time and space, offering, for instance, a sense of familiarity and belonging.

Drivers

Intricately linked to these sources of psychological ownership are its drivers, namely contamination, knowledge, appropriation/control, as well as creation (see Belk, 1988; Pierce et al., 2003; Sartre, 1943/1958 for a review). For this study, I limit the discussion to aspects most relevant to the research problem set out in Chapter 1. With regard to contamination, prior research suggests that owning arte-facts make them more valuable for us—a phenomenon also known as the *endowment effect* (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1990; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1980). Later studies have found that we actually do not need to own the object; touch, imagined possession and psychological ownership can also induce this effect (Ariely & Simonson, 2003; J. Peck & Shu, 2009; Shu & Peck, 2011). These insights indicate that—with regard to the disposition of typefaces discussed in Chapter 1—we might show a preference for keeping typefaces we do not use any more rather than deleting them.

The next driver is knowledge. As discussed earlier, we might study typefaces (e.g. history, for-mal qualities, socio-cultural context, et cetera) and experiment with them (e.g. using them in our works), which has the effect that we build a body of (explicit-implicit, declarative-procedural) typographic knowledge. In doing so, we come to know the typefaces intimately and build a relationship with them, developing a sense of psychological ownership. Belk (1988) adds the caveat that our knowledge must be passionate for us to develop a sense of 'mine-ness'. This implies that psychological ownership through knowledge comprises a cognitive, affective and relational dimension.

Finally, appropriation/control and creation of artefacts are two additional ways of developing psychological ownership. In the former case, manipulating our environment through the use typefaces requires mastery and/or control of typefaces. This taps into declarative and procedural knowledge. Cre-ation on the other hand "involves investing time, energy [e.g. physical or psychological/mental], and even one's values and identity" (Pierce et al., 2001, p. 302). Literature equally suggests that creation could be defined more broadly still by including, for instance, purchase intentions and the actual acqui-sition of typefaces (Belk, 1988; Sartre, 1943/1958). In the narrowest sense, creation refers to the pro-cess and/or outcome of designing typefaces. However, I use the term creation in a broader sense to

also include the process and outcome of using fonts for the creation of works (e.g. writing emails or creating posters). Since mastery and creation are closely related, and because the use of typefaces represents a key consumption activity discussed in Chapter 1, I next explore these points in more detail. To do so, I adapt the concepts of customization and personalization to the context of typefaces, as they can be seen as indicators for the degree of mastery.

Customization and personalization

For the purpose of this study, the level of mastery is described along a continuum ranging from customization (low) to personalization (high). *Font customization* signifies the use of predefined software parameters to change basic typeface characteristics such as point size (e.g. 12pt), font style (e.g. Italic) and font colour (e.g. black) (Tseng, Jiao, & Wang, 2010). The level of mastery is low because the modification of those features is considered shared knowledge (Holst-Larkin, 2006). *Font personalization* refers to the use of software to actively manipulate the visual appearance of typefaces or their arrangement significantly. Mindful of the emerging prosumer culture in the font industry, I propose that the highest level of mastery represents the designing of typefaces. The adjustment of aspects such as kerning and tracking lies somewhere between these poles, as it requires some typographic knowledge. The continuum of font customization and personalization is best understood as dynamic and above all discretionary (see Figure 3, p. 33).

Figure 3

The continuum of font customization and personalization

customisation		personalisation
Change of basic design features such as size, style, and colour of fonts within the boundaries set by the font designer.	Change of parameters that alter the design of the typeface beyond the boundaries set by the font designer (e.g. kerning or spacing).	Change of parameters that result in a fundamentally new visual design (e.g. expressive type, motion type, texture, dynamism…)

low   medium   high

Level of mastery

In her research, Mugge (2007) identified seven dimensions along which the personalization of (durable) products can be evaluated. The present study appropriates those dimensions and applies them with changes to the domain of font consumption to provide a better understanding of typeface mastery, that is customization and personalization. The first dimension is called *mental effort*. It is at its lowest when we use the default font and accept all pre-sets without making any customizations. The further along we move on the continuum towards the personalization of typefaces, the more mental energy we invest (e.g. cognitive skills and declarative knowledge). Second, it is suggested that personalization may involve *physical effort*. In the case of typefaces, this dimension is epitomized by the handling of computer software like Microsoft Word or Adobe InDesign. More advanced typeface personalization require additional psychomotor skills and procedural knowledge. Third, typefaces can be personalized to varying degrees and an infinite number of times, which makes the personalization of typefaces very *flexible*. Fourth, type designers may *initiate* personalization by offering alternative glyph designs (e.g. ligatures) font users can choose from. Personalization can also be initiated by situational (e.g. wedding), personal (e.g. values) or social factors (e.g. friends). Fifth—analogous to earlier discussions—the *goal of personalization* may be driven by utilitarian, hedonic or symbolic reasons, or a combination thereof. Sixth, typefaces are generally personalized at the *moment* of usage. The seventh dimension is called *deliberateness*. Mugge (2007) uses the example of a leather jacket to explain that the jacket can be

personalized deliberately or simply show signs of wear. While the latter make the jacket unique, they develop unintentionally. Being intangible objects, typefaces will generally not show unintended signs of personalization. Hence, every personalization in the context of typefaces is much more likely to be deliberate.

In conclusion, Mugge's (2007) seven dimensions can be subsumed in an objective and subjective category respectively. Flexibility, deliberateness and the moment of usage would fall into the former. Conversely, the dimensions mental and physical effort, goal of personalization and—to some extent—initiation belong into the subjective group. I termed this category subjective, because its dimensions seem to best represent our personal involvement in the process. As mentioned earlier, we do not only invest resources (e.g. time), but also parts of ourselves in the process of creation and personalization respectively. To understand what role our identities play, it is necessary to explicate what identity and/or self means. That discussion also reveals a shortcoming of Mugge's (2007) model, namely that it does not acknowledge the implicit dimension. For example, we might not always be aware of our motives for initiating personalization or of the goals we pursue with personalization (Boddy, 2005; Donoghue, 2000; Mesías & Escribano, 2018). Thus, not only do our typographic knowledge (no matter whether declarative or procedural), but also our self-understanding, have explicit and implicit dimensions—and this is explained in the next section.

The self

Defining self and identity

Despite long-standing research interest in the two constructs (see e.g. Hattie, 1992 for a review), the delineation of self and identity is still challenging, not least because they are studied in different academic disciplines that apply various theories (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011). Further problems arise first from the varying conceptualizations of the two constructs—even within same academic disciplines; second from the introduction of new constructs by creating compound terms using self or identity as prefixes and/or suffixes respectively (e.g. self-concept, ego identity, self-identity); and third, from the

conceptual overlaps and differences between concepts (see Leary & Tangney, 2012; Vignoles et al., 2011 for a review). Table 6 (p. 35) provides some examples to illustrate the problems.

For this study and in line with prior research (e.g. Ahuvia, Batra, & Bagozzi, 2009; Roeser, Peck, & Nasir, 2006; Swann & Bosson, 2010), the terms self and identity are used interchangeably. In simplest terms, when speaking of self and identity respectively, I shall refer to descriptions (e.g. beliefs, thoughts, feelings, motives…) individuals provide in response to the question *Who am I?* (Campbell, Assanand, & Paula, 2003; Leary & Tangney, 2012; Vignoles et al., 2011). These descriptions are the result of self-interpretations, suggesting that we actively construct our identities by interpreting ourselves; but because we are not always able to access information and articulate who we are, self-interpretations will have an implicit, as well as an explicit, dimension (Brinkmann, 2008; Rosa, 2004; C. Taylor, 1989). The self is therefore considered a psychological (Sedikides & Gregg, 2003) and/or phenomenal construct (Edward Ellsworth Jones & Gerard, 1967).

Table 6
Examples of constructs related to the self in prior literature

Construct name	Construct definition	Source (author, year)
Self-concept	The totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object	Rosenberg (1979, p. 7)
	One's description and evaluation of oneself, including psychological and physical characteristics, qualities, skills, roles, and so forth	VandenBos (2015, p. 953)
Self-image	One's view or concept of oneself	VandenBos (2015, p. 956)
Self-knowledge	Beliefs, thoughts, memories, and feelings about the self	Swann and Bosson (2010, p. 591)
Self-representations	Attributes or characteristics of the self that are consciously acknowledged by the individual through language–that is, how one describes oneself	Harter (1999, p. 3)
Self-understanding	A person's constellation of beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes about the self	Hart and Edelstein (1992, p. 319)
	The attainment of knowledge about and insight into one's characteristics, including attitudes, motives, behavioral tendencies, strengths, and weaknesses	VandenBos (2015, p. 959)

Facets of identity

According to extant literature (see Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Sedikides & Gregg, 2003; Vignoles et al., 2011 for review), identity can be described along multiple facets, namely personal (also called individual), relational, collective and material. The first facet, personal identity, comprises aspects such as, for instance, physical characteristics, personal goals, motives, desires, values, beliefs, and future projections. Relational identity on the other hand describes the roles we adopt in relation to others by self-identifying for instance as daughter, sister, or aunt. Through our collective identity we express our belongingness to groups and self-identify with, for instance, the values and beliefs of these groups. Examples are my self-identification as academic or European.

The final facet is called material identity. As Vignoles et al. (2011) explain in their review, the material self comprises everything an individual calls mine (James, 1890), including tangible and intangible artefacts (Belk, 1988, 2013; Proshansky, 1978) and places (Proshansky, 1978). Belk (1988, 2011) introduced the concept of *extended self* to describe our self-identification with possessions and places. The drivers facilitating self-extension (contamination, knowledge, creation, mastery/control) have been discussed in the context of psychological ownership. There is a very close relationship between what I call mine (e.g. psychological ownership) and what I call me (extended self) (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004), confirming that actual or legal ownership and/or possession is not required for the extension of our selves (Pierce et al., 2001). I also agree with Ahuvia (2005, p. 180) who states that the term extended self is difficult because it "can give rise to the idea that the core self is prior to, and ontologically distinct from, the extended self." One way of overcoming this problem is to think of objects as more or less important to our identity.

These four facets of identity are not mutually exclusive but offer different perspectives to describe one's identity (Vignoles et al., 2011). While Sedikides, Gaertner, and O'Mara (2011) do not speak of material identity in their work, their postulates nevertheless offer valuable grounds for discussing the relationship of the facets. First, the authors suggest that in Eastern and Western cultures, personal identity seems to be the centre of our identities. Second, the other facets become meaningful only if they are integrated into the personal identity. Following above arguments, it is fair to say that this applies

for the material self too. Third, we leave our personal identity to engage with others. Finally, although we move between the individual, relational and collective facets, our starting and end point always is the personal facet.

While I believe that these propositions are valuable, they cause various challenges for this study. The first postulate, for instance, according to which personal identity is the centre—or the "home base [which] constitutes the essence of the person" (Sedikides et al., 2011, p. 104)—implies an essentialist perspective (Langdridge, 2007). A problem discussed in relation to the extended self already. Consequently, it conflicts with the definition of identity offered above, proposing that we actively construct our identity through self-interpretations. What about the other postulates? Appropriating Gadamer's (1960/1989, p. xxx) ideas to the context of typefaces, we could argue that "everyone who experiences … [typefaces] incorporates this experience wholly within himself [*sic*]: that is, into the totality of his [*sic*] self-understanding, within which it means something to him [*sic*]." This seems to confirm the second postulate. Implicit in Gadamer's (1960/1989) thoughts, are three premises that are at odds with the remaining postulates. First, the I needs a Thou for the construction of self-understanding. As already mentioned in my discussions of product meaning in the previous section, meaning arises from the I-Thou encounter, more precisely the space between I and Thou. This is represented by the metaphor *fusion of horizons* (Gadamer, 1960/1989) (see Chapter 3, p. 63).

Second, Gadamer (1960/1989) refers to the I-Thou encounter as experience, which ultimately is a lived experience (Boden, Larkin, & Iyer, 2019). Third, understanding occurs through interpretation and application (Gadamer, 1960/1989): For a particular person, interpretations become meaningful only if applied to a context (J. A. Smith, 2019; C. Taylor, 1985b), making lived experiences not only "*relational*" (I-Thou encounter) but also "*perspectival*" (Boden et al., 2019, p. 219; emphasis in original). Referring to Heidegger's work (1927/1962), Larkin, Watts, and Clifton (2006, p. 106; emphasis in original) explain that we are enmeshed in our world and "it is a mistake to believe that we can occasionally *choose* to take up a relationship with the various somatic and semantic objects that 'make up' our world, because such relatedness is a *fundamental part of our constitution*."

This, however, seems to be exactly what Sedikides et al. (2011, p. 104) suggest when arguing that persons leave the personal self for the purpose of "social exploration" (postulate three), but always come back to the personal self (postulate four). However, it is fair to propose that Sedikides et al. (2011)

assume a Cartesian subject-object divide (Larkin et al., 2006), which conflicts with Gadamer's (1960/1989, p. xxx) thoughts outlined in more detail in later pasts of this study. For the remainder of this section, I focus on three aspects. First, the processes involved in the integration of experiences into identities. Second, the temporality of our identity, as the integration of relational and perspectival (lived) experiences into our selves suggests that our identity is dynamic and temporal. Finally, I outline the role of identity in consumption.

Integrating experiences into identities

According to Breakwell (1986/2015), we can integrate new aspects into our identity (assimilation) with, or without, revising our existing identity (accommodation). Whether or not accommodation processes are required when assimilating new experiences depends on how we evaluate them. While literature proposes various evaluation processes—which are basically initiated by self-motives—the focus here is on those that have been identified as key processes and motives in prior literature (see J. D. Brown, 1998; Hattie, 1992; Leary, 2007; O'Mara & Gaertner, 2017; Sedikides, 1993 for review). Further, the scope is narrowed to constructs that are most relevant to this research. At least two basic assumptions underly self-evaluations and -motives. First, it is suggested that self-evaluations are not absolute but relative, because we compare ourselves to the Thou when making evaluations (Festinger, 1954; Sedikides & Gregg, 2003). Second, evaluations and motives can be explicit (conscious) and implicit (automated and unconscious) (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Leary & Tangney, 2012; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953), which can lead to several biases (see e.g. Leary, 2007 for examples).

Self-consistency

Self-consistency describes our motivation to preserve our identity and to protect it against information that is inconsistent with our self-understanding (Lecky & Thorne, 1951; Rosenberg, 1979). The self-consistency motive is believed to be one of the drivers initiating coping strategies, i.e. any conscious or unconscious strategy employed to protect the self from threats (see e.g. Breakwell, 1986/2015 for review).

Self-verification

Related to the self-consistency motive is self-verification, which proposes that we seek to confirm our self-understandings through information we obtain from our environment (e.g. feedback) (Swann, 1983, 1990). For instance, in line with our need for self-consistency, we tend to seek feedback selectively, e.g. by choosing a source of feedback that is similar to us and hence likely to confirm our views.

Self-enhancement

Swann (1990) explains that self-enhancement processes are related to self-worth, i.e. "an individual's evaluation of himself or herself as a valuable, capable human being deserving of respect and consideration" (VandenBos, 2015, p. 959) and to I-Thou comparisons. These comparisons can be horizontal (lateral) or vertical (upward/downward) (Sedikides & Gregg, 2003; Swann & Bosson, 2010). In the former case, I might compare myself to a Thou that is fairly similar to me (e.g. other PhD candidates in marketing), whereas in the latter cases, I might compare myself to my supervisors (upward) or to students I teach (downward). Self-enhancement hence operates like a lens through which we process information in a way that allows us to enhance our self-worth (Escalas & Bettman, 2003).

Self-accuracy

J. D. Brown (1998) sketches out three reasons for our desire to obtain an accurate understanding of who we are. First, we might want to reduce uncertainty. Second, we might be motivated to discover who we are in a metaphysical sense. Finally, a more precise self-understanding (e.g. strengths and weaknesses or learning preferences) might support the achievement of other goals (e.g. getting the PhD done). Gadamer (1972/2007) also reminds us that—while we might strive for an accurate self-understanding—our identity is in flux, making it impossible to achieve full self-understanding. Such flux also resonates with the temporal feature of identity, which is discussed next.

Temporality of the self

Recalling my definition offered earlier, identity refers to descriptions individuals provide in response to the question *Who am I?*. Literature suggests that to answer this question, we look back into our past as

well as into the future for information (see D'Argembeau, Lardi, & Van der Linden, 2012; Peetz & Wilson, 2008 for review). At the same time, when asked to describe our future self, we inform our responses by past and present experiences that are being projected into the future; conversely, our view of the past will be shaped by the present (Boscolo & Bertando, 1992; Gadamer, 1960/1989; Strahan & Wilson, 2006). The consideration of past, present, and future reveals a first dimension of temporality, namely direction. A second dimension is distance. According to the *construal level theory* (Liberman et al., 2007; Trope & Liberman, 2010; Trope, Liberman, & Wakslak, 2007; Wakslak, Nussbaum, Liberman, & Trope, 2008), our self-interpretations will be more abstract and less detailed the bigger the temporal distance. Studies suggest that although we recall proximal past events and information more vividly, those memories fade over time while proximal future events can be imagined more easily (D'Argembeau & Van der Linden, 2004). Therefore, memory effects could be one explanation for that phenomenon.

Temporal distance does not only have an impact on the concreteness of our descriptions, but also on the perceived connectedness of present and future and/or past self (self-continuity) (Hershfield, 2011). To use Hershfield's (2011) example, our identification with our potential future self of five years will be stronger than that of forty years. At the same time, construal level theory suggests that distal representations (e.g. five years versus six months) are more important to individuals (Trope & Liberman, 2010) as they seem to epitomize what Wakslak et al. (2008, p. 758) refer to as "the essence or gist of the self, [extracted by] imposing an order or structure on self-representation, and using more abstract and superordinate self-identifications." In accordance with prior discussions, I suggest to speak of the 'of what really matters to us' rather than 'the essence of the self', proposing that those things, that really matter to us, will cut through the noise of our daily lives. Various self-evaluation processes (e.g. self-enhancement by preferring positive rather than negative future or past self-understandings) are believed to be at work when assimilating self-related information across time (see e.g. D'Argembeau et al., 2012; D'Argembeau & Van der Linden, 2004).

The relevance of the self in consumption

As mentioned earlier, tangible and intangible commodities have functional, hedonic and symbolic values. Here, the symbolic dimension is of particular interest because it allows us to express our identities.

Research suggests that we can do so by differentiating ourselves from others or by expressing group affiliation (Dittmar, 1992). Consequently, consumption allows us to construct and maintain identities and to situate ourselves in a socio-cultural context (Wattanasuwan, 2005).

In their literature review, Rifkin and Etkin (2019) presented two fundamental ways in which consumption can affect self-understanding, namely indirectly and directly. In the former case, consumption choices and contexts can be used as heuristics allowing us to infer information and relate them to our self-understanding (see e.g. self-perception theory; Bem, 1972). In the latter case, consumption choices and hence our identity construction activities are intentional—we choose artefacts to express our identity or to create an image of our selves (e.g. Solomon, 1983). We can do so reactively or proactively, for example by using self-protection strategies to shield the self from perceived identity threats and/or by using self-enhancement strategies as part of our ongoing identity construction activities that occur independently from potential identity threats (e.g. Hepper, Gramzow, & Sedikides, 2010). The remainder of this section summarises selected identity theories and reviews their relevance in the context of font consumption.

Self-congruity theory (Sirgy, 1982, 1985, 2018) posits that consumers compare their self-image with the brand and/or brand user image and choose those artefacts that are congruent with their own identity. Research suggests, for example, that some individuals choose the brand Helvetica because it portrays a youthful, trendy user image (Nedeljković et al., 2014). The study conducted by Grohmann et al. (2013), on the other hand, indicates that typefaces can express a brand's personality (image).

An alternative theory is that of *product-personality congruence* (Govers, 2004), whereas product personality refers to the attribution of personality characteristics to products. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 1 (p. 15) and elaborated in the next section (p. 44), individuals anthropomorphise typefaces by ascribing them traits like gender (masculine-feminine), movement (slow-fast) or feelings (sad-happy) (e.g. Shaikh & Chaparro, 2016). Research findings suggest that we prefer products with personalities congruent with our self-understanding (Govers & Schoormans, 2005).

Self-extension theory (Belk, 1988, 2013) was introduced in Chapter 2 in the context of product ownership (p. 29) and material self (p. 36). The central tenet of this theory is that consumers define their identities through their possessions. Based on the works of Denegri-Knott et al. (2012) and Belk (2013)

respectively, it is conceivable that consumption rituals such as the curation of fonts (e.g. archiving) extend consumers identities by rendering fonts meaningful to them.

Finally, s*elf-expansion theory* (Aron & Aron, 1986) proposes that we incorporate aspects of persons we have a close relationship with into our own identities. Reimann and Aron (2009) applied the self-expansion theory to consumer-brand relationships, suggesting that brands offer resources (e.g. symbolic or functional value), perspectives (of prototypical owner/user) and identities that consumers can adopt and eventually incorporate into their selves (Reimann, Castaño, Zaichkowsky, & Bechara, 2012). Considering the previous discussions, it is conceivable that these mechanisms are applicable to the context of typefaces too. Connell and Schau (2013), however, offer an important caveat by urging researchers not to confuse *self-expansion* with *self-extension*, because the former is indicated by an inward, the latter by an outward direction. Belk (2014) accepts Connell and Schau's (2013) delineation, while providing another useful distinction based on the type of relationship we develop with objects, namely emotional attachment in the case of self-extension and love/hate in the case of self-expansion.

Consumer-product relationships

Setting the stage

In this section, I draw on product and brand literature to review relevant consumer-object relationship theories and models. My rationale is threefold. First, it has been established in Chapter 1 (p. 2) that we can distinguish between products (fonts) and brands (e.g. Calibri). My observations suggest that font users make reference to typefaces on the more aggregate brand level (typeface family) when referring to the global yet unique design characteristics of fonts. On the other hand, actual product attributes are being assessed on the more specific product variant level (e.g. Calibri Bold Italic).

Second, typefaces and brands share another feature, namely intangibility. This is an important factor to consider, because some marketing and consumer researchers (e.g. S. S. Kleine & Baker, 2004; Schifferstein & Zwartkruis-Pelgrim, 2008) explicitly exclude intangible artefacts from their discussions, while others do not (e.g. Belk, 2017; Shimp & Madden, 1988).

Lastly, research interest in consumer-brand relationships steadily increased with the publication of Fournier's (1998) influential work and has since then fostered the introduction of many key concepts. The latter include, for example, *brand love* (e.g. Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Roy, Eshghi, & Sarkar, 2013), *brand hate* (e.g. Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, & Bagozzi, 2016), and *brand attachment* (e.g. Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011; C. W. Park, Macinnis, Priester, Eisingerich, & Iacobucci, 2010; Thomson, MacInnis, & Whan Park, 2005) to describe the relationships consumers form with brands (see e.g. Curina, Francioni, Hegner, & Cioppi, 2020; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015; Khamitov, Wang, & Thomson, 2019 for recent reviews).

Although researchers from different academic disciplines (e.g. marketing and design) have studied concepts such as *love* (e.g. Russo, 2010; Whang et al., 2004) and *attachment* (e.g. S. S. Kleine, Kleine, & Allen, 1995; Mugge, 2007; Schifferstein & Zwartkruis-Pelgrim, 2008) in the context of products, my review suggests that the body of consumer-brand relationship literature is deeper and broader, hence offering a greater wealth of existing knowledge that can be reviewed in the context of typefaces.

In general, the conceptualization and operationalization of consumers' relationships with brands and products respectively depends in large part on the theories applied. In a recent review of brand love, Palusuk, Koles, and Hasan (2019) summarised three major theoretical perspectives used to study the concept. The first stream uses interpersonal relationship theories and applies them to consumption objects. The second stream however takes issue with that, arguing that relationships with consumption objects are not reciprocal but unilateral and its proponents are therefore recommending the application of *parasocial relationship* theories to the context of brands and products (e.g. Fetscherin, 2014). The third perspective is that of e.g. *grounded theory* (Charmaz, 2000; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), arguing we must approach the study of phenomena without preconceptions.

In this research, I limit myself to the discussion of parasocial and/or interpersonal relationships by comparing both theories and eventually positioning my own research. A juxtaposition of both theories is necessary to build my argument that the distinction between parasocial and interpersonal relationships is essentially theoretical, and my choice is one of preference. Since there are authors from both streams who use the theory of anthropomorphism to justify the application of parasocial and interpersonal relationships with consumption objects (e.g. Alvarez & Fournier, 2016; Fetscherin, 2014), I first review anthropomorphism, and I am then linking it to typefaces.

Theory of anthropomorphism

Anthropomorphism refers to the projection of humanlike characteristics (e.g. cognitions, affects, behaviours, shapes, et cetera) to non-human objects (Boyer, 1996; Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007; Waytz, Epley, & Cacioppo, 2010). This definition is quite broad and comprises three important aspects. Firstly, the attribution process is automatic and does not rely on conscious reflection. Secondly, non-human objects can be animate (e.g. pets) or inanimate (e.g. thoughts). Thirdly, the ascribed characteristics go beyond the pure description of, for instance, observable behaviour (e.g. 'My cat climbs up the tree' versus 'My cat is smiling at me').

Researchers identified various reasons for, and consequences of, anthropomorphism. Epley et al. (2007) propose that anthropomorphism is caused by a cognitive (elicited agent knowledge) and two motivational (effectance and sociality) factors acting jointly. The authors suggest that our prior understandings of humans as well as our self-understanding offer a rich source for inferences when interacting with non-human objects. Here, engaging with our world is seen as a means of making sense of it and ascribing familiar, humanlike characteristics to non-human objects can increase our sense of effective interaction with our environment and convey a sense of social connectedness with these objects.

In their review, Yang, Aggarwal, and McGill (2020) identified three main effects of anthropomorphism: comprehension, connection and competition. The first two aspects—comprehension and connection—relate directly to the motivational sources of anthropomorphism (effectance and sociality) and are applicable to the broader contexts of social interactions. Competition, on the other hand, is specific to the consumption context, which is epitomized by power asymmetry between consumers and brands/companies. Yang et al. (2020) suggest, for instance, that perceived trustworthiness of brands or products can be affected by the activated human characteristics. The review of typographic literature in Chapter 1 (p. 10) indicates that this phenomenon also applies to typefaces (e.g. Hagtvedt, 2011).

It has been stated that typefaces convey denotative (lexical) and connotative (semantic) meanings. The latter is based on the visual form of characters and can (a) strengthen, (b) add novel, (c) communicate (almost) neutral or (d) induce dissonant meanings (Harrison & Morris, 1967). Practitioners and academics across different disciplines acknowledge the expressive power of typefaces and used

different names for connotative meanings, among them typeface personality (see e.g. Shaikh, 2007 for review). Taking into account earlier discussions, the attribution of personality traits to inanimate objects such as typefaces can be seen as a way to anthropomorphise typefaces (Effendi & Whitfield, 2012; Hyndman, 2016; Jacob, Torán, & Esteve, 2012).

To evaluate typeface personality, researchers predominantly rely on the semantic differential scale (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957) in its original or adapted version, using adjective pairs (e.g. masculine–feminine, emotional–unemotional, fast–slow) or single adjectives (e.g. friendly, warm, professional) aiming at identifying typeface personality profiles and dimensions (e.g. evaluation, activity, and potency) (see e.g. Shaikh, 2007; Shaikh & Chaparro, 2016 for review). Assessing typeface personalities occurs usually on a microtypographic level (visual form of characters), but will—where applicable—interact with evaluations of other typographic aspects, such as line or paragraph design (mesotypographic level), overall graphic arrangement (macrotypographic level) and finally with issues related to print and media (paratypographic level) (Stöckl, 2005). While typographic meanings are thought to be context-dependent and polysemous (Stöckl, 2005), research on anthropomorphism (Yang et al., 2020) and product personality (Govers, 2004) suggests that product personality traits—in analogy to personality psychology (e.g. McCrae & John, 1992)—are perceived to be relatively stable helping us to make sense of our world (Govers, 2004; Yang et al., 2020).

It appears that typefaces can be anthropomorphised on a superficial as well as on a deeper level (see Yang et al., 2020 for review). For instance, rating typeface personalities on s semantic differential scale favours a more superficial degree of anthropomorphism. Conversely, asking research participants to associate typeface designs with gustatory words (sour, bitter, sweet, and salty) (e.g. Velasco et al., 2015) or inviting participants to a *type dating game* (Hyndman, 2016, p. 93), where the players "go through three stages of choosing which fonts they would date, ditch and be just friends with" and are asked to verbalize their choices, moves anthropomorphism to a deeper level. Hyndman's (2016) type dating game illustrates quite effectively, how individuals project understandings of their selves and others to make sense of their world (comprehension) and in turn increase their sense of effectance (Yang et al., 2020).

The following subsections provide a detailed treatment of relationship theories. One aspect of that discussion is the illustration of how the theory of anthropomorphism is used to justify the application

of parasocial and/or interpersonal relationship theories to the context of brands and products respectively.

Delineating parasocial and interpersonal relationships

The concept of parasocial relationships emerged in the 1950s in the context of mass media. It was introduced to describe the relationship individuals perceived to maintain with characters in mass media (e.g. newscaster) (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Parasocial relationship theories have been applied to the broader fields of e.g. business (Yuan, Moon, Kim, & Wang, 2019), information management (Xiang, Zheng, Lee, & Zhao, 2016), communication (Schmid & Klimmt, 2011), marketing (Chung & Cho, 2017), and psychological research (A. F. Young, Gabriel, & Hollar, 2013). In contrast, interest in interpersonal relationships has persisted for more than two millennia and has motivated scholars from many different disciplines to study interpersonal relationships and their efforts, resulting in the proposal of manifold theories (see e.g. Perlman, Duck, & Hengstebeck, 2018; Perlman & Vangelisti, 2006 for review). Despite inherent differences, parasocial and interpersonal relationships share important commonalities (J. Cohen, 2004).

First, parasocial and interpersonal relationships are characterized as relationships between I and Thou. In the former case, the Thou can be a real person (e.g. celebrity), a fictive person (e.g. character performed by an actor) or an anthropomorphised object (e.g. brand mascots); in the latter case, the Thou can be another individual or groups (Giles, 2002; Hinde, 1995). This, in general, would provide an argument in favour of applying parasocial relationship theory in the context of anthropomorphised brands and products.

Second, both streams acknowledge the involvement of cognitive (e.g. attitudes, beliefs, motivations), affective (e.g. empathy, jealousy) and behavioural (e.g. approach and avoidance) processes entailing a series of interactions (Hartmann, Schramm, & Klimmt, 2004; Hinde, Finkenauer, & Auhagen, 2001). Based on this definition, temporality and interactions are two important dimensions of parasocial and interpersonal relationships. Literature suggests that parasocial and interpersonal relationships develop and change over an extended period of time. Let me start with parasocial relationships. Giles (2002), for instance, sketched out processes, phases and influential factors in the development of

parasocial relationships. Another example is Tukachinsky and Stever's (2019) theoretical model, according to which the formation of parasocial relationships progresses in four phases (initiation, experimentation, intensification, and integration/bonding). Other researchers have analysed other distinct phases of the parasocial relationship lifecycle, such as breakup (J. Cohen, 2003, 2004; Eyal & Cohen, 2006; Fajer & Schouten, 1995; S. M. Rose, 1984; Tal-Or, 2017) or maintenance (Eyal & Dailey, 2012).

Moving to interpersonal relationships, Levinger (1983) identified five distinct phases in interpersonal relationship lifecycles: acquaintance, build-up, continuation, deterioration, and ending. This model has been applied to consumer relationships with brands (Fournier, 1998) and products (Russo et al., 2011). It is fair to suggest that one reason for the popularity of this model (Hodge, Romo, Medina, & Fionda-Douglas, 2015) might lie in its relative simplicity compared to other, more fine-grained suggestions (e.g. Knapp, 1978, who distinguishes ten phases in the relationship lifecylce).

Apart from looking into the phases of relationship development, prior research also analysed trajectories of parasocial relationships (e.g. R. B. Rubin & McHugh, 1987), interpersonal relationships (e.g. Hadden, Harvey, Settersten, & Agnew, 2018) and consumer-brand relationships (e.g. Fournier, 1994; Langner, Bruns, Fischer, & Rossiter, 2016; Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, & Fetscherin, 2018). Findings indicate that the dynamic feature of parasocial and interpersonal relationships is nurtured by changing interpretations of past and anticipated future events (Hartmann, Stuke, & Daschmann, 2008; Hinde, 1995). These events include—but are not limited to—interactions between I and Thou.

The nature of I-Thou interactions is the final and most important demarcation line between parasocial and interpersonal relationships. As indicated earlier, the core difference between the two is that parasocial relationships are one-sided (Giles, 2010). Let me take the example of typefaces to illustrate this. We can for instance like or dislike typefaces, choose to buy typefaces or simply experience joy looking at them. Conversely, typefaces cannot think, act, nor develop their own or reciprocate feelings, et cetera. In contrast, interpersonal relationships are characteristically reciprocal relationships with interdependent partners (Hinde et al., 2001). What does this mean for brands and products?

Alvarez and Fournier (2016) argue that anthropomorphism justifies the application of interpersonal relationship theories to the context of brands, especially since marketing activities can be perceived as the brand's efforts to interact with customers (Fournier, 1998). While this view has its merits, I propose it would not hold for products, principally because communication occurs on a brand level,

where the brand is the sender of communication messages (e.g. Calibri, BMW). Another counterargument could be that relationships with brands are often mediated because consumers and brands (in analogy to e.g. celebrities or bloggers) do not interact directly but through traditional or new media (Chung & Cho, 2017; J. Cohen, 2014; Giles, 2010; Kurtin, O'Brien, Roy, & Dam, 2018; J. E. Lee & Watkins, 2016). Based solely on these considerations, I argue that relationships with typefaces are best thought to be parasocial. Yet, the picture is not as black and white as it appears at first glance.

To explain that the distinction between parasocial and interpersonal relationships is not clear-cut and to position my own research, various parasocial phenomena are introduced in the next subsection. I acknowledge that alternative conceptualizations exist (see e.g. Hartmann, 2017 for discussion). However, I utilise those that are most suitable for the purpose of my research. To apply parasocial relationship theory to the context of typefaces, parasocial constructs need to be abstracted, because the consumption object is highly intangible. Appropriating H. H. Huang and Mitchell's (2014, pp. 43-44) ideas, it can be said that relationships with typefaces necessitate a higher degree of "imagination to produce contexts in which consumers form relationships with their brands"—and fonts. Gadamer's writings (e.g. 1960/1989) on aesthetic encounters with works of art presented in the next subsection facilitate this abstraction. Although typefaces are not works of art in the strict sense, Gadamer's thoughts can be extended to the applied arts, including graphic and type design respectively (Gadamer, 1960/1989; Grondin, 2000; Hammermeister, 2006).

Parasocial relationship phenomena

It has been suggested in earlier parts of this study, that relationships entail multiple interactions between I and Thou that occur over an extended period of time. Implicit in this conceptualization are two parasocial dimensions, namely parasocial interactions and parasocial relationships—an important distinction many scholars have called for (see Hartmann, 2017 for review). The term parasocial interaction denotes individual I-Thou encounters, whereas the term parasocial relationship refers to the intimate bond between I and Thou that develops through—but critically persists beyond—parasocial interactions (Dibble, Hartmann, & Rosaen, 2016). The two concepts are elaborated further in the following.

Parasocial interactions

Earlier literature identified two distinguishing features of parasocial interactions that have been termed *paracommunication* and *parasocial processing* respectively (Hartmann, 2008). Schramm and Hartmann (2008) explain that…

> *paracommunication* is about users' subjective feeling to be engaged in a give-and-take with the personae …. In this respect PSI [parasocial interaction] stands for users' feeling to be part of a *reciprocal* social interaction during media exposure, although they subjectively know, … that this feeling is evoked by an illusion. (p. 387; emphasis in original)

Gadamer (1964/1976) claims that works of art speak to us, and if we are open to listen, we will be engaged in an intimate dialogue with the artwork (Bourgeois, 2007). It speaks to us in the sense that it rises or answers questions (Dutt, 1993/2001). The underlying structure—the back-and-forth move-ment—is that of a dialogue (Weinsheimer, 1985). Although it might be more appropriate to speak of an inner dialogue, it would still find its place in the parasocial relationship literature (Konijn & Hoorn, 2017).

Parasocial processing, in turn, refers to all psychological (cognitive and affective) and behav-ioural responses to the Thou arising during an individual parasocial interaction (Hartmann, 2008). Be-cause cognitive (e.g. attitudes), affective (e.g. joy) or behavioural (e.g. approach) responses do not need to occur simultaneously, parasocial processing will vary in breadth (Schramm & Hartmann, 2008). It is furthermore proposed that while we will always react to the Thou, the strength of our responses—rang-ing from weak to strong—will not always be the same, meaning that parasocial processing does also vary in intensity (Hartmann et al., 2004). Schramm and Hartmann (2008) conceptualize parasocial pro-cessing as a *meta-concept*, because it comprises subsidiary concepts such as for instance attention, attitude, knowledge, and social comparison.

In general, I would argue that the quality (breadth and strength) of our parasocial interactions with typefaces will depend on the way we engage with them. Let me introduce a fictive person called Martin to illustrate this point. Martin sticks to the default font, except at work where he must use the corporate font. For Martin, fonts are mere tools; they are *ready-to-hand* (Heidegger, 1927/1962) fulfilling a purpose (e.g. writing an email). Similarly, typefaces are ready-to-hand when reading texts, as they become invisible. In both cases, typeface designs are perceived pre-attentively and/or processed su-perficially (Hartmann et al., 2004). Conversely, viewing typefaces solely for the purpose of aesthetic pleasure, i.e. without regard for their utilitarian or symbolic values, entails disinterested detachment

(Cupchik, Vartanian, Crawley, & Mikulis, 2009; Gadamer, 1960/1989). Disinterestedness means, however, that we withdraw ourselves from what Gadamer (1960/1989) calls *'Spiel'*—which can be translated as *play* and *game* (Grondin, 2000).

Gadamer uses the metaphor of play to describe encounters with works of art, that is aesthetic experiences. It symbolizes the dependence of, and movement between, players and characterizes a changed psychological state as we become absorbed in the play (Bourgeois, 2007). "The game [aesthetic experience] properly exist[s] only when it is played—that is, when object [e.g. poem] and subject [e.g. reader] coalesce so that object is no longer object and subject no longer subject" (Weinsheimer, 1985, p. 103). To play, we must invest ourselves fully (Gadamer, 1992/2007). If not, we shut ourselves out from the game play and we risk not hearing what the work of art has to say to us (Gadamer, 1964/1976); we, in essence, become a spoilsport (Gadamer, 1960/1989).

When we play, typefaces are no longer considered objects. In an interview with Dutt (1993/2001, p. 70), Gadamer repeated his claim "that the experience of art is an experience of meaning, and as such this experience is something that is brought about by understanding." This means that the aesthetic encounter is not about understanding typefaces, but about what they have to say to us. The message is very personal; it touches and surprises us (Gadamer, 1964/1976). "The voice belonging to such a work, in its strangeness and otherness, makes us look at our own strangeness, which we begin to grasp when we ask the question 'Who am I?'" (Michelfelder, 1997, p. 447). The ultimate task then is to incorporate this experience into our identities (Gadamer, 1964/1976). Understood this way, we are not passively perceiving typefaces. We participate in the experience and the experience does something to us; it changes us by affecting our self-understanding (Gadamer, 1960/1989).

This is where the core ideas discussed in this chapter come together. We encounter typefaces in parasocial interactions, which entail paracommunication and parasocial processing. The quality of parasocial interactions varies and literature suggests there is a close link between parasocial interaction and involvement (Gadamer, 1960/1989; Hartmann et al., 2004), because involvement affects, for example, how we process information (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983) and it facilitates formation of parasocial relationships (A. M. Rubin & Rubin, 2001). During this encounter, we make sense of the meaning typefaces have for us (product meaning). In defining ourselves by what matters to us (identity construction) (Brinkmann, 2008), we form relationships with entities and integrate those meaningful

relationships into our identities (e.g. assimilation/accommodation and evaluation processes). Our relationships epitomize our way of *being-in-the-world* (Heidegger, 1927/1962).

Parasocial relationships

Like interpersonal relationships, parasocial relationships (Hartmann, 2017; Tukachinsky, 2010), consumer-brand relationships (Batra et al., 2012; H.-Y. Kim & Yoo Jin, 2011), as well as consumer-product relationships (Mourey, Olson, & Yoon, 2017; Whang et al., 2004) can take many forms, including friendships or romantic love. Some scholars (e.g. Shimp & Madden, 1988) propose eight forms of consumer-object relationships (e.g. liking, utilitarianism, and loyalty), whereas Fournier (1998) identified fifteen different types of consumer-brand relationships and hence describes relationships with much finer nuance (e.g. arranged marriage, secret affairs and flings).

Based on earlier research (e.g. F. M. Miller, Fournier, & Allen, 2012), Alvarez and Fournier (2016, p. 131) devised four dimensions to describe the nature of consumer-brand relationships: "first, valence (positive–negative); second, intensity (strong–weak); third, arousal/passion; and fourth, equality (equal status–unequal status)." It appears that these aspects can be also found explicitly (e.g.: passion, Gleich, 1997; valence, Hartmann et al., 2008; intensity, Tukachinsky & Stever, 2019) or implicitly (e.g. imbalance inherent in worshipping, W. J. Brown, 2015) in the parasocial relationship literature. From the outset of consumer-brand relationship research, scholars paid particular attention to the strength of those relationships, which today is believed to have brand attachment at its core and which—in turn— requires the implication of our identities (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016). Similar results are found in parasocial relationship (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000; J. Cohen, 2004; Stever, 2017) and consumer-product literature.

Schifferstein and Zwartkruis-Pelgrim (2008, p. 1; emphasis added) for instance define consumer-product attachment as "the emotional bond a consumer experiences with a *durable product*," and a study conducted by Govers and Mugge (2004) claims that attachment strength is affected by the degree of product-personality congruence. This suggests that our attachment to typefaces increases if we perceive their characteristics to be similar to ours. Some researchers, however, argue that types of attachments vary depending on attachment objects; put differently, attachment to material possessions, brands, places, or experiences are conceptually different (S. S. Kleine & Baker, 2004). Acknowledging

this argument, the definition above should not be applied to intangible commodities (e.g. typefaces) without further reflections, which I undertake next.

Belk (2013) discusses the consequences of digital consumption for the extension of the self to possessions. One central premise in Belk's (1988) original conception of the extended self was that consumption objects become unique (*singularized*) once they leave the marketplace, because consumers form relationships with those objects by imbuing them with meaning. The relationship between extended self and object is termed *emotional attachment* (Belk, 2014). After reviewing and discussing literature on, for example, the consumption of digitised music and video games, Belk concludes that we do indeed—despite their inherent differences—extend our selves to both, tangible and intangible objects (see Belk, 2013 for a detailed discussion). Yet, the strength of the attachment might vary and depend on other factors such as e.g. the person's age, because younger consumers grew up with digital objects and hence distinguish less sharply between tangible and intangible possessions (Belk, 2017). This argument is quite important in the context of typefaces as it was the digitisation of typefaces that fuelled their proliferation and made fonts available to consumers (Cahalan, 2004/2007). In this sense, the contemporary consumer grew up with digital typefaces.

Taking this and earlier discussions within this chapter into account, and building on existing concepts in brand (see Alvarez & Fournier, 2016 for a review) and product literature (e.g. Govers, 2004; Govers & Mugge, 2004; Schifferstein & Zwartkruis-Pelgrim, 2008), I propose to conceptualize typeface attachment as the emotional bond that connects consumers and typefaces, whereas the strength of this bond is affected by the degree to which typefaces relate to our self-understanding. Identification/differentiation is accompanied by various psychological processes (e.g. assimilation/accommodation and evaluation) discussed before. The type of relationship will be determined by an interplay of four dimensions: valence, strength, arousal/passion, and equality. An important issue, that has not yet been explicitly addressed, is the question of labelling. You too might have already been in a relationship where you asked yourself—or your partner—*What do I call us?* (borrowed from Hadden et al., 2018).

What do I call us?

At first glance, it seems that parasocial and interpersonal relationships are two distinct and irreconcilable concepts considering the argument of (lacking) reciprocity. Some scholars (e.g. C.-P. Chen, 2014; Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy, & Pervan, 2015) go as far as to distinguish *lived experiences* from *mediated experiences* to differentiate what is *real* from what is experienced *through* mass-communication and media products. As implied in the above discussion, cross-fertilisation occurs across literature, making the boundaries blurry. Various interpersonal relationship theories have been applied to parasocial relationships, such as for instance the *relationship developmental model* (Tukachinsky & Stever, 2019), *self-expansion theory* (Shedlosky-Shoemaker, Costabile, & Arkin, 2014), *social exchange* and *interdependence theory* (Eyal & Dailey, 2012), *attachment theory* (J. Cohen, 2004), and *uncertainty reduction theory* (R. B. Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Others combine interpersonal and parasocial relationship theories to gain better understanding of phenomena. Erickson (2017), for example, proposes a model called *Adolescent Romantic Parasocial Attachment* (ARPA) and argues that romantic attachment to media characters can affect the development of adolescent romantic and sexual relationships. Palusuk et al. (2019) go one step further and combine consumer-brand relationship research from all three streams (interpersonal relationship theory, parasocial relationship theory, and grounded theory) into a single framework outlining trajectories of brand love.

While I appreciate this development and agree that cross-fertilisation across literature can advance knowledge, it raises at least three potential issues that need to be addressed. A first issue arises from the different conceptualizations and methods used to study phenomena, as they can influence research findings and conclusions. This in turn affects the question *What do I call us?* as the following example shows. Fetscherin (2014) argues that parasocial relationship theories deliver better results than interpersonal relationship theories when studying brand love. However, the items used to measure interpersonal and parasocial love (see Table 7, p. 54) seem to have e.g. different potencies (none of the items used to measure parasocial love actually uses the word love), which might have skewed responses towards parasocial love. In comparison, Fournier (2009) refers to research using projective techniques or interviews employing the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) (Zaltman & Coultier, 1995), which taps into the implicit dimensions of e.g. motivation, knowledge, and memories.

Table 7

Items used to measure interpersonal love and parasocial love in previous studies

Dimensions	Items	Source (author, year)
Interpersonal love	When I think of this car brand, it is hard for me to say exactly when the friendship turned into love for this brand	Hendrick and Hendrick (1986); Lee (1977)
	In truth, the love I have for this car brand required friendship first	
	I expect to always be friends with this car brand	
	The love I have for the car brand is the best kind because it grew out of a long friendship	
	The friendship with the car brand merged gradually into love over time	
	The love relationship is really a deep friendship, not a mysterious, mystical emotion	
	The love relationship is the most satisfying because it developed from a good friendship	
Parasocial love	I feel sorry for this car brand when there is negative news	Perse and Rubin (1989)
	This car brand makes me feel comfortable, as if I'm with friends	
	I see this car brand as a natural, down-to-earth person	
	I'm looking forward to using this car brand	
	I miss seeing this car brand when it's not available at a rent-a-car agency	
	This car brand seems to understand the kind of things I want	
	I find this car brand attractive	
	If there were a story about this car brand in a newspaper or magazine, I would read it	

Note. This table is a short version of Fetscherin's (2014, p. 439) table "AII Construct Measurement"

Second, each theory has its own principles, constructs, nomenclature et cetera to explain phenomena. This would explicate in part why marketing and consumer literature adopts constructs from interpersonal relationship theories (e.g. friendship, love, marriage, et cetera) as metaphors for parasocial, consumer-brand, and consumer-product relationships respectively. Scholars are expressing conflicting opinions concerning the use of relationship theories and metaphors in brand literature (see e.g. Alvarez & Fournier, 2016; Avis, Aitken, & Ferguson, 2012 for discussion). Consequently, the answer to the question *What do I call us?* will depend to substantial extent on the theories applied.

Finally—yet related to the above—the philosophical stance will also affect the answer to the question *What do I call us?* Breaking experiences down into lived and mediated experiences or speaking of real and mediated relationships or lives respectively, compartmentalises our way of *being-in-the-world*. If lived experiences are understood as "our *encounters* with everything within our lifeworld — the world as it appears to us and is salient for us" (Boden et al., 2019, p. 219; emphasis in original), then such distinctions become arbitrary, particularly as that apparently incompatible theories not only inform each other but are also combined.

Interpersonal relationship (Waldinger, Diguer, Guastella, Lefebvre, & et al., 2002), parasocial relationship (Klimmt, Schramm, & Hartmann, 2006), and consumer-brand relationship literature (Fournier, 2009) for instance, accept the idea that individuals develop dynamic relationship schemas that are influenced by past, present and anticipated future experiences and which affect the way we engage with animate and inanimate entities. Relationship schemas comprise the views we have of ourselves and of others as well as so-called relationship scripts (Waldinger et al., 2002). The latter refers to internalised and generalized representations of events, that have a descriptive ("which features and actions are typically encountered in a situation") and a normative ("what behaviors are expected or accepted in the situation") component (Krahé, Bieneck, & Scheinberger-Olwig, 2007, p. 687).

I would argue that the key difference between relationships with humans and non-humans lies in the quality of relationship dynamics. In the former case, the relationship partner thinks, feels, and acts as an independent agent with their own internalised schemas and scripts. In the latter case, we are projecting meanings, schemas and scripts on to inanimate objects, which are reflected back, making I-Thou interactions quasi-reciprocal. Seen this way, distinctions between interpersonal and parasocial relationships, lived and mediated experiences, or real and mediated life appear principally theoretical in nature. My decision to apply parasocial relationship theories to inform my study is therefore based on preference after evaluation of the alternatives.

Figure 4 (p. 56) integrates the discussions in Chapters 1 and 2 into a conceptual framework. The circles represent parasocial interactions with fonts, which encapsulate paracommunication and parasocial processing (Hartmann, 2008). Product meanings are constructed in the space between I and Thou (Gadamer, 1960/1989) during paracommunication and are shaped by parasocial processing—that is, our psychological and behavioural responses to fonts. Differently put, meanings arise from our

conscious and unconscious lived experiences with fonts (Boden & Eatough, 2014). The varying valence, breadth and intensity of parasocial interaction processes (Schramm & Hartmann, 2008) is illustrated spatially by distributing the circles vertically.

Ultimately, parasocial interaction processes affect the development of parasocial relationships with fonts, which extend beyond individual parasocial interactions (Dibble et al., 2016). This is signified by the horizontal distribution of the circles. The double-headed arrows connecting parasocial interactions and parasocial relationships indicate that those constructs mutually influence each other. The positive and negative poles on the left-hand side of graphic can also be used as heuristic for the evaluation of relationship dimensions like valence and intensity (e.g. Alvarez & Fournier, 2016).

Figure 4
Conceptual framework
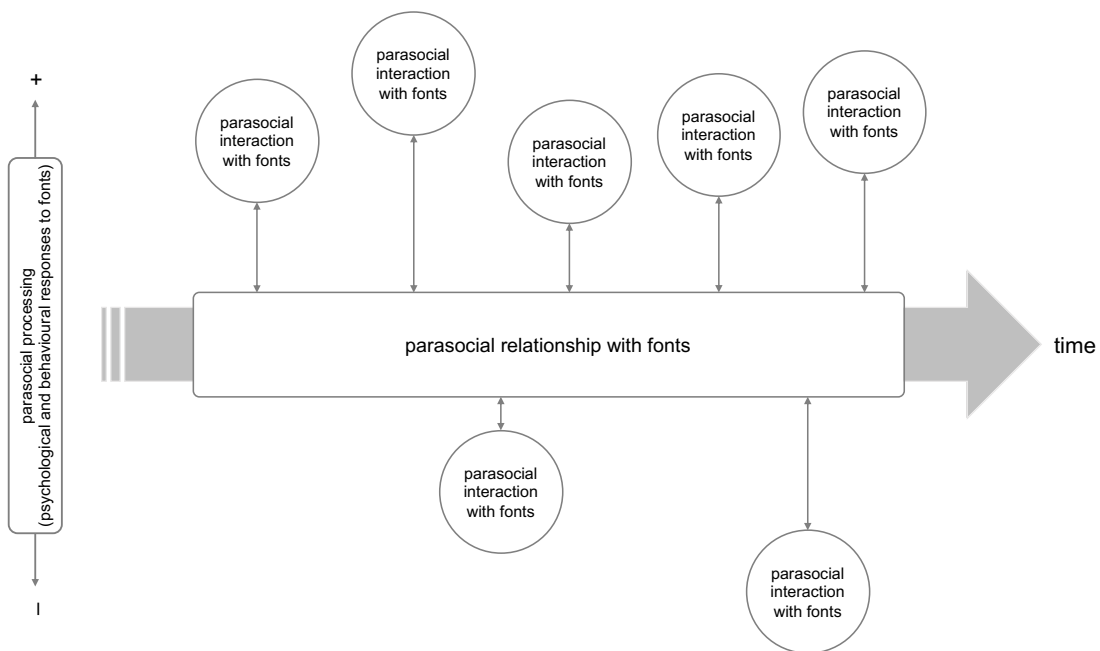
Summary

This chapter began with the discussion of product meanings arising from the space between I and Thou.

Extant meaning dimensions and typologies were reviewed and various challenges, including the lacking

consideration of implicit and explicit meaning making processes, were addressed. Next, the concept of product involvement was introduced as a factor that affects our engagement with typefaces. It has been argued that font ownership can be an indicator for individuals' relationship with typefaces. The concept of psychological ownership was advanced further in connection with the material self, one of the four facets of identity. Identity was conceptualized as total descriptions an individual provides in response to the question *Who am I?* It has been argued that these descriptions have a strong temporal component and are based on implicit and explicit self-interpretations entailing various conscious and unconscious processes (e.g. assimilation/accommodation and evaluation) and self-motives. The role of self in consumption contexts has been sketched out. Finally, various relationship theories and underlying assumptions (e.g. anthropomorphism) have been discussed, concluding that the demarcation between interpersonal and parasocial relationships is rather theoretical in nature and the choice of parasocial relationship theories is based on preference. A conceptual framework has been introduced.

3

"Meanings represent a fluid multiplicity of possibilities …but within this multiplicity of what can be thought– i.e., of what a reader can find meaningful and hence expect to find–not everything is possible."

(Gadamer, 1960/1989, pp. 268-269)

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview and justification of methodological choices made in this research. The present study adhered to the principles of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (J. A. Smith et al., 2009; J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2022). As some scholars rightly comment, IPA is not a mere method for analysing qualitative data but rather a stance (Larkin et al., 2006) and/or framework (Clarke & Braun, 2013) for undertaking qualitative research aimed at understanding individuals' lived experiences sense of self (J. A. Smith, 2004, 2019). This is the sense in which the term IPA is used throughout this study.

IPA is founded on three distinct principles: Phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (for a review see e.g. Shinebourne, 2011b). However, it does not prescribe to just one phenomenological school (for an overview see e.g. Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) but integrates different phenomenological traditions (e.g. Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Merleau-Ponty) to explore the *things themselves* (Eatough & Smith, 2008; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003). In basic terms, phenomenology and idiography signify IPA's commitment to study specific experiences as lived by particular individuals, whereas hermeneutics refers predominantly to researchers' interpretations expressed in analytical comments and tentative truth claims (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). By building theory inductively through the analysis of individual cases followed by a cross-case analysis, IPA promotes "theoretical transferability rather than empirical generalizability" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 51).

In spite of controversies about, for example, its scientific status and theoretical pluralism bringing together ideas from incommensurable thinkers (see e.g. Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Dennison, 2019; Giorgi, 2010; J. A. Smith, 2010), IPA "is now one of the best established qualitative approaches in UK psychology but is also used increasingly by psychology researchers throughout the world" (Eatough & Smith, 2017, p. 193). Consequently, core aspects concerning IPA's theoretical framework as well as its approach to sampling, data generation and data analysis are well-explored and well-documented since the publication of Smith's (1996) seminal work 25 years ago. Detailed information can be found, for instance, in published textbooks (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, 2022; J. A. Smith & Nizza, 2022), handbooks (e.g. Eatough & Smith, 2008; J. A. Smith, 2016; J. A. Smith & Shinebourne, 2012), book chapters (e.g. R. Shaw, 2019; Shinebourne, 2011a; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2004), journal articles (e.g. R. M. Miller, Chan, & Farmer, 2018; Shinebourne, 2011b) and doctoral theses (Boden, 2013; Eatough, 2005; Starr,

2020). The theoretical foundations of IPA (phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography) are summarized in Appendix 3 (p. 325), highlighting how those aspects manifest in this empirical research. Here, the discussion of IPA is restricted to aspects that are most significant to the present research project and that contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

IPA is a predominantly psychological approach (J. A. Smith & Eatough, 2012) but extends to other academic fields as well (J. A. Smith, 2017). Table 8 (p. 62) provides examples of IPA studies undertaken outside the traditional domain of psychology, including marketing and consumer research. Chakravarti and Crabbe (2019, p. 83) describe IPA "as a core interpretative methodology for qualitative research in consumer psychology," which is where this study is situated. By exploring individuals' lived experiences with font consumption, this research seeks to provide an analytical account of consumer-font relationships and to gain a deep understanding of how everyday (mundane) products like typefaces contribute to the construction of consumer identities. It touches upon central psychological constructs like self-concept and/or identity (Kimmel, 2015)—see Chapter 2 (p. 34).

This chapter starts with reflections on the chosen research paradigm before it elaborates on the core theoretical perspective that guides this research: Gadamer's (1960/1989) aesthetic hermeneutics. Notwithstanding important differences between these three thinkers, it must be acknowledged that Gadamer integrated fundamental ideas of Husserl's and Heidegger's works into his own writings (Langdridge, 2007; Palmer, 1969).

His views on aesthetics and hermeneutics (e.g. Gadamer, 1964/1976) provide an important scaffold for this study and add a new facet to IPA's theoretical underpinnings. Next, methodological considerations and ethical implications are discussed. The second part of the chapter presents the research design, as well as the methods used and procedures followed with an emphasis on the generation and analysis of visual data by means of collage construction. The latter is a novel approach in IPA research and requires therefore more explanation and justification than well-established methods like semi-structured interviews (e.g. J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Finally, the pilot study undertaken prior to the main study is described and key 'lessons learned' are shared.

Table 8

Selection of exemplary IPA studies conducted outside the field of psychology

Field	Study (author, year)
Advertising	Phillips, McQuarrie, and Griffin (2014)
Brand Management	Hand, Murphy, MacLachlan, and Carr (2021)
Business Management	Dias and Teixeira (2017)
Computing	Ghaffari and Lagzian (2018)
Consumer Behaviour	Ritch (2019)
Education	Noon (2018)
Entrepreneurship	Ng, Tan, Sugiarto, Widjaja, and Pramono (2021)
Human Resources	Berber and Acar (2020)
Leadership	Lewis (2015)
Management	Groenewald and Odendaal (2021)
Marketing	Larsson and Viitaoja (2017)
Music	Renfrew (2016)
Organizational Studies	Agarwal and Sandiford (2021)
Policing	T. Turner and Jenkins (2019)
Recruitment	Priyadarshini, Kumar, and Jha (2017)
Tourism and Hospitality	Deale and Crawford (2018)

I appreciate the important role that reflexivity plays in qualitative research in general (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018) and in IPA studies in particular. The latter assumes that reflexivity operates within and between individuals (J. A. Smith, 2003). Scholars identified distinct yet interrelated forms of reflexivity (for a review see e.g. Finlay, 2012). Haynes (2012), for instance, describes various levels of reflexivity, including ontological (paradigmatic), theoretical, methodological and subjective (personal) reflexivity. My reflections can be found in the prologue and epilogue of this study and were also carefully woven into the narrative of this, and other chapters, rather than being presented as synopses in isolated sections.

Paradigmatic reflections

Research aim as starting point

The aim of this research is to explore the lived experiences individuals have with font consumption. From the outset of this study, lived experiences were described as our meaningful encounters with the

world and its entities, hence situating individuals and typefaces in a particular space and time as well as in relation to each other (Boden et al., 2019). Situatedness shapes our understanding of lived experiences (Shinebourne, 2011b). Gadamer (1960/1989, p. 302; emphasis in original) adopts Husserl's idea of 'horizon' and defines…

> the concept of 'situation' by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of '*horizon.*' The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point.

Horizons signify our past and present prejudices and traditions, that form invisible, fluid boundaries "beyond which it is impossible to see" (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 306). Understanding can only arise from the *fusion of horizons*, i.e. when I and Thou engage in a dialectic of questions and answers (Gadamer, 1960/1989). Only then does the horizon of the Thou (typefaces) (see e.g. Lupton, 1996) bring to the fore our own horizon, which is why the fusion of horizons is ultimately an event of self-disclosure (Palmer, 1969). Consequently, lived experiences are fundamentally idiographic in nature (divergence), but our world as immediately experienced—that is, our *lifeworld* (Husserl, 1954/1970)—displays some common characteristics (convergence) like temporality, spatiality, and selfhood too (Ashworth, 2003, 2015). Gadamer (1960/1989) reminds us that we are ultimately living in a shared, pregiven world.

The way we engage with our world is multimodal, i.e. we use different sensory channels (modalities), such as vision or touch, to experience the world and its entities (Reavey & Prosser, 2012). As established in earlier chapters, we consume typefaces in different ways, including seeing, reading, and using. This does not mean, however, that we are always consciously aware of those experiences or that we are able to articulate them. Our experiences can be pre-reflective and pre-linguistic (Boden & Eatough, 2014) as argued, for instance, in the context of self-understanding and self-motives (see Chapter 2, p. 34). When we say we encounter our lifeworld pre-reflectively, we mean that we do not actively think about our experiences (Dowling, 2007)—an idea that is also inherent in Heidegger's (1927/1962) notion of readiness-to-hand. Instead, our experiences are, for example, embodied or interpreted tacitly (Sandywell, 1996). At times, we might have difficulties in expressing our experiences in words (linguistically), but we might be able to express them using e.g. imageries (Boden & Eatough, 2014).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, it is a defining feature of our human existence that we aim to understand encounters that matter to us; we engage in a sense-making process that contextualizes

lived experiences and renders them meaningful to us (J. A. Smith, 2019; C. Taylor, 1985a, 1985b). These constructed meanings are highly personal.

Interpretivist paradigm

As a constructivist researcher, I adopted an interpretivist paradigm to guide this research. I acknowledge that my decision situates this study at the fuzzy border between constructivism and interpretivism (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The interpretivist paradigm presented here differs from that discussed in qualitative research handbooks (e.g. Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2018) and business research textbooks (e.g. Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016) respectively, because they tend to associate interpretivism (or constructivism) with relativism and subjectivism.

I also appreciate that the term constructivism in itself is ambiguous because it is used synonymously with other terms such as *(social) constructionism* (for a critical discussion see e.g. Schwandt, 2007; Sismondo, 1996; R. A. Young & Collin, 2004). I chose the label constructivism—as opposed to (social) constructionism—deliberately. It is a constant reminder that this research is predominantly interested in idiographic meanings that individuals construct in their interactions with inanimate (e.g. typefaces) and animate (e.g. researcher) entities rather than being interested in social meanings (Crotty, 1998). This view sets the paradigm apart from subjectivism. The latter denies such an interaction and supposes that individuals instil objects with meanings they create from within (Crotty, 1998). As Heidegger (1927/1962, pp. 190-191) eloquently argues:

> In interpreting, we do not, so to speak, throw a 'signification' over some naked thing which is present-at-hand, we do not stick a value on it; but when something within-the-world is encountered as such, the thing in question already has an involvement which is disclosed in our understanding of the world, and this involvement is one which gets laid out by the interpretation.

As an academic who was trained as critical realist (objectivist) for the most part of his life, I find it difficult to imagine a reality where individuals live in their own universe separated from others (as in ontological relativism; Fay, 1996). This leap would be too big for me. However, this study helped me to comprehend that my theories in use and my espoused theories (Argyris, Putnam, & McLain Smith, 1985) were not always congruent. Today, I fully endorse the view that…

certain 'things' exist and would have existed even if humans had not (and that these 'things' are real), but that the very question of this separate existence (and hence questions about the nature of their reality) can only arise because we [humans] are here to ask the question. (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 107)

This statement highlights IPA's realist ontology (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). By asking questions, we engage in a dialogue with entities that we are so inextricably enmeshed with, and we try to make sense of those encounters (see above). Following Heidegger (1927/1962), we must recognize that we are "'always already' *thrown* into this pre-existing world of people and objects, language and culture, and cannot be meaningfully detached from it" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 17; emphasis in original). And, to push this idea further, neither can future generations.

The interpretivist paradigm proposed by, for instance, Guba (1990) as well as Lincoln and Guba (1985) offers the following tentative conclusions: First, by interpreting (making sense of) our world and its entities, we actively construct realities that are essentially mental constructions (meanings). Second, our interpretations are based on our personal lived experiences with entities as well as all pre-existing (social) conceptions thereof. Third, meanings are affected by our own horizons and are thus situated in space and time. Finally, as a result, we must acknowledge the existence of multiple realities, as well as the possibility that our meanings will never fully correspond with the world and its entities. It follows as a corollary, according to Guba and Lincoln (1989), that interpretivism predicates on relativism.

Gadamer (e.g. 1997a; 1997b), however, repeatedly rejected claims according to which phenomenological hermeneutics subscribed to relativism. As Schmidt (1995) highlights, conservative scholars disagree with Gadamer and locate his philosophy further down the continuum of relativism, while postmodern thinkers criticize Gadamerian hermeneutics for not fully committing to relativism. This controversy seems to situate Gadamer's hermeneutics somewhere between objectivism and relativism (see also e.g. Bernstein, 1983; Healy, 2015). Abducting Turner's (1974, p. 232) thoughts and applying them to the present context, it feels like Gadamerian hermeneutics is "ambiguous, neither here nor there, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification." In an interview with Jean Grondin, Gadamer (2007b, p. 415) renewed his objection to relativism and stressed:

There was no word "relativism" so long as there was no doubt in absolute truth, which was to be embodied in metaphysics …. But for a finite nature there can be no knowledge of the absolute. Most of what we call science today is really a collection of sciences of experience-with the exception of mathematics and logic-and sciences of experience cannot be absolute knowledge. Greek philosophy seems to me to offer the right answer to the objection of relativism, when it only called mathematics science and all our world of experience was settled in the boundless realm of

linguisticality and rhetoric. In this realm not everything is provable. What must be accepted as true here aims at what is believable.

What Gadamer has to say in the above quote is critical as it hints towards perspectivism (e.g. Fay, 1996). He reminds us that neither natural nor social sciences—including consumer research—can claim "absolute certainty or an aperspectival 'truth'" (Thompson, 1991, p. 67). This study embraces this idea. It does not aim to make absolute truth claims but hopes to shed light on aspects that remained concealed in the literature and are brought to light in a trustworthy manner (Yardley, 2000). Gadamer (1994, p. 36) describes this endeavour as follows: "Heidegger taught us … that truth must be won as if it were a robbery … from the concealment and hiddenness of things. Concealment and hiddenness—both belong together. Things hold themselves from themselves in concealment."

Implicit in the above quote are the notions of *aletheia* and *things themselves*. The former denotes *un-concealment* (Heidegger, 1927/1962), whereas the latter refers to the claim *back to the things themselves* (Husserl, 1900-1901/2001), which is a central motto in phenomenology (J. A. Smith & Nizza, 2022). However, Husserl, Heidegger and Gadamer have different understandings of what *the thing* is (Gadamer, 2007b). For Husserl, it is the intentional object (i.e. phenomenon) that we must study detached from, for instance, our pre-understandings (like consumer theories); we accomplish this by suspending (bracketing) them (Finlay, 2008). The idea that we can put aside our preconceptions has been called into question by other phenomenologists like Gadamer (1960/1989), Heidegger (1927/1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1945/2014). I belong to the latter camp, but I believe the attempt to bracket preconceptions creates a positive tension within the interpretivist paradigm, as it requires the researcher to be open and to listen to the Thou—a key feature of IPA specifically (J. A. Smith et al., 2009) and Gadamerian hermeneutics more generally (Gadamer, 1960/1989).

Conversely, "when Heidegger speaks of the thing itself and of the thing that shows itself as phenomenon, what he means is the deconstruction of what is covering the thing over" (Gadamer, 2007b, p. 416). For Gadamer, on the other hand, the thing symbolizes the *subject matter* that is revealed in the fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 2007b). In Gadamerian hermeneutics, the term aletheia becomes synonymous with truth-events where truth (the thing) is being disclosed because we dwell on the meaning that arises from the dialogical encounter between I and Thou (Dostal, 1994). However, as suggested in Gadamer's (1960/1989, pp. 268-269; emphasis added) quote presented at the beginning of this chapter:

"Within this multiplicity of what can be thought [in *I-Thou* encounters]—i.e., of what … [a person] can find meaningful and hence expect to find—*not everything is possible*." This statement is important in at least two ways. First, it sets boundaries within which interpretation can take place (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Gadamer takes issue with interpretations that do not originate from the text itself and instead impose meanings from outside like it is the case in psychoanalysis (Gadamer, 1984; see also Gadamer, 1984/1989). Gadamerian hermeneutics does consequently stand in stark contrast to Ricoeur's (1970) hermeneutics of suspicion. Second, it explicitly refutes a relativism that maintains *anything goes* (Wachterhauser, 2002).

If we accept that not everything is possible when making sense of the of the subject matter (Gadamer, 1960/1989), then—to rephrase Crotty (1998)—we must also reject the proposition that inter-pretivism *condemns* us to subjectivism (as, for instance, in Guba, 1990). It is reasonable to argue that I (e.g. researcher) and Thou (e.g. participant) co-construct meanings (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). This view is, as maintained earlier, compatible with a constructivist epistemology (Crotty, 1998). In this case, our horizons become perspectives (or standpoints) from which we make sense (mental constructs) of the pre-existing world and its entities (realist ontology). Seen that way, constructivism could be described as a form of *perspectivism* (Schwandt, 2003), where knowledge is fluid and understood from the per-spectives of particular individuals (e.g. participants or researcher).

This supports the idea that multiple meanings exist, and absolute truth claims cannot be made within (constructivist or perspectival) interpretivism (see above). But there are boundaries as to what is possible, namely everything that is believable. This sets an important backdrop for the evaluation of this study (see Chapter 7, p. 247). In this context, we must also acknowledge that…

> understanding is not, in fact, understanding better, either in the sense of superior knowledge of the subject because of clearer ideas or in the sense of fundamental superiority of conscious over unconscious production. It is enough to say that we understand in a *different way, if we understand at all.* (Gadamer, 1960/1989, pp. 296-297; emphasis in original)

It could be argued that this quote renders statements like *understanding better* (B. Peck & Mummery, 2017) or *understanding more fully* (Boden & Eatough, 2014) problematic. However, I prefer to think of them as metaphors rather than golden standards: Multimodal research allows us to explore the phe-nomenon of typeface consumption more *holistically* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Theoretical perspective

When was the last time you escaped reality and made a flying visit to the art world attending a performance at the opera or an exhibition at your local art museum? Did you enjoy the aesthetic pleasures the works of art had to offer? Did you discuss the performance of the famous star singer, the costumes, the set-design or the expressive colours and forms of the paintings hanging on the blank walls of the museum with your partner or friend, who joined you on your getaway? What did you learn from that experience?

Hidden in these seemingly innocent questions are four fundamental ideas Gadamer (1960/1989) takes issue with (e.g. Grondin, 2014; Palmer, 1969). First, we seem to differentiate the art from the real world and with it all its members, which leads to a compartmentalisation of our lives and thus of our experiences. Gadamer (1960/1989) terms this process *aesthetic differentiation*. To avoid the pitfall of engaging in aesthetic differentiation, this study did not distinguish between designers and non-designers in the conception of its sampling strategy (see p. 79).

Second, aesthetics is reduced to a subjective experience of feelings and sense perception (Bourgeois, 2007; Gjesdal, 2008), hence Gadamer's (1960/1989) notion of *subjectivization of aesthetics.* Gadamer (1960/1989) develops his own understanding of aesthetics out of his critical reflections of the Kantian (1781/1952) *Critique of Judgement*, where Kant distinguishes between *judgments of taste* (e.g. This typeface is beautiful.) and *responses to aesthetic objects* (e.g. I like that typeface.) (Gaiger, 2002). While both aesthetic statements are subjective, the former differs from the latter by attributing aesthetic characteristics to the object and claiming them to be universal (Gaiger, 2002).

An important feature of taste judgments is *disinterestedness* (Neville, 1974). Gadamer (1960/1989, p. 488) explains that disinterestedness has a double meaning: In a negative sense, the object may not be used or desired, whereas in a positive sense, nothing can be added to the "aesthetic content of pleasure, to the 'sheer sight' of a thing." Accepting the view that aesthetic statements must be disinterested would have two important consequences for the present study. On the one hand, a discussion of typeface designs would not be possible because fonts are instrumental—they are used to accomplish another task (e.g. communication). On the other hand, it denies any "cognitive value" (Grondin, 2014, p. 132) in the experience of works of art, which leads to Gadamer's next criticism.

When we leave the opera and talk about the performance of the singer, or when we discuss the expressive lines of an artwork that we have just seen in the museum, we are using our *aesthetic consciousness*, the third issue implicit in the introductory questions above. Post-Kantian thinkers applied the concept of the beautiful exclusively to art by focussing on formal qualities and neglecting content, which consequently gives rise to the aesthetic consciousness (Bourgeois, 2007). The latter is defined as "the experiencing (erlebende) center from which everything considered art is measured" (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. 85).

Finally, when we ask ourselves what we learned from these aesthetic encounters, we might recall, for instance, that Claude Monet was a French Impressionist painter known for his series of paintings of Water Lilies (Kalitina & Brodskaia, 2011) and that "the Impressionists sought to create the illusion of forms bathed in light and atmosphere" (Gardner, De la Croix, & Tansey, 1980, p. 776). However, this represents semantic and/or propositional knowledge (Moser, 2015, p. 316) and does not say anything about how we interpret and apply the contents of the paintings to our situation and hence to our self-understanding. As indicated, aesthetic consciousness reduces aesthetic claims to the realm of pleasure and has a blind eye for the contents of the works of art (Palmer, 1969).

Gadamer does not wait to challenge the separation of form and content. He argues that "a work of art, thanks to its formal aspect, *has something to say to us* … either through the question it awakens, or the question it answers" (Gadamer & Dutt, 2001, pp. 69-70; emphasis in original). What is implied here is Gadamer's (1960/1989) notion of the fusing horizons, that ultimately leads to self-interpretation. Elsewhere, Gadamer (1964/1976, p. 100) explained that "the work of art … says something to each person as if it were said especially to him [*sic*]," which highlights not only the idiographic, but also the phenomenological character of the I-Thou encounter (Davey, 2011). Conclusively, Michelfelder (1997, p. 447) states that "the voice belonging to such a work, in its strangeness and otherness, makes us look at our own strangeness, which we begin to grasp when we ask the question 'Who am I?'."

As shown in later sections, the question *Who am I?* is at the heart of this study. It is used to provoke participants—it invites them to engage in a parasocial interaction with typefaces.

Methodological considerations

General thoughts

Gadamer (1960/1989) communicates his philosophical endeavour in the first three pages of his magnum opus *Truth and Method*. Departing from his critique of the aesthetic consciousness, he wants to legitimize the "the truth of art" and to develop a "conception of knowledge and of truth that corresponds to the whole of our hermeneutic experience" (Gadamer, 1960/1989, p. xxiii). However, sympathetic and unsympathetic readers find the title of Gadamer's (1960/1989) work *Truth and Method* overpromising, as the work did not offer a detailed theory of truth, nor an explicit method (for a review see e.g. Bernstein, 1983; Grondin, 1982, 2014; Marchildon, 1997). Although these criticisms have their merits, a detailed treatment thereof lies outside the scope of this research. Here, the discussion focusses on the methodological implications Gadamer's hermeneutics have for this study.

While Gadamer (1960/1989, p. 97) acknowledges that truth of art is different from truth of science, he asserts that the truth of art "is not inferior to" the truth in science. The kind of truth Gadamer (1960/1989) has in mind is aletheia (see above). It is not a truth that can be justified using scientific methods (e.g. experiments; Chiurazzi, 2017), but it is a hermeneutic truth (Schmidt, 1995). Di Cesare (2007/2013, p. 37) explains that the use of scientific methods is appropriate in scientific contexts, but these methods limit or alter the "experience of truth." It is therefore suggested, that using scientific methods—in human sciences in general and in aesthetic studies in particular—lead to misrepresentations of the explored phenomena (Grondin, 2000).

The present study too challenges the dominant paradigm (post-positivism) and research approach (experiments) of typographic studies (see Chapter 1) in particular, as well as of consumer studies (Kardes & Herr, 2019; Solomon, 2018) and of research on consumer aesthetics in general. For instance, Reimann and Cao (2017) conducted a systematic literature review focussing on empirical consumer aesthetics. The authors concluded that the subject of aesthetics is still underrepresented in consumer psychological research. However, it must be acknowledged that Reimann and Cao (2017) explicitly excluded qualitative studies (including interpretative research) from their review. This seems to confirm Chakravarti and Crabbe's (2019, p. 61) observation that "in the community of consumer psychologists, qualitative research methods have no overt enemies, but many damn them with faint praise."

The hermeneutic approach used in this study is not, according to Gadamer (1960/1989), a method in a traditional sense, but it represents the very structure of our being-in-the-world. Gadamer adopts Heidegger's (1927/1962) hermeneutic circle, in which truth is disclosed from the interplay between fore-understanding and understanding (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Put differently: It suggests that our fore-understanding will always affect our understanding and vice versa. In doing so, he reconceptualizes the classic hermeneutic circle where understanding arises from the disinterested analysis of the part-whole relationship (see e.g. J. A. Smith et al., 2009); Gadamer's hermeneutics necessitates an active involvement in the play (see previous chapter), because only then we will understand the part and the whole (Davey, 2013). This prerequisite extends to the researcher, who must step into the participants' place to make sense of their lived experiences with font consumption (Gadamer, 1989). This process is aptly described as *double hermeneutic* (e.g. Freeman, 1992; Gadamer, 1960/1989; J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2003): The first hermeneutical dialogue takes place between participant and fonts, the second between researcher and participant.

As argued earlier, our being-in-the-world is multimodal and can be both, reflective and pre-reflective and/or pre-linguistic (Boden & Eatough, 2014; J. A. Smith et al., 2009). This research was therefore designed to explore consumers' multifaceted engagements with fonts. Inspired by Keats' (2009, p. 193) work, I used "multiple texts constructed through writing [narratives], speaking [interviews], and visual means [collages]." While the semi-structured interview remains the standard method for generating data in IPA studies (J. A. Smith, 2017), literature suggests that more and more IPA studies complement these well-established procedures with multimodal techniques, including visual methods, such as photo-elicitation or drawings (for a review see e.g. Boden et al., 2019; Eatough & Smith, 2017).

For instance, Kirkham, Smith, and Havsteen-Franklin (2015) asked their participants to draw their experiences with pain. Cues like *What does your pain look like?* Were proposed to facilitate the task. Participants were subsequently interviewed to explore their lived experiences in more depth. At the outset of the interviews, participants were asked to explain their drawings as well as the meanings they had for them. In doing so, the researchers engaged in—what they called—a *triple hermeneutic process* (Kirkham et al., 2015): Individuals experienced their pain pre-reflectively and pre-linguistically while they created their drawings (first level); participants then reflected on their drawings (second level) before researchers eventually interpreted the meanings (third level). A comparable approach was

chosen by Craythorne, Shaw, and Larkin (2020), who asked study participants to draw their experiences of coping with body dysmorphic disorder.

As indicated above, this study combines visual (collage), written (narrative) and spoken (interview) texts to construct rich accounts of lived experiences with font consumption (Silver, 2013). This approach allows me to address both research questions in depth. The use of interviews in qualitative research in general (e.g. Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; H. J. Rubin & Rubin, 2012) and in IPA studies in particular is well-justified (e.g. J. A. Smith et al., 2009; J. A. Smith & Nizza, 2022). J. A. Smith et al. (2022, p. 54) highlight that semi-structured one-to-one interviews constitute suitable "data collection events which elicit detailed stories, thoughts and feelings from the participant …. One-to-one interviews are easily managed, allowing a rapport to be developed and giving participants the space to think, speak and be heard." Interviews, therefore, adhere to IPA's commitment to capture subjective experiences of the research phenomenon (e.g. Husserl, 1913/1982). The interview method (e.g. structure, questions, sequencing) used in this research is elaborated further in later parts of this chapter (see p. 85). In the following, I dedicate more space to justify approaches less established in IPA research, namely collages and narratives, respectively.

Visual texts: collages

My review of literature showed that collages have not yet been employed within the context of IPA research. However, the collage technique is used in, for example, psychological (e.g. McCloskey & Wier, 2020) and anthropological studies (e.g. Højring & Bech-Danielsen, 2022), and it enjoys increasing popularity in business, marketing and consumer research (see e.g. Plakoyiannaki & Stavraki, 2018; Shin Rohani, Aung, & Rohani, 2014). For instance, John and Chaplin (2019) wanted to know how products and brands support children's identity construction. As part of the research process, the authors asked children from different age groups (early childhood to late adolescence) to construct a *Who am I?* collage, i.e. to describe themselves with images and text. One reason for using this method was that it is extremely accessible for participants at all age groups (John & Chaplin, 2019). The following discussion highlights select benefits and limitations of the collage technique (for a more detailed overview see Appendix 4 (p. 330).

Collage construction is a so-called *projective technique* (for a review see e.g. Lindzey, 1959; Mesías & Escribano, 2018). It allows participants to transfer unconscious cognitions (e.g. motives) and affects (e.g. desires) to other entities (Bond, Ramsey, & Boddy, 2011). This is possible because projective techniques use non-linear questions (e.g. *Who are you?*), employ polysemic stimuli (e.g. typefaces) and grant participants high degrees of independence (see below) (Rook, 2006).

Collages offer a clear advantage when researchers must make sense of lived experiences that participants cannot easily articulate (Boddy, 2005). For example, individuals find it easier to express their identities in collages than in interviews (Herz & Brunk, 2017). Similarly, it is expected that non-expert font consumers are less familiar with typographic language and might hence feel inhibited to express their experiences theoretically. A collage creation task could enable participants in that regard, as it allows them to contextualize their experiences (Gerstenblatt, 2013). Roberts and Woods (2018) emphasize the *physicality* of the task. It refers to the possibility of trying things out (doing), of moving elements of the collage around (spatiality), and of expressing implicit thoughts and feelings in the artefact (embodiment).

Moreover, collage construction is an empowering technique (Scotti & Chilton, 2018), that results in a more participatory and democratic research process (Reavey, 2011). Participants become true agents of their experiences because they can…

> act with some degree of independence within the research process, with their actions [being] self-authored rather than wholly determined by others. The level of control which a collage-based methodology gives to the research participants is notable. Participants are not responding to a series of questions and thus a predetermined area of thinking set by an outsider. Instead, they are responding to a wide brief … in an individual, self-determined way. (Roberts & Woods, 2018, p. 639)

Consequently, as with other visual techniques, the tone of the research changes, because participant voices are given a greater space, and because experiences are explored more deeply (Frith, Riley, Archer, & Gleeson, 2005; Reavey, 2011).

Notwithstanding the compelling benefits, researchers must be aware of the challenges that come with the technique. Firstly, the collage method is very time consuming (Kalter, 2016). Secondly, like other visual methods, it necessitates additional ethical and legal considerations (e.g. G. Rose, 2016; M. Temple & McVittie, 2005). These are elaborated in the ethics section below (p. 76). Thirdly, visual methods in general, and projective techniques in particular, are criticized for lacking scientific rigour, i.e.

validity, reliability and objectivity (see e.g. Rook, 2006; Stricker & Lally, 2015). Lynn and Lea (2005, p. 217) respond to the charge by suggesting that mainstream (post-positivist) researchers might instead be "unable to disengage themselves fully from the modernist's [objectivist] epistemological security blanket." Their position echoes Gadamer's (1960/1989) critique presented earlier. I concur with the authors and share Butler-Kisber and Poldma's (2010) view that the collage construction method is highly compatible with a constructivist epistemology.

Finally, there are various barriers to the participation in and employment of visual research. For example, participants might find the collage creation task daunting and consequently experience feelings of discomfort (Shinebourne & Smith, 2011). Other participants might feel unable to express themselves through collages in the first place (Bagnoli, 2009). Again, others might consider the task to be too childish (Van Schalkwyk, 2013). It is conceivable that, in particular, expert consumers might feel that way. With all this in mind, it could be concluded that individuals are somewhat self-selecting to participate in visual research based on e.g. their abilities and interests. Conversely, the aforementioned issues, like time constraints, legal and ethical complexity, as well as concerns over scientific rigour, could deter researchers from conducting visual research.

Written texts: narratives

A narrative, in its broadest sense, is "an organized interpretation of a sequence of events" (Murray, 2003, p. 113). Researchers studying narratives might be interested in their contents (what is said), structures (how is it said), or in the relationship between e.g. public/historical and private/personal narratives (for an overview see e.g. J. A. Smith et al., 2009). This study is concerned with the contents of the narratives which were analysed using IPA (see below).

The role of narratives does mainly depend on the purpose they have in the research project (Maitlis, 2012). Inspired by previous research (e.g. Kirkham et al., 2015), participants of the present study were asked to reflect in writing on the content and the process of constructing their collages. Kirchmair (2011) points out visual researchers using collages might not only want to attend to the artefact itself, but also to the way it was accomplished.

In related vein, Boden and Eatough (2014) developed two separate frameworks to analyse drawings created by participants—one for the image and one for the production thereof. Building on Rose's (2001) work, the authors explained they "drew on compositional analysis, which seemed to resonate most closely with hermeneutic-phenomenological research approaches, exploring how the image was made, how it is composed, and what meanings it may convey" (Boden & Eatough, 2014, p. 166). Various subsequent IPA studies adopted the frameworks to analyse drawings created during the research process (e.g. Attard, Larkin, Boden, & Jackson, 2017; Nizza, Smith, & Kirkham, 2018). While the proposed frameworks have their merits, they cannot be applied without a caveat. Frameworks like these can be helpful heuristics that facilitate researchers' meaning-making process. However, they risk becoming instrumental and thus concealing paradigmatic tensions. Implicit in the frameworks is the rather objectivist stance that *meaning* can be *found out there* and eventually collected by following a *checklist*. This view is at odds with the interpretivist paradigm presented earlier, where meaning is constructed and not found; meaning relies on the back-and-forth movement between fore-understanding and understanding. Researchers must consequently be mindful of possible incompatibilities between chosen paradigm and methods. More importantly, researchers must ask themselves whose lived experiences with and responses to the collages are being analysed: that of the researcher or that of the participant?

As discussed later, participants of this study were geographically dispersed. The research design had to consider not only availability of participants but also time differences. Narratives were found to be a sensible way to support participants' reflections before and during the interviews and to avoid the loss of experiential data because of temporal and/or psychological distances. The representation of lived experiences through collages is after all an utterly transient process. It entails the inscription of fleeting ideas; editing; communication (externalisation) of thoughts and feelings; and eventually the discovery of a gestalt (meaning) (Eisner, 2002). Discovery must not be understood in an objectivist sense. It refers to "the surprise at the meaning of what is said" in the collage (Gadamer, 1964/1976, p. 101), that is the meaning that arises when we dwell on the subject matter (Gadamer, 1960/1989).

In his discussion of the use of projective techniques in consumer psychology, Kalter (2016, p. 138) maintains that collage construction is "arguably one of the most successful [techniques] in generating those 'aha' moments that researchers seek to uncover: The collage produced and explained by respondents often generate the most insightful, enlightening commentary surrounding the focus of

study." Asking participants to reflect on their experiences and to write them down is therefore an important first step towards generating surprise and uncovering 'aha' moments. This step was repeated in the interview, where collages and narratives were discussed to produce deeper meanings (Mesías & Escribano, 2018).

Some researchers warn that participant reflections could lead to a "post-hoc rationalisation" of the collage (Roberts & Woods, 2018, pp. 630-631), while others endorse this approach "because it reduces interpretation bias and enables the interviewer to understand the communicated content accurately" (Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013, p. 100). I appreciate their concerns but recognize that the language used in the statements indicates an objectivist epistemology, which is not compatible with my interpretivist paradigm for at least three reasons (Gadamer, 1960/1989; Kirkham et al., 2015): First, understanding requires an active participation in the play, i.e. we must enter the hermeneutic circle with all our prejudices and traditions. Second, researchers who make sense of participants' lived experiences (including collage creation) will inevitably engage in a triple hermeneutic process. Finally, we must accept that we understand differently—if we understand at all.

Ethical implications

Ethics constitutes an integral part of constructivist research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln et al., 2018). The subject of ethics was mindfully programmed into the inquiry. The study followed institutional (University of Gloucestershire, 2008) and professional (The British Psychological Society, 2014, 2018) standards. Project approval was granted by the University of Gloucestershire Business School end-August 2018 and did not necessitate fuller ethics review. The Postgraduate Research Lead concurred that no physical, social or psychological harm was to be expected, although emotional distress could arise when talking about identity, a potentially sensitive issue.

I am espousing the idea of the *human-as-instrument* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It maintains that only constructivist researchers are, for example, responsive, adaptable, wholistic and have a processual immediacy, i.e. "the ability to process data immediately upon acquisition, reorder it, change the direction of the inquiry based upon it, generate hypotheses on the spot, and test them with the respondent or in the situation as they are created" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 136). I adopted, therefore, a situated ethics

approach. This allowed me to evaluate and solve ethical and potential legal dilemmas at varying stages of the research process by considering the particularities arising in specific contexts as well as in participant-researcher-interactions (Heggen & Guillemin, 2012). Dilemmas that arouse despite careful reflection-for-action were solved by reflecting-in-action and by reflecting-on-action (Schön, 1983, 1987). Where necessary, reflection involved the discussion with thesis supervisors. The *Code of Human Research Ethics* published by the British Psychological Society (2014, p. 7) acknowledges: "Ethical research conduct is, in essence, the application of informed moral reasoning, founded on a set of moral principles."

When I designed and conducted this study, special attention was directed to issues arising from the use of visual materials, because neither the institutional nor the professional standards covered their use explicitly. However, literature emphasizes the particularity of visual research and highlights associated ethical issues (e.g. Boden et al., 2019; Mason, 2002). Visual research raises important ethical and legal concerns, such as informed consent and anonymity (Reavey & Johnson, 2008); ownership, copyright, permissions and rights (J. Rowe, 2011); display and dissemination (Clark, 2012); as well as the use of images showing illegal activities (e.g. sexual violence) or inappropriate content (e.g. sexual activity) (Wiles et al., 2008). I consulted thesis supervisors, intellectual property lawyers, literature, as well as applicable terms and conditions (e.g. Unsplash, n.d.-b) and license agreements (e.g. Unsplash, n.d.-a) to create an ethical framework that was incorporated into the research material like the collage toolkit (see Appendix 5, p. 331) and participant documents. The latter included a participant information sheet (see Appendix 6, p. 343), consent form (see Appendix 7, p. 345) and debriefing sheet (see Appendix 8, p. 347), that were developed based on institutional templates (M. I. Jones & Parker, n.d.) and existing research (Hallikainen, 2018; Khokhar-Cottrell, 2017; Williams, 2018). The latest version of the University's privacy notice (see Appendix 9, p. 348), as well as a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix 10, p. 351) were included in the participant documents. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire together with the remaining documents (e.g. consent form) as literature suggests that "background and demographic questions are basically boring; they epitomize what people hate about interviews" (Patton, 2015, p. 446). Put differently: I hoped to create more positive experiences for participants during the data generation phase by combining and completing all negatively perceived administrative tasks at the beginning.

Relevant documents and ethical considerations are discussed and referred to throughout different parts of this study—that is in the context in which they occurred—rather than confining their treatment to this section.

Methods and procedure

Research design

The present work is a multimethod qualitative study (Saunders et al., 2016). It follows a sequential multistage design (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011), where knowledge is constructed using an inductive approach (Blaikie & Priest, 2017). The data generation process—loosely inspired by Herz and Brunk's (2017) as well as Kirkham et al.'s (2015) works—started with the participants creating their collages and narratives independently at home (stage one). To accommodate participants' work and private schedules, as well as to allow participants to dwell on typefaces (Dostal, 1994) and to try out things (Roberts & Woods, 2018), a time limit of two weeks was set for the entire activity. Once completed, participants emailed me their contributions so that I could engage with the material (stage two), before entering the next phase. Participants' collages and narratives were incorporated into stage three, where participants and I met to conduct a semi-structured interview to speak about participants' lived experiences with font consumption, including their experiences with creating the collages and narratives. In line with IPA's commitment to idiography and bracketing, each participant was treated as *single case*; insights were not purposefully fed into other cases (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). This procedure allowed me to listen to what typefaces had to say to each individual participant (Gadamer, 1964/1976). A cross-case analysis was conducted after all single cases had been analysed separately (J. A. Smith & Nizza, 2022). Details are further explained below.

Sampling strategy

Sixteen diverse participants were purposefully recruited to reflect the increasingly diverse font user (see Chapter 1). I used the snowballing technique to sample participants with heterogeneous characteristics, because I wanted to explore "the central themes that cut across a great deal of variation" (Patton, 2015, p. 283). As shown in the next chapter in more detail (p. 98), research participants differ in terms of age, gender, cultural background and typographic expertise while still sharing important features. For example, all participants are users of Latin script and have been encultured or accultured in Western societies.

I acknowledge that IPA favours small, homogeneous samples (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2004). A possible explanation for this preference could be that IPA originated in the context of health psychology (J. A. Smith, 1996). As a method, it is mainly interested in *special experiences* (J. A. Smith & Nizza, 2022) such as chronic lower back pain (Osborn & Smith, 1998); unprotected sex in gay relationships (Flowers, Smith, Sheeran, & Beail, 1997); alcohol addiction (Shinebourne & Smith, 2009); breast cancer (Loaring, Larkin, Shaw, & Flowers, 2015); anger (Eatough & Smith, 2006); domestic abuse (Christofi, 2018); systemic lupus erythematosus (Pendeke & Williamson, 2016); Alzheimer's disease (Clare, 2002); anorgasmia (Lavie & Willig, 2005); or atrial fibrillation consultations and anticoagulation decision-making (Borg Xuereb, Shaw, & Lane, 2016).

However, not all IPA studies prescribe to this sampling strategy (for a review see e.g. Brocki & Wearden, 2006)—an increasing number uses diverse samples. For example, A. P. Fox, Larkin, and Leung (2010, p. 123) interviewed eight young women (18-29 years old) in an attempt "to examine some of the experiential commonalities of eating disorders which might cut across diagnostic categories."

Similarly, Hewitt, Tomlin, and Waite (2021) recruited nine male and female participants aged 15 to 18 years who experienced panic attacks. The sample was considered heterogeneous because no specific diagnosis was required for individuals to qualify for the study. Differently put, a variety of causes might be responsible for participants' panic attacks.

In another study, Krzeczkowska, Flowers, Chouliara, Hayes, and Dickson (2019) explored a range of phenomena (e.g. diagnosis and stigma) that were experienced by men living with hepatitis C.

The authors interviewed seven participants aged between 53 and 68 years who contracted the virus either via contaminated blood transfusions or injected drug use.

Conversely, Vermorgen et al. (2020, p. 109) recruited "a heterogeneous sample of 30 family carers of people with cancer, heart failure or dementia." The authors divided participants across these three different chronic illnesses. The paper indicates that 5 participants were under 45 years of age, 18 participants were between 46 and 75 years of age, and 7 participants were above 75 years of age.

Finally, Macleod, Craufurd, and Booth (2002) interviewed 12 individuals to understand what makes genetic counselling effective. The sample was heterogeneous because the reasons for receiving counselling varied (e.g. follow-up checks versus diagnostic consultations). Nevertheless, the authors concluded "the participants in this study could also be considered a homogeneous group, in the sense that they were all experiencing genetic counselling for the first time" (Macleod et al., 2002, p. 147). Following this reasoning, the diverse sample of my own study (see Chapter 4, p. 97) could be regarded as homogenous because, fundamentally, all participants consume fonts in Latin script and share a cultural lens (see p. 98). What this review demonstrates is that the distinction between homogeneous and heterogeneous samples becomes somewhat arbitrary and that the classification of sampling strategies depends—to a great extent—in the researcher's conceptualization.

I assessed the option to study lived experiences with font consumption from different perspectives (e.g. designers versus non-designers), using a multiple perspectival interpretative phenomenological approach (Larkin, Shaw, & Flowers, 2019; J. A. Smith et al., 2009). However, I decided that such a design is not compatible with Gadamer's (1960/1989) hermeneutics. By separating the two groups, I would differentiate the (applied) art world from the real world and hence engage in aesthetic differentiation (see above). Furthermore, such a distinction is fairly difficult considering that font users are increasingly diverse (see Chapter 1).

This sampling strategy differs from that employed in prior typographic research. My literature review indicates that these studies tend to focus on non-expert participants. Researchers that designed their studies to include expert and non-expert perspectives did so by defining experts a priori as design professionals and design students respectively (see Table 9, p. 81).

Table 9

Examples of participant samples used in typographic research

Classification of participants	Exemplary research (author, year)
Experts	
Members of the Australian Graphic Design Association (AGDA) for the questionnaire study; type designers, typographers and design educators for the interview study	Cahalan (2004/2007)
Students in typography and graphic communication	Dyson (2011)
Students in industrial design	W.-Y. Lee and Pai (2012)
Non-experts	
Samples included adults, students, or both	Bachfischer (2007); Bayer et al. (2012); Brumberger (2003a, 2003b, 2004); Celhay et al. (2015); T. L. Childers and Jass (2002); Doyle and Bottomley (2004, 2009); Kang and Choi (2013); Liao, Corsi, Chrysochou, and Lockshin (2015); Liu et al. (2019); McCarthy and Mothersbaugh (2002); Mead and Hardesty (2018); Pochun et al. (2018); Puškarević et al. (2016); C. L. Rowe (1982); Schiller (1935); Van Rompay and Pruyn (2011); Velasco, Woods, et al. (2018)
Experts and non-experts	
2 groups: Design versus university students	Bartram (1982)
2 groups: Designers versus non-designers	Dyson and Stott (2012)
3 groups: naïve students, students in instructional technology, and students in typography	Morrison (1986)
3 groups: Pro, semi-pro, and amateur	Tannenbaum, Jacobson, and Norris (1964)

Sample size

As a rule of thumb, IPA literature suggests sample sizes between 10 and 12 participants for publications at doctoral or post-doctoral levels (J. A. Smith & Nizza, 2022). In comparison, the published studies introduced above used sample sizes between 8 (A. P. Fox et al., 2010) and 30 participants (Vermorgen et al., 2020). During the annual '*Qualitative Methods in Psychology*' (QMiP) conference 2021, Professor Jonathan A. Smith (personal communication, 16th July 2021) encouraged the audience not to think in absolute participant numbers only, but to look at the design and scale of the study. For example, interviewing four participants twice yields eight interviews that must be analysed in depth using IPA (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Analogously, my research generated three different data sets (collages, narratives and interviews) per participant, resulting in a size of 48 data samples. At that point of my research, I felt

that a cohesive, yet nuanced, gestalt was shaped that would tell "a suitably persuasive story [and I concluded] that the analysis may be considered sufficiently complete" (Brocki & Wearden, 2006, p. 95).

Ethics

Individuals, who expressed an initial interest to participate in this research, were sent a participant information sheet and privacy notice to review, as well as two copies of the consent form to counter-sign (one for the participant and one for the researcher). The documents explained purpose, aim and procedure of the study, highlighted the voluntariness of participation and informed participants about their possibility to withdraw from the research at any time up to one month after the interview had taken place (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Specific sections of the participant documents (see e.g. Appendix 5, p. 331 and Appendix 6, p. 343) dealt with issues relating to rights and dissemination. Participants confirmed, for example, that…

> by participating in the study, you grant the researcher an irrevocable, unlimited, non-exclusive, worldwide licence to download, copy, modify, distribute, perform, and use your collage, your explanation of the collage, and the transcripts of your interview for free, including for commercial purposes, without your permission.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality from the outset of the study, initial pseudonyms were assigned to participants upon reception of the signed consent form. Some participants preferred to choose their own pseudonyms, which is why pseudonyms were reviewed and ultimately agreed with participants during the interviews. Research suggests the choice of pseudonyms is not simply a mechanical task but has epistemological value and affects voice of as well as power relationships in research projects (R. E. S. Allen & Wiles, 2016).

The analysed data were destroyed after completion of the study. Raw data are kept securely to allow follow-up studies.

Data generation

Collage toolkit

All participants who signed the consent form received a fundamentally identical collage toolkit (see Appendix 5, p. 331). The only difference was that I decided to allow participants to use any software to

create their collages after I had met with George, the second participant (see Chapter 4, p. 115). Before that, software was restricted to Microsoft PowerPoint to facilitate the task in particular for non-expert font users, because the use of bundled-typefaces did not generate additional costs and did not require participants to search, download or install fonts. A range of other influences informed the development of the collage toolkit and are touched upon below. In general, the toolkit was organized in four sections. The first section contained instructions for creating the collage and for writing the narrative. The second section covered legal and ethical issues. Stimuli were presented in sections three (typefaces) and section four (photographs) respectively.

As in prior studies, participants were asked to use an A2-sized canvas for their collages (e.g. Costa, Schoolmeester, Dekker, & Jongen, 2003; Herz & Diamantopoulos, 2013; Koll, von Wallpach, & Kreuzer, 2010; Stappers & Sanders, 2004). I felt this canvas size would give participants plenty of space to move elements around (Roberts & Woods, 2018), and it would facilitate the presentation of collages during examination and dissemination.

Collage construction

Inspired by previous consumer research (e.g. Chaplin & John, 2005; John & Chaplin, 2019), individuals were briefed to create a *Who am I?* collage. The use of one or more typefaces was mandatory. The following cue was offered to participants: "Create your collage telling us 'who you are'." My intention was to step into the place of the typefaces and to ask participants: *Who are you?* (Michelfelder, 1997). Conversely, the use of photographs was optional. I felt that some participants might find the task easier if they were permitted to include photographs in their collages; the task could have otherwise been too abstract. Overall, this activity allowed me to explore participants' lived experiences with fonts (research aim); participants' relationship with fonts (RQ1); and ways participants use fonts to construct their identities (RQ2).

In total, 30 typefaces were included in this research. The font selection was based on the typeface classification proposed by Coles (2013), who grouped typefaces according to their design features. As explained earlier, typefaces have something to say to us because of their aesthetic qualities (Gadamer & Dutt, 2001). Only fonts bundled with Microsoft Office were referenced to ensure availability

of fonts (e.g. non-expert font users), to provoke responses (e.g. expert font users) and to reduce complexity of the task for participants and researcher. This study does not claim completeness of typeface stimuli, but it includes a selection that is sufficiently fine-grained to explore font consumption. The study parameters were purposefully designed into the research to offer additional consumer insights.

My review of typographic research showed that typefaces (visual stimuli) tend to be presented either as placeholder texts, pangrams, character sets or combinations thereof (see Appendix 11, p. 352). In line with previous research (Koch, 2011), I did not want to confound participants' responses to typeface designs with responses to denotative meanings of words or texts. Typefaces were therefore presented as character sets (see part three of the toolkit).

Participants who wanted to include photographs in their collages were asked to choose stock images exclusively from Unsplash (https://www.unsplash.com). The use of private photographs and/or images was prohibited to ensure anonymity of participants and of any other persons depicted on the visual. I chose Unsplash because the website provided royalty free images that did not require attribution of respective photographers and could be used for commercial and non-commercial purposes (Unsplash, n.d.-a). By contributing to the website, photographers (users) had to agree to the terms and conditions (Unsplash, n.d.-b). For instance, as part of that agreement, users had to confirm that they fully owned the photographs (content) they uploaded to the website, and users had to grant a limited licence to Unsplash allowing the latter to disseminate the photographs through their website. Elements of the license agreement and terms and conditions were replicated in the participant documents as well as in part two of the collage toolkit. These decisions were made to respond to ethical and legal issues identified in the literature (see above).

<center>Narrative writing</center>

Participants were asked to write a 300-word reflection on their collages and/or the production process. The word limit felt appropriate as it was comparable with the length of journal abstracts (typically up to 250 words) that provide concise synopses of academic papers (American Psychological Association, 2010). No other parameters were defined for this activity. This offered participants a considerable

latitude in completing the task and allowed the researcher to analyse participants' decisions (e.g. font selection) as well as the presence and/or absence of data (e.g. mention of typefaces).

Semi-structured interviews

In IPA research, in-depth interviews are the most established and most suited way to generate rich, phenomenological accounts of participants' lived experiences (J. A. Smith & Nizza, 2022). An interview schedule was developed to guide the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 12, p. 353). Questions (e.g. future self; Shinebourne, 2010), themes (e.g. identity; J. A. Smith, 1995), sequencing (e.g. present, past, future; Fleuridas, Nelson, & Rosenthal, 1986) and structure (e.g. from easy to tough questions; H. J. Rubin & Rubin, 2012; J. A. Smith et al., 2009) of the interview schedule draw on established procedures.

Most interview questions were self-related (J. E. Brown, 1997) and designed as open questions to invite long answers; where needed, prompts were offered to facilitate articulation of experiences (Shinebourne, 2011a). A combination of direct (linear) and indirect (circular, projective) questions was used to elicit different types and depths of responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This approach had various benefits. First, it changed the rhythm of the conversation (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Second, linear questions allowed the discussion of concrete, explicit experiences like those made with the collage construction (Herz & Brunk, 2017). Third, indirect questions like *Is there anything that I should have asked you but didn't?* encouraged meta-cognition (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) and revealed aspects of font consumption that were particularly meaningful to participants (H. J. Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Fourth, projective questions like *How would other people [e.g. your partner] describe you?* allowed to tap into subconscious or withheld thoughts and feelings (Gordon & Langmaid, 1988). Finally, circular questions like those about past and future selves (Fleuridas et al., 1986) speak to the temporality of our self-understanding (see Chapter 2). They allowed the recognition of salient identity constructs. I acknowledge that—although presented as distinct benefits—features of questions overlap and interrelate. The interview guide allowed me to address the research aim and explore both research questions in depth and breadth.

Fundamentally, all interviews were conducted face-to-face, either in person or online via Skype or Google Hangouts. Online interviews were necessary because participants were geographically dispersed. This approach seemed justified given that previous IPA studies had already used alternative interview modes successfully. For example, Burton, Hughes, and Dempsey (2017) conducted telephone interviews, while Spiers, Smith, Simpson, and Nicholls (2016) as well as Pendeke and Williamson (2016) held interviews in person, via Skype and on the phone.

In the introduction phase of the interview, I introduced myself and explained the research project in general and the interview procedure more specifically to the participants. I thanked the latter for their participation as well as their collages and narratives. Any open questions participants had at this point of the meeting were answered first, before the actual interview started. Participants were reminded that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time up to one month after the interview. Oral consent to participate in the research and to audio/video record the session was obtained. Interviews were recorded using either a mobile recording device or the recording function of the Skype software.

In the closing phase, I expressed my gratitude to the participants and outlined the next steps of the research (e.g. approval of interview transcript). The debrief sheet (see Appendix 8, p. 347) was handed out and/or emailed to participants.

Transcription

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and purposefully immediately after they took place (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). The transcription followed a modified convention originally proposed by Poland (1995) (see Appendix 13, p. 354). Participants were given the opportunity to review the transcript for accuracy and to withdraw and text they did not want to be published and/or disseminated (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). This step was not designed as means of triangulation or member check (Hagens, Dobrow, & Chafe, 2009; Thomas, 2017), because these ideas are not compatible with my interpretivist paradigm. Instead, it was an attempt "to validate the transcripts, to preserve research ethics, and to empower the interviewees by allowing them control of what was written" (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 231). Written narratives did not require transcription (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Loosely inspired by Van Schalkwyk's (2010) research, participants' collages were transcribed once the withdrawal period had ended. The transcription process started with creating a blank A2-sized canvas in Adobe InDesign, onto which all visual elements were transferred using geometrical forms. Gray shaded rectangles were chosen for photographs and white ovals for text and typefaces respectively. Next, I marked all geometrical shapes with either Arabic numbers (rectangles/images) or Latin letters (ovals/fonts). This approach allowed me to reference elements of collages throughout the study by concatenating the word *COL* (abbreviation for collage), the Arabic number and Latin letter of the collage element in question. For example, *COL1A* refers to the first image and typographic character in the collage depicted in Figure 5 (p. 87).

Figure 5
Example of one participant's (Kevin) transcribed collage
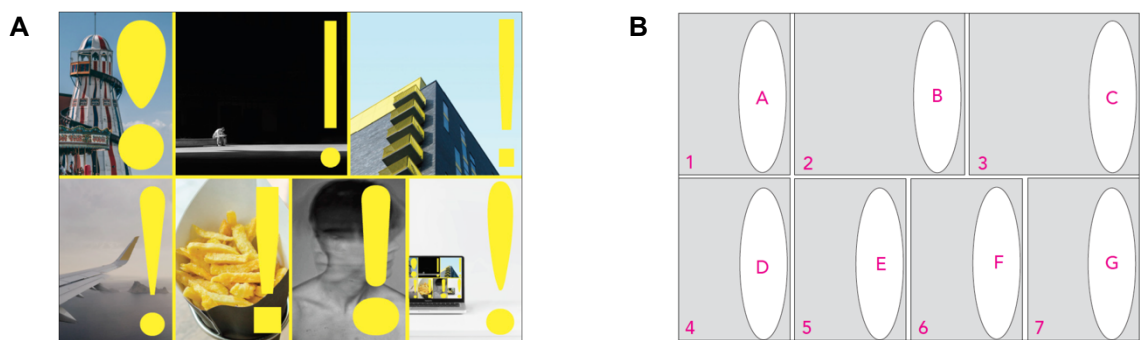
Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Data analysis

General approach

During the write up of this study, a new edition of the IPA textbook was published (J. A. Smith et al., 2022). The latter introduces an updated IPA terminology (see Table 10, p. 88) and outlines seven instead of six steps in the qualitative data analysis (QDA) process (see Table 11, p. 88). The additional step in the analytic process is essentially a result of breaking up step 4 of the original process (J. A. Smith et al., 2009) into two distinct steps, namely step 4 (searching for connections) and step 5 (graphic

representation). IPA is a flexible approach and because the write up of this study—and therefore the hermeneutic process—were still under way, I decided to adopt the new terminology and process where possible and sensible (J. A. Smith et al., 2022).

Table 10

Comparison of old and new IPA terminology

J. A. Smith et al. (2009)	J. A. Smith et al. (2022)
Master table	Table of group experiential themes (GETs)
Table of superordinate themes and themes (for one participant)	Table of personal experiential themes (PETs)
Superordinate theme	Experiential theme
Emergent theme	Experiential statement

Table 11

Comparison of steps in conducting IPA

Step	J. A. Smith et al. (2009)	J. A. Smith et al. (2022)
1	Reading and re-reading	Starting with the first case: Reading and re-reading
2	Initial noting	Exploratory noting
3	Developing emergent themes	Constructing experiential statements
4	Searching for connections across emergent themes [and graphic representation, e.g. table]	Searching for connections across experiential statements
5	Moving to the next case	Naming the personal experiential themes (PETs) and consolidating and organizing them in a table
6	Looking for patterns across cases	Continuing the individual analysis of other cases
7	n/a	Working with personal experiential themes (PETs) to develop group experiential themes (GETs) across cases

The initial six steps of the QDA pertain to single case analyses; in step seven, the focus is shifted to the analysis of patterns across cases. A sequence was defined for analysing the 16 single cases (see Appendix 14, p. 355). The first case was largely predetermined because it was from the pilot study (see below). It was included in the main study for the rich insights it provided. The order of the remaining 15 cases was set inductively by spreading out all collages in front of me and sequencing them based on

"striking elements", i.e. features of the collages which stood out for me (Roberts & Woods, 2018, p. 632). I am cognizant that this might have shaped my pre-understanding and hence understanding of the subject matter. Hereafter, the six steps are briefly explained.

Reading and re-reading (step 1)

In this first step, I familiarized myself with the single case data by reading and re-reading the collages, narratives and interview transcripts individually, before I engaged in a hermeneutic dialogue between the three data sets (Boden & Eatough, 2014), which I have illustrated in Figure 6 (p. 89). As part of this process, I repeatedly listened to the interview recordings to improve recall of the interview situation as well as to use participants' voices as guides for my analysis (J. A. Smith & Nizza, 2022). Any pre-understandings that arouse were noted in my research diary in an attempt to bracket them off and to return to them at a later point in the QDA (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Figure 6
Hermeneutic dialogue between data sets
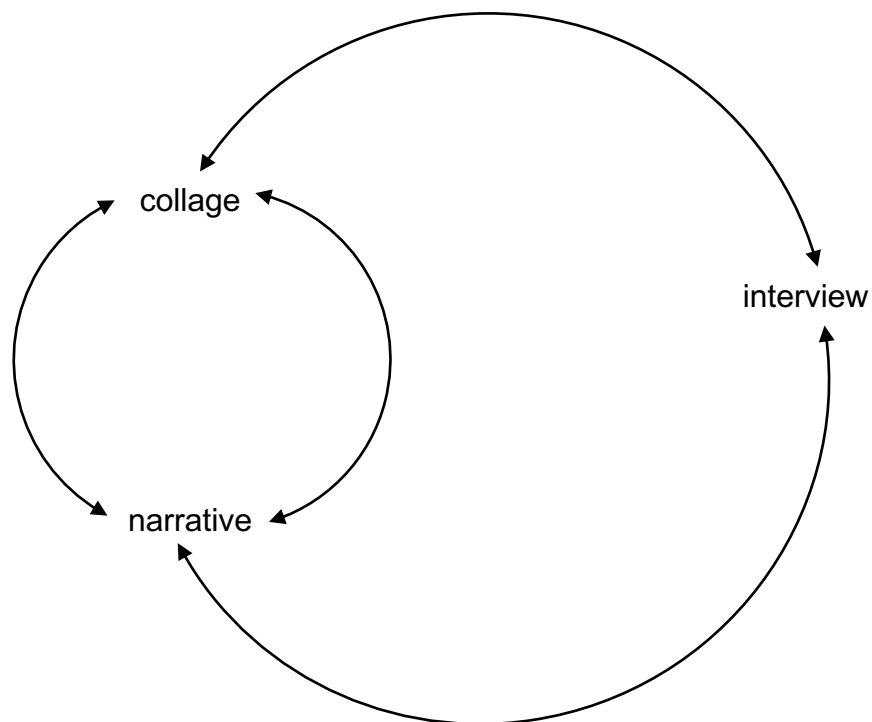
Exploratory noting (step 2)

Before initial notes could be made, narratives and interview transcripts respectively had to be transferred into separate Microsoft Word templates. Each of the template had three columns. The texts were pasted into the centre column that contained line numbers; the left and right columns were used for coding (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Lines and pages of the templates were numbered continuously. In this study, quotes from narratives and interviews are referenced using the same convention as for collage elements (see above). For example, the source information "Kevin, p. 1, NAR4-7" refers to page 1, lines 4-7 of Kevin's narrative. Conversely, "Kevin, p. 33, INT580-583" refers to page 33, lines 580-583 of Kevin's interview transcript. An extract from Kevin's annotated interview transcript is illustrated in Appendix 15 (p. 356), whereas an extract from Kevin's annotated narrative is illustrated in Appendix 16 (p. 361).

At this stage of the QDA, I engaged with the line-numbered transcripts and noted four different types of comments in the right column of the templates (Mason, 2002; G. W. Ryan & Bernard, 2003; J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Firstly, descriptive comments captured denotative (semantic, literal) meanings of the phenomenological experience. Secondly, I commented on participants' use of language. This included aspects like repetitions and metaphors. The former was not treated in an objectivist sense as something that was found, counted and categorized, but rather conceptually as something that struck me in particular contexts. Metaphors were analysed because they build powerful bridges between descriptive (phenomenological) and conceptual (interpretative) comments (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). They enable participants to articulate their experiences more easily (J. A. Smith & Nizza, 2022) and thus, yield richer understandings of the subject matter (Shinebourne & Smith, 2010). Thirdly, conceptual (interpretative, reflexive) comments included, for example, the temporal dimension of experiences. Conceptual comments resulted from an iterative, hermeneutic dialogue with the texts. The latter raised questions that I (tentatively) answered out of my own horizon (e.g. consumer theories). This has ultimately shaped my initial understandings, which in turn formed new pre-understandings and so forth (Gadamer, 1960/1989). Finally, I added a fourth type of notes, namely methodological comments. The latter was helpful in recognizing participants' experiences with the methodological choices made in this study.

As for the collages, I transferred all transcribed collage elements into a *story grid* that I created for each participant in Microsoft Word. The grid was adapted with changes from extant literature (Van Schalkwyk, 2010; see also Du Preez & Roos, 2008). It consisted of four columns: Name and visual

representation of the collage element; experiential statements; participants' story (explanation); and initial notes (denotative, linguistic and conceptual comments). An extract from Kevin's annotated collage transcript (story grid) is provided in Appendix 17 (p. 362). This approach facilitated the intertextual reading (hermeneutic dialogue) and yielded rich accounts of participants' experiences (Keats, 2009). Given my earlier critique of Boden and Eatough's (2014) frameworks for analysing drawings, the use of story grids seemed an effective alternative because it provided sufficient degrees of freedom for conducting a constructivist QDA, while adhering to IPA principles and analysing visual data in a systematic fashion.

Constructing experiential statements (step 3)

In the next step, experiential statements were constructed on the basis of descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments (J. A. Smith & Nizza, 2022). Experiential statements were noted in the left column of the templates used for the QDA of narratives, interviews, and collages.

In doing so, I began to consolidate the qualitative data and to generate an inductive understanding of the phenomena. This moved the data further away from phenomenological (descriptive) towards a hermeneutic (interpretative) accounts by reorganizing data and relating them to psychological theories and constructs (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). For example, the experiential statement 'Being a graphic designer defines Kevin's overall sense of self' (see Appendix 15, p. 356) is an interpretation of Kevin's self-description. It relates to psychological constructs like self-concept and identity. The term 'overall' was purposefully chosen to indicate variability and ambiguity in Kevin's self-understanding.

Searching for connections across experiential statements (step 4) /

Naming and consolidating personal experiential themes (PETs) (step 5)

Once experiential statements were formulated for visual, written and spoken texts, they were cut onto small pieces of paper and scattered on a pinboard (see Appendix 18, p. 363). Next, I established connections between statements and clustered them (see Appendix 19, p. 364), using mainly three different techniques: Abstraction, subsumption and contextualisation (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, 2022). This process reduced the number of data further by generating personal experiential themes (PETs). For example, I used abstraction to create the experiential theme 'Focus on centrality of type' and subsumption for the theme 'Focus on identity'. The outcome of this stage was a table of personal experiential themes

(PETs) for each single case. Kevin's table of personal experiential themes is provided in Appendix 20 (p. 365) to exemplify the result.

Moving to the next case (step 6)

As outlined earlier, participants' accounts were treated as single cases and a sequence was defined in which the single cases were analysed. Once the personal experiential themes were constructed for the first case, I moved the next one. The process was repeated for all single cases.

Cross-case analysis to develop group experiential themes (GETs) (step 7)

At this final step, knowledge was produced by comparing single cases with each other. I engaged in a hermeneutic dialogue with personal experiential themes (PETs) from all 16 participants (the group). I spread out all 16 personal tables that were generated in step 5 on a large table in front of me. I then dwelled on them and listened to commonalities and differences between texts as well as the presence and absence of data.

Two main (overarching) themes were constructed: 'Facets of connoisseurship' (Chapter 5) and 'Trajectories of connoisseurship' (Chapter 6) respectively. To solidify them, I created two tables of group experiential themes (GETs)—one for each main theme. These tables comprise experiential themes, experiential statements and verbatim quotes from participants' texts (see Appendix 21, p. 367 and Appendix 22, p. 371 respectively). J. A. Smith (2011a, p. 24) offers the following guidance:

> For larger sample sizes, researchers should give illustrations from at least three or four participants per theme and also provide some indication of how prevalence of a theme is determined …. The overall corpus should also be proportionately sampled. In other words, the evidence base, when assessed in the round, should not be drawn from just a small proportion of participants.

IPA recognizes that 'recurrence' is a relative term. Its meaning is dependent on aspects like the level of specificity of experiential themes on the one hand, and the research design on the other hand (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). For example, experiential themes like 'Involvement' and 'Knowing' in Chapter 5 are fairly broad and hence show greater instances of the respective themes than more narrowly defined themes in Chapter 6 (see below).

Concerning the second aspect, J. A. Smith (2011b, p. 59) highlights that in particular bold and creative IPA research designs might not meet all criteria defined above but could still be considered

good IPA studies: "The author now has to persuade the reader of the rigour of the analytic process gone through even though less [evidence] is transparently available." This point is crucial for my own study, as it deals with diverse data and participants. Some themes are formed from the interplay between the presence and absence of data (G. W. Ryan & Bernard, 2003). As the term suggests, the latter cannot be evidenced in carefully curated tables but must be explained and justified in the write-up. The latter is even more important in studies like mine that use unfolding, non-linear narratives to present themes (Nizza, Farr, & Smith, 2021). For instance, at the outset of Chapter 6, experiential themes were organized along the stages of an 'initial connoisseurship life cycle model' (p. 205), which was revised and eventually replaced by a 'connoisseurship trajectories framework' in the discussion section (p. 218).

It follows, in my opinion, that tables indicating the prevalence of themes can be useful heuristics (Chapter 5) but should neither be read in isolation nor be considered the golden standard for the evaluation of IPA research. In some cases (e.g. Chapter 6), such tables do simply not make any sense or are not practicable. Appendix 23 (p. 372) shows recurrent themes developed in Chapter 5.

Participant voices

As elaborated at the beginning of this chapter, this study embraces the idea that knowledge is co-constructed between participants and researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In an attempt to make sense of individuals' lived experiences, researchers must engage in double (J. A. Smith et al., 2009), even triple (Kirkham et al., 2015) hermeneutic readings of multiple texts (here: visual, written and spoken texts). This is the only way to understand the subject matter from an '*insider's view*' (Conrad, 1987; see also Smith, 1996). As part of this process, researchers step into participants' horizons and see the subject matter revealing itself from the perspective of each particular individual (Burton et al., 2017; J. A. Smith et al., 2022). In this regard, we may want to recall Gadamer's (1964/1976, p. 100) claim that "the work of art … says something to each person as if it were said especially to him [*sic*]."

With this in mind, I wanted to dedicate ample space in this study to participant voices. Other researchers tend to introduce the 'cast' (participants) of their 'play' (study) in the appendix (e.g. Eatough, 2005). I believe this approach bears the risk that participant voices fade away and that participant horizons remain concealed. Depending on the type of study (e.g. visual research), it might even diminish

the value of participant contributions if the latter are moved to the appendix. As a response to that, all 16 participants and their collages were presented in Chapter 4 from the perspectives of participants. Where applicable, initial analytical comments were offered.

In Chapter 5 (p. 153) and Chapter 6 (p. 203), participant voices are represented with verbatim quotes from all three texts. Experiential statements are displayed in italics to differentiate them from my own voice as well as that from literature. The font size of longer participant extracts—as opposed to longer quotes from literature—does not change to symbolically restore the power balance between participants and researcher. A metaphor that resonated very strongly with me was that of a 'quilt'. Koelsch (2012, pp. 823-824) explains:

> The quilt metaphor is useful when presenting the results of a qualitative research project involving multiple participants. The patchwork quilt metaphor is a means to present participant data as both unique and part of a larger whole …. The quilter is the theory builder and ultimately responsible for the final quilt, but the materials are bounded. Rather than discovering absolute facts, a social scientist can be seen as constructing theory out of disparate information including participant data, pre-existing theory, and self-reflexivity.

I appreciate that the idea of quilting multiple voices within and across chapters could be pushed much further, for instance by assigning different font colours to each participant voice (see e.g. Gayton, 2021), but I feel that the way it was translated here allowed for an optimum management of the 'disparate information' without compromising understanding of the research.

Pilot study

Literature recognizes the value of pilot studies in qualitative research (e.g. Malmqvist, Hellberg, Möllås, Rose, & Shevlin, 2019) and identified numerous reasons for undertaking them (see e.g. Van Teijlingen, Rennie, Hundley, & Graham, 2001). However, scholars criticize that the reporting of pilot studies as well as the publication of lessons learned remain scarce (e.g. Beebe, 2007). As a response to the critique, this section briefly describes the pilot study conducted as part of this research and highlights three key learnings derived from it.

Two individuals, Emma and Amber (pseudonyms), agreed to participate in the pilot study undertaken in December 2018. Participant documents were signed and the collage toolkit was distributed. Amber withdrew from the study after she had sent her collage but before the interview took place. As

participation was voluntary and because withdrawals did not require justification, Amber's case is not treated further. Emma and I held the interview on the 7th of December 2018. The latter was transcribed and shared with Emma for approval, which was obtained on the 20th of December 2018. All data sets were subsequently analysed using IPA. Analyses were shared and discussed with supervisors as means of independent audit (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

One objective of the pilot was to evaluate the approach to QDA. Rather than treating visual, written and spoken texts as "one body of data" (G. Rose, 2016, p. 325), texts were treated and analysed separately following the first three steps of the established IPA procedure. Eventually, a cross-textual reading took place in step 4 (connecting and clustering experiential statements). Although this process yielded rich accounts, I felt that—particularly in the case of collages—interpretations moved too far away from participants' experiences and thus had violated Gadamer's (1960/1989) postulate that *not every-thing is possible*. I have therefore abducted and modified the story grid for the analysis of collages. This means the QDA process described above is a direct result from my lessons learned during the pilot study. The advantage of the grid was that participants' stories anchored my interpretations more firmly and facilitated a rigorous, transparent hermeneutic dialogue between texts in concordance with the spirit of Gadamer's hermeneutics and IPA. This is not to say that this view is the only possible. I appreciate that other ontological (e.g. relativism), epistemological (e.g. subjectivism) positions or theoretical lenses (e.g. grounded theory) would have promoted the independent readings of the texts and might have consequently yielded different results. But the methodological choices made in this study defined the parameters for QDA more narrowly.

Another aim of the pilot study was to evaluate the interview schedule, which I had tested on peers and friends before the pilot took place. My interview with Emma confirmed that questions were well understood, and prompts were deemed helpful. The structure of the interview and sequencing of questions facilitated the articulation of experiences as well as the meaning-making process. No modifi-cations were required. However, reflecting on the interview itself during the transcription process, I felt that I could attempt to bracket my own thoughts and/or ideas a bit more (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). As a consequence, I made more field notes during subsequent interviews and attended to them at a later stage of the QDA. Another decision I made was to transcribe future interviews more purposefully, which

meant that I would cease from transcribing each and every articulation, like pause fillers or stuttered utterances (Bricker-Katz, Lincoln, & Cumming, 2013).

Summary

This chapter started with a justification for adopting IPA as methodological framework for this constructivist study. Underpinned by Gadamer's aesthetics and his phenomenological hermeneutics more generally, an inductive, multimodal research design was developed, which would allow the researcher to address the research aim and questions. It was recommended to create three types of data (visual, written and verbal) to tap into the conscious and unconscious lived experiences of font users to develop an enhanced understanding of font consumption. Legal and ethical implications of doing visual research were highlighted. Acknowledging the fact that the latter become more diverse, a heterogeneous sampling strategy was devised. A detailed outline of the approach to QDA followed, evidencing each step of the meaning making process. Finally, learnings from a pilot study were shared.

The cast

4

"Now constructions are, quite literally, created realities. They do not exist outside of the persons who create and hold them."

(Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 143)

Introduction

Inspired by previous IPA research, this chapter offers three different information about each of the 16 study participants: First, I introduce participants using brief pen portraits (for examples of IPA studies using pen portraits see e.g. De Santis, 2015; Eatough, 2005; Gauntlett, 2019; Larkin, 2002). Second, I follow Boden's (2013) example and describe my meetings with each participant and communicate potential issues that arose. This demonstrates my commitment to quality research (e.g. Yardley, 2015) and epistemological reflexivity (Mann, 2016; Willig, 2013). Finally, I offer a synopsis of participants' collages and their lived experienced.

All three elements are presented for the first case before moving to the next case. Where applicable, I use participants' verbatim, phenomenological accounts to make their voices heard and intersperse the text with my own interpretations and literature, without creating and aggregating themes. This approach embraces IPA's idiographic commitment (J. A. Smith et al., 2009); it emphasizes the particular of each case and provides contextual information for the interpretation of findings presented in Chapter 5 (p. 153) and Chapter 6 (p. 203).

As displayed in Table 12 (p. 99) below, 16 participants from five different nations were recruited for the study. Their ages range from 24 to 75 years, with an average of 39 years. In response to an open question about their gender, eight participants self-identified as female and male respectively, which means that participants were equally distributed across two gender categories. Six participants indicated they would work in a university setting (e.g. academic, lecturer). Five participants identify as freelancer (e.g. designer, musician, writer). Four participants are employed in firms (e.g. management, sales). Only one participant works at an agency (designer).

Some of the participants disclosed their ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Black, Asian, Colombian) or disabled status during the interview. This information is not presented in Table 12 (p. 99) but was fed into their respective pen portraits as I felt it was important to those participants that the information is included.

Notwithstanding their diverse characteristics, participants share important features relevant for this study. First, individuals have been encultured or accultured in Western societies (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018). This matters because culture provides an important 'lens' for making sense of our world (Solomon, 2018). Second, fundamentally all participants use Latin script, which is significantly

different from other forms e.g. Arabic, Chinese, Cyrillic, Greek, Hebrew, Indian, and Japanese, (Ambrose & Harris, 2011). It follows that all participants are familiar with the product category (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Finally, and most importantly, all participants are regular font users.

As presented in earlier in this chapter (pp. 79-80), the sample could be considered homogeneous with regard to the phenomenon of interest, namely individuals' lived experiences with font consumption. However, it is their variation that allowed for the juxtaposition and deeper exploration of personal and group experiential themes that cut through the noise. This reasoning seems compatible with IPA's commitment to idiography, in general, and its openness towards (single) case studies more specifically. Within IPA, cases are—after all—analysed case by case before a cross-case analysis is being conducted (see e.g., p. 88).

Table 12
Research participants' demographic information

Name [a]	Age [b]	Gender [c]	Profession/occupation [c]	Company category	Nationality/Residence
Alicia	42	Female	Academic/designer/researcher	University/consulting	Australian/Australia
Briana	46	Female	Lecturer	University	British/England
Damian	49	Male	Key account manager	Firm	German/Germany
Emma	31	Female	Musician	Freelancer	American/USA
George	62	Male	Company founder	Firm	British/USA
Jasmin	31	Female	Manager/student	Firm	German/Germany
Jelena	31	Female	Industrial designer	Freelancer	Croatian/Croatia
Justin	43	Male	Lecturer	University	British/England
Kevin	24	Male	Graphic designer	Agency	British/England
Laura	48	Female	Lecturer	University	British/England
Luka	27	Male	Type designer/visual designer	Freelancer	Croatian/Croatia
Raphael	29	Male	Academic	University	American/USA
Ruby	45	Female	Design academic	University	Australian/Australia
Sarah	75	Female	Researcher/writer/illustrator	Freelancer	American/USA
Thomas	27	Male	Writer	Freelancer	British/USA
Tobias	28	Male	Area sales manager	Firm	German/Germany

Note. Participants are presented in alphabetical order. [a] All names are pseudonyms. [b] Age at time of interview. [c] Gender and professions are self-identified by participants in the demographic questionnaire; actual professional activities might be broader than indicated here.

Following the presentation and analysis of experiential statements in Chapters 4 to 6, actors were recast into four different groups and eight subgroups to facilitate comparison of research participants and their lived experiences with font consumption. The details of this recasting are presented in Appendix 24 (p. 373) and augments information presented in tables of group experiential themes (see Appendix 21, p. 367, and Appendix 22, p. 371, respectively) as well as the table containing recurrent themes developed in Chapter 5 (see Appendix 23, p. 372).

Alicia

Pen portrait

Alicia is a white, female, in her early forties, from Australia. Alicia is married, has two children, one stepchild, and a puppy. Looking into the future, she says: "*I wanna be able to go out of my way for others more, and be there for my children more, which is really challenging with competing work requirements that see me travel internationally*" (Alicia, p. 24, INT416-420). This struggle is a central aspect of "*Amour Fou*" (mad love), the theme of her collage presented below (see Figure 7, p. 104). Alicia pursues various careers: She is a researcher, academic, and designer. Alicia is currently working towards her doctorate in typography, while she lectures in design and typography at an Australian university; she also works as design practitioner and branding consultant. Alicia is a member of the International Society of Typographic Designers from the United Kingdom. "*From a very early age*" on, art and design have been great passions of hers, and she explains: "*I see creativity as the driving force in life and I've really had this as an underlying kind of current … in myself and being for a long time*;" Alicia uses her creativity and works to make a difference in her community and society (Alicia, pp. 20-21, INT349-374).

Meeting Alicia

I experienced Alicia as a very open, communicative, and supportive person. Alicia and I had initially met in the United Kingdom to conduct the interview in person during one of her international travels. The atmosphere was relaxed, despite time restrictions. It was quite comfortable to talk to Alicia, because of her outgoing nature and her typographic experience, which she articulated with ease and hence kept the conversation flowing. However, there were two situations where some of her comments made me feel like an outsider because she highlighted that I was not a design practitioner. In those instances, I noticed feelings of self-doubt arising inside me, but they subsided swiftly. After my return from the interview, I realized that the memory card in my digital recording device was broken. The interview recording could not be restored, despite every possible action undertaken to recover the interview data. Alicia was very compassionate and agreed to do another interview session with me. Given the significant time difference between Europe and Australia as well as her busy schedule, we agreed that she would video record her responses to the questions set out in my interview guide—which I emailed to her for orientation—at a time most suitable for her. Although it could be argued that this solution might have created a

less dynamic interview situation because I could not follow up with comments she made, nor probe for a deeper understanding of her experiences, Alicia's eloquence provided a rich description of her lived experiences. As with the other interview data, the recording was transcribed verbatim and analysed following the IPA procedure described earlier.

Alicia's collage

Titled *'Aroha'*, which means 'love' in the Māori language spoken by the indigenous population in New Zealand, Alicia's collage symbolizes: *"the struggle for parent-focus"* (Alicia, p. 6, INT104-105). The ty-pographic text *'amour fou'* (French for 'mad love') (Alicia, COLA) is placed at the centre of the collage, where it becomes its focal point. The expression is representative of Alicia's lived experiences at the time she created the collage and stands for: *"A mêlée for power and focus amongst what I love doing, what I need to do, and what I have to do—embraced and squashed between my responsibilities to others"* (Alicia, p. 1, NAR1-5).

Amour fou (Alicia, COL1A) appears to float in space (Alicia, COL2), rendering the expression weightless and void of the tensions associated with it. What is interesting is Alicia's choice of typeface: *"I was really drawn to using the Futura font [for example] because of … the grid … which I feel is really important as a structural element for design, but also for our lives"*; she continues: *"we all live underneath a clock—a timetable, and we've got that perception of time moving–we look at time and I feel that that kind of cements us in some way to what we do"* (Alicia, pp. 15-16, INT256-258, INT270-276).

The verb *'cement'* used in the last quote is a powerful metaphor that forms a counterpoint to the sense of *'zero gravity'* evoked in Alicia's collage. Cement connotates weight, something that pulls other entities down and/or anchors them. This impression is reinforced by the images Alicia had chosen to fill the outlines of the letters: *"I decided to be representative of me and my identity and the various places … I have lived and various experiences I've had in those places"* that are embodied by photographs from mountains, volcanos, ice, water and deserts respectively (Alicia, pp. 3-4, INT52-55, INT58-69; COL1A, COL2A). The imagery adds literal (e.g. mountains) and symbolic (e.g. memories) weight to 'amour fou' and are loosely representing the four basic elements.

However, there is a third temporal dimension to amour fou. It does not only symbolize present and past lived experiences, but it looks into the future too. Alicia explains: *"I also wanted to focus on*

what might be there in our future and I think that all parents … are very concerned about the future for their children on … earth and life, society and culture" (Alicia, p. 7, INT120-125). She concludes:

> *Overall, I wanted a very optimistic tone for the collage. I think that, although it references people passed [see next chapter] and it represents places I've been, it also hopefully—by being set on the stars by the night sky—I anticipate that is has a sense of enlightenment and looking up—an optimism and I really wanted to create a sense of optimism in the work, so hopefully that comes across. (Alicia, pp. 12-13, INT212-221)*

Figure 7

Alicia's collage: 'Aroha.'

A

B
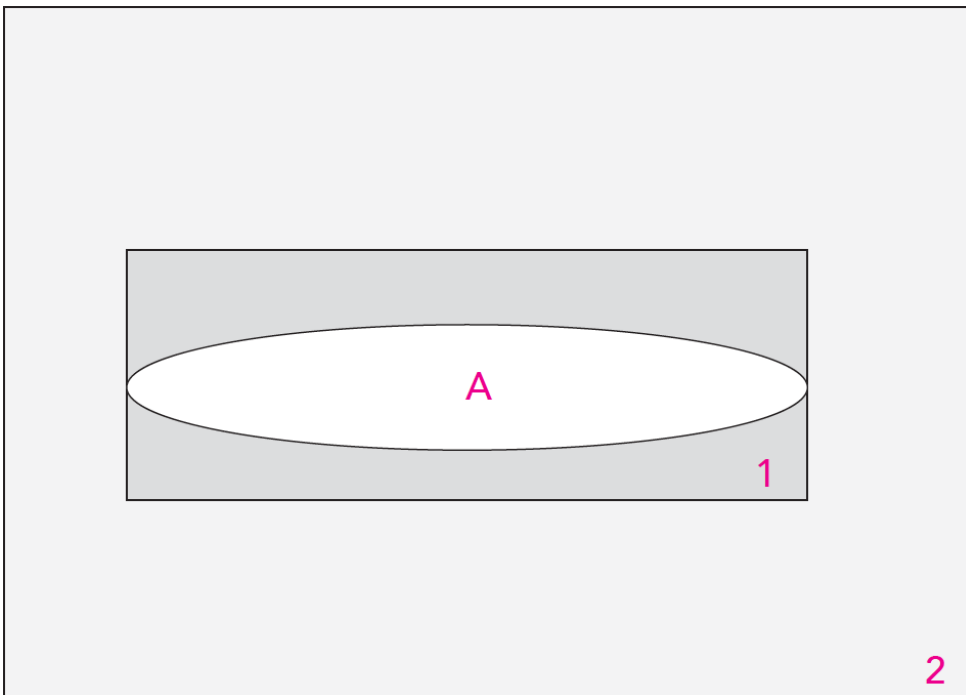
Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Briana

Pen portrait

Briana is an African-born, black, British, female academic in her mid-forties. In the 1970s, she emigrated with her parents from Africa to the United Kingdom. Fascinated by different countries and cultures as well as a result of having moved within and across continents, Briana considers herself a citizen of the world. She is married to her husband who has a bi-ethnic background (African and English). Together, they have two children—a daughter and a son. Briana explained that her family and her Christian faith are of utmost importance to her. She recently earned her PhD from an English university and is now working towards a professorship. Briana holds a law degree and gained practical experience in top American and British law firms, before she decided to: "*start my own business, because I felt that I wanted to give back to society … through perhaps helping to develop people*" (Briana, p. 15, INT260-262). Today, she works as a university lecturer. She describes herself as: "*somebody who loves to learn …, loves to share knowledge … and want[s] to impact the world in a positive way*" (Briana, pp. 42-43, INT755-760). Being an academic and social entrepreneur allows her to do exactly that. But managing her many different roles and developing her careers requires a lot of perseverance, resilience and grit as her past experiences show: "*I've had three major [life] changes and some of those experiences have been really tough, so I know that the future may be even tougher*" (Briana, p. 49, INT872-875).

Meeting Briana

Briana and I met online to conduct the interview via Skype. She sent me her collage and narrative shortly before the actual meeting. When I had realized that she had not followed important instructions set out in the consent form and collage toolkit (e.g. use of imagery and fonts), I asked her if she would be willing to rework her collage by exchanging some of the images to ensure compliance with the standards of ethics defined for this study. She agreed and sent me her updated collage which is displayed below (see Figure 8, p. 107). Very similar images were selected to ensure meanings of the original collage were preserved. We decided to keep the image of Barack and Michelle Obama (Obama, 2019) in her collage (Briana, COL5), as it was a decisive element of her narrative. Notwithstanding the initial obstacle, Briana was passionately engaged in the interview, which made it very pleasurable. She explained she had "*really enjoyed*" the whole process and had learned about herself—"*this has allowed me to share things about myself that I don't have actually vocalized before… It's been a great experience to do this*

research. Although you're focussing on typefaces … but it's been fantastic for me personally" (Briana, p. 60, INT1064-1075). As will be shown later, the last sentence in Briana's statement is indicative of her relationship with typefaces.

Briana's collage

Briana chose to title her collage 'This is me'. Her collage contains nine visuals (Briana, COL1-COL9) and one textual element positioned at the bottom of the page (Briana, COLA). The visuals are arranged in a loose three by three (3x3) grid. Both, the visual and textual elements are surrounded by a lot of white space, that appears to fragment the collage and/or disconnect the elements. As indicated earlier, Briana revealed during our conversation: "*I've got a very strong faith and that's underneath everything that I do, as well*" (Briana, p. 51, INT902-904). It appears the white space is symbolic of her faith—an invisible force that connects the elements of her collage and hence the key facets of her self-identity ('this is me').

When I asked Briana to deconstruct the collage to create meaning units, she identified three main clusters. The first cluster could be labelled 'private-self' and is—as Briana highlighted—character-ized by a sense of temporality. Briana explained: "*It [the cluster] really represents me from birth [map; Briana, COL6] to getting married [Obamas; Briana, COL5] and becoming a mum [superwoman; Briana, COL1]*" (Briana, p. 53, INT948-950). 'Academic-self' forms the second cluster and comprises the images of the classroom [*Briana,* COL7], the female teacher writing on the board [*Briana,* COL8] and the female and the student looking at the computer together [*Briana,* COL9] (Briana, p. 53, INT952-954). For Bri-ana, the images epitomize: "*The fact that I love learning and … [I've] been in academia for a number of years and I'm aspiring to use education—by becoming a professor—to … impact others*" (Briana, p. 54, INT955-960). The third and final cluster contains the visuals 'lawyer' (Briana, COL2), 'do something great' (Briana, COL4) and the 'female entrepreneurs' (Briana, COL3). It could be themed 'practitioner-self' signifying: "*My professional background but also my business interest as a social entrepreneur and the fact that I also want to be a part of people in society, especially women, that want to use entrepre-neurship to impact lives and impact the world*" (Briana, p. 54, INT964-970). Although Briana did not address this matter, it could be argued that 'academic-self' and 'practitioner-self' have a temporal di-mension too. The meaning units symbolize Briana's past self (e.g. work experience), present self (e.g. interests) and future self (e.g. aspirations).

Figure 8

Briana's collage: 'This is me.'
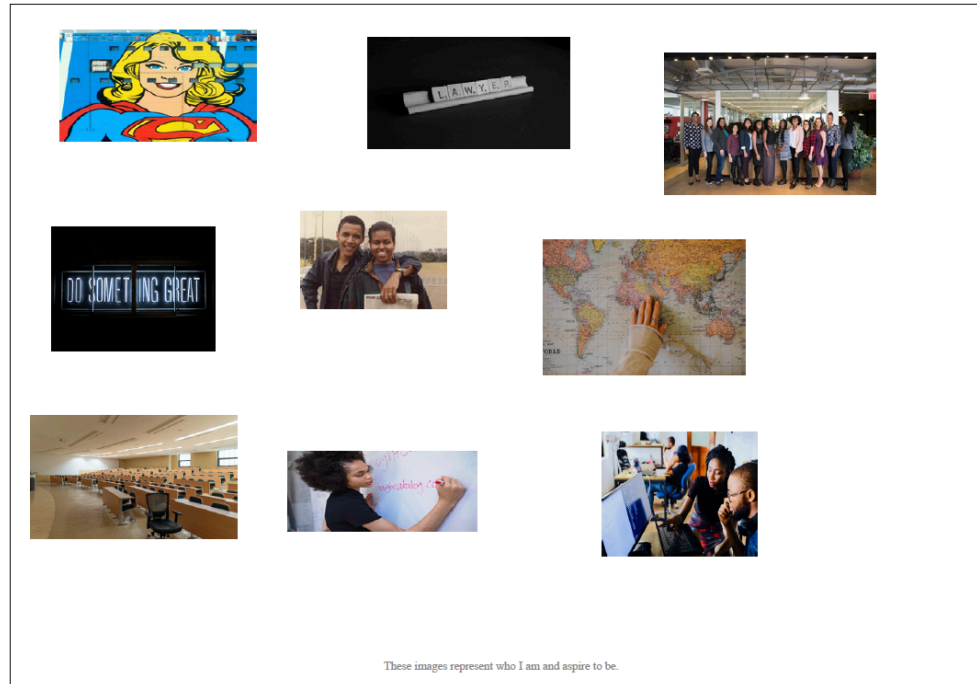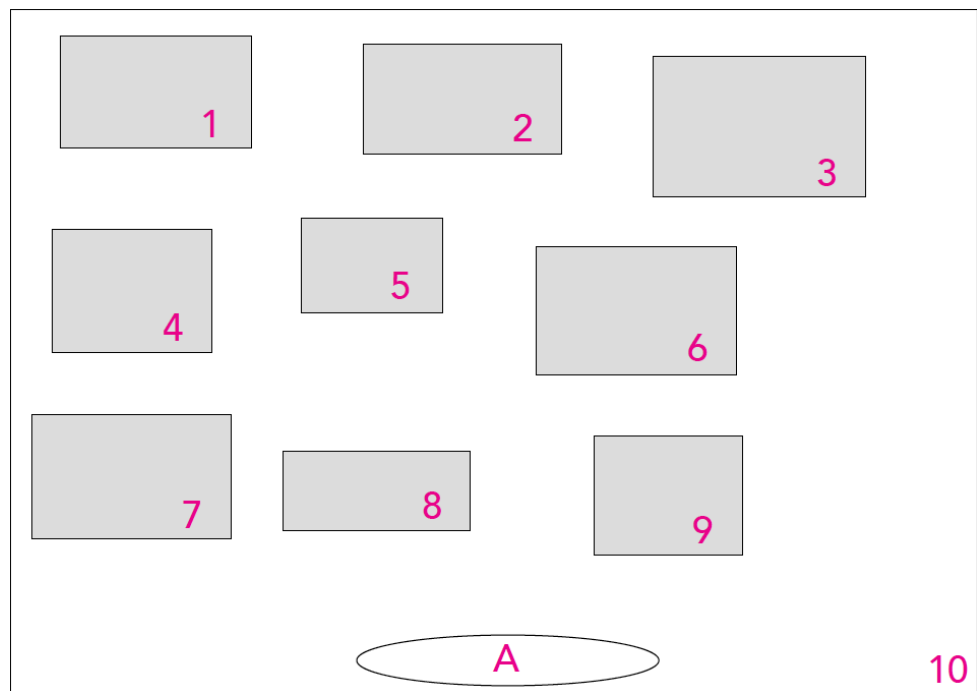
Damian

Pen portrait

Damian is a white, 49-year-old, male, from Germany. During the interview, Damian self-identified as severely disabled person (Damian, p. 100, INT1797-1798) and elaborated on his circumstances, which are also embodied in Damian's collage presented below (see Figure 9, p. 111). He works fulltime as key account manager at a company he is employed with for more than 18 years now, while pursuing his doctorate in part-time. Before joining his employer, Damian had run various small businesses in the 1990s. His family biography is quite rich and eventful, which affected his upbringing and eventually his identity. One aspect, that Damian wanted to include in his collage was his culturally diverse background, but he did not find images that could tell his story (Damian, p. 126, INT2253-2257). For example, his father was born in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, after his family was exiled due to the upheaval in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Damian himself was born and raised in Germany. He has two brothers and one sister, against which he had to assert himself (Damian, p. 50, INT891-893). At various points of the interview, he mentioned his poor family background (e.g. Damian, p. 33, INT594; pp. 87-88, INT1565-1578), and that he had worked hard towards his social mobility.

Meeting Damian

My interview with Damian took place online via Skype. I noticed from the very outset of the interview that Damian had struggled with articulating his experiences in English. We were half an hour into the interview, when Damian felt that important points he was making in English felt: "*a little bit thin*" (Damian, p. 26, INT465-467). I consequently offered him to switch languages and to continue the interview in German, which is Damian's and my native language. Damian was very concerned how this might affect my study, but I asked him not to worry and reassured him that this was not going to be a problem. For my analysis, I used the transcripts in the respective original languages, i.e. English for the first part and German for the second part of the interview, and—where applicable—translated the latter for the presentation of my findings only (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). I am cognizant of the theoretical and philosophical implications of this choice (B. Temple & Young, 2004), but I conclude it is compatible with my constructivist stance. To meet the standards of quality in IPA research (J. A. Smith et al., 2009), in particular the standard of 'transparency and coherence' (see Chapter 7, p. 247), I have listed the

German extracts and their English translations in Appendix 25 (p. 374). As the interview unfolded, it became evident that it was the right choice to switch languages. It allowed Damian to give voice to his very intimate experiences. He mentioned at the beginning of the interview that the research process: "*was challenging … because that's such a deep and personal—nobody gets this [information] out of me—… nobody can get such a full picture of my setting I'm living in—except for my wife and two or three very close friends*" (Damian, p.1, INT13-18). I felt honoured by his openness, and I was touched by his personal story. I acknowledge that in some places I had to manage my own emotions, because I sympathized with Damian and because the interview conjured up feelings of grief for my mother who passed away not too long before my interview with Damian.

Damian's collage

Damian's collage is titled 'my life'. It visualizes Damian's lived experiences at various stages of his life. For example, the collage references past experiences (e.g. upbringing; COL7E) as well as core values (e.g. perseverance; Damian, COL23V) and traits (e.g. creativity; Damian, COLK25). Interestingly, the trait 'curiosity' is the only textual element in Damian's collage that has been emphasized using a bold typeface in red font colour (Damian, COLP21). It feels like all other typefaces in Damian's collage were made invisible and with it the meaning they convey. This could be indicative of Damian's struggle to tell his very intimate story to a stranger.

Towards the end of our interview, Damian admitted that he felt tense; he elaborated: "*This was by far the most personal conversation I ever had in my life with an outsider*" (Damian, p. 138, INT2480-2483). He admitted: "*I am doing this [interview] with a degree of honesty that is unusual for me*" (Damian, p. 51, INT908-909). To put his quote into context, it is helpful to understand the two meaning units Damian identified in his collage. Embedded—and perhaps concealed—in the bigger picture of the collage that represents his social self is his personal vulnerability (personal self). As indicated earlier, Damian self-identified as a severely disabled person (Damian, p. 100, INT1797-1798), but he did not specify his health condition further. He emphasized: "*Those illnesses are very much mine. [I'm] always trying not to let others participate in them*" (Damian, p. 100, INT1792-1795). Damian describes his lived experiences with his disease as follows: "*For me, the worst of this experience is the loss of control,*

because I cannot win against it" (Damian, p. 81, INT1454-1456). Damian considers the fact that his life is no longer self-determined as: "*the biggest challenge in [my] life*" (Damian, p. 83, INT1483-1486).

By choosing to render the typefaces in his collage invisible and/or illegible, Damian exercises control over his narrative. The images remain polysemic and ambiguous, and so does the text. To others, its intimate meaning is being withheld and virtually camouflaged. Yet, to Damian, the collage is highly intelligible and meaningful. When we talked about the degree of detail in his collage, Damian acknowledged: "*I could not have done it [the collage] differently … No matter what I had left out, it would have always … felt incomplete to me*" (Damian, p. 84, INT1509-1512).

Figure 9
Damian's collage: 'My life.'

Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Emma

Pen portrait

Emma is in her early thirties. She is a white, female, freelance musician, of North American origin. Music plays an important role in her life. She is currently undertaking a doctoral study at an American university on the west coast, where she lives in a small on-campus studio apartment with her partner, Paul. Emma explains: "*Water is really important. I feel like in my life I grew up near water, I kind of live near water, every time I go to water, I'm–I feel very peaceful and happy. I like to look at it–it's really nice*" (Emma, p. 46, INT812-816). Emma loves being outdoors and enjoying the sun. She describes herself as a warm, loving and nurturing person, as well as someone who is: "*curious about the world around me and very interested in learning more about the world that I live in; the people I interact with …; the objects that surround me …. I think curiosity is a big component*" (Emma, p. 99, INT1761-1767).

Meeting Emma

Emma and I met in person to hold the interview. I asked Emma to propose a date, time and location that would suit her best. We initially met in a student lounge room on the university campus. Unfortunately, the room was occupied, which is why we had to look for an alternative location. Emma suggested to go to her apartment which was nearby. I agreed. Although Emma's apartment was fairly small, it was big enough to fit two small sofas that faced each other. This allowed us to make eye contact during the interview. However, it felt like the change of location from a communal to Emma's private space required a greater warm-up phase prior to the actual interview. Emma offered to make tea and we spent some time to get to know each other and used the opportunity to talk about the project in more detail. Emma was very open and articulate, which facilitated our conversation. Approximately ten minutes into the interview, her partner Paul returned home unexpectedly. He offered to come back later, but Emma asked him to stay. Emma was comfortable to continue the interview. I hesitated but she insisted to proceed, which is why I consented. The conversation continued to flow naturally and without further interruptions or changes.

Emma's collage

Emma's collage (see Figure 10, p. 114) is divided into six segments (Emma, COL1-COL6). Emma wrote in her narrative: *"I collected some images that represented important things to me: Rabbit (gentleness) [Emma, COL1], Tiger (fierceness) [Emma, COL2], Lightning (power/inspiration) [Emma, COL5], notation and the act of writing and reading [Emma, COL6]"* (Emma, p. 1, NAR13-17). As stated earlier: *"Water is really important … in my life"* (Emma, p. 46, INT812). Emma explained: *"I chose that picture [of the people in the ocean; Emma, COL2] … because there's little bit of anonymity. You can't see exactly who the people are. But also, it reminded me of kinda like my group of friends, right now"* (Emma, p. 46, INT817-821). The final section is that of the three coffee cups (Emma, COL3). She admitted: *"The coffee was like with the last edition, because … this corner needed something, and I was like: 'I really like coffee', so I put that in there"* (Emma, pp. 2-3, INT34-38). Later, Emma elaborated: *"I chose this one [picture], because it's the three stages–it's like, the beans, the espresso, 'n the cappuccino, so it's like the coffee process"* (Emma, p. 9, INT156-158). She specified…

> *A lot of people focus on … the end product and like the, the coffee in the to go cup but a lot of the really nice things happen before the end product …. I feel like that's something that at least I think about a lot, is like, what point in the process are you gonna stop? (Emma, pp. 11-12, INT198-211)*

This question can be easily adopted to the collage creation process. Emma explained the title of her collage ('No bunny knows') as follows: *"No bunny knows how to really make a collage of themself"* (Emma, p. 79, INT1413-1414). The spatial and textual focus on the rabbit in Emma's collage (Emma, COL1) is symbolic of the meaning units Emma identified: *"You could … look at it as 'rabbit' [Emma, COL1] versus 'all like this other stuff' [Emma, COL2-COL6]"* (Emma, p. 76, INT1358-1359).

Figure 10

Emma's collage: 'No bunny knows.'
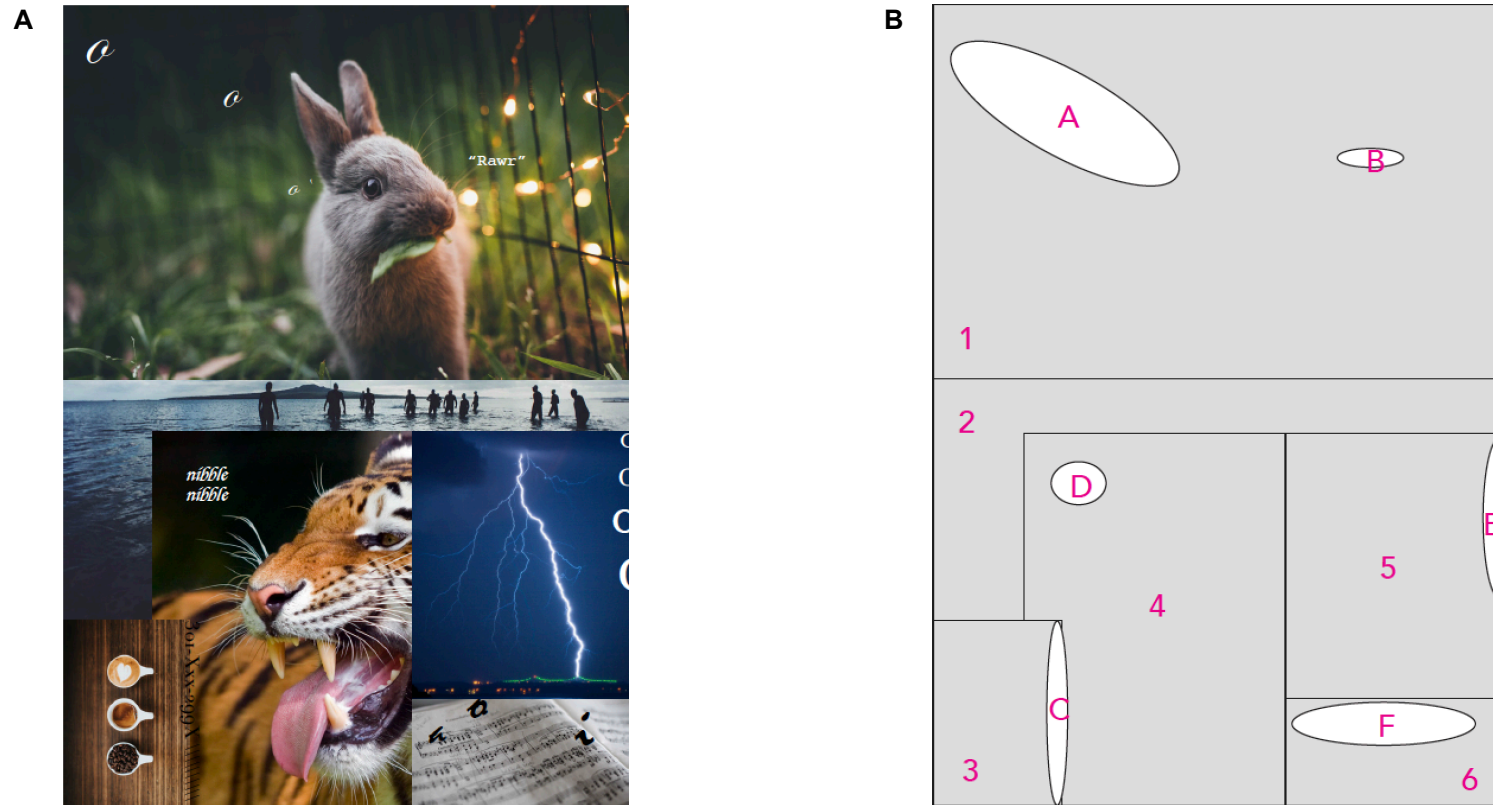
Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

George

Pen portrait

George is a 62-year-old, white, British, businessman who is presently living in the USA after emigrating from the United Kingdom five years ago (George, p. 48, INT848-850). George runs his own company and is currently working on the launch of a new product to support the management of mental health and well-being (George, p. 33, INT582-583). He feels very strongly that the idea he is developing will make a big difference and have a positive impact (George, p. 44, INT776-784). He holds a degree in printing technology (George, p. 30, INT534). After graduating from college he got a scholarship to study at an art school in the USA (George, p. 31, INT549-552). In his past career, George worked as a typographer in advertising (George, p. 34, INT596-597).

Meeting George

I met George in a university library, where we booked a meeting room for the interview. George explained to me that he did not find it helpful to stretch the data generation process (i.e. collage creation, narrative writing and interview) over several days and/or weeks. He preferred to reserve one hour for the collage creation (see Figure 11, p. 117) and writing up of the narrative on the day of the interview. I agreed to change the process to accommodate George's needs and preferences. We scheduled three hours for the total process. This modification resolved another problem. George never worked with Microsoft PowerPoint, and the software was therefore not installed on his MacBook. I offered him to use my MacBook for creating his collage. George uses design software fundamentally every day and is familiar with creative processes; he admitted that: *"It was also interesting for me using what was effectively completely new software today, which didn't give me the same amount of control that I would usually have"* (George, p. 2, INT26-34). George was very supportive throughout the whole process. He was highly engaged, opened up easily to me and was able to articulate his experiences, which was quite helpful. However, I felt bad that George could not express himself with Microsoft PowerPoint in the same way he could have done with the software of his choice. Therefore, I decided to change the guidelines after my interview with George, allowing participants to choose their software freely.

George's collage

"I have a number of roles in life, and it seemed to me that this [task] was about defining some of those roles … I chose five labels [roles]" (George, p. 11, INT185-189). George explained: *"I … started off with my name in the middle [George, COLA] … [and continued by] writing down that I'm a son [George, COL3D] … My dad lit a lot of fires in me, and I feel I'm carrying that flame forward"* (George, p. 11, INT183-196). *"Then I'm a brother … We're very close"* (George, p. 12, INT210-211; COL4E). The next element in George's collage signifies 'friends' (George, COL5F). George elaborates: *"My friends are very important to me and I've supported that with the statement 'dependable,' because … loyalty in life is really, really important … to me and, you know, I want to be there … for my friends"* (George, p. 13, INT220-225). Gorge thinks: *"It's my work, really, which guides me through life,"* which is why he chose the compass to depict that facet of his identity (George, p. 13, INT229-230; COL2C). *"And then, finally, in the top left-hand corner, there is a picture of a lighthouse, which … I hope it's in a modest way … I don't think this is kind of a boastful thing, but I feel like a part of my purpose is to inspire other people"* (George, pp. 13-14, INT231-236; COL1B). Reflecting on his collage and the collage creation process, George wrote in his narrative:

> *I immediately saw that my first reaction to the question was to see that 'who I am' has a lot to do with my relationships to other people—to my friends, my family, and the world at large. In a way I think I exist because of my connections to other people …. I notice that four of the five images I chose include hands [George, COL2-COL5]. Again, this indicates my connection with other people. (George, pp. 1-2, NAR10-16, NAR20-22)*

Typographically, closeness is also signified by reducing the tracking of the font *(George, p. 22, INT380).*

Figure 11

George's collage: 'Me.'
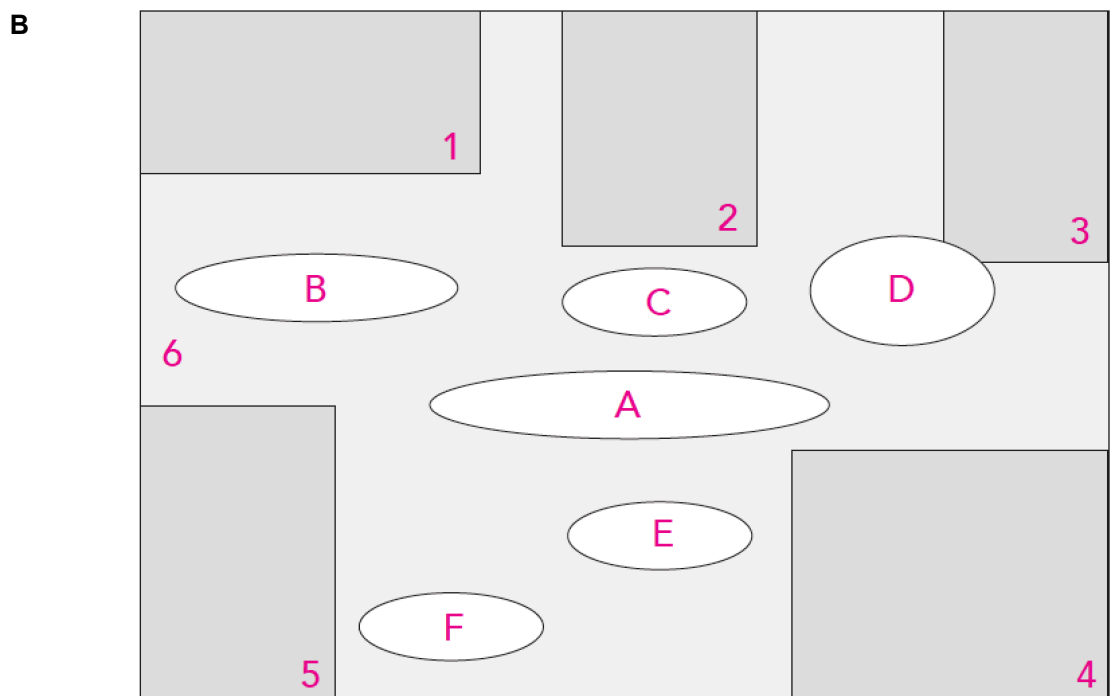
A

B

Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Jasmin

Pen portrait

Jasmin is 31-year-old, white, female, from Germany. She pursues her part-time doctoral studies while working fulltime as manager in a traditionally male dominated service-sector. During our interview, Jasmin emphasized two of her traits in particular, namely being very focused and being ambitious, which she considers to be *"a strength and a weakness"* (Jasmin, p. 50, INT889). Equally, Jasmin elaborated on her different hobbies. She describes her versatile interests as somewhat contradictory (in a gender-normative sense): *"I am interested in lots of different things that obviously do not match, e.g. race and muscle cars, dogs, homeopathy, makeup, research, animal rights, boats and do-it-yourself house reno-vation"* (Jasmin, p. 1, NAR3-9). The positive tension in her interests is also represented in her collage (see below).

Meeting Jasmin

My interview with Jasmin was held online via Skype. This was particularly helpful as it enabled Jasmin to take control of the screen to explicate her collage (see Figure 12, p. 120) and to talk me through her experiences of creating it. Furthermore, using Skype allowed her to demonstrate the various ways she consumes typefaces in her everyday life. Jasmin's presentation highlighted that her consumption prac-tices did not significantly differ between natural and research contexts, which was a valuable insight.

Jasmin's collage

'I am Miami' is the dramatic title of Jasmin's collage. She explains: *"Miami is a diverse and colourful city to me, and that is also how I describe myself"* (Jasmin, p. 1, NAR3-5). During the interview, Jasmin highlighted some incongruencies between the images…

> *The picture in the middle [Jasmin, COL1] is different than the other pictures [Jasmin, COL2-COL5]. It's more like the realistic type of picture. Because the other ones are like pink and blue [Jasmin, COL2-COL5] and this [Jasmin, COL1] is like really a natural vibe within the picture and I really like the–the person within, just the–the legs and the shoes … So like you're on top of Miami and can overview everything, like the different sections which I tried to express in the other four pictures. (Jasmin, pp. 14-15, INT251-260)*

Jasmin repeatedly juxtaposed the 'real' from the 'fake' image of the city (e.g. Jasmin, p. 18, INT308-314). She explains: *"When I think about Miami, I think about these type of colours, like the pink, the blue, the–like this beach house [Jasmin, COL2], like … the pink sky [Jasmin, COL3, COL5]… but that's not the Miami I experienced when I was there"* (Jasmin, pp. 17-18, INT305-309). Jasmin emphasized: *"As I wanted to describe myself, I used a more realistic picture in the middle [Jasmin, COL1]. I'm–I'm real. Yes. I'm not like the stereotype around"* (Jasmin, p. 18, INT316-320).

The last quote in particular refers to Jasmin's self. She appropriates all traits of the city 'Miami' and integrates them into her self-understanding. Miami becomes a synonym for her personal identity and her diverse interests introduced earlier. It reveals her opposition to normative gender stereotypes and a challenge of the hegemonic thought. Elsewhere, she states: *"It's really unusual … Miami combines everything and so you have limitless possibilities because you can do everything"* (Jasmin, p. 20, INT351-356). 'Limitless possibilities' (Jasmin, COL5E) is a metaphor for what Jasmin's diverse interests and skills have to offer. Looking into the future, she admits: *"I have too many options now. Too many good options. It's not a bad thing, but it's also hard when you have a lot of good options, and you like everything you do. And you know it's too much and you need to quit something, but you like everything"* (Jasmin, p. 51, INT907-913).

Figure 12
Jasmin's collage: 'I am Miami.'
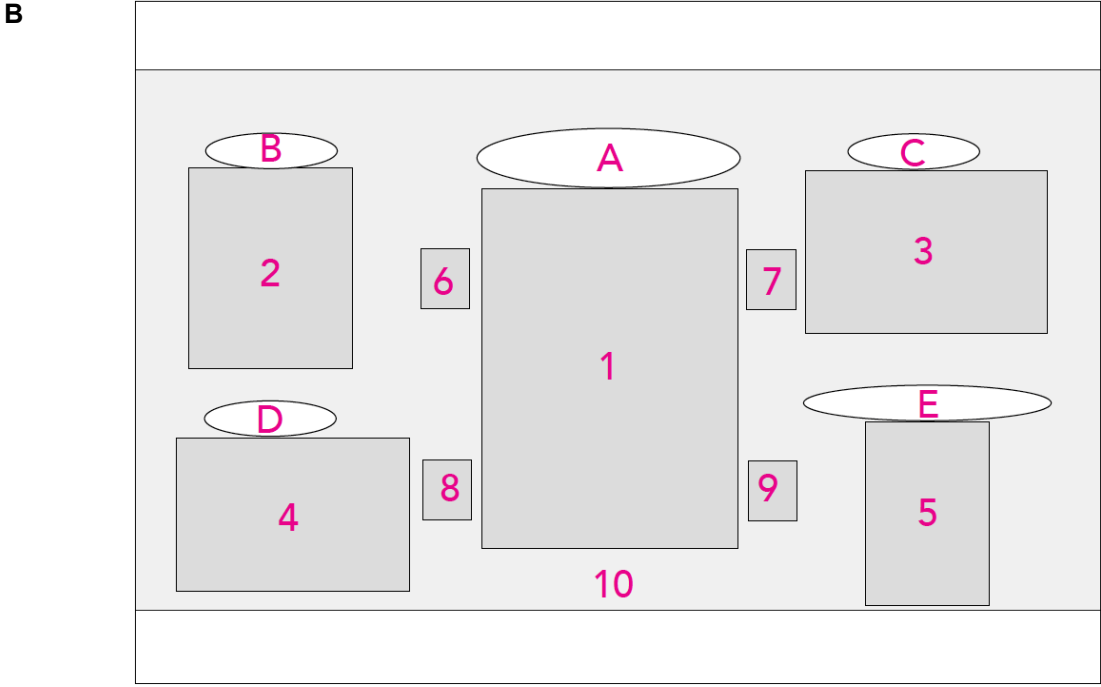
A

B

Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Jelena

Pen portrait

Jelena is a female industrial designer from Croatia, where she currently works freelance for international clients. She is 31 years old and lives in a relationship. Jelena became acquainted with typography and type design while she pursued her degree in industrial design. She describes herself as a *"creative introvert"* (Jelena, p. 36, INT642) and *"visual person,"* who gives meaning to entities. And this, so she believes: *"makes [the] world more interesting"* (Jelena, p. 18, INT318-320). During our interview, Jelena stressed her need for *"visual harmony"*. Nickel, Orth, and Kumar (2020, p. 699) define 'visual harmony' as the use of "lines, curves, and colors to achieve symmetry, proportion, balance, roundness, and unity in a design stimulus." 'Meaning-making' and 'visual harmony' are two central aspects in Jelena's collage presented below (see Figure 13, p. 123).

Meeting Jelena

I met Jelena in Croatia for a face-to-face interview. She suggested to meet in an outdoor café, which she believed was quiet at that day and time of the week. Jelena is a very fashionable and modern young woman. I found her to be a very likeable person and I thought we connected easily. However, I had the feeling that she was not quite ready to start with the interview yet. We therefore spent some time to get to know each other better and to speak about the research project. There was some noise coming from a construction site nearby, which is why we decided to change locations. Once relocated, we started straight away with the interview. The setting and conversational atmosphere were friendly and relaxed.

Jelena's collage

The collage is representative of Jelena's personal self. It signifies her need for visual harmony. Jelena thinks: *"It … represents my need to make things harmonic or to … balance the visual things in certain frame or space"* (Jelena, p. 22, INT389-392). She continues: *"It represents my way of thinking or … my ability to achieve that harmony"* (Jelena, p. 23, INT398-400). Jelena explains that…

> *The large geometric part [Jelena, COLA] … creates imbalance … in the composition, so it is balanced with the paragraph section [Jelena, COLC] and … with the photo section which are bundled … on the one side … to create that balance [Jelena, COL1-COL7] and also the fun,*

colourful numbers [Jelena, COLB] … Behind everything is [the] background (Jelena, COL8).

(Jelena, p. 57, INT1014-1023)

Elsewhere Jelena elaborated on her approach to the collage creation, highlighting…

I focused more on the composition … that was the … main thing for me and I didn't want to overcomplicate it. Yeah, I didn't think that the … subject of the text was important …. This paragraph [Jelena, COLC] is not just thrown there … No … it's there with–it all has a reason, but the text doesn't … have a meaning … for me. I looked at this … like a layout … so anyone could replace this text with their text and use the composition as I made it … for something they want to display. (Jelena, pp. 16-17, INT283-298)

Those quotes suggest that Jelena approached the collage creation task as an industrial designer, who created an artefact that can be consumed by others. By doing so, Jelena offers (extends) a part of herself to the consumer of what she calls '*layout*'. The latter term is also used in the title of the collage, which is called 'Jelena's layout'. She reveals…

The part 'Jelena' … does represent me, and symbolizes that there are some elements, that characterize me, but 'layout' is something that … can be used by other people as something … like [a] framework for … their character, so that they can copy my underlying layout and put their initials [Jelena, COLA], their pictures [Jelena, COL1-COL7], their text [Jelena, COLB, COLC] and use the layout I already made. (Jelena, p. 55, INT975-987)

Figure 13

Jelena's collage: 'Jelena's Layout.'
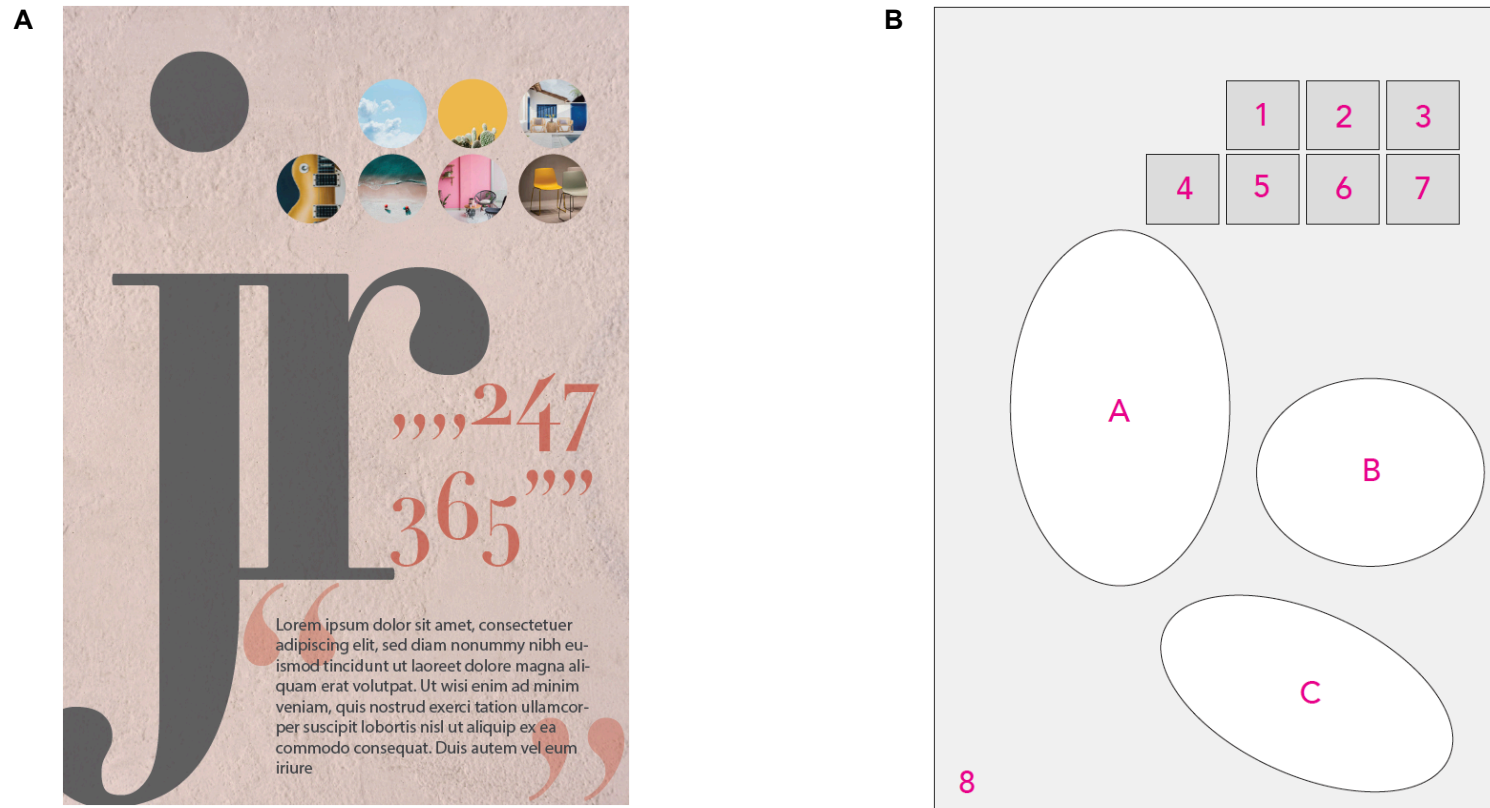
Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Justin

Pen portrait

Justin is a 43-year-old male university lecturer from the United Kingdom. He is a British citizen with Chinese ethnicity (Justin, p. 2, NAR42-43)*.* Before becoming a lecturer, Justin worked, for example, as freelance graphic designer. In this role, he: *"spent a lot of time picking fonts for artwork and copy in publications"* (Justin, pp. 1-2, NAR24-26). Justin earned a degree in fine art. As part of the programme, he studied various graphic design related topics, including e.g. typeface designs and their histories, meanings, and social contexts. He used the various occasions provided in the research process (i.e. narrative, collage, and interview) to highlight his typographic knowledge and experiences, sharing valuable insights into his relationships with typefaces, which are presented in the later text.

Meeting Justin

During the Skype interview, Justin initially had some difficulties to open up to me when I asked him to describe himself. *"Unpacking all of that stuff becomes really complicated,"* he said, and: *"I did actually want to open myself up properly to you … although my answer may seem flippant, it's actually quite– I hope it's actually quite revealing about my inner character"* (Justin, pp. 33-34, INT591-598). His difficulties to articulate '*who he was'* arose in part from his reluctance to use *"cliché[s]" such as e.g. "I'm a lecturer"* (Justin, p 28, INT487-488) as well as from his struggle to find the right words to describe himself to *"a relative stranger"*, who does not know him *"in that emotional sense"* (Justin, p. 53, INT938-942). Justin and I used humour to establish a rapport with each other. This eased the tension and facilitated our conversation. However, the interview was at times also strenuous for me, for instance when Justin deflected my questions; started meta-communications about the meaning and purpose of those questions; or asked me my own questions in return. In those situations, I gently refocused the conversation to the topic and questions at hand. The difficulty to open up and to find the right words was the recurring theme represented in Justin's collage (see Figure 14, p. 126) expressed in the sentence *'it's complicated'*.

Justin's collage

The phrase 'it's complicated' is placed at the centre of Justin's collage. As elaborated in more detail in later parts of this study, Justin told me: *"Through this simple presentation of a few words repeated in a single colour, I have tried to create something deeply meaningful for me"* (Justin, p. 2, NAR30-32). He continued: *"I … tried to create an interplay between the image I chose [Justin, COL1], the presentation of the main body of text [Justin, COLB-COLP] and the statement text [Justin, COLA] to represent the relationship between the simple words 'it's complicated' and their meaning"* (Justin, p. 2, NAR33-37). During the interview, Justin identified the following meaning units in his collage: *"The meaning clusters are: 'visual presentation', … 'the personal relationship I have with the fonts'; 'the viewer's relationship with the fonts'; and 'the conveyance of the message within the phrase, that I've used'"* (Justin, p. 66, INT1175-1181).

What struck me is that the 'main body text' (Justin, p. 2, NAR33-34; COLB-COLP) as well as the 'image' (Justin, COL1) are essentially invisible to the viewer's eye and so is the 'Easter egg', i.e. the message that Justin hid in his collage (Justin, COLP). The last sentence of the body text deviates from the phrase 'it's complicated'. It reads: *"But I really try not to make it complicated"* (Justin, COLP). The collage seems to embody Justin's struggle to articulate who he is (see above). When I asked him to give his collage a title, he proposed: *"Untitled IV"* (Justin, p. 65, NAR1153-1165), which reminded me of his refusal to describe himself using 'cliché' labels (e.g. 'lecturer'). Regarding the latter, he emphasized: *"That's not me, that's not–those are just some things that I do. Does that make sense?"* (Justin, p. 28, INT490-492). Instead, he thinks of himself as: *"I'm a complicated bunch of emotions and experiences"* (Justin, p. 28, INT498-499) and if feels to me that Justin tried to protect them not only during the interview, but also in his collage.

Figure 14

Justin's collage: 'Untitled IV.'
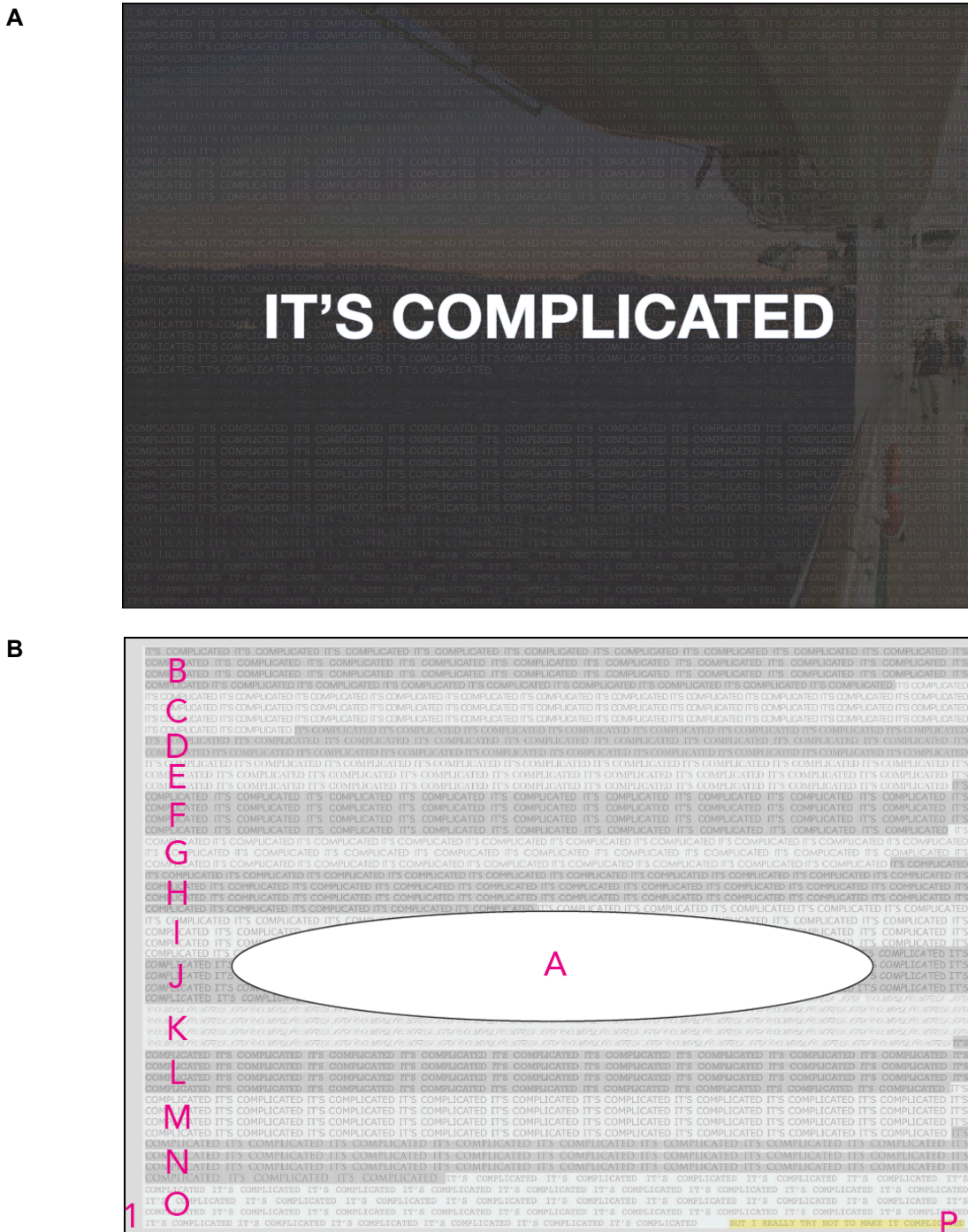
A

B

Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces. Text elements (COLB-COLP) were highlighted in grey and yellow colour to signify change in typeface and phrase respectively.

Kevin

Pen portrait

Kevin is a 24-years-old, male, white, British, graphic designer, who specializes in typography. Over the past six years, Kevin had: *"moved around about seven times"* (Kevin, p. 14, INT241-243). Working in different places allowed him to develop his typographic skills and knowledge. He told me, for example: *"I worked in Croatia … with [name reference], a … very talented studio that specializes in typography … where I learned a lot and then I went to [location reference in the Netherlands]"*, before he accepted jobs in different locations in England (Kevin, p. 57, INT1012-1019). Kevin could be best described as typeface enthusiast with a strong passion for typography and print (Kevin, p. 55, INT974-978). He believes: *"Especially … in relation to my work, I'm an overthinker"* (Kevin, p. 25, INT440-442). This is why he decided to approach the research task more intuitively. Kevin explained: *"I didn't want to overthink it—I wanted it to come quite naturally and roll that way, hopefully it would be a bit more authentic"* (Kevin, p. 10, INT163-166).

Meeting Kevin

Kevin and I agreed a date and time for a Skype interview that were most convenient for Kevin. When we met, we were able to quickly resolve any open questions and issues and to start the recording of the session. Kevin had a clear, deep voice and seemed quite relaxed throughout the interview. He had the collage (see Figure 15, p. 129) and narrative in front of him, which facilitated our conversation. Once started, the interview was fairly dynamic and provided Kevin a space in which he could generate a deep and rich account of his lived experiences with fonts, including an explication of his collage.

Kevin's collage

> *As a graphic designer, I naturally made my collage quite graphic using only digital methods. Images [Kevin, COL1-COL7] have been chosen selectively to what I feel best represents different traits of my personality—not how others may see me, but certainly how I perceive myself. For each image I used a different font [Kevin, COLA-COLG] to what I think best captured the essence of that personality trait. (Kevin, p. 1, NAR1-9)*

I introduce Kevin's collage with this quote, as it epitomizes his relationship with graphic design in general and with typography more specifically. From the outset, Kevin identified as graphic designer (social self)

and explained that he had approached the task as such. He said: *"When you think of 'collage', a lot of the time you think of a physical collage. You think of someone who is cuttin' out images and sticking them and … you'd think of something that is a little bit more sketchbook, and I wanted to kind of do the opposite of that"* (Kevin, p. 43-44, INT767-773).

Kevin revealed that the use of colour is an important aspect in his design works: *"I don't think I'm a very colourful personality, but I like to include colour when I do work … it's almost like … a bit of … an outlet, … something that I can include elsewhere, because it's not so much in myself"* (Kevin, p. 44, INT777-779). To embrace the colour in his artefact, Kevin decided to name his collage: *"'Amarillo', which is … 'yellow' in Spanish"* (Kevin, p. 46, INT818-819). In contrast to Kevin's disinterested use of the yellow colour, he carefully curated the fonts to encapsulate facets of his identity, such as his past (youth and childhood; Kevin, p. 1, NAR14-15, COL1A) and present self: *"The blurred image of the man means to express duality and an unclarity to identify"* (Kevin, p. 2, NAR44-45, COL6F). In the former example, Kevin reinforced meanings because image and typeface connotations are congruent, whereas in the latter case, Kevin introduced conflicting connotations: *"The man with … the blurred motion is quite dark, and you look at the character and you think 'Oh, that is interesting, because the character really … doesn't have that same feeling'"* (Kevin, p. 39, INT690-494). Kevin concluded: *"I think that [contrast] was kind of interesting and fun"* (Kevin, p. 40, INT706)-shedding light on his relationship with fonts.

Figure 15

Kevin's collage: 'Amarillo.'
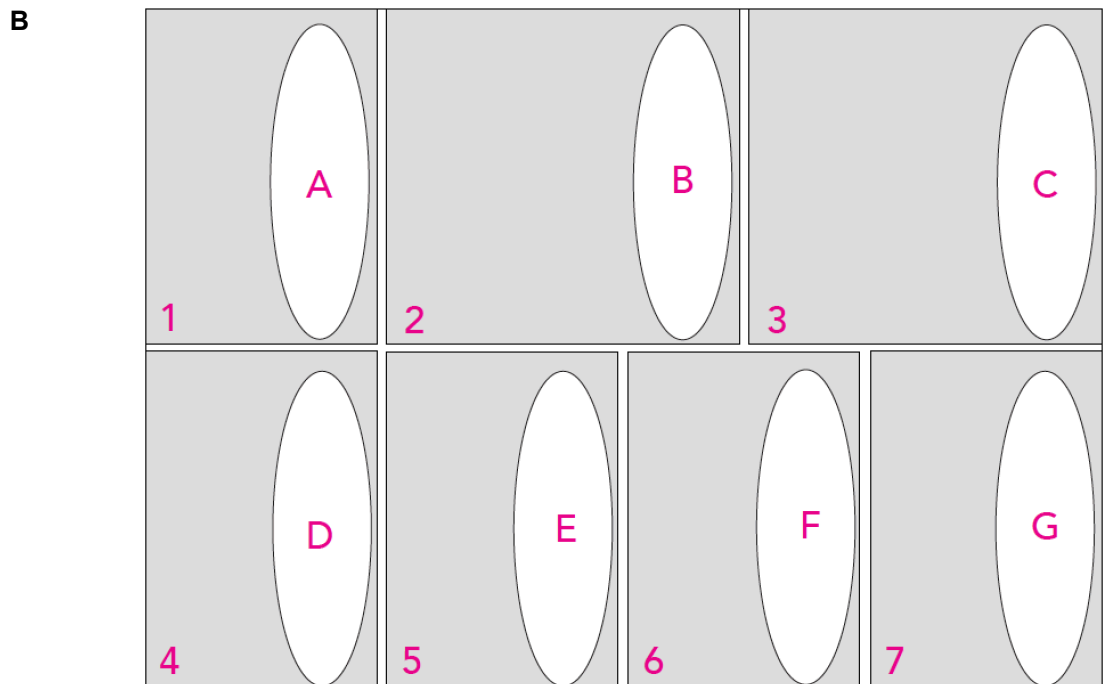
A

B

Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Laura

Pen portrait

Laura is a white, British, female, in her late forties. She is married and a mother of two young adults. She holds a degree in art and design and is currently pursuing her (part-time) doctoral studies while lecturing fulltime at a British university. Laura considers herself to be humorous, personable and creative (Laura, p. 40, INT704-706). Laura told me during the interview: *"I've always been obsessed with clothes and fashion … I used to be a fashion buyer … Before that I used to make my own clothes and make them for my dolls, and, you know, I've always loved clothing"* (Laura, pp. 68-69, INT1220-1225). Conversely, she calls herself a *"technophobe"* (Laura, p. 76, INT1350). It is therefore not surprising to find those themes represented in her collage (see Figure 16, p. 132). Laura is a decisive, independent woman and is perceived by others as such. She can furthermore be quite literal: *"It's like: 'You asked me—I've told you'"* (Laura, p. 45, INT795-796). This feature was particularly beneficial during my interview with Laura.

Meeting Laura

My interview with Laura took place via Skype at a date and time most convenient for Laura. She joined the meeting from home. Approximately twenty minutes into the interview, I asked her how she would describe herself, and she told me: *"Well, it's been a bit of a day, so you're asking me on the right day. I'm going from here to the hospital. My mother-in-law has had an accident"* (Laura, p. 39, INT691-694). I felt sorry for Laura and offered postponing the interview to a date and time more convenient, but she said: *"No, it's alright"* (Laura, p. 39, INT700). After that affirmation, I chose to carry on with the meeting; she appeared quite stable and had fully engaged in the interview. For the remainder of the interview, I looked out for any signs of distress and decided to check in on Laura occasionally to see how she was doing and if she still wanted to continue with the interview.

Laura's collage

Most characteristic for Laura's collage is its tripartition. The first (Laura, COL1-COL2) and last (Laura, COL3) segments of her collage are visuals, that encapsulate Laura's narrative (Laura, COLA). This choice not only situates the narrative spatially but also metaphorically. Understood as book cover, for example, the visuals protect and bind Laura's written narrative and overall story together. Contrary to

the saying 'Don't judge the book by its cover', the relevance of the visuals in Laura's collage must not be underestimated. Laura says: *"I'm a very visual person. So I think in pictures and images and things like that …. In order to get the narrative, I had … to choose the pictures"* (Laura, p. 4, INT55-64). The visuals are presented in a sequential order that is most meaningful to Laura. She explains:

> *I put the first two [images] [Laura, COL1-COL2] together, because they almost, for me, were one and the same thing, you know, you could have transplanted the person [Laura, COL1] into the landscape [Laura, COL2] and vice versa. You know. It was a backdrop … Whereas the third image [Laura, COL3] was a stronger, more stand-alone picture, and if I could only pick one, I'd pick the third image …. As much as I love the other two, the third image would be something that would be my happy place all the time. (Laura, p. 7, INT113-124; see also Laura, p. 1, NAR19)*

Laura elaborated further on the relevance of the images:

> *That [image] [Laura, COL3] for me … personally, is a much stronger image than the other two [Laura, COL1, COL2], because, you know, depending what mood, I would still relate to that … whilst the other two would be just–I was relatin' more to the colour, really. (Laura, p. 8, INT137-142)*

The last two quotes reveal a temporal dimension that underlies her story and choices. The meaning of the motorbike (Laura, COL3) represents an enduring 'mood', whereas the meaning of the other ones is rather temporary-or fleeting: *"The images chosen reflect my emotions and thoughts [moods] when browsing through the selection"* (Laura, p 1, NAR1-2). The central role of 'moods' is also captured in the collage title: Moods.

Figure 16

Laura's collage: 'Moods.'

A

B

Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Luka

Pen portrait

Luka is a white, Croatian, male, in his late 20s. He currently works as freelance type designer and visual designer in Croatia, where he completed his five-year Master programme in graphic design. During his studies, he became acquainted with typography. Although he initially struggled with the subject matter, he soon developed a strong fascination with type design. He eventually enrolled in an additional one-year Master programme in the Netherlands specializing in type design. After graduation, he was offered an internship as type designer at an international technology company in California, USA where he then worked as type designer before returning to Croatia. The typefaces he is working on are being published by type foundries and he considers launching his own foundry in the near future.

Art (e.g. music) and technology are two great passions of his. During the interview he mentioned that: *"I'm a fanboy of all technologies … and then I'm really a fanboy of how things will express themselves through that technology—how type will work"* (Luka, p45, INT796-800). He is constantly looking out for technological advancements and studies how those may disrupt the type industry and hence (re)shape his work.

Meeting Luka

Luka describes himself as an outgoing, expressive, dynamic, and fun person. This mirrors the impression I had of him during the interview, which we conducted on Skype. The conversation we had before the recording started was fairly short. He was very passionate about the subject matter and ready to start quickly. Luka offered me deep insights into his lived experiences with the consumption and creation of typefaces. He readily responded to questions and probes I had prepared for our meeting, which made it easy for me. At the same time, he actively offered me experiences and topics to talk about because he felt they might be of interest for me. While he clearly is a type expert, I experienced our conversation as symmetric.

Luka's collage

'Drama' might be the best word to describe Luka's collage. It is intrinsic in its title ('The downward spiral'), its monochromatic colour scheme, its visual forms as well as in the choice of fonts. Luka offered the

following explanation of his collage (see Figure 17, p. 135), that is also discussed in more detail in later parts of this study:

> I started with Times New Roman [Luka, COLA]. This default and overused typeface has been stuck insides everyone's computer for way too long and has been used for the most mundane tasks. It reminds me of all the government or medical documentation in Croatia I always pretend to read. For something more contrasting to Times I went with Cooper black [Luka, COLB]. A typeface that is characterized as being fun, informal, and easy-going but designed with great care to every detail. Cooper instantly pours warmth to the page and sets a different mood. Times New Roman represents all the times I am stuck in my head spinning mundane everyday tasks, ideas and questions. The letters in the collage are spiralling to the centre where those tasks become aggregated to the point of over saturating my mind. On the flip side, Cooper is the part of me that just says screw this, let's just enjoy life. It is a reminder that crashes the loop, reminding me to be more relaxed about things, not to over stress and overcomplicate as I usually tend to do. This clash of ideas and thoughts is represented in the collage as the big clunky letters collide and break the monotone spiral. I visualize this as a mundane galaxy that is disrupted by an influx of fresh new thoughts and ideas that reset and refresh me. The collage does not use any colors, I wanted to tell the story using only composition and distortion of typography. (Luka, pp. 1-2, NAR14-43)

Figure 17

Luka's collage: 'The downward spiral.'
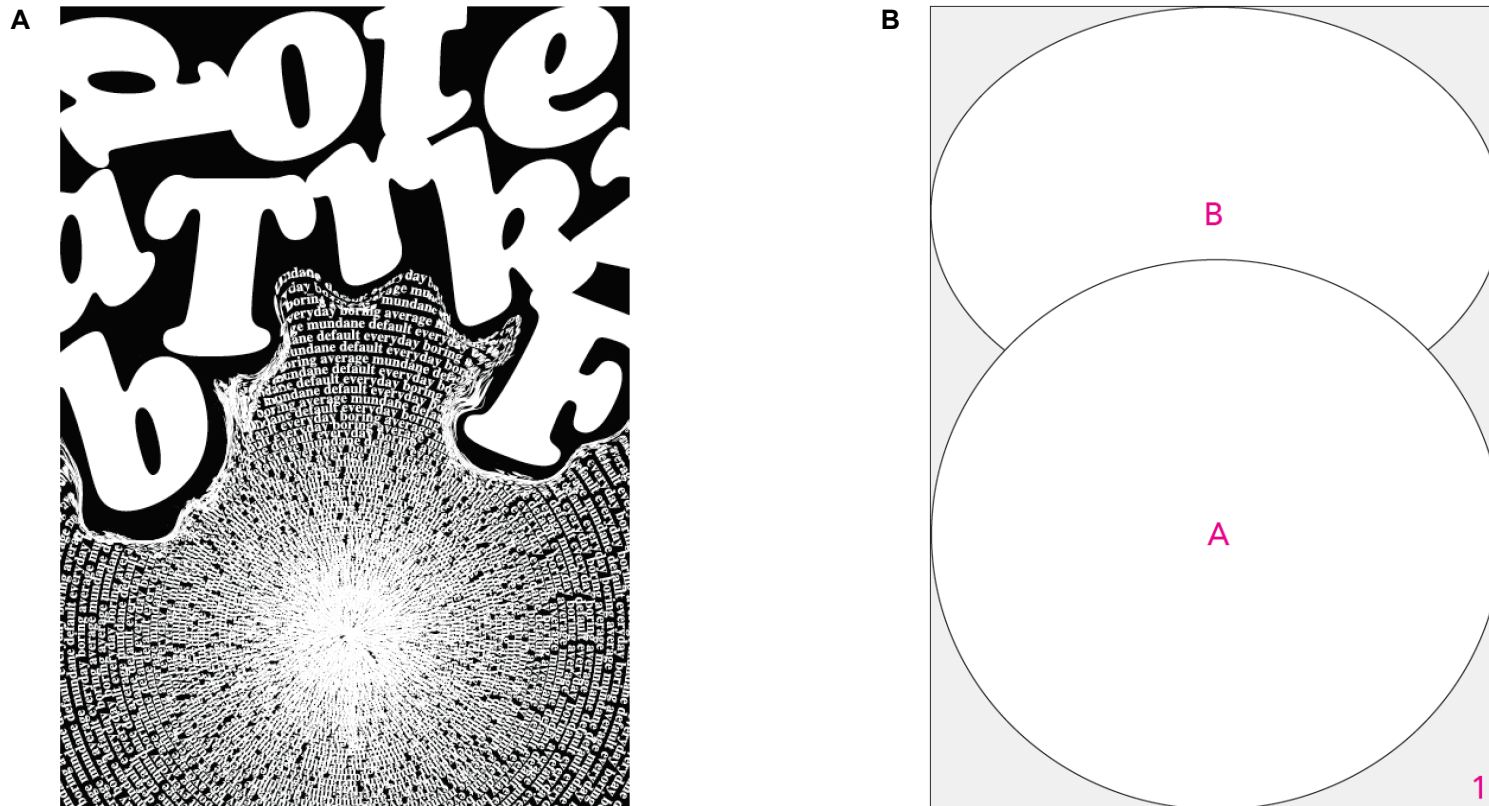
A

B

Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Raphael

Pen portrait

Raphael is a 29-year-old, white, male, from the USA. He self-identifies as academic. At the time of the interview, Raphael was associated with an American university at the west-coast. He says about himself: *"I have a real desire to explore different things and topics that I'm interested in …. I don't really have hobbies per se … I find different topics in the world that interest me and then they just become all consuming"* (Raphael, pp. 19-20, INT338-343). These interests eventually become integral parts of Raphael's self-identity (Raphael, p. 20, INT353-355), as is also evidenced in his collage (see Figure 18, p. 138). He continues: *"There are things that I end up picking up but it's never to distract myself–it's kind of to further my own creative output … I think creative output is one of the main driving forces in my life"* (Raphael, pp. 20-21, INT360-364).

Meeting Raphael

For the interview, Raphael and I met in person at the university he was associated with. Raphael booked a studio that was filled with a lot of technical equipment. We had to re-arrange the furniture slightly to fit the purpose and ended up sitting diagonally opposite to each other. We were able to maintain eye contact at all times. Raphael was polite and interested in the questions I asked. He was very articulate, yet his voice and responses seemed at times controlled, which I believe is symptomatic of his self-description: *"I think that I'm a quite focused individual. I have a great deal of intensity to me, but I'm also quite reserved most of the time, so most people would never see that sort of intensity, because I wouldn't necessarily open up to just some random person"* (Raphael, p. 19, INT332-337). Raphael himself had previously conducted some interviews for a documentation and was therefore acquainted with the process, which facilitated our conversation.

Raphael's collage

Raphael structured his collage *"in a way where each term [e.g. scholar; Raphael, COL2B] flows to the subsequent term [e.g. traveller; Raphael, COL3C] through natural, intuitive associations"* (p. 1, NAR7-10). Raphael told me: *"I knew that I wanted to have these strips of images associated … with each of these terms"* (Raphael, p 2, INT25-27) that *"I understand to constitute my literal function in society"*

(Raphael, p. 1, NAR4-5). Regarding the terms, Raphael specified: *"I decided to do more so like career functions … and creative functions"* (Raphael, p. 37, INT659-661).

Using poetry as analogy it could be argued that the structure of the collage resembles a six-line stanza that follows the rhythmic scheme ABBCCA. This is achieved predominantly by the groupings of texts and choice of typefaces. The first (Raphael, COL1A) and last (Raphael, COL6F) element of the collage are signposts of what Raphael does and (from) where he does it. They function as frames and/or enclosing rhymes. Elements two (scholar; Raphael, COL2B) and three (traveller; Raphael, COL3C) combine to the first couplet rhyme representing 'intellectual activities'. Conversely, the second couplet rhyme consists of elements four (photographer; Raphael, COL4D) and five (musician; Raphael, COL5E) and signifies artistic activities. It feels like Raphael is extending himself outwardly expressing his many identities in relation to others primarily by embracing his *"career functions … and creative functions"* (Raphael, p. 37, INT660-661).

Raphael decided that each visual should *"be of equal dimensions"* (Raphael, p. 2, INT27-28); see also p. 2, NAR31-34). As a result, the elements in the collage appear balanced, which might suggest that all six facets of his identity (Raphael, p. 1, NAR3) are of similar importance to him. Raphael noted: *"All those things are likely elements of any given year of mine, you know. These are just things that I would experience during the course of year"*, which is why he titled his collage *"A year in the life"* (Raphael, p. 58, INT1030-1038).

Figure 18

Raphael's collage: 'A year in the life.'
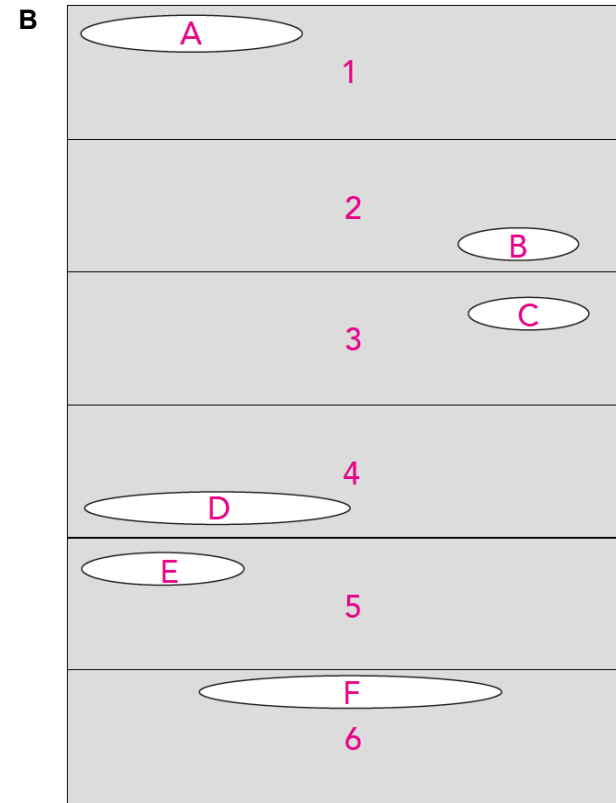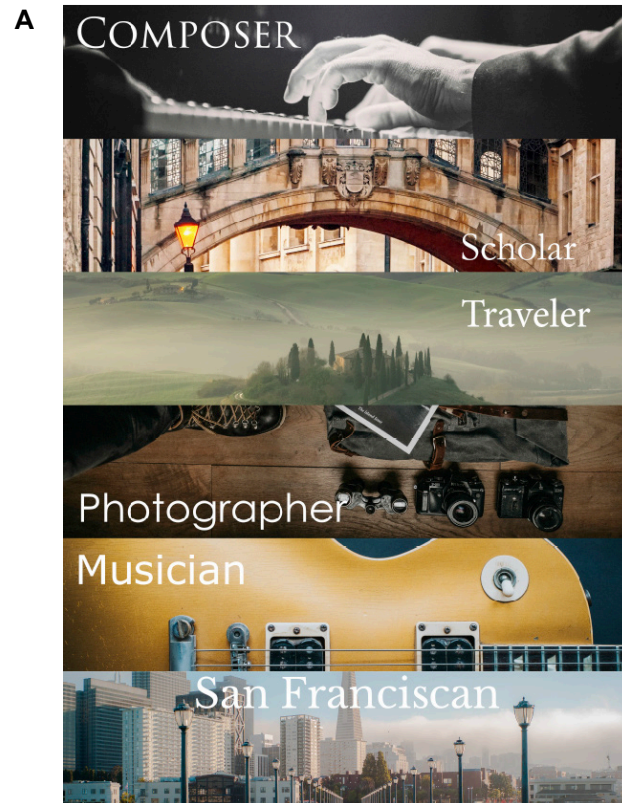
Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Ruby

Pen portrait

Ruby is a white, female, Australian, aged 45. She is married and a mother of two adolescents. Ruby is a humorous person who can laugh about herself. For example, commenting on her collage (see Figure 19, p. 141) she said: *"There's my two pussy cats—I am a crazy cat lady—middle aged cat lady"* (Ruby, pp. 6-7, INT108-110; COL7, COL14). Ruby self-identifies as design academic and works for a renowned Australian university. She recently completed her PhD and admits: *"It's … been all-consuming for four years"* (Ruby, p. 5, INT74-75). Ruby lived through many life-changing events, which prompted her to redefine her self-understanding. She explains: *"That push and pull in my life became–where I became interested in feminist theory, which very much was a part of my research as well, so yeah, my personal identity is very much interwoven with feminism and equity"* (Ruby, p. 38, INT671-676). A central aspect of her life is her curricular and extra-curricular activism for equity: *"I'm very passionate about equity and look at people on that same level and trying to give people opportunities to get, you know, to an equitable level on things when they don't have that opportunity, through design"* (Ruby, p. 39, INT686-691).

Meeting Ruby

Ruby and I held the interview on Google Hangouts, the application of Ruby's choice. Ruby had proposed a date and time that suited her most, respecting the time difference between continents. The conversation was recorded using a separate device and transcribed as outlined in the previous chapter. Ruby was very warm-hearted, communicative and outgoing, which kept the conversation going and created a vivacious yet relaxing atmosphere. She also used humour to connect with me and laughed throughout the interview, which made the interview very enjoyable. Ruby's computer ran out of charge before we could officially conclude the interview. She offered to answer any further questions via email, but as we were discussing my last question ("Is there anything I should have asked you, but I didn't?") it seemed sensible to close the interview via email. It thanked Ruby for her participation and referred to the de-briefing sheet she would receive shortly.

Ruby's collage

Titled "*This is me*" (Ruby, p. 21, INT365-366), Ruby's collage signifies: *"what and who is important in my life"* (Ruby, p. 1, NAR2-3). Its contents can be assigned to one of the following three meaning units: personal self (passion and drive; Ruby, p. 22, INT392-393), relational self (family; Ruby, p. 22, INT391), and social self (professional; Ruby, p. 22, INT391). When I look at Ruby's collage, I notice a certain 'balance' and 'symmetry' between the elements, which makes them 'equitable'. It struck me therefore when I read the following reflection in Ruby's narrative: *"My creative process became a simple pairing of images"* (Ruby, p. 1, NAR1-2).

The term 'pairing' can be understood literally as putting images together to a collage, or metaphorically as matching images to sets of two. For example, Ruby chose the words 'together' (Ruby, COLB) and 'alone' (Ruby, COLA) because: *"who I am is very much about the relationships in my life as much as it is about the independent feelings and thoughts I have"* (Ruby, p. 2, NAR29-36). The two words not only add visual depth to the collage as they are placed in front of (Ruby, COLA) and/or behind (Ruby, COLB) most other elements, but they also embrace the remaining contents of the collage. Also, Ruby's relationship with her husband is signified by the two wedding rings (Ruby, COL13); her two children are epitomized by the Poké ball (son; Ruby, COL1) and teenage girl (daughter; Ruby, COL5) respectively, which–together with two stacks of books (Ruby, COL6, COL10)—are situated on the left and right side of the collage where they create some sort of counterweights. Ruby explains further: *"A messy desk [Ruby, COL12] with a mac [sic] [Ruby, COL8], books [Ruby, COL6], paper and pens [Ruby, COL18], represents my academic career while the Pantone swatches [Ruby, COL11] and design books [Ruby, COL10] represent my career in graphic design"* (Ruby, p. 1, NAR4-7).

Figure 19

Ruby's collage: 'This is me.'
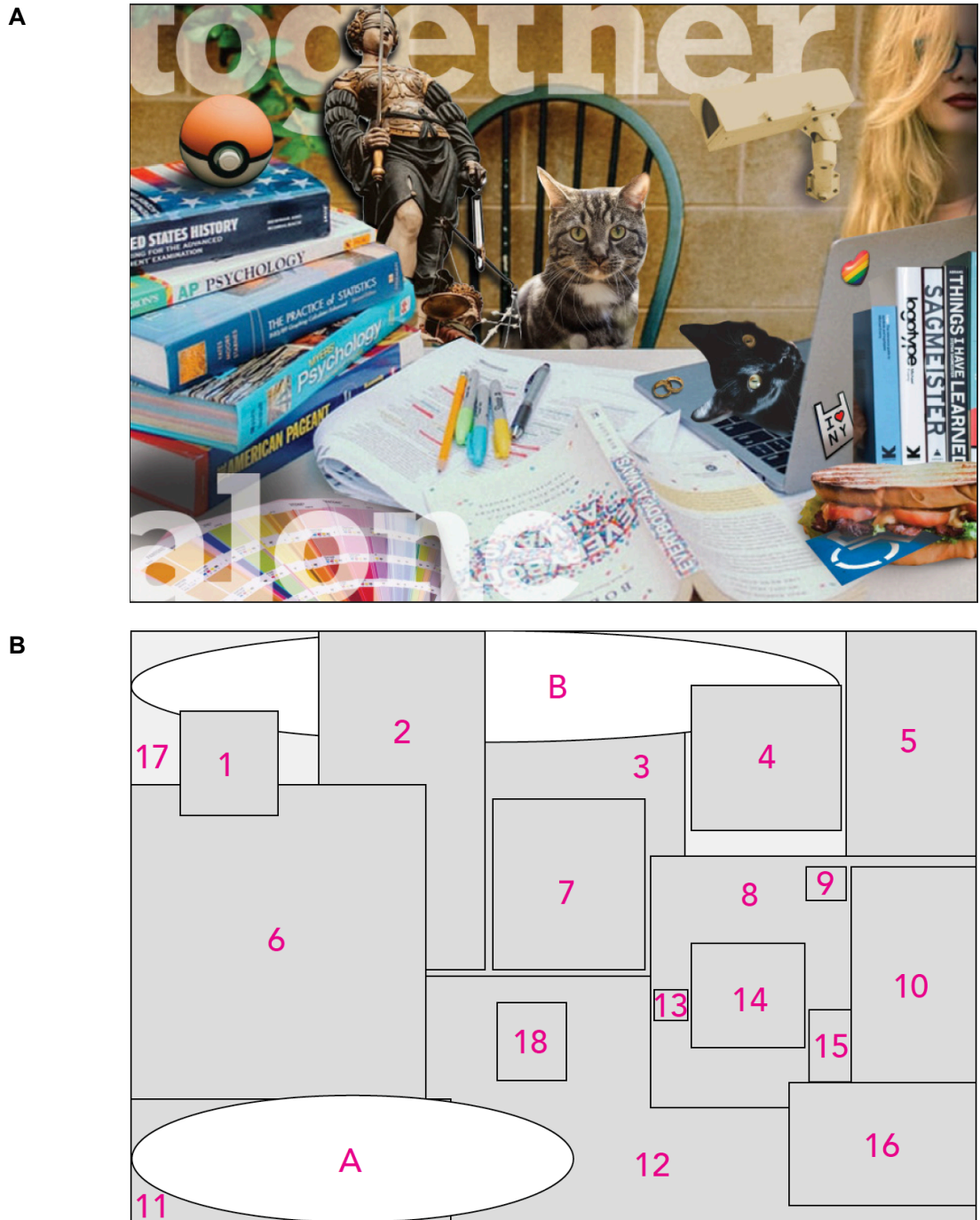
A

B

Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Sarah

Pen portrait

Sarah is a 75-year-old, white, female, American. She is a loving wife, mother and grandmother. Sarah identifies as freelance researcher, writer and illustrator. Her works are being published internationally. Recently, a global firm reached out to Sarah, asking her to become one of their featured artists teaching innovative techniques in Photoshop (Sarah, p. 23, INT398-404). During the interview, Sarah emphasized: *"I'm a storyteller"* (Sarah, p. 5, INT87). She explained that her grandchildren were her greatest source of inspiration: *"It was the grandchildren who inspired me to start writing my own little children's books—mostly for them, to … capture the sense of fun and playfulness and curiosity that they exhibited"* (Sarah, p. 17, INT302-306). Interestingly, those are some of the key features Sarah attributes to herself: Adventurous, curious and open to new experiences. Reminiscing about her own childhood, she said: *"[When] I grew up as a child, books were so important to me—being at a library, and just sitting quietly and reading was the best thing … It was the most fun …. I could go places in books"* (Sarah, pp. 10-11, INT179-187). Reflecting on her collage, Sarah concluded: *"It all seemed to circle back in an unexpected way to … the 'stories live forever' concept"* (Sarah, p. 11, 194-195). It does therefore not surprise much that she chose *'stories live forever'* as the title of her collage (Sarah, p. 35, INT616-617).

Meeting Sarah

Sarah and I met online via Skype to conduct the interview. Sarah informed me at the beginning of our conversation that she was expecting an important call from her husband to update her on a family emergency and that she might therefore need to interrupt the call. I offered Sarah to postpone the meeting, but she preferred to hold it as originally planned. I agreed but reminded her that we could interrupt and/or terminate the interview at any time. As per her request, we started with the interview. Approximately 45 minutes into the conversation, Sarah received the call she was waiting for. We interrupted the meeting for a couple of minutes and resumed the interview after she had terminated her call. I made sure to check if Sarah felt comfortable to continue and she confirmed. In both parts of the conversation, the atmosphere was warm and relaxing; Sarah did not display any distress or discomfort at any time.

Sarah's collage

Sarah's collage (see Figure 20, p. 144) embodies her lived experiences and signifies her relationship with the world and its entities. It situates her spatially, temporally and psychologically. Sarah placed herself (Sarah, COL1) in a library (Sarah, COL12) and spread-out multiple books in front of her (Sarah, COL2-COL11). Understood as container metaphors (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008), the library creates a safe space that separates Sarah from the outside world, whereas the books invite the reader (Sarah) to embark on psychological journeys by immersing herself in the stories they contain (Sarah, pp. 10-11, INT179-187).

Sarah's narrative and the interview revealed that the books (Sarah, COL2-COL11) were encapsulating Sarah's life story from early childhood to present and future, which shows the temporal as well as the psychological dimension of the collage. For example, Sarah wrote in her narrative: *"My earliest memory is reading at night under blankets, like the girl in the black and white photo"* (Sarah, p. 1, NAR6-8; COL4F). She continues: *"The foreground photo of a woman [Sarah, COL1] reading books arranged … around her suits me perfectly as I love the tactile feel of books in my hands"* (Sarah, p. 1, NAR11-14). During our interview, Sarah offered me the following 'gem' (J. A. Smith, 2011c) when she reflected on the meaning units of her collage:

> *I think if I'd had just these three [images] [Sarah, COL2A, COL3, COL4F] to work with, that …*
> *would have been sufficient … in telling my story, because the little poem on the open book*
> *[Sarah, COL2A] is also very critical to the concept of, you know, being drawn to books at an*
> *early age, and reading all my life, just as stories live forever [Sarah, COL4F], THOUGH I WON'T.*
> *(Sarah, pp. 40-41, INT720-727; emphasis added)*

Here, Sarah acknowledged the transience of life while her stories (legacy) will extend her across time.

Figure 20

Sarah's collage: 'Stories live forever.'
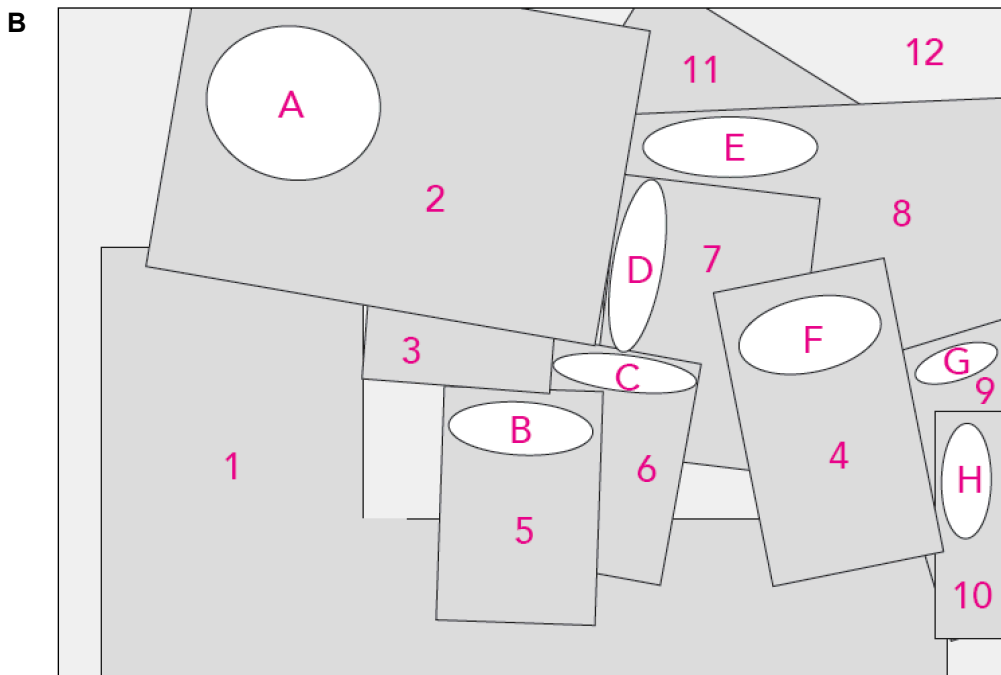
A

B

Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Thomas

Pen portrait

Thomas is a 27-year-old, white, male, British, of Colombian origin. He is a freelance writer who creates own as well as commissioned works for diverse international clients. For example, Thomas writes pitches for television (Thomas, p. 1, NAR12) as well as pieces for a cricket journal. He explains: *"I talk about things from history to arts and philosophy—in a cricket journal. It's very weird. It's very English. It's very weird"* (Thomas, p. 46, INT823-826). His flair for words shaped his research contribution. Referring to his collage (see below), he acknowledged: *"I think it came through quite strongly—I'm much more of a verbal person than a visual person"* (Thomas, p. 1, INT13-16). These extracts seem to epitomize his personality, which Thomas describes as follows: *"I like to think of myself as quite open person; chatty; personable; interested in lot of [different] things …. I like sharing those things with people [when] I'm meeting them. I'm drawn to people who are interesting and different"* (Thomas, pp. 30-31, INT539-546).

Meeting Thomas

Thomas and I met in person to conduct the interview. Thomas had access to an American university on the west-cost, where he arranged a room for our meeting. I experienced Thomas as an outgoing, lively and engaged communicator. I had the feeling we got on very well, which is why we swiftly started with the actual interview. The conversation was fast-paced and dynamic. We sat diagonally opposite to each other at the corner of the meeting room table. This allowed us to keep eye-contact and to jointly look onto Thomas's artefacts (collage and narrative), which I had printed out for our meeting. This evoked a sense of collaboration and ultimately facilitated our conversation. Thomas's collage is depicted in Figure 21 (p. 147).

Thomas's collage

> *I selected five different fonts for each … element of my 'personality'. I hoped to convey what I regard as the distinct facets of 'who I am'. Formatting the 'personality elements' in a grid seemed like them most logical way to convey the information in a straightforward manner (I don't consider myself a very visually creative person). (Thomas, p. 1, NAR1-7)*

Called 'Who I am', Thomas's collage configures those elements in a five by six (5x6) grid using a monochromatic, blue colour scheme because: *"shades of blue are my favourite"* (Thomas, p. 1, NAR9). He explains (e.g. Thomas, pp. 8-9, INT143-146; pp. 56-57, INT999-1010) that the elements on the left side of the collage (e.g. 'friendly'; Thomas, COLA1) are more central to his self-understanding than the ones on the opposite side (e.g. 'precise'; Thomas, COLA6).

Moving from the top to the bottom of the grid, the elements represent Thomas's personality traits (Thomas, COLA1-COLA6), his collective identity (Thomas, COLB1-COLB6), hobbies (Thomas, COLC1-COLC6), intellectual activities (Thomas, COLD1-COLD6) and finally, his family (relational identity; Thomas, COLE1-COLE6). Thomas selected the fonts purposefully, as they were particularly meaningful to him. For example, he wrote in his narrative: *"I associate Courier with family as my father introduced it to me because the equal size of its letters made it the best font for annotating chess moves in a neat manner"* (Thomas, p. 2, NAR29-32). However, during the interview he pointed out that: *"Courier is my least favourite font of that [selection] so, that's … why that's at fifth"* (Thomas, p. 8, INT127-129).

Elsewhere, he described his relationship with fonts in more detail: *"They were–So–other than Courier, okay, they were clearly the four of my favourites in the list … that you sent … and they're the ones that I–Baskerville I don't really use very much but the other three I do use"* (Thomas, p. 11, INT181-187). Thomas disclosed in his narrative that: *"I decided to type this reflection in Times New Roman as it seems to me to be the most neutral font"* (Thomas, p. 2, NAR33-35), that best captures *"essential"* information (Thomas, pp. 15-16, INT253-280).

Figure 21

Thomas's collage: 'Who I am.'

A

Friendly	High-brow	Low-brow	Traditional	Contemporary	Precise
British	Colombian	Male	Classical liberal, of the pre-identity-politics kind	Concerned citizen	Explorer
Rugby fan	Literature reader	Cricket player	Culture	Chess	Travelling
Writer	Broadcaster	Historian	Academic	Greek etymologies	Media
Husband	Son	Grandson	Brother	Son-in-law	Grandson-in-law

B

A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6
C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6
E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6

Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Tobias

Pen portrait

Tobias is a white, male, German, in his late twenties. He is employed on a full-time basis as area sales manager at an international German firm, while pursuing his part-time doctoral studies. Prior to joining his employer, Tobias earned his master's degree in engineering. He describes himself as straightforward, honest, authentic and structured. During the interview, Tobias admitted laughingly that his spare time was fully booked until the end of the year (we still had seven months to go at the time of the interview) and that his family was therefore teasing him for being so organized (Tobias, p. 32, INT559-564). While structure is an important element in Tobias's life, the real driving force (or life motto) is 'fun'. He explains: *"It doesn't matter if it's with my friend[s], with my job, or with my family—I always try to have fun in … life and if you don't have fun, I would change something"* (Tobias, pp. 32-33, INT576-579). His reference to friends, job and family is no coincidence. In his collage (see Figure 22, p. 150) Tobias refers to them as: *"The three pillars of my life"* (Tobias, COLD).

Meeting Tobias

Tobias and I arranged to meet via Skype to conduct the interview. We did not spend much time to discuss the project before starting the recording, as there were no particular questions or issues to address. Tobias seemed interested in the research project and process, and he was engaged at all times. His active participation facilitated the capturing of his lived experiences with typefaces. He had a clear voice and articulated his experiences succinctly, which lent the conversation a fast-paced and dynamic character. The latter was reinforced by his light-heartedness and interjection of occasional jokes, which caused laughter.

Tobias's collage

Tobias explains the title of this collage (Tobias, COLD) as follows: *"I used the definition 'pillar' because I think that my life is based on them and depending on the strength and stability of the pillars, I can live my life as I want to, and I can unfold myself"* (Tobias, p. 1, NAR13-16). My reading of this quote is that the three pillars not only root Tobias, but also enable him to realize his full potential (self-actualization).

As such, they represent a constructive force. In his narrative, Tobias provided the following rationalisation for this consumption choices:

> *For the pillar family [Tobias, COL1A], I used the font* **COOPER**. *I used this font type because I wanted to illustrate with the bold letters that family is for me the most important pillar in my life because my family is always supporting me and helping me whenever I need something. For the pillar Job [Tobias, COL3C], I used the font* American Typwriter [*sic*]. *I used this font type because in my opinion the letters and font are very straight, structured and clear and these are properties which I connect to [sic] my business life. For the pillar friends [Tobias, COL2B], I used the font* Mistral. *I used this font type because I wanted to illustrate with the curved and crazy looking letters that I can do together with my friends whatever I want to. (Tobias, pp. 1-2, NAR22-39; emphasis in original)*

Not only the typefaces, but also the placement, sequence as well as size of the visual and textual elements of the collage are indicative of their respective centrality, as Tobias mentioned: *"The first priority definitely—and I tried to illustrate it also with the biggest picture on my collage—is the family … and that's why … it's at the beginning"* (Tobias, p. 10, INT173-177). Looking into the future and planning a family of his own, Tobias concluded:

> *As a father … you have responsibilities for the family, obviously … therefore I think … [my] life … or … also … my collage would change even more [in] that the family is growing more and more in the priority and is going in the centre of my life. (Tobias, p. 39, INT688-695)*

Figure 22

Tobias's collage: 'The three pillars of my life.'
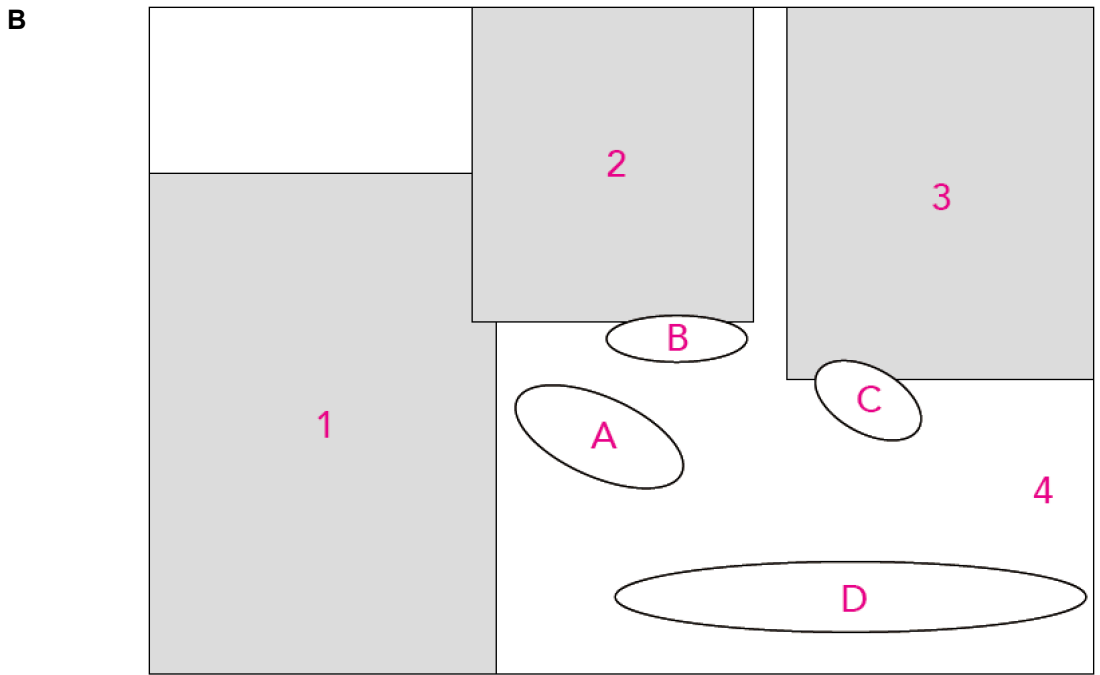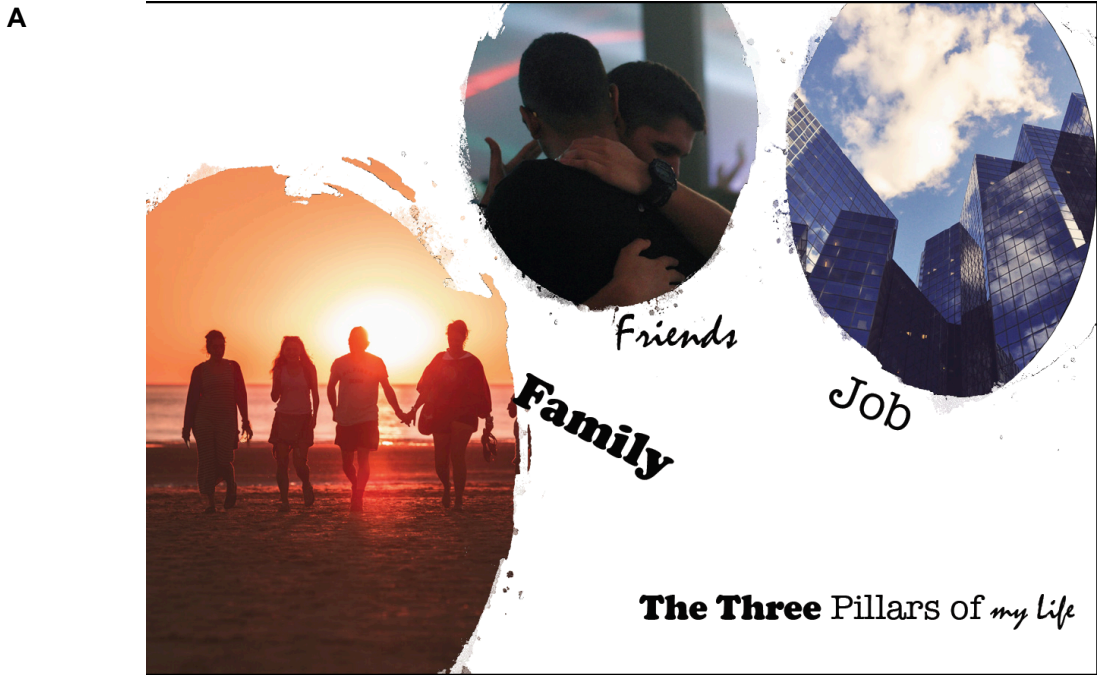
Note. Panel A: Original collage. Panel B: Collage transcript. Arabic numbers in the collage transcript (Panel B) denote images. Latin characters signify typefaces.

Summary

This chapter provided a platform for introducing 'the cast' of this study. Idiographic case studies were presented for each of the 16 participants offering three pieces of information: Pen portraits, meeting notes and synopses of participants' collages. The case studies imbued study participants with life and made their voices heard by offering verbatim quotes, rich descriptions and, where applicable, tentative interpretations, without creating and aggregating themes. The case studies provide an important back-drop for understanding the analyses, findings and discussions offered in the following chapters.

Act one:
facets of connoisseurship

5

"**To grasp something that takes hold of us.**"

(Emil Staiger, as cited in Gadamer, 2007a, p. 61)

Introduction

In this and the next chapter, I present two overarching themes in relation to 'connoisseurship', which is the main gestalt that was derived from my data. The first overarching theme is about the structure of connoisseurship, while the second deals with the dynamic nature of the phenomenon (see Chapter 6, p. 203).

As elaborated in more detail in later parts of this study (see e.g. Chapter 5, p. 197; Chapter 7, p. 231), the terms 'connoisseurship' and 'connoisseur' respectively are used in various disciplines and domains, including marketing and consumer behaviour. While there is no universally accepted conceptualization, marketing literature tends to delineate connoisseurship on the basis of (good) taste (e.g. Holbrook, 2005). This approach corresponds with the lexical meaning of both words. For example, the *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* defines 'connoisseur' as "an expert judge in matters of taste" (Pearsall & Trumble, 2002, p. 305). Accordingly, the term 'connoisseurship' describes the state of being a connoisseur. In this (see p. 197) and the next two chapters (pp. 203, 229), this research challenges the conceptualization of connoisseurship on the basis of (good) taste as essentially being one-dimensional and static through suggesting individuals either have taste or not. Furthermore, this rudimentary definition implies that interactions with fonts are disinterested. By withdrawing ourselves from the play (see Chapter 2, p. 50), we miss what typefaces have to say to us. This inhibits self-encounter because we are unable to integrate those experiences into our self-understanding and into our orientation to the world at large (Gadamer, 1964/1976, 1960/1989).

My study found that connoisseurship is best understood as a temporally dynamic (see Chapter 6, p. 203) and multi-dimensional concept, comprising five distinct, yet interrelated, multi-layered facets outlined in this chapter. The first facet is called 'apprehending'. It signifies the intentional shift that must occur for individuals to perceive typefaces as commodities in their own right. This shift happens when font users cross the 'Rubicon' (see Chapter 5, p. 161), situating font users in either a pre- and post-Rubicon space (see Chapter 6, pp. 218-219). The second facet is 'involvement', which not only initiates engagement in consumption practices that are described in all other facets but is itself also reinforced by those parasocial interactions. 'Hunting and gathering' is the third facet. It shows that for some consumers, typefaces become objects of desire and pride. The fourth facet is 'knowing'. It entails typographic knowledge, as well as the ability to envision typeface consumption in the mind's eye and to

discriminate subtle differences between fonts. Finally, gatekeeping represents the creation and enact-

ment of symbolic and social boundaries, including marketing structures. The multi-dimensional connois-

seurship model is visualized in Figure 23 (p. 155) below.

Figure 23

The five facets of connoisseurship

Facet 1: Apprehending

- Mundane consumption: The invisibility of fonts in daily lives

RUBICON

- Crossing the Rubicon: Starting to see typefaces everywhere

Facet 2: Involvement

- When did it all start: The temporal dimension of involvement

- From interest to lifestyle: The level of involvement

- What's that got to do with me: Ego-involvement

Facet 3: Hunting and Gathering

- The yearning self

Facet 4: Knowing

- To know or not to know: Typographic knowledge

- Seeing with the mind's eye: Having a vision

- Same same, but different: Discrimination ability

Facet 5: Gatekeeping

- Me versus them: Defining symbolic and social boundaries

- Made for people like me: Building marketing structures

As explained in Chapter 3 (p. 87), the five facets of connoisseurship represent so-called group

experiential themes (GETs) or superordinate themes. They were generated by analysing personal ex-

periential themes (PETs) across all cases. The latter were created by reading individual data line by

line. Appendix 20 (p. 367) outlines the facets of connoisseurship (GETs) and provides participant quotes

for each facet to solidify the novel construct depicted in Figure 23. Appendix 23 (p. 372) displays recur-

rent GETs introduced in this chapter. Convergences and divergence between participants, as well as

the presence and absence of evidence, helped to identify and to develop the themes. Where appropriate, findings were placed in the context of relevant literature to further solidify the themes.

Table 13 (p. 157) uses empirical data from this study to cast a more nuanced light on its research participants and their characteristics. It complements Appendices 21-22 (pp. 367-371) that contain lists of GETs and participant quotes, as well as the overview of recurring GETs presented in Appendix 23 (p. 372). This tabular snapshot (Table 13, p. 157) is best understood as a heuristic device that aims to capture how connoisseurship manifests in each participant.

The term connoisseurship was chosen purposefully. Its word stem contains the French verb 'connaître' meaning 'to know' (Pearsall & Trumble, 2002). The latter relates to various other concepts discussed in this research, such as awareness (e.g. perception, apprehension); familiarity (e.g. psychological closeness, intimacy); and personal experience (e.g. episodic memory; personal biography) (Pearsall & Trumble, 2002).

The following offers working definitions of the key terms 'connoisseurship' and 'connoisseur' as used in this study and unfolded throughout Chapters 5-7. *Connoisseurship* refers to the multi-faceted and multi-layered gestalt of an individuals' relationship with fonts that evolves over time. In this sense, there is no person-object relationship without connoisseurship because individuals consume everyday objects, such as fonts, pre-reflectively and pre-linguistically. The term *connoisseur*, on the other hand, describes an individual who experiences connoisseurship and has developed the capacity to forge person-object relationships. These conceptualizations start to answer Sheaves and Bares' (1996, p. 216, as cited in O'Malley & Tynan, 1999) question as to "when a relationship can truly be said to exist."

Chapter 7 (p. 240) introduces the proportional metaphor 'Connoisseurship is the soul of person-object relationships'. It reveals that our relationship with fonts 'comes alive' once we apprehend them (facet 1). As the discussion of the *relationship trajectory framework* (RTF) in Chapter 6 (p. 220) suggests, connoisseurship can transcend dyadic person-object relationships. The term 'soul' is, therefore, used to indicate that connoisseurship can 'live on', even if relationships with consumption objects fade. Furthermore, the notion of 'monomorphic' and 'polymorphic' connoisseurs is proposed in Chapter 6 (p. 226) to signify that individuals can, respectively, display connoisseurship in single or multiple domains. This conceptualization extends Fournier's (e.g. 1994, 1998) work and moves it to the realm of product relationships, where literature is scarce (see Chapter 2, p. 42).

Table 13

Refined participant characteristics derived from the facets of connoisseurship

Participant Name	Apprehending (stage in lifecycle; see also Chapter 6)	Involvement			Hunting and Gathering	Knowing			Gatekeeping	
		intensity	duration [2]	ego-involvement	yearning self	level of knowledge [3]	seeing with the mind's eye	ability to discriminate	defining boundaries	creating marketing structures
Briana	pre-Rubicon	low	n/a	low	(comment absent)	very low	(comment absent)	(comment absent)	(comment absent)	(comment absent)
Damian	pre-Rubicon	low	n/a	low	(comment absent)	very low	(comment absent)	unable	(comment absent)	(comment absent)
Jasmin	pre-Rubicon	low	n/a	low	(comment absent)	very low	unable	unable	yes	(comment absent)
Laura	pre-Rubicon	low	n/a	low	(comment absent)	very low	unable	unable	yes	(comment absent)
RUBICON										
Tobias	post-Rubicon (initiation)	medium	short-term	low	(comment absent)	low	(comment absent)	(comment absent)	yes	(comment absent)
Thomas	post-Rubicon (initiation)	medium	short-term	medium	(comment absent)	low	able	unable	(comment absent)	(comment absent)
Emma [1]	post-Rubicon (initiation)	medium	short-term	medium	yes	low	unable	unable	(comment absent)	(comment absent)
Raphael	post-Rubicon (growth)	medium	medium-term	medium	yes	low	unable	(comment absent)	yes	yes
Jelena	post-Rubicon (growth)	medium	long-term	medium	(comment absent)	medium	(comment absent)	able	(comment absent)	(comment absent)
Sarah	post-Rubicon (maturity)	high	short-term	medium	yes	medium	unable	(comment absent)	(comment absent)	(comment absent)
Alicia	post-Rubicon (maturity)	high	long-term	high	yes	advanced	able	able	yes	yes
Kevin	post-Rubicon (maturity)	high	long-term	high	yes	advanced	able	able	(comment absent)	yes
Luka	post-Rubicon (maturity)	high	long-term	high	yes	advanced	able	able	yes	yes
Ruby	post-Rubicon (maturity)	high	long-term	high	yes	advanced	(comment absent)	(comment absent)	yes	yes
George	post-Rubicon (decline)	medium	long-term	medium	yes	advanced	able	able	(comment absent)	yes
Justin	post-Rubicon (decline)	high	long-term	high	yes	advanced	(comment absent)	able	yes	yes

Note. This table is a snapshot of participant characteristics presented in Chapter 5 (p. 153). It includes the notion of lifecycle stages (see second column: apprehending), which is introduced in Chapter 6 (p. 203). While it offers broad categorizations, the language used allows for a more nuanced portrayal of research participants situated in the post-Rubicon space. [1] Participant from pilot study. [2] The label "n/a" signifies that the involvement level is so low that a classification of duration is not applicable. This notion differs from "comment absent", indicating the absence of data. [3] Level of knowledge (see Appendix 21, p. 367) corresponds with font user clusters presented in Chapter 5 (pp. 183-184): very low = prospect consumers; low = interested consumers; medium = effective consumers; advanced = expert consumers.

Facet one: apprehending

The first facet of connoisseurship—apprehending—is not, as traditionally conceptualized, about attending to the aesthetic qualities of fonts in a disinterested manner (Osborne, 1974). This facet is about perceiving typefaces in the first place. Two subthemes emerged from the analysis. The first reveals that for some participants, typefaces become invisible in everyday consumption practices, whereas the second suggests that consumers start seeing typefaces when their focus shifts from consumption *activity* to consumption *object*. Once grasped, typefaces cannot be unseen. Although presented individually, the two subthemes are best understood as connected.

Mundane consumption: the invisibility of fonts in daily lives

Various data sets indicate that some participants (e.g. Briana, Damian, Jasmin, and Laura) predominantly consume typefaces unconsciously and automatically by using exclusively standard or preferred fonts. Two of the most explicit verbal accounts are those of Laura and Briana. The former explains *"I tend to use [Calibri] on a daily basis …. And … it's not even conscious"* (Laura, pp. 32-34, INT574-603). The latter, who chose Times New Roman for her collage (Briana, COLA), admitted having used:

> *Times New Roman [and] Arial … all those [times] in the past. And to be honest, I never thought about it—the honest truth. This research has actually made me to think about typefaces and think about fonts and its [sic] use …, so that's something which … I've never thought about. (Briana, p. 59, INT1045-1052)*

Both quotes highlight that Briana and Laura are neither actively thinking about what typefaces they consume nor about the reasons for their consumption decisions. Briana's repeated use of the word '*honest*' signifies her surprise about this. She describes how this study allowed her to reflect upon her own consumption behaviour. Similarly, Laura acknowledged:

> *When I was choosing them [typefaces and images], I was thinking 'Well, why have I chosen that? If Ruffin asks me … why have I?', you know. (Laura, pp. 67-68, INT1204-1207)*

Laura's standard font Calibri was not listed in the collage toolkit and her first choice, Kefa (Laura, p. 18, INT319), was not installed on her office computer (Laura, p. 15, INT264-265), which is why she eventually picked Garamond for the narrative sandwiched in her collage (Laura, COLA). Laura's attitudes

towards (cognitive responses) and choices of typefaces (behavioural responses) are determined—as she puts it—by what *"I respond to visually"* (Laura, p. 30, INT535-536) and she admits: *"I like this one [Garamond] … I have chosen what I like" (Laura, p. 15, INT255).*

These accounts indicate that Briana and Laura might regard fonts as 'ordinary' (R. E. Kleine, III & Kernan, 1991) or 'mundane' (R. E. Kleine, III et al., 1992) commodities. These products are inconspicuous, everyday artefacts that allow them to pursue more conscious and fundamental activities (Gronow & Warde, 2001). Shove and Chappells' (2001) exploration of utility consumption (i.e. energy and water) highlights five characteristics of mundane consumption that overlap with font consumption.

Firstly, the authors contend that "energy and water are important not for themselves but for what they make possible, that is, cleaning, cooking, lighting, heating, and so on" (Shove & Chappells, 2001, p. 48). Analogously, fonts might not be consumed as commodities in their own right because they allow consumers to engage in more conscious activities, such as reading retailer prospectuses, responding to business emails, writing up reports, engaging with social media posts, and sending text messages to friends.

Secondly, the consumption of water and energy is predominantly mediated by other technologies like dish washers (Shove & Chappells, 2001). The same applies to fonts—in most cases, they are not consumed independently but using other entities that have a purpose to other ends. We need computer hardware (e.g. drive, processor, display, mouse, touchpad, printer…) and software (e.g. operating system, word processing, desktop publishing and typesetting, email…) to get fonts 'working'. Our interaction with (digital) typefaces is therefore highly mediated through technology (e.g. Ihde, 1990, 1990/2009, 2010). This is conceptually different from the concept of mediated lived experiences critiqued in Chapter 2, which asserts that experiences are mediated by mass-communication or media products (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy, & Pervan, 2018).

Thirdly, the quality (e.g. nuclear versus renewable energy) and quantity of consumed utilities is determined by situational (e.g. family gatherings), product (e.g. energy efficiency) and personal factors (e.g. lifestyle and values) (Shove & Chappells, 2001). Similar observations were made in the previous chapters for typefaces, arguing that situational (e.g. workplace), product (e.g. software), and personal aspects (e.g. interest) may influence typeface consumption.

Fourthly, in most cases the use and costs associated with everyday consumption of utilities remain unclear to the consumer—partly because consumption and charging occur at different points in time, and partly because utility bills are issued periodically only (Shove & Chappells, 2001). I appreciate that the introduction of, for example, smart readers might help consumers to better understand their relationship with consumption objects as well as their behaviours, but I will not discuss this aspect further. With regard to typefaces, it is worth acknowledging that fonts consumed in everyday contexts are oftentimes bundled with other software, and that software companies employ different pricing strategies (for a review see e.g. Lehmann & Buxmann, 2009). For example, the rights to use typefaces as part of bundled software packages might be obtained by acquiring software rights through single (e.g. Office 2019) and recurring payments (e.g. Microsoft 365 subscriptions) respectively (Microsoft, 2021b), or they can be obtained free of charge (e.g. LibreOffice, n.d.). In any case, costs for bundled typefaces are most likely sunk and thus hidden, which might affect consumers' product and price perceptions.

Finally, "householders know relatively little about the networks and interests involved or the infrastructures which lie behind their taps and socket outlets" (Shove & Chappells, 2001, p. 49). During the interviews and while engaging with the data, it became apparent that only a relatively small number of participants (e.g. Alicia, George, Jelena, Justin, Kevin, and Luka) were able to articulate differentiated understandings of the typeface market. Conversely, most participants did not mention the font industry or its actors at all. This seems like another parallel between the typeface and the utilities market.

Generally, the juxtaposition of utilities and typeface consumption provides some suggestive evidence that fonts represent mundane consumption objects. While those remain hidden in daily consumption practices, consumers might still pause and reflect upon their practices. Participant Damian, for instance, had thought about his typeface consumption prior to this study, but his relationship with typefaces in general has not evolved since; it can be characterized as habitual and is less sophisticated compared to other participants introduced later. Damian tends to use *"only … one font"* (Damian, p. 9, INT152) and that is Arial—his *"preferred typeface"* (Damian, p. 15, INT256). When he could not find Arial in the collage toolkit, he selected Helvetica (Damian, COLA-COLY), which he *"feel[s] is the closest to Arial"* (Damian, p. 14, INT247-249). For his narrative, where there were no restrictions set by the study parameters, Damian chose his favourite font Arial.

Jasmin, on the other hand, moved away from her standard fonts and opted for Century Gothic (Jasmin, COLA-COLE) once she *"came up with the idea of Miami"* (Jasmin, p. 4, INT71-72). She explains: *"Century Gothic describes the vibe when I think about my favourite city"* (Jasmin, p. 1, NAR1-20), indicating some sort of aesthetic mood, which neither her habitual fonts Calibri and Arial (Jasmin, p. 37, INT658-660) nor any other of the pre-selected typefaces seemed to reflect. Jasmin told me, for example, that Cooper looked *"like Las Vegas … not Miami"* (Jasmin, p. 12, INT209-211) and the serif typefaces on page six of the collage toolkit *"would be more like New York or London"* (Jasmin, p. 34, INT607). Century Gothic, however, reminded her of Miami…

> *because you know … the famous sign of Miami when you go to the city or like Miami Vice TV*
>
> *series … and this typeface reminds me of that kind of stuff. (Jasmin, p. 12, INT199-204)*

Although Jasmin engaged with different typefaces in this study, her typeface associations are quite literal and are fundamentally based on images and/or cultural meanings created by film, advertising, and marketing (e.g. McCracken, 1986, 1988), indicating a rather rudimentary relationship with typefaces. In this instance, however, she was able to appropriate the perceived features of her favourite city Miami to describe her own identity.

Fournier (2009) reminds us of the fallacy of assuming consumers' relationships with consumption objects must always be related to identity projects; she maintains that relationships with objects can be more functional, and that consumption choices and practices may be aimed at satisfying more 'basic' needs. The author cites earlier studies (e.g. Coupland, 2005; Fournier, 1998) to explicate how ordinary consumption objects (e.g. household items or brands) become invisible through habitual practices. It could be argued, for example, that Damian employed a mimicry strategy, because he chose Helvetica due to its resemblance with Arial, rendering the typeface Helvetica invisible to himself and others respectively (Coupland, 2005).

Crossing the Rubicon: starting to see typefaces everywhere

In contrast to the small group of participants introduced above (Briana, Damian, Jasmin, and Laura), the majority (e.g. Alicia, Jelena, Justin, Kevin, Raphael, Ruby) do apprehend typefaces, although to varying degrees. Some participants (e.g. Sarah, p. 21, INT363-366; Tobias, pp21-24, INT372-432) even

recalled incidents that caused their relationships with typefaces to change. It struck me that both George (pp. 26-27, INT454-504) and Luka (pp. 16-17, INT279-293) used expressions like *'earliest exposure'* and *'first exposure'* respectively in their descriptions of those events. Exposure is defined as one's proximity to an object and is the first of the three-stage (exposure, attention, and interpretation) perception process (Solomon, 2018). I was surprised because technically both participants had been *'exposed'* to typefaces before, for example when reading signs or drafting emails.

What is implied in George's and Lukas's accounts, and what is revealed more explicitly in Emma's story, is that there is some sort of attentional filter that prevents—or allows—for the perception of typefaces (Rossiter & Percy, 2017). Attention refers to the allocation of mental energy to objects (Solomon, 2018). Emma, for example, told me:

> *I didn't think about fonts at all, and then I like got a MacBook like when I was like [year reference] maybe … and I was like 'Wow, this is a different font, when you open Word on a MacBook, like the font is different. I don't know if I like it.' And that was like the first time when I started thinking about it. And then I still continued to not think about it. I was just 'Times New Roman, Times New Roman, Times New Roman' all the time. (Emma, pp. 88-89, INT1574-1584)*

Emma describes how she consumed typefaces pre-attentively (ready-to-hand), i.e. without thinking about them. This type of consumption corresponds with that of the participants mentioned in the earlier subsection (e.g. Briana, Damian, and Laura). Typefaces are transparent in mundane consumption, because we are engaged with the respective activity, namely with acting upon (e.g. writing) or perceiving of (e.g. reading) our environment and not with typefaces as commodities (Brey, 2000; Dotov, Nie, & Chemero, 2010). When Emma got a new laptop, she negotiated her attitude towards the unfamiliar typefaces bundled with the Microsoft Word software on her MacBook. The fonts were suddenly present-at-hand. However, her relationship with typefaces had not changed. Her account indicates the presence of some sort of threshold, around which Emma oscillated, but which she had not yet passed. This is illustrated quite effectively in her linguistic choices. At the very outset of the account, she makes clear that she *'didn't think about fonts at all.'* Although she initially *'started thinking about'* fonts when she got the new MacBook, she *'still continued not to think about it.'*

A transformation eventually occurred a couple of years later, when she started university and noticed that her peers picked typefaces more purposefully. Emma realized: *"Oh, yeah, I never thought*

of that. I could do it in a different font" and she is mindful of her typeface consumption ever since (Emma, p. 89, INT1585-1594). Her attention shifted from the consumption activity to the consumption object. By doing so, typefaces moved from the background (context) to the foreground (consciousness) (R. E. Kleine, III et al., 1992; Koffka, 1935). Emma's descriptions of her experiences unfold that the meaning of typefaces had changed. This is a result of interpretation (meaning-making)—the third stage of the perception process (Solomon, 2018).

Emma's continued apprehension of typefaces indicates that once consumers have passed the threshold, there is no way back—typefaces cannot be unseen. Let me introduce three more accounts, to solidify this idea and to eventually carve out a peculiarity in the perceptual process. Justin asserts that *"a lot of people just … passively receive fonts"* (p. 57, INT1019-1021). The notion *'a lot of'* is used quantitatively, suggesting that many *'people'* do not apprehend typefaces; instead, they are perceiving them *'passively'* (i.e. unconsciously). It could be argued from the contrary, that there is only a small number of people that actually 'see' fonts. Luka *(*p. 8, INT127-129) maintains that *"people wi–it's our nature—we will first read the thing [text], we won't even notice … the typeface, the design."* I chose this extract from my interview with Luka because it contains an intriguing detail, that is meaningful in isolation, as well as in the context with another assertion he made. It felt to me like Luka was referring to *'people'* as in general public, which would have excluded him. But he hesitated for a very brief moment, before he seemingly self-identified with that group by affirming that *'it's our nature'* and that *'we'* behave in a certain way. The quote seems to suggest that no one is immune from automatic perceptual processes that direct our attention to the consumption activity, i.e. that forces us to '*first read that thing*'. Interestingly, only a few moments later, he told to me: *"I see it [typeface] everywhere, and you probably can too … if you focus, you will … start seeing … that thing everywhere"* (Luka, *p. 9, INT148-151).* In this extract, Luka draws a distinction between him and me (others); he does '*see*' typefaces, because he focusses on them. For him, typefaces are intentional objects. At the same time, he reassured me that I too can apprehend typefaces if I *'focus'*. Only then will I *'start seeing'* typefaces. The words he chose epitomize the attentional shift ('focus') described in Emma's case, as well as the beginning ('start') of an activity, namely of apprehending ('seeing') typefaces.

There is one detail in Luka's last quote that remained unmentioned. It is the notion of *'everywhere'*. He used the expression twice in just one sentence, which adds some emphasis to it. It reveals

that the attentional shift is not a situational phenomenon. Crossing the threshold (or Rubicon) is a revelation. It allows us to see what was previously concealed. Kevin (p. 38, INT673-674) made a similar comment in that regard, saying: *"I can't help but see typefaces."* Kevin's quote suggests that apprehending typefaces is an involuntary process—it is not a deliberate choice but a way of being-in-the-world.

This idea resonates to an extent with the notion of selective perceptual processes. This phenomenon has been reviewed in different contexts, such as advertising effectiveness (e.g. C. R. Taylor, Franke, & Bang, 2006), brand perception (e.g. Diamantopoulos et al., 2019), product characteristics (e.g. Witt, 2010), political campaigning (e.g. Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944), and tourism marketing (e.g. Ballantyne, Moutinho, & Rate, 2018). Selective perception theory stipulates that individuals may selectively approach, or avoid, (exposure) and therefore selectively allocate psychological energy (attention) to stimuli, which they eventually make sense of (interpret) using subjective frames of reference (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018).

Reasons for selective perception may lie in the stimulus (e.g. bold typeface characteristics), as well as in the person (e.g. interests and needs) (Solomon, 2018). The latter can result in so called perceptual vigilance, i.e. consumers might be more alert to stimuli "that may be relevant or important to them in some way" (Eagle, Czarnecka, Dahl, & Lloyd, 2015, p. 36). It is conceivable that consumers, who passed the threshold, experience perceptual vigilance and start seeing typefaces everywhere, because typefaces have become more meaningful for them. Apprehending typefaces, so it seems, is therefore highly associated with involvement, i.e. the relevance a product category has for a particular consumer (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Involvement emerged as a separated facet of connoisseurship and is presented in the next section.

Facet two: involvement

The second theme is titled involvement and encapsulates three different sub-themes. The first concerns the temporal dimension of involvement, and it asks when participants' involvement with typefaces started. The second sub-theme comprises the level of involvement and relates to the strength of involvement. Finally, the third sub-theme offers insights into the link between self-identity and typeface involvement by looking at ego-involvement.

When did it all start: the temporal dimension of involvement

The visual, written and verbal, as well as the procedural data suggest that participants' involvement with typefaces varies with regard to the temporal dimension of involvement. It signifies the point in time when participants started to be involved with typefaces and hence the duration of their involvement. It became evident that some participants were generally not much involved with typefaces, even in the context of this study. This suggests that their enduring involvement and situational involvement were relatively low (Houston & Rothschild, 1978). The former describes a person's on-going interest in a product category, that is relatively stable across various situations and time, whereas the latter arises in specific contexts only, like purchases (Richins & Bloch, 1986).

Richins, Bloch, and McQuarrie (1992, p. 152) found that enduring and situational involvement "combine in a straightforward manner to influence" consumer behaviour. It could be argued that for some participants the present research increased situational involvement with typefaces, because participants were asked to express their identity using typefaces. It is conceivable that my research created a context, in which the consumption of typefaces constituted a psychological and/or symbolic risk for participants (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). However, as the following accounts indicate, the research context did not affect participants' involvement levels. Some participants (e.g. Damian and Jasmin) show only a very low level of involvement and others (e.g. Laura and Briana) do not seem to be involved with typefaces at all. Laura, for example, stated: *"Yeah, you see, the pictures are where I started, 'cause they are more interesting to me" (Laura, p. 29, INT510-512).* Similarly, Briana explained:

> *I really feel more strongly about the images … than I do … the words, and so I didn't think too much about [the reasons for] using Times New Roman …. I spent a lot more thought thinking about these images. (Briana, p. 34, INT597-604)*

The lack of relevance is also suggested by the treatment of typefaces in their respective collages and narratives. Briana, for instance, had initially sent her collage without any typeface on it. When asked to update her collage to incorporate one or more typefaces given that the focus of my study was on typefaces, Briana inserted a footnote in her collage (Briana, COLA). The only typographic element in Laura's collage is the narrative, which is enclosed with photographs (Laura, COLA). Interestingly, neither Briana

nor Laura specifically mentioned or wrote about typefaces in their narratives. In many instances within the interview, both participants talked about the images and ignored questions related to typefaces (e.g. Briana, pp. 38-40, INT678-706; Laura, pp. 66-75, INT1176-1335).

Data suggest that Emma's (p. 89, INT1587-1597), Raphael's (p. 40, INT713-718), Sarah's (p. 21, INT361-377), and Thomas's (p. 23, INT401-404) involvement with typefaces was not triggered by this study either. Instead, their on-going involvement with typefaces began more recently, at some time before the study. Tobias's case to illustrates this further. In his role as area sales manager, Tobias must prepare and hold many customer presentations around the world (Tobias, pp. 21-22, INT372-382). He told me of a specific event that changed his relationship with typefaces. Two months after he held his first presentation in the USA, for which he received much positive feedback, Tobias presented the identical material in Eastern Europe, where his customers did not appreciate the presentation. They told him, for example, *"You have too much [sic] different … fonts"* (Tobias, pp. 23-24, INT398-415), and *"from that point"* on, Tobias started to consciously think about his typeface consumption and to educate himself on, for instance, typeface perceptions in diverse cultures (Tobias, p. 24, INT418-432).

A third group of participants characterize their involvement with typefaces as enduring (e.g. Ruby and Luka), some without mentioning a definite point in time when their involvement with typefaces had started. However, there is a linguistic marker that indicates their involvement has been ongoing for some considerable time. During the interviews, many participants of this third group used the word *'always'* to describe their attraction to (Alicia, p. 17, INT306) or interest in (Kevin, p. 54, INT963-964) typefaces, as well as the significant (Justin, pp. 17-18, INT306-307) and/or important (Jelena, p. 32, INT559) role they played in their lives. Data from this group provides additional suggestive evidence that the present study did not trigger situational involvement. In summary, all accounts presented here propose that consumers can be differentiated with regard to the temporal aspect of their enduring involvement in typefaces.

From interest to lifestyle: the level of involvement

This subsection addresses the level—or strength—of involvement. Prior research found that enduring involvement is an individual trait variable that can be described along a continuum ranging from low to

high (Richins & Bloch, 1986). It is argued that high involvement may lead to product enthusiasm (Bloch & Richins, 1983) and even fanaticism (Thorne & Bruner, 2006). In line with previous studies, participants in this research can also be differentiated by their level of involvement. As shown in previous discussions, Briana's, Damian's, Jasmin's, and Laura's level of involvement with typefaces is fairly low. Other participants are situated somewhere in the middle of the continuum. For example, Tobias is *"really thinking a lot … about which font … [to] use"* (p. 22, INT387-388). For Raphael, *"typefaces are quite important … and … play a big role"* in his life (Raphael, p. 15, INT253-255). Jelena explains that typefaces are an important *"part of my work, but not the main thing"* (p. 32, INT564-565).

It appears that while typefaces are important for participants who demonstrate medium-involvement (Emma, George, Jelena, Raphael, Thomas, and Tobias), they are not the most important thing, which distinguishes them from highly involved participants (Sarah, Justin, Alicia, Kevin, Luka, Ruby) introduced next. Sarah, for instance, considers fonts as *"absolutely essential and critical to the storytelling"* (Sarah, p. 31, INT546-548), which might not be a surprise given her profession as e.g. writer, illustrator, and publisher of children's books.

Alicia reiterates that *"typefaces play a huge role in my world"* and acknowledges *"I'm embedded within type and I love it"* (pp. 18-19, INT321-326). Her love for typefaces was indeed noticeable across all data sets, and her embeddedness within type is also visually expressed in her collage. Her use of the word *'embedded'* and the encapsulation of the places she identifies within the Futura outline (Alicia, COL1A-COL2A) are powerful spatial metaphors for her close relationship with typefaces, situating and rooting herself in the (typographic) world, as she explains during the interview (e.g. Alicia, p. 8, INT129-138) and in her narrative:

> *Futura, although 90yrs old, has stood the test of time. Within the face, Paul Renner built his foundation on the grid for a triangle, a circle and a square. This is a metaphor for the foundation of design—the world I live in. (Alicia, p. 1, NAR14-18)*

Luka too uses a spatial metaphor when he speaks of being *"deep, deep … into only type design" (p. 21, INT374-375)*, suggesting a high level of immersion in and involvement with typefaces, which even extends to his *"free time",* where *"[I'm] polishing my own stuff, and also helping some people who are type designers, working … with type" (Luka, pp. 21-22, INT375-382).*

The following extract from Kevin's narrative epitomizes the relationships he, Luka and Alicia have with typefaces. He explains: *"Luckily my hobby and passion is [sic] also my career therefore it has become more of a lifestyle for me"* (Kevin, pp. 2-3, NAR49-51), i.e. the engagement with typography has become a way of *being-in-the-world*. Elsewhere, Kevin equates his interest in typography with obsession (Kevin, p. 55, INT976-978), which again suggests an extremely high level of involvement and/or a sophisticated relationship with typefaces. Kevin's use of the words *'passion'* and *'obsession'* caught my attention, inasmuch as Vallerand et al. (2003) differentiate two types of passion, namely harmonious and obsessive passion respectively. In general, passion is conceptualized as "a strong inclination toward a specific object, activity, concept or person that one loves (or at least strongly likes), highly values, invests time and energy in on a regular basis, and that is part of one's identity" (Vallerand, 2015, p. 33). This conceptualization shares important qualities of highly involved consumers, who invest a significant amount of "their time, energy, and resources intently on a specific area of interest" (Thorne & Bruner, 2006, p. 53). It could therefore be argued that passion is a marker of high involvement (Seguin-Levesque, Lalibertea, Pelletier, Blanchard, & Vallerand, 2003).

Self-expansion theory (see Chapter 2, p. 42) offers valuable insights into the self-defining character of passions (Vallerand et al., 2007) as well as their strength. The theory proposes that individuals' identities transform in intimate relationships by incorporating the *Thou* into the *I* (Reimann & Aron, 2009). In the case of harmonious passions, the object is congruent with one's self-understanding and is hence internalized voluntarily (Seguin-Levesque et al., 2003). Conversely, obsessive passions entail an element of compulsion, that may arise from within (e.g. need to maintain high self-esteem) or outside the person (e.g. need for social acceptance or the uncontrollable pleasure derived from pursuing an activity), and that "eventually takes disproportionate space in the person's identity and causes conflict with other activities in the person's life" (Vallerand et al., 2003, p. 757; see also Forest, Mageau, Sarrazin, & Morin, 2011).

It might be that highly involved consumers (e.g. Alicia, Justin, Kevin, and Luka) experience extreme levels of harmonious passion towards typefaces and that those feelings are linguistically equated with obsessions (Kevin, p. 55, INT974-978) to signify the magnitude of their harmonious passion. There is no indication of compulsion in the accounts of my study participants. Justin's interview data provide interesting insights concerning the self-expansion of highly involved consumers. As he explains,

"anyone who actually works with fonts, has that relationship with them … they are a personal thing" (Justin, pp. 5-6, INT90-93). Justin's quote suggests that a specific group of consumers, namely those with more elaborate consumption practices, develop a relationship with typefaces. The notion of *'personal thing'* suggests a certain degree of intimacy in their relationships with typefaces. In line with literature presented above, incorporating passionate objects into consumers' self-understandings allows them to construct and maintain their identities.

<p style="text-align:center">What's that got to do with me: ego-involvement</p>

In Chapter 2, involvement was conceptualized as the relevance products have for individuals (Zaichkowsky, 1985). However, the data revealed that there is another type of involvement at work, namely ego-involvement. It overlaps with product involvement but is defined much narrower. Ego-involvement is understood as "the importance of the product to the individual and to the individual's self-concept, values, and ego" (Beatty, Homer, & Kahle, 1988, p. 150). It moves the focus from involvement with general product classes (e.g. font) closer to product exemplars (e.g. my wedding font) and to aspects that are more relevant to our identities (e.g. relational self), i.e. those characteristics that are psychologically central (Gecas & Seff, 1990). It is believed that behaviour of highly ego-involved consumers will express higher degrees of affective qualities (Sherif & Cantril, 1947), an observation already made in the context of consumer passions discussed above.

Ego-involved individuals are more likely to engage in self-presentation (Goffman, 1959/1990), understood as the conscious or unconscious management of impressions others have of any aspect of one's identity (e.g. attitudes, values, roles, et cetera) (Schlenker, 2009; Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Leary and Kowalski (1990) identified two distinct impression management processes. Impression motivation is concerned with the motives for engaging in impression management activities. As discussed in Chapter 2 (p. 38), self-enhancement and self-consistency motives can direct consumer behaviour (J. D. Brown, 1998). Self-enhancement (i.e. approaching positive self-images) and self-protection (i.e. avoiding negative self-images) respectively are important self-image goals and/or motives, which are at the core of ego-involvement (Hadden, Øverup, & Knee, 2014). Impression construction, on the other hand,

looks into ways how individuals create impressions (e.g. through the use of artefacts) and at the contents of those impressions (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

The analysis of the research data revealed that the level of ego-involvement in my study participants can be described as a continuum that ranges from low to high. A first group of participants (Damian, Laura, Jasmin, and Tobias) is using typeface connotations or characteristics literally to describe their identity and is therefore situated at the lower end of the spectrum. Conversely, Alicia, Ruby, Luka, Kevin, and Justin fall into a second group, that sits on the opposite end of the spectrum. Their involvement with typefaces goes beyond those literal associations and the participants offer multi-layered, highly personal stories across all data sets, underlining the psychological centrality of the consumed fonts. Finally, Emma, Jelena, Raphael, Sarah, and Thomas can be categorized into a third group, that is situated somewhere in the middle of the continuum. The following discussion, mainly focus on the medium- and high-involved groups but is interspersed with experiences from low ego-involved participants to reveal differences even more.

Some participants appear to consume typefaces to actively create and present positive images of themselves. One way to do that is by appropriating typeface qualities. Let us recall Jasmin (low ego-involvement), who chose the font Century Gothic to appropriate associations she has with Miami (Jasmin, p. 12, INT199-206). In line with product-personality congruence theory (Govers, 2004) presented earlier (see Chapter 2, p. 41), Jasmin selected a typeface that has a similar personality to hers. Another way to create positive self-presentations is to demonstrate one's understanding and mastery of typographic matters. For example, it stood out in my interview with Raphael (medium ego-involvement), that he is clearly concerned about the image others might have of him as a typeface consumer. He explains that *"someone … could also make a lot of assumptions about the content and the creator"* (Raphael, p. 16, INT275-276). Elsewhere, he asserts that:

> *typeface is presentation, it's how are you are presenting your ideas to the world; even if the content is identical, how you present it changes how the audience will interact with that or how they will receive it, what they'll think of you, or even bypass the content and start making judgments about the creator, depending on what sort of fonts you use. (Raphael, p. 15, INT259-266)*

Reviewing Raphael's extracts in the context of literature on consumer-object relationships, it appears that product-personality congruence theory does not explain Raphael's behaviour. The theory

postulates that product personality does not make any assumptions about the product user, but is focused on the product variant level (Govers, 2004). Conversely, self-congruence theory (Sirgy, 1982, 2018) introduced in Chapter 2 (p. 41) explicitly acknowledges the link between consumers and product-users. Wright, Claiborne, and Sirgy (1992, p. 314) propose that consumers, who invest more psychological energy into typefaces, will "make inferences about the stereotypic image of the generalized user," as they become familiar with the symbolic meanings' products have.

Raphael (p. 16, INT280-282) says *"I spend a lot of time trying to get the right font for the right job …, because I know that there are these associations that most people have."* This allows him to associate *"those fonts … with what I do"* (Raphael, p. 26, INT463-465). Raphael's collage suggests that he in general defines himself through what he does (Raphael, COLA-COLF). For example, in one section of his collage, he self-identifies as photographer (Raphael, COL4D) and during the interview, he described how doing photography became a part of his identity:

> *I started to dabble in photography and then that evolved into 'I'm listening to three hours' worth of photography each day while doing other things,' and then I would go out in the evenings and, you know, do long exposure and try out all those things, well and then had that translated—or that transitioned—to being a freelance photographer. So, what used to be hobby then just became another thing that I'm doing and … it's just another part of who I am. (Raphael, p. 20, INT346-355)*

Raphael selected the very round, almost geometrical, non-serif font Century Gothic Regular to visualize this facet of his identity:

> *With the photographer, that was a really deliberate association because often with web content, there is a big push towards sans serif and I've noticed for a lot of photography websites … they definitely prioritise the more rounded shapes so not just sans serif but sans serif plus super rounded shapes, so I felt like photographer that's something that I would see all the time, that sort of pairing. (Raphael, pp. 9-10, INT154-163)*

Raphael's account highlights how his engagement with the typeface made him perceptible to the symbolic value rounded typefaces have for photographers. By identifying as a photographer himself (social self), this professional group becomes an important reference group for Raphael, that offered a plethora

of symbolic meaning (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Evidence suggests Raphael made a self-typeface connection by incorporating fonts and related associations from photographers (ingroup) into his identity (Escalas & Bettman, 2003, 2009). Expressing those connections in his collage reinforces his self-image. This also has important implications for his self-esteem (Edward E. Jones, Rhodewalt, Berglas, & Skelton, 1981) and his private self-perceptions more generally (for a review, see e.g. J. D. Brown, 1998), as Jelena's (medium ego-involvement) case shows. Typographic choices have always mattered to Jelena. It is important to her that…

> *Things, that I put out … are designed, … that [the] layout looks good … I never made it … in some programme … and used like a default setting. (Jelena, p. 32, INT559-563; see also Jelena, pp. 30-31, INT533-542)*

By customizing all material used to communicate and promote her works, Jelena (and other participants analogously) actively manages impressions others form about her as designer. Positive judgments from others will reinforce her self-concept and, therefore, improve her self-esteem (Baumeister, 1997). Comparable results were found in other marketing studies, particularly in the context of social media, where self-presentation is a widely used tactic by social media users (e.g. Bareket-Bojmel, Moran, & Shahar, 2016; Meeus, Beullens, & Eggermont, 2019).

In contrast to the examples above, which sought to foster a positive image, impression management tactics may also be used to distance and dissociate oneself from negative images (avoidance), i.e. those views that represent an identity threat. For instance, Laura (low ego-involvement) finds the typeface Geneva *"looks too childish,"* and she asserts she *"wouldn't want to be seen like that, really"* (Laura, pp. 19-20, INT334, INT353-354). Damian's choice of Arial (low ego-involvement) is an effort to communicate clearly and transparently, with the goal of avoiding negative judgements about him as author, the content, or the tone of voice of e.g. written texts (Damian, p. 9, INT151-158). The difference between Damian and e.g. Raphael is that the former is using Arial for its utilitarian value avoiding everything that distracts from the message and diminishes processing fluency, because that could raise questions about the typographic choices he made (e.g. Damian, pp. 130-131, INT2325-2347). It almost feels like he is trying to be as invisible as the typeface he consumes, whereas Raphael actively uses typeface associations to generate and promote images about the content of the message as well as

himself as typeface consumer. These observations seem to be indicative of the different involvement levels that Damian and Raphael have.

Emma (medium ego-involvement) clearly distances herself from a person who she had respected in the past, but who committed *"a judgeable act"* (Emma, p. 24, INT415) by violating a social norm of typeface consumption:

> *I had a teacher, who used Comic Sans in a [musical] score, and I was kind of like mortified, because I really respected this person, and then they had like the goofiest font ever in their score, and I was like—there's this cognitive dissonance—and I was like, 'Urh, I never wanna be this person!' You know what I mean? … And so, that's why I hate [xxx] [him?], because of that one like moment. (Emma, p. 28, INT491-500)*

Emma's account is a great example of a specific impression management tactic, namely the conformity and compliance with norms (Leary, 1995/2019), which reveals how social influences may affect typeface consumption. As Bachfischer (2014; Para 3) writes, "using Comic Sans is on the big-type-crime list," a norm that Emma might have assimilated, and which may explain why Emma believes that consuming Comic Sans represents a *"judgeable act"* (Emma, p. 24, INT415). The latter is an expression of her *"prejudices against Comic Sans"* (Emma, p. 1, NAR9-10). Ultimately, Emma's relationship with Comic Sans affects her relationship with her former teacher. I will use Heider's (1958) balance theory to contextualize Emma's lived experience.

Emma describes the psychological tension, the *"cognitive dissonance"* (Emma, p. 28, INT496-497) (see Festinger, 1957), that arouse from the incongruence between her negative sentiment relation with the typefaces, and her positive sentiment relation with the teacher, who in turn has a positive unit relation with Comic Sans (Solomon, 2018). This tension posed an identity threat to Emma (Steele, 1988). To resolve the imbalance in this triadic (Emma–teacher–typeface) relationship, Emma changed her attitude towards the teacher, which consequently restored balance; this allowed Emma to behave consistently with her beliefs and thus her identity. Emma's example is, therefore, another vivid illustration of the circumstance that typefaces are more than mere visual cues with utilitarian value, which is in line with recent research on the effect consumption objects have on self-identity (Wheeler & Bechler, 2021); fonts too trigger complex intra- and interpersonal identity construction processes.

This becomes even more evident in e.g. Ruby's, Alicia's, and Justin's cases, who are all highly ego-involved. As will be shown, their relationships with typefaces have different sources. Escalas, Gallo, and Gaustad (2019) distinguish between symbolic and experiential origins of self-brand connections. In the former case, objects express perceived or desired selves, whereas in the latter case, relationships are based on consumers' biographies (Escalas et al., 2019). Let me start with Ruby, whose choice of the font Rockwell for her collage was…

> *an ode to American illustrator Norman Rockwell who is famous for creating work commenting on civil rights and freedom. (Ruby, p. 2, NAR30-33; COLA, COLB)*

The term *'ode'* signifies that her consumption choice is an expression of her appreciation for Norman Rockwell and for his work that was critical of society. Elsewhere, she elaborates on her decision, explaining:

> *Norman Rockwell, the sort of famous American illustrator, who sort of visually communicated civil rights in America and, you know … his visual communication was … kind of something symbolized through just choosing that typeface. (Ruby, p. 9, INT153-162)*

Later in the interview, she insisted that her typeface choice…

> *had something to do with me, and those things that are important to me and when I just scanned the list of what you sent, Rockwell stood out immediately, 'cause I have spent time illustrating in my career as well. (Ruby, p. 53, INT940-945)*

What manifests itself in Ruby's extracts, and is made most explicit in Ruby's last quote, is that her choice is directly related to her personal identity. Norman Rockwell represents, for example, her past self, when she was illustrating, as well as her enduring interest in e.g. graphic design and social studies (Ruby, p. 7, INT123-124; p. 1, NAR6-7; COL6, COL10, COL11). More substantially, they share core beliefs and values; diversity and equity are fundamental guiding principles in Ruby's life (e.g. Ruby, p. 1, NAR9-11; COL2, COL9). As parts of her identity, these global values (Vinson, Scott, & Lamont, 1977) are highly psychologically relevant (Gecas & Seff, 1990). Instead of appropriating typeface qualities or connotations like Jasmin does it, Ruby is assimilating those features of Norman Rockwell that allow her to affirm her own values and consequently her self-image, that she communicates to others. Belk (1988) exemplifies this self-extension mechanism in the context of hand-made antiquities, maintaining that it imbues

the owner's identity with symbolic value, more precisely with facets of the creator's self. Ruby identifies with Norman Rockwell on multiple levels and wishes to present those aspects to the outside world. This again will positively affect her self-esteem, because the gap between actual and ideal self is getting smaller (Sirgy, 2018).

Alicia's reasons for choosing Futura were also very personal. As the following two statements suggest, the typeface consumption is now moving from a symbolic towards an experiential realm. During the interview, Alicia (p. 8, INT137-138) told me that *"I kind of see it [Futura] as a different metaphor for my experiences in life."* She continued explaining that:

> *There seems to be [a] really nice, more personal connection with Futura than any of the other typefaces there, and so for me it's a bit of … a woven … ancestral narrative thinking about … the glimmer of hope and the possibilities. (Alicia, p. 9, INT149-156)*

With the choice of the font Futura, her story becomes personal, practically autobiographical. The typeface situates her in time by linking her present with her past and her future (Pierce et al., 2003). Alicia told me that *"for a time, my father worked for NASA … when he met my mother"* (Alicia, pp. 8-9, INT142-146), and she explained that the typeface *"had been used on a commemorative plaque that they placed on the moon fifty years ago, and this is the fiftieth anniversary of that moon landing"* (Alicia, p. 8, INT138-141). By choosing Futura, Alicia is paying tribute to her parents, and is:

> *thinking about where I am, what I am doing and thinking about all the little particles of memories, of people who are no longer with us and, you know, presentations of what might be for tomorrow. So, quite a lot of stuff in there, really. (Alicia, pp. 9-10, INT1159-164)*

Alicia's and Ruby's stories illustrate how semantic (typographic), episodic (autobiographical) and procedural knowledge (collage creation) combine to instil typefaces with personal meanings. Fonts are no longer considered mere commodities that are void of symbolic meanings and are exchanged in the marketplace; instead, they enter (e.g. acquisition) the consumers' lives, who exercise diverse consumption rituals (e.g. personalization) before recommodifying them again (e.g. deinstallation) (Epp & Price, 2009). However, it must be acknowledged that typefaces already have their own biographies (e.g. origin) before they meet the consumer, but through parasocial interactions, typeface and consumer biographies become shared biographies imbuing typefaces with idiosyncratic meaning (Kopytoff, 1986). In her

narrative, Alicia links the typeface biography (e.g. formal qualities and moon landing) to her own biography (e.g. parents, design practice, and future outlook), by which the typeface becomes significant to her.

Those shared experiences facilitate the creation of emotional bonds between typefaces and consumers, as Justin asserts: *"I certainly have developed fondness for certain typefaces"* (Justin, p. 56, INT1006-1007). The term *'fondness'* signifies his affection for the fonts. In his narrative, Justin wrote:

> *the fonts I have chosen from your list are all fonts that I have a personal connection with—they are ones I have worked with in my life, and all have some memory associated with them. (Justin, p. 1, NAR20-23)*

The fonts Justin used in his collage were encoded in his autobiographic (episodic) memory when he had worked with them. This made them meaningful to him, and he incorporated them into his identity. Elsewhere in his narrative he explains that the fonts he had chosen for his collage:

> *contain memories, associations, represent emotions and express different states of being for me. And so, through this simple presentation of a few words [It's complicated] repeated in a single colour, I have tried to create something deeply meaningful for me. (Justin, p. 2, NAR27-32)*

During the interview, Justin elaborated further on his choice of typefaces:

> *The reason I chose … the fonts was not because they just represented the 'It's complicated' … word, the phrase. They represented the complication of my life experience. And, so, rather than just kinda go 'Well, I'm just gonna use sans serif fonts to do this.', I wanted to show actually that life is a complex mix of these different experiences. (Justin, pp. 22-23, INT388-397)*

And this is exactly how Justin sees himself: *"If you … ask me, like, 'who am I' … I'm a complicated bunch of emotions and experiences"* (Justin, p. 28, INT497-499). Given this, it is not surprising that Justin included a whole '*bunch*' of typefaces (14 in total) in his collage, as they all represent different facets of his identity. Escalas et al. (2019) propose that experiential self-brand connections, like those Justin and Alicia have formed with their typefaces, are stronger and more enduring than symbolic self-brand connections, because the former are incorporated in consumers' episodic memories, whereas the latter may change over time as consumers' self-identities evolve. In the case of long-lasting symbolic

self-brand connections, the authors (Escalas et al., 2019) conjecture that these might be a result of interferences with experiential bonds that were assimilated into one's self-understanding and therefore become psychologically central.

The discussion in this subsection demonstrates that ego-involvement with typefaces varies between individuals, even when asked to create a collage expressing who they are using fonts. Some participants did not think about typefaces at all (e.g. Briana; low ego-involvement), others focused on literal typeface associations (e.g. Jasmin; low ego-involvement), created social identities (e.g. Raphael; medium ego-involvement), or shared biographies with typefaces (e.g. Alicia; high ego-involvement), making them highly meaningful for consumers and fostering an affective bond with those typefaces. Appendix 24 (p. 373) offers a recast of participants into eight different subgroups, allowing for a more fine-grained comparison of identity processes across cases.

Distinct from, but related to, involvement is another theme that emerged from the data, namely 'hunting and gathering', which I present next.

Facet three: hunting and gathering

The yearning self

I had a … subscription to Eye Magazine in the past few years, and that has launches of new typefaces, and I've got to say there were some ones in there I went like 'Uh, yeah, I would like to add you to my little bevy' but haven't the money to purchase them, so I just looked at them from afar. (Ruby, p. 16, INT272-278)

I introduce the theme using this extract from Ruby's interview, as it representative of medium to highly involved participants, who yearn for fonts. Put differently, typefaces become objects of desire. The absence of accounts from lowly involved participants helped to crystalize the theme. During and after my interview with Ruby, I stumbled over the notion of *"my little bevy"* (Ruby, p. 16, INT277), which she used with considerable affection. It felt like she was referring to a collection of typefaces she is very fond of and has grown attached to. The desired typefaces, so it seems, would complement her cherished collection, but their costs prove to be a barrier to their acquisition—not only for Ruby, but also for other

participants. Justin too comments on the costs of typefaces and how they affect his consumption decisions:

> I can't afford, you know, professional typeface packages, so I tend to use the free downloadable fonts. (Justin, p. 81, INT1445-1448)

However, there seem to be instances where the desire for typefaces can be fulfilled with substitutes (Belk, Ger, & Askegaard, 2003), which presumably meet an individual's subjective aesthetic threshold, as Raphael's account shows:

> Certain software will not have one of those [typefaces] 'cause they're under copyright …, and mostly … the Trajan is under—I guess—more recent copyright, or maybe it's just not a standard, but there is another font that's very similar … it's called Felix Titling … so that's kind of always in my mind for … those sort of headings. (Raphael, p. 12, INT201-209)

Emma also reported on an event, which triggered her desire for a typeface and subsequently led to its acquisition:

> I was grading papers the other day and this one student turns in this paper in this certain font, every time, and I cannot figure out what the font is, and—but it looks great—and what I very like about it, is that I know I haven't seen it before … so I finally asked him [the student] what it was … I downloaded it and I started using it. (Emma, pp. 32-34, INT593-608)

While the accounts introduced here might suggest that typefaces only occasionally become objects of desire, data reveal the collection of typefaces or typeface specimen can become a generalized or on-going behaviour, culminating in even more sophisticated 'hunting and gathering' practices than those described above. Consistent with past research (e.g. Beatty & Smith, 1987; Bloch et al., 1986), it appears that medium- and high-involved participants (e.g. Alicia, p. 17, INT293-295; Raphael, p. 40, INT715-717; Luka, p. 76, INT1352-1353) engage in on-going information search to create banks of knowledge as means to an end (e.g. epistemic value) or as an end in itself (e.g. hedonic value), which extends to gathering typefaces specimens and fonts respectively. Sarah tells me, she…

> would always carry back suitcases filled with … children's books from remote parts of the world … [because] the artwork fascinated me. (Sarah, p. 16, INT276-279; COL7)

But her fascination extends to typefaces, which:

> *reminded me of fonts that I had seen in my early childhood, that … were so interesting to me …*
> *I wanted to know what the words meant and … I couldn't figure it out. But the fonts just seemed*
> *like an invitation to read them and that was magical to me. As magical as … the illustration that*
> *they were [inextricably] linked to (Sarah, pp. 31-32, INT553-561; COL2A),*

like the dancer and the dance in Yeats' poem (Sarah, p. 2, NAR34-40; p. 30, INT528-532). For Sarah, the immersion into stories (hedonic value) starts with typefaces and illustrations, that become gateways to those alternative worlds. For Kevin, it is the process of collecting typefaces that gives him pleasure. He explains…

> *Everywhere I have worked, I collect typefaces and I collect them for fun—I find them online, so*
> *I have like a whole collection. (Kevin, p. 30, INT523-525)*

The hedonic value of collecting typefaces is supported by the repeated use of the term *'for fun',* and he adds: *"Like, I have so many …. I have, like, a whole hard drive … with typefaces"* (Kevin, pp. 28-29, INT504-505, INT521-522). The passages from Kevin's interview highlight not only the emotions that arise from those consumption practices (i.e. collecting), but they also shed light on two other aspects of participants' consumption behaviours. First, they reveal socially deviant consumer behaviour. Typefaces are collected from work, suggesting that legal rights are being infringed (see Chapter 2, p. 29). Second, quantity seems to matter. It felt like Kevin was taking great pride in his typeface collection. But he was not the only one to do so. George, for example, told me that he had:

> *worked as a typographer in advertising [and] … I think I've probably told you this, but I'll tell you*
> *again … for the recording: I've got a USB stick with all the fonts from a typesetting company in*
> *London … I have probably 30,000 fonts. (George, p. 34, INT596-605)*

Both, Kevin and George admitted having collected typefaces at work, and they emphasized the high number of typefaces they possess either by referring to it or by quantifying it. Clearly, it was particularly important for George to get that piece of information on record, so that it could become part of the study. While Kevin and George expressed their pride simply by sharing that information with me, Justin did so in a much more competitive way. By asking me: *"How many fonts do you [Ruffin] have on your*

machine?", Justin (p. 81, INT1449-1452) seemed to invite me to a challenge, aimed at determining who had the most typefaces and hence, identifying a winner. He explains:

> *on average, every machine that I have tends to have about 150 different fonts, at least … 'cause I like a good palette of … fonts to choose from. (Justin, p. 82, INT1467-1474)*

Justin's, Kevin's, and George's excerpts offer some initial ideas as to why the number of typefaces matters. The notion of '*good palette*' is a qualitative and quantitative metaphor. It signifies the breadth and depth of typeface collections, offering utilitarian (typefaces as tools) and hedonic value (typefaces as objects of appreciation). However, the number of typefaces can too be a means of expressing one's salient identity, for example as typographer (symbolic value). Typeface collections can thus be indicative of the relationship individuals have with fonts. Following my discussions in Chapter 2, one might argue that involved individuals use those typefaces to reinforce their self-understandings. They do so by extending and imposing their selves on typefaces (Belk, 1988), which fosters a sense of psychological ownership that could explain deviant behaviour (Pierce et al., 2003).

Related to the number of typefaces is another aspect, namely that of typeface management. George's data do not provide any explicit clues in that regard. He admits laughingly that:

> *very few of them [of the 30,000 typefaces] are actually on my Mac, but … if I needed a font, it's in my pencil case. (George, p. 34, INT606-608)*

George's typefaces are not installed on his laptop, indicating a spatial distance. But they are always ready to hand in his pencil case (psychological closeness). How he manages the sheer number of typefaces remains unclear. Justin on the other hand provides an intriguing context for the discussion of typeface management. He states:

> *Nowadays I use Apple Font Book … that kind of manages all the fonts for you …. In the old days, I would have had separate folders for all the different … fonts and organize them by … [the] typeface that they are. (Justin, pp. 83-84, INT1489-1501)*

What is interesting here is how Justin contrasts his past and present consumption behaviour (temporality) and indicates distinct levels of personal implication in the management of typefaces. Today, Justin uses a software to manage typefaces automatically, which does not require much personal involvement. Conversely, the manual management in the past implies, for example, a much higher temporal and

psychological investment from his side. The way he spoke about that change evoked the impression that typeface management has become much more efficient thanks to the use of respective software. I wondered, however, what consequences it had for his relationship with typefaces: Does it facilitate a detachment from typefaces? Let me introduce Kevin's story to explain my line of thought:

I categorize … [my collection] by the different type of font it is—whether it is serif, sans serif, slab serif, monospace, kind of a heading typeface, like a display typeface, so–or blackletter—so I always categorize it by folder and then categorize it by type foundry—if it's Monotype foundry or—I always categorize it from where I got it from, whether it is a free website or et cetera. (Kevin, p. 30, INT531-538)

Kevin, who is significantly younger than Justin, manages his typeface collection still manually. He explains: *"I'll have that instant connection or have that instant feelin' of where I think I should go"* to find the appropriate typeface (Kevin, p. 30, INT526-529). As established earlier, Kevin enjoys collecting typefaces (hedonic value), which likely evokes a state of flow (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). But his latter statement unveils the epistemic value of collecting typefaces in general and the typeface management process in particular. What he describes as *"instant connection" or "instant feelin'"* (Kevin, p. 30, INT528-529) is characteristic of tacit knowledge, that can be accessed through internal search by retrieving information encoded in memory (Peterson & Merino, 2003). It is furthermore conceivable that each time Kevin accesses and engages with his collection (parasocial interactions), he does not only strengthen cognitive links (knowledge structure and associations), but he also creates emotional bonds with individual typefaces as well as the collection in its totality. In other words, Kevin gets to know his collection intimately, which fosters and strengthens his relationship with typefaces, that eventually become part of his identity (Pierce et al., 2003).

Facet four: knowing

Another central theme that emerged from the data is entitled 'knowledge.' It comprises three sub-themes. The first sub-theme, 'to know or not to know', revolves around participants' typographic knowledge. The second sub-theme, 'seeing with the mind's eye', represents participants' capabilities to

envision their typeface consumption. Finally, the third sub-theme named 'same same, but different' describes the varying levels of sophistication with which individuals discriminate typeface designs.

Although presented as individual sub-themes, it is important to highlight that the concepts presented in this section are interrelated—a feature that is in line with past research. As indicated in Chapter 2 (p. 27), consumer knowledge is a two-dimensional concept. It distinguishes product familiarity (i.e. the frequency of parasocial interactions) from product expertise (i.e. *"the ability to perform product-related tasks successfully"*), whereas familiarity is believed to be a precursor (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987, p. 411; emphasis in original) but not a guarantee for the development of expertise (Hutchinson & Eisenstein, 2008). Cordell (1997) argues that expertise comprises two distinct types of knowledge. First, there is procedural knowledge that is generated through repeated practice and that leads to improved task-performance. The second type encapsulates "understanding and application of a product's potential, a knowledge-based expertise gained primarily through exploration and learning" (Cordell, 1997, p. 243). Expertise in the second sense is an important aspect of creativity, which requires problem-solving skills (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Hirschman, 1980). An example of a problem in the present study is the collage creation task posed to participants of my research.

While Alba and Hutchinson's (1987) conceptualization of familiarity does not make any claims concerning the type or quality of consumption practices (de Bont & Schoormans, 1995), Shimp and Madden's (1988) work on consumer-object relationships suggests that repeated interactions with consumption objects increase the likelihood of forming conscious or unconscious emotional attachments with the objects in questions.

To know or not to know: typographic knowledge

The data suggest that participants can be categorized in four groups that differ with regard to breadth and depth of typographic knowledge. However, their boundaries are fuzzy and overlap. The proposed classification is rather a tentative attempt to present commonalities and differences within and between groups.

Asking participants to comment on their prior typographic knowledge taps into their subjective knowledge (Brucks, 1985). Members of the first group (e.g. Damian, p. 132, INT2365-2368; Jasmin,

p. 36, INT631-632; Laura, p. 38, INT671) self-identified as non-experts describing their experience as e.g. *"literally nill, to be honest"* (Briana, p. 37, INT654-655). While participants in question were familiar with individual typefaces (e.g. Times New Roman, Arial, and Calibri), they lacked declarative and procedural typographic knowledge. Participants in this first group could therefore be best characterized as 'prospect consumers'.

Emma (p. 94, INT1687-1688), Raphael (p. 18, INT309-312), Thomas (p. 22, INT393-394), and Tobias (p. 25, INT458-459) on the other hand can be grouped as 'interested consumers'. This is because they are actively engaging in font exploration (Emma, p. 81, INT1448-1449), trend research (Raphael, p. 40, INT714-715), reflection (Thomas, p. 23, INT400-404) or activities aimed at understanding and meeting customer needs (Tobias, pp. 24-25, INT426-434). As outlined in the introduction to this section, these parasocial interactions promote the development of consumer expertise.

In contrast to the aforementioned participants, consumers like Jelena and Sarah could be best described as 'effective consumers', whose declarative and procedural knowledge is more sophisticated. Jelena believes she:

> *would be somewhere in a safe middle, maybe? Because, in the middle you can combine educational background, which is very solid … and very good … but … my professional experience … is not that … big, so I think, that when you combine those, it will be some kind of a middle. (Jelena, pp. 32-33, INT574-585)*

Jelena has a moderate level of declarative (e.g. explanation of old-style figures; pp. 6-5, INT88-91; COLB) and procedural knowledge (e.g. creation of ligatures; p. 12, INT212-215; COLA), that she gained during her formal typographic education and that she effectively used in this research. At the same time, she acknowledges the lack of practice in graphic design since her work focus is on industrial design.

Sarah (p. 50, INT886-889) admits having "*working knowledge and some expertise, but I wouldn't consider myself an expert.*" She uses her "*advanced*" knowledge (Sarah, p. 49, INT881) to:

> *make the words in my stories understandable, and personal and relatable, and the best way for me to do that is to choose fonts, that speak to me and hopefully draw a reader in and make them want to read more. (Sarah, pp. 33-34, INT591-596)*

As such, her typeface consumption is a means of fulfilling her identity as 'storyteller'. Appropriating the poem she wrote in her collage (Sarah, COL2A) to the current context, it can be said that Sarah 'becomes who she needs to be' by extending herself through the stories she tells; she connects with her readers beyond the present, because *"stories live forever, though I won't"* (Sarah, p. 41, INT726-727). As a consequence, Sarah becomes immortal.

Finally, the last group of participants is labelled 'expert consumers.' It comprises participants who are *"expert[s] in typography in terms of graphic design"* (Kevin, p. 59, INT1050-1051) or typography per se (George, p34, INT596-597); know *"how to manipulate an eye across the page"* (Ruby, p. 25, INT447-448; COLA-COLB); have developed deep explicit and implicit knowledge so that:

> *you know when you need to drop Helvetica in, you know when you wanna use Arial … you know*
> *when those fonts are appropriate; (Justin, p. 13, INT230-233)*

and that are very knowledgeable about typefaces and their biographies (e.g. Alicia, p. 1, NAR14-25). The latter appears to be a significant aspect, lifting typographic knowledge to another level, as the previous discussion demonstrated. Similarly, Luka has the following to say about the typeface Cooper Black, which he used in his collage (Luka, COLB):

> *I would probably say 'that's such a crappy typeface,' when I was younger, you know, and now I*
> *kind of appreciate all the quirks and–and weirdness, and when you read the history about the*
> *typeface and you know more about the … industry, then those things start to be interesting to*
> *you. (Luka, p. 26, INT451-457)*

Luka's example is a manifestation of the dynamic relationships that consumers may form with typefaces, where increased intimacy (i.e. liking) establishes conscious and unconscious emotional attachments to fonts (Shimp & Madden, 1988). His younger self did not appreciate Cooper Black, but his present self does. As this statement and other passages (e.g. Luka, p. 47, INT834-840) suggest, this transformation is facilitated by an increase in declarative knowledge of formal qualities (e.g. *'quirks'*) and context (e.g. *'history'* and *'industry'*). In these relationships, consumers learn to appreciate the *'quirks'* and *'weirdness'* of the products through consumption practices. Ruby, on the other hand, acknowledges:

> *I'm all about the people and the stories and the context of typefaces, which is probably not …*
> *how you should choose a typeface. (Ruby, p. 12, INT209-212)*

This was evident not only in her choice of Rockwell for the collage (Ruby, COLA-COLB), but it was a major thread running through the entire interview and thereafter. Ruby frequently referred to designers (e.g. *"Stephen Banham,"* p. 34, INT600) and typefaces (e.g. *"Mrs Eaves,"* pp. 12-13, INT214-224; *"The Green Fairy,"* pp. 19-20, INT335-347) that inspired her, and she provided biographic information (e.g. designer, origin, and context) about the products she suggested I should look up. After the interview, Ruby sent me a list of typographers she thought might be of interest for me. All that is emblematic of her *"superpower of connecting people"* (Ruby, p. 38, INT677). At a deeper level, these data (see also e.g. Luka, pp. 68-70, INT1207-1257) suggest that expert consumers become brand (foundry/designer) and/or product (typeface) ambassadors who engage in word-of-mouth activities by sharing their typographic knowledge and experience with others. Furthermore, their expert knowledge affected their responses to the research activities designed for this study. For example, Luka's

> *initial reaction [to the list of fonts] was like 'Urh, those fonts are so boring,' because I'm so used to those fonts and they're like–every person, like either small print shop, you'll see them everywhere …. And so oversaturated … it's 'a story told so many times', you know, with Times, with everything …. Times was like the representation of something ultimately boring and mundane for me. (Luka, p. 5-6, INT87-104)*

I had the impression that Luka was annoyed by the font selection, as it lacked excitement. His statement suggests that there are more stimulating typefaces out there of which he is aware—and that he would have preferred to use. In line with this idea, Justin explained that: *"if you'd have given us a bit more 'free rein' I would have actually included a couple of other ones, on top of that"* (Justin, p. 10, INT170-172), and Kevin admitted:

> *to be honest, I really wanted to break it– … I would have loved to have chosen my own typefaces … because … I feel like I could have chosen some that would have really nailed the image even more. (Kevin, p. 28, INT499-504)*

What caught my attention when I juxtaposed Justin's and Kevin's account was their use of metaphors. Justin's (p. 10, INT171) *"free rein"* metaphor implies that he indeed would have wished for more freedom but accepted the study parameters more readily than Kevin (p. 28, INT500), who appeared to be somewhat frustrated by them and therefore *"wanted to break it [rule]."* Kevin knows his typeface collection by

heart (intimately) and is convinced that those types would have supported his narrative more effectively, which leads nicely to the next sub-theme.

Seeing with the mind's eye: having a vision

As implied in the earlier subsection, Kevin had a clear vision of his collage and felt that the shortlisted typefaces did not allow him to fully express that vision. Similarly, Alicia acknowledged:

> *I knew that ninety percent of the faces that you had selected on there, the list, were not going to be applicable to what I wanted to use for this occasion. (Alicia, p. 13, INT226-229)*

Analogous to Kevin's case, Alicia's expert knowledge about the typefaces allowed her to imagine how the final collage would look like and immediately ruled out those that were not appropriate for what she wished to communicate. This stands in stark contrast to prospect (e.g. Laura and Jasmin), interested (e.g. Emma, Raphael, and Thomas) and effective consumers (e.g. Sarah).

Laura *"usually [chooses fonts] just from the dropdown menu … and I just pick the one that I respond to visually … unless we've had a direct brief"* (p. 30, INT534-537). Jasmin (p. 36, INT640-643) employs the same strategy as Laura when selecting fonts and admits that *"I didn't know how to describe myself in a collage and I didn't know in what way to do it"* (Jasmin, p. 4, INT67-69). For Emma, the inability to see the collage with the mind's eye eventually became the title of her collage: *"No bunny knows"* (Emma, p. 78, INT1398). She explains her title as follows: *"I guess 'no bunny knows' how to really make a collage of themself"* (Emma, p. 79, INT1412-1414). Raphael too struggled with the task:

> *It being a collage of fonts … I had a lot of questions … like 'What that would be …'; 'What that would look like'; 'What sort of …?'—there is this serial killer vibe that I guess you could have if it's just a page with a lot of cut-outs of different fonts …, right? Ransom note, I guess. (Raphael, p. 46, INT820-826)*

Thomas, in contrast to Raphael, says *"[I] had in my mind … the ones that I most wanted to use"* (Thomas, p. 18, INT310-311) and to him …

formatting the 'personality elements' in a grid seemed like the most logical way to convey the information in a straightforward manner (I don't consider myself a very visually creative person). (Thomas, p. 1, NAR4-8)

The ambiguity of the task *"was also quite challenging"* for storyteller Sarah, *"from the standpoint of looking at it as I was doing it without a preconceived notion of what the end result would look like"* (Sarah, p. 2, INT20-24), i.e. not knowing the 'plot' of her collage.

The above accounts suggest that most participants struggled with at least two related yet distinct aspects. The first concerns the general question how to create a collage, which however is not the focus of this study. The second and more meaningful issue is the use of typefaces. It appears that participants were forced to rethink their day-to-day typeface consumption behaviours (e.g. reading and writing) and to work out new ways of consuming type. This again involves 'knowing what' and 'knowing how,' as the following accounts from Luka and Kevin illustrate. Luka (pp. 51-52, INT918-921) *"kind of set the typefaces almost at the beginning … I kind of already knew, what I was … going for."* Elsewhere, he explains:

I really didn't wanna use photographs, because I think photographs tell you a bit too much, they are too explanatory, so … I really wanted to limit myself to only shapes and forms. (Luka, p. 2, INT27-31)

With regard to using text in his collage, he made clear:

At the beginning, I didn't wanna use words, that have some meaning …. I wanted to be more abstract, but in this case, … I kind of used those words, so people can also see what it says, and … it also creates this … interesting graphic. (Luka, pp. 8-9, INT125-133)

I became interested to see that both, Luka and Kevin, agree that typefaces are more polysemic than photographs but pursued opposite creative directions, as the following quote from my interview with Kevin reveals:

When I've first thought about doing the collage, I originally wanted to have it–to be … quite typographically heavy and not imagery heavy, but I didn't want the viewer to be biased about what I wrote—I didn't … want to write anythin' that could make you feel or think at a certain way—which is why I liked the idea of just usin' a character, because it's kind of unbiased [as opposed to using words], and also lettin' the imagery doing more of the work, because the

imagery I find more to be self-expressive … than the typography, because the typography …

[is] more interpretive …, whereas … you can interpret the imagery, but I think it speaks more …

clearly … than that type would, so, that's kind of why I went for this combination about some-

thing, that's a bit more graphically led with the imagery. (Kevin, pp. 80-81, INT1437-1456)

In his collage, Kevin used photographs as meaning anchors, which narrow the meaning potential of

typefaces (Machin, 2007) (see Chapter 3). Conversely, Luka did not want to limit the meaning of type-

faces using images, but he did not mind using words for the Times New Roman spiral to do so. On the

contrary, it appears it was important to him to let the viewer know about his negative associations of the

typeface. The words make his negative psychological response to the typeface intelligible. At the same

time, the spiral (COLA) renders the words invisible and acts as dominant graphical element to counter-

balance the bouncing letter shapes written in Cooper Black (COLB). Luka (p. 8, INT143-144) is *"kind of*

currently really fascinated with that typeface" and shows his attraction by giving it prominent space in

his collage. These letter shapes are *"crashing onto the loop, morphing it and stretching it"* (Luka, p. 11,

INT190-192). In doing so, they break the mundanity of his daily life expressed by Times New Roman.

      Placing Luka's and Kevin's works in the context of Raphael's *(p. 46, INT820-826)* statement

cited above, and contrasting them with Raphael's collage, it can be established that Luka provides an

example of a collage that only uses typefaces without having the look and feel of a *"ransom note"* (Raph-

ael, p. 46, INT8326). While Raphael's and Kevin's collages share significant similarities (e.g. segmen-

tation of the collage and use of different typefaces per segment), they differ in terms of execution and

intent. Raphael predominantly appropriated typeface associations and symbolic meanings respectively

to reinforce the self-identities illustrated in each collage segment (e.g. Trajan for composer; Raphael

p. 2, NAR43; COL1A). Kevin, on the other hand, had different plans, as he explains:

I liked the idea of also just using the one character [exclamation mark] so you could really study

the difference between … each font, so that it really pushes you to look past the exclamation

point. (Kevin, pp. 52-53, INT934-938)

Here, Kevin invites viewers to apprehend and appreciate the differences in the typefaces he had care-

fully curated for this occasion. To appropriate Ruby's (p. 25, INT447-448) quote, the term '*pushes'* sug-

gests that Kevin *'manipulates the viewer's eye.'* Kevin deliberately guides the viewer's attention towards

the difference and now it is up to the viewer to grasp them. The ability to see subtle differences emerged as separate theme introduced next.

Same same, but different: discrimination ability

Kevin's account bridges nicely into this sub-theme and provides an interesting backdrop for other participants' stories. Within and across various data sets, Kevin (p. 4, INT69; see also p. 52, INT935; p. 81, INT1444-1445) repeatedly expressed his enjoyment and amusement of *"just using one typographic character,"* as the terms *"liked" (Kevin, p. 4, INT68; p. 52, INT934; p. 81, INT1444; p. 1, NAR9)* and *"ironic"* suggest (Kevin, p. 1, NAR12). The latter evidences his playful yet thoughtful engagement with typefaces. The use of the exclamation mark is not accidental, as Kevin explains. It *"demands attention"* (p. 1, NAR13), but its repeated use:

> *desaturates an exclamation mark to the point, where it doesn't really have that emphasis, it doesn't really have the power or the dominance. (Kevin, p. 52, INT923-926)*

Consequently, viewers see *"the structure of fonts and how each font varies depending on the form"* (Kevin, p. 4, INT70-72) and typefaces become *"just abstract, just almost art"* (Kevin, p. 53, INT942-943). Kevin's approach differs from Emma's. In one segment of her collage (Emma, *COL5E*):

> *made a collection of circles by using 'O's' [sic] from different fonts [Garamond, Optima and Charter] and got interested in how some of them looked exactly the same. (Emma, p. 2, NAR28-30)*

During the interview she said:

> *I realized that you really couldn't tell any of them apart formative …. If you told me to write an essay about myself and use different typefaces, I might have a sentence in this, a sentence in that and I can—when you have that many letters strung along—you can really see the difference …. But in a single shape, like a circle, you can't see that difference … not at least really apparently. (Emma, pp. 81-83, INT1454-1478)*

While Emma had difficulties in discriminating the typefaces, Luka's account suggests that more experienced consumers *"can focus on the minute details"* of typefaces (Luka, p. 34, INT602-603). It fascinated

me to see that Emma had chosen a character, for which typeface variations might be possibly harder to discriminate than for an exclamation mark. The letter 'O' is based on a circle, which is a basic geometrical shape (Alicia, p. 8, INT136-137). Furthermore, she cropped the letters in her collage, making it even more difficult for viewers of her collage to see differences in the letter shapes. Kevin, in contrast, wants the viewer to appreciate and be awed by the typefaces he had chosen. Both, the choice and the presentation of letter shapes, suggests that Kevin has a more sophisticated relationship with typefaces than Emma.

While Kevin's and Emma's accounts focus on differences in individual letter shapes, data suggest that prospect (e.g. Damian, Jasmin, and Laura) and interested (e.g. Thomas) consumers in particular had difficulties noticing general differences between typefaces. Damian (p. 132, INT2368-2370) *"can't reliably say if Helvetica indeed comes closest to Arial,"* and Jasmin (p. 30, INT539-540) *"thought the first two pages [of the typefaces listed in the collage toolkit] were quite similar."* The same was the case for Laura (p. 16, INT278-279), who argued that the typefaces she had shortlisted *"were similar, so it didn't matter"* which font she eventually chose. But the differences between typefaces and the acknowledgment thereof mattered to Thomas.

Thomas, who was fairly articulate about his typeface choices, confused some of them. He felt *"silly for not having worked out the difference between Garamond and Baskerville"* (Thomas, p. 59, INT1056-1058). Thomas was visibly surprised—almost upset—when I asked him how he would feel if I told him that he confused some of the fonts:

> *No way. I wouldn't believe you–I wouldn't believe you …. That's crazy …. Really? …. That's– I can't–I–That's astonishing. That's astonishing. I don't know what to say. I've–that's really weird. Well, it shows that … I don't know my fonts well enough. (Thomas, pp. 49-51, INT882-910)*

Kevin's and Thomas's accounts in particular made me realize that the ability to discriminate between typefaces is not simply a cognitive faculty, but it has an important affective component. At the most direct level, there is the enjoyment (i.e. hedonic experience), that arises from their discrimination ability. At a deeper level, however, data suggest that discrimination ability is tightly linked to self-expression. For example, it expresses Kevin's (p. 60, INT1069-1071) expertness *"in terms of knowing typography and understanding typography."* As such, his engagement with typefaces is an expression of his self-

identification as a typographic expert. Similarly, Thomas's (p. 59, INT1056) feeling of silliness and his overall response to that event reveal characteristics of shame.

During our interview, Thomas self-identified as *"interested dabbler"* (Thomas, p. 22, INT393-394) and he emphasized the word *'interested'*, which suggested to me that he wanted me to know he was not simply a *'dabbler'*, but someone who 'actually cared' about typefaces. It appears Thomas's self-image, which he wanted to present in the study, was disconfirmed and posed some sort of identity threat to him (Leary, Terry, Batts Allen, & Tate, 2009).

Facet five: gatekeeping

The final facet that was derived from the data sets is labelled 'gatekeeping'. It describes the process of deciding which persons, objects, ideas et cetera are *in* and which ones are *out* (Lewin, 1947). Insights from Ulver's (2019) work that studied macro level market transformations were used to abstract the personal experiential themes (PETs) from the present research and to construct two subthemes.

The first subtheme presents general symbolic and social boundaries that gatekeepers draw. The former are used to distinguish people and other entities; whereas the latter signify social inequalities in, for instance, access to resources like education (Lamont & Molnár, 2002).

The second subtheme shows that gatekeepers are actively engaging in the construction and maintenance of marketing systems, which is achieved through the drawing of symbolic boundaries. Marketing systems are "complex social networks of individuals and groups linked through shared participation in the creation and delivery of economic value through exchange" (Layton, 2014, p. 303). Gatekeepers appear to assign roles to market actors, which has implications for channel structures that characterize marketing systems (E. Shaw, 2014).

As the two subthemes presented below highlight, the creation of boundaries involves assimilation and differentiation processes that are employed to negotiate social identities through e.g. implicit or explicit articulation of group memberships (Brewer, 1991).

On the topic of typefaces, I wish the average person cared more … And I think they're an un-

tapped means of expression, and most people are not aware of these sorts of associations that

they're putting out in the world, and they could have a much more accurate way of representing

themselves—if they were just a bit more knowledgeable about typefaces. (Raphael, pp. 39-40,

INT700-708)

I picked the above excerpt from my interview with Raphael, as it presents three important features of gatekeeping as it is understood in this research. First, Raphael assumes the *'average person cared'* not enough about typefaces, implying they are not as involved with and/or interested in typefaces as he himself is. The term *'wish'* underscores the relevance typefaces have for Raphael. It also reveals a powerful desire for others to be more like him, that is like someone who actually cares about fonts. Evidence presented in this section suggests that gatekeeping is associated with the level of involvement, i.e. medium and high-involved consumers are more likely to act as gatekeepers.

Second, Raphael claims self-representations of the *'average person'* tend to be inaccurate. The idea that there might be an *'accurate way of representing'* someone or something indicates that gate-keepers appraise consumers' typographic choices (aesthetic judgements) and compare them to an external benchmark, by which they draw conclusions concerning consumers' aesthetic sensitivities (Child, 1964). Aesthetic judgements were made by other participants too. Luka feels that fonts like Times New Roman and Cooper have *"been, like, used and abused"* (Luka, pp. 8-9, INT141-148). Kevin believes that Cooper is *"literally a font that's overused—in a good way—I do like the font,"* and he says: *"Helvetica you see everywhere—you see it on shops, you see it for logos—I've seen so many logos—it's–it's ridiculous"* (Kevin, p. 35, INT617-618, INT626-628). While the valence of neutral (*'used'*), positive (*'overused—in a good way'*) and negative (*'abused'; 'ridiculous'*) expressions used by Luka and Kevin respectively is quite explicit and clear, aesthetic judgements can be much more subtle and ambiguous. For example, Alicia asserts that…

most users of type, for whatever reason, select from the lists available. It is rare for a non-

designer to seek a face that isn't on the software list. This is why we have so much Comic Sans

and Palatino popping up everywhere. This is both a good and a bad thing. Bad for type design-

ers, good for ease of access for many. (Alicia, pp. 13-14, INT232-239)

She draws a symbolic boundary between designers (e.g. Luka, Kevin, and Justin) and non-designers, arguing the latter selected typefaces primarily from drop-down lists (see e.g. Laura, p. 30, INT534-537; Jasmin, pp. 36-37, INT640-660). The consequence thereof is that *'we have so much Comic Sans and Palatino popping up everywhere'*, i.e. there do not seem to be 'filters' or 'arbiters' that keep seemingly 'inappropriate' typefaces in check. Rather, they are *'popping up everywhere'*. For me, that metaphor brought up images of mushrooms emerging uncontrollably after rain showers, and Alicia's appreciation of *'software list[s]'* as a *'good … thing'* because they provided *'ease of access for many'* typeface consumers felt like she is damning typographic decisions made by non-designers with faint praise. The condemnation, however, might be extended to software companies, who could be understood as channel intermediaries or channel gatekeepers. It is them who decide which fonts are included in the list and which ones are not. Consequently, software companies are too making decisions about 'in' and 'out'. Their choices will ultimately affect consumption decisions made by end-consumers as well as the inclusion or exclusion of typeface designers in the font list.

Finally, Raphael concludes the boundary condition between the *'average person'* and him was knowledge. This is expressed in the conditional sentence *'if they were just a bit more knowledgeable about typefaces'* as well as in Raphael's claim the *'average person'* were ignorant of the symbolic meanings that fonts have. These two statements signify Raphael's epistemic 'advantage' or 'superiority' in terms of 'expertness'. Consistent with boundary processes described in social science literature (e.g. Lamont & Molnár, 2002), the symbolic boundary constituted by typographic knowledge may become a social boundary, where access to and possession of typographic knowledge are considered emblematic of inequalities in social classes. The most explicit statements in that regard were made by Alicia. During the interview, she mentioned:

I'm really drawn towards sans-serif written typefaces, having been schooled in the international style, that's really important. For me, it's just part of my lineage, part of my educational back-ground, as a white, Anglo-Saxon westerner, essentially, I'm very privileged to be in that political grouping in terms of–[to] have the educational knowledge about type. (Alicia, p. 12, INT202-210)

The extract sheds light on Alicia's typographic training and her appreciation thereof, as the expression *'I'm very privileged'* suggests. It indicates a much more sophisticated relationship with typefaces than other, in particular lowly involved, participants have (e.g. Briana, Damian, Jasmin, or Laura). The term 'privilege' might be understood as an expression of a special honour, but it could also be regarded as an advantage in the sense of unequal distribution of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1979/1984).

Alicia (p. 18, INT319-321) acknowledges that her typographic knowledge is superior *"to the normal computer user or 90% of the population on the streets"* (symbolic boundary) and that not everybody might have access to typographic knowledge (social boundary). At the same time, she appears to generalize typographic education or knowledge as a western 'privilege'. However, while there are western schools specializing in type design (see e.g. Luka, p. 18, INT307-310) as well as schools offering typographic courses embedded in design (see e.g. Jelena, p. 31, 548-554) or fine art programmes (see e.g. Justin, pp. 17-18, INT301-321), it is fair to suggest that access to and possession of typographic knowledge remains unequally distributed even in western countries; not everybody attends those schools or undertakes those programmes, and not everybody might therefore have access to formal typographic education. The latter appears to be highly specialized and accessible to a small and exclusive number of type consumers only.

Nevertheless, both interpretations—'privilege as honour' and 'privilege as social inequality'—suggest that typographic education is important and precious to Alicia. The accounts presented above indicate furthermore that gatekeeping reinforces consumer-object relationships.

Made for people like me: building marketing structures

My analysis revealed that some participants (e.g. Alicia, Jelena, Justin, Kevin, Luka, and Ruby) draw symbolic boundaries to distinguish professional and non-professional typeface consumers. Literature shows that this boundary is essential to the construction of social identities (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1979/1986) and to the expression of psychologically central identities (Kettle, 2019). However, participant stories unfolded that those boundaries are also used to form and preserve marketing systems.

It has been established in Chapter 1 already, that the channel structure of the typeface market becomes more and more blurred due to the emergence of increasingly diverse market actors (Cahalan,

2004/2007). Yet, gatekeepers seem to have a clear structure in mind, when talking about the typeface market and its 'true' consumers. Luka, for example, told me that:

fonts are mostly used by designers, and when I create … type designs … I also think of … the designers, that are gonna use it. So, it's not just–it's kind of a weird feel, because I'm not–I'm designing for designers, not really for the–for the end-consumer, which is, like, the–the person, who is gonna read it; they won't really notice the–the typeface …. It's mostly … the designers that choose the typeface for whatever reason—either they like your typeface, or it fits their specific need, or maybe it has some … aesthetic features. (Luka, pp. 13-14, INT231-249)

Kevin's own view mirrors that of Luka. He argues *"they [foundries and type designers] make typefaces just for people like me [graphic designers]"* (Kevin, pp. 59-60, INT1062-1063). Luka and Kevin, both exclude non-professional users from their discussions of the marketing system. For Luka, *'end-consumer[s]'* do not appear to be an attractive target market, because they do apprehend typefaces and therefore do not engage in value exchange. Kevin, on the other hand, reinforces his self-identity as graphic designer, which places him prominently in the value chain and increases his self-esteem; typefaces are not made for everyone, but *'just for people like'* him.

By excluding non-professional users, the marketing system is being narrowed down, i.e. it is becoming more specialized and exclusive. It is conceivable that this practice elevates the meaning typefaces have for the remaining (professional) market actors like Kevin, as it moves them and their expectations for typeface designs to the centre of concern. Another example in that regard comes from Justin, who gets annoyed by typefaces *"that are ill-conceived, I think, essentially. So, quite often fonts that have little consideration … for the professional user"* (Justin, p. 76, INT1359-1363) like him (Justin, p. 17, INT301-305). He also provided an example to illustrate his response to *'ill conceived'* fonts:

I was using a couple [of fonts] last week, actually, that I–I downloaded off the internet, and was just– … they were ones that I thought 'Ah, these are really appropriate for the message that I wanna convey.' and the moment I started try to play around with them, they stopped working, you now, they really stopped working coherently, which just frustrated me, actually, 'cause it just–I thought that that was actually just a really sloppy approach to the design—the typeface design. (Justin, p. 78, INT1387-1398)

Only when Justin started to *'play around with them'*, i.e. manipulating and personalizing the fonts (see Chapter 2), they '*stopped working*' and he became *'frustrated'*, because they were designed not with the *'professional user'* in mind. The extracts presented here raise the question who designers actually create their typefaces for.

Duru (2011, 2013) conducted studies to analyse the foundry market. Her findings reveal that designers "usually do not have particular clients in mind, other than the general graphic designer, when designing retail typefaces" (Duru, 2013; Section 6: Targets). Her study provides some initial support for Luka's, Kevin's, and Justin's accounts presented above. Looking at the study results in more detail (Duru, 2013), I became interested to learn that only 16% percent of the designers responded they would create typefaces for graphic designers. Conversely, most designers (38%) create typefaces that interest them, reflect their personal tastes, and/or that they would use themselves. A similar number of respondents (31%) indicated they would design typefaces without particular target audiences in their minds. I began to wonder if that could be one reason for the exponential proliferation of typefaces, and Duru's (2013) results help to contextualize a comment Kevin made:

> *In my own time, I also like to try to make my own typefaces and design them all … I tend to design them all in Illustrator and then I have a programme called 'Mini Glyphs' [sic], that you can put them in from Illustrator and then to–to workin' fonts …. I do that in my spare time, just for fun … And so far–so far I've got two working fonts, but I have maybe three or four all sketched out, that I need–still need to progress. (Kevin, p. 58, INT1027-1037)*

As this extract shows, Kevin too designs typefaces, and it suggests that he does so without a particular target audience in mind (*'just for fun'*), hence supporting Duru's (2013) findings. However, he reaffirms the perceived channel structure by saying that foundries:

> *use typography in a different way than I do—they create the typefaces, but I am the one who uses the typefaces, so, that–the relationship is completely different in terms of how–how we use them in–for a career. (Kevin, p. 59, INT1057-1061)*

It appears that Kevin's central identity is that of a graphic designer and not that of a typeface designer, which solidifies the symbolic boundary drawn between the two groups. In reality, however, the boundary is much fuzzier, as the discussion of 'prosumption' in Chapter 1 demonstrated. Kevin is actually a

prosumer, but he does not self-identify as such. This could be, for example, because 'prosumer' is not considered a professional identity category and/or because he does not consider himself a professional type designer, as *"it's a whole new world"* for him (Kevin, p. 59, INT1052-1053). At this stage, Kevin might be exercising a serious leisure activity (Stebbins, 1982, 2009), that could eventually transform into a profession. He says, *"in terms of the making of typefaces, this is still something that I'm working on"* (Kevin, p. 60, INT1067-1069), indicating that he has not yet gained the mastery required to self-identify as, or to be perceived as, professional type designer. My interviews disclosed that some consumers (e.g. Justin, pp. 24-25, INT431-434; Luka, pp. 23-24, INT403-415; Raphael, p. 18, INT 307-209; Ruby, pp. 34-36, INT595-641) consider the designing of typefaces as distinguishing feature for 'true' expertness.

Discussion

Based on the findings presented in this chapter, I propose to extend the concept of connoisseurship to the consumption of typefaces. The notion of connoisseur, derived from the French word 'connaître' meaning 'to know' (Pearsall & Trumble, 2002), is used in various disciplines, such as the arts (e.g. Arora & Vermeylen, 2013); sociology (e.g. Bourdieu, 1968/1993); political (e.g. Bunea & Gross, 2019), organizational (e.g. B. A. Turner, 1988), and environmental studies (e.g. Greenbaum, 2005); education (e.g. Eisner, 1976); tourism and hospitality (e.g. Gyimóthy, 2009); as well as marketing (e.g. McQuarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013). Consumer behaviour literature labels certain consumers as, for instance, connoisseur consumers (e.g. Kauppinen-Räisänen, Björk, Lönnström, & Jauffret, 2018); food connoisseurs (e.g. Buckley, Cowan, & McCarthy, 2007); wine connoisseurs (e.g. Peršurić-Ilak & Mann, 2019); coffee connoisseurs (e.g. Manzo, 2010); fragrance connoisseurs (e.g. Alonso & Marchetti, 2008); and brand connoisseurs (e.g. Koronaki, Kyrousi, & Panigyrakis, 2018). However, there is no universally accepted definition or conceptualization of connoisseurship (see also Chapter 7, p. 231).

The examples from the domain of consumer behaviour epitomize the outcome of "two processes [that] are occurring simultaneously: One is the inscription of 'connoisseur' status upon objects previously outside the realm of connoisseurship; and the second is the 'democratization' of objects previously located squarely *within* the realm of connoisseurship" (Elliott, 2006, p. 233; emphasis original).

In the former case (e.g. coffee), brands (e.g. Starbucks) develop marketing strategies to imbue their products with connoisseur status resulting in a mystification of their products, whereas in the latter case, products (e.g. wine) enter consumers' everyday lives, as evidenced in e.g. the increased number of wine-related websites, leading to a demystification of products that traditionally enjoy connoisseur status (Elliott, 2006). Typefaces are subsumed in the latter process. As evidenced in Chapter 1, the democratization of typefaces is already in full progress (Cahalan, 2004/2007). The process moves fonts from specialists to general consumers.

Typefaces might not be the first product category that springs to mind when thinking about products with connoisseur status. However, Young's (2012) critical paper concerning graphic design education indicates that the consumption of typefaces is heavily informed by a connoisseurship approach rooted in the fine arts, which is restricted to formal aspects of works of art and designs respectively (Josephson, 2015). Ultimately, connoisseurs become arbiters of good and/or bad aesthetic taste by deciding whether or not designs are "universally appropriate" (A. Young, 2012, p. 123). This trait of connoisseurs was also found in the present study, where some typeface consumers engaged in gatekeeping (e.g. Alicia, Justin, Kevin, Luka, Raphael).

In consumer behaviour literature (e.g. Holbrook, 2005) aesthetic taste was also identified as a defining characteristic of connoisseur consumers. In their theoretical paper, Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer (2012, p. 174) described three categories of consumers along a continuum "ranging from the heavy use of cognition [e.g. tailor] to the heavy use of affect [e.g. fashion connoisseur]," with a third category (e.g. fashion designer) being situated at the centre of the two poles. For the present discussion, I label the two extremes 'experts' and 'connoisseurs' respectively—a terminology that is implicit in the original work. The authors establish that expert consumers rely on cognition (i.e. knowledge) when making decisions. Connoisseurs, on the other hand, base their decisions on affect and/or gut feeling, that is 'consumer aesthetic taste'. The latter is defined as "an individual's consistent and appropriate response to aesthetic consumption objects through any of the five senses that is *highly* correlated with some external standard" (Hoyer & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012, p. 169; emphasis added). Consumers that fall into category II use both, cognition and affect in their decision-making processes.

Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer's (2012) conceptualization of connoisseurs contains important features that must be critically reviewed in the context of my study. Although presented separately, those

aspects are highly intertwined. First, it is a one-dimensional concept that presupposes taste (Hoyer & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). Consumers with 'little taste' (Holbrook, 2005) and/or with low aesthetic sensitivity (Child, 1964) are not considered connoisseurs, because their aesthetic judgements are only weakly correlated with external benchmarks. In fact, it seems consumers with little or no taste fall between the cracks, and only those consumers who endorse 'good designs' by displaying 'good taste' are included in their conceptualization of connoisseurship. Similar critique is articulated by A. Young (2012, p. 123), who concludes that:

> the emphasis of the connoisseurship model is very much more on the producer, rather than on the consumer, and although it may be recognised that what is deemed good design changes over time, there is still a certain essentialism in the value system. Good design is seen as good, no matter the make up [sic] of the audience.

These insights might partially explain why type designers and foundries create typefaces predominantly for graphic designers (16%) (Duru, 2013). It is conceivable that type designers consciously or unconsciously develop typefaces for consumers with aesthetic taste (Hoyer & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012), rather than for the general consumer. As established earlier, the latter *"won't really notice … the typeface"* (Luka, p. 14, INT238-239) because they *"just simply–passively receive fonts"* (Justin, p. 57, INT1020-1021) or predominantly *"select [fonts] from the lists available"* (Alicia, p. 13, INT233-234). The information according to which 31%–38% of type designers and foundries create fonts that they personally like or that they would personally use for an undifferentiated group of consumers (Duru, 2013) suggests that their own 'good taste' is used as an implicit and/or explicit benchmark for consumer taste. What this means is that only those individuals with 'good taste' matter because they are the only ones who will appreciate and consume their typefaces. This raises the question if academics as well as design and marketing professionals should target previously ignored consumers—and if so, how?

Second, expertness and connoisseurship are considered two opposite poles. To illustrate their proposition, Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer (2012) take the example of consumers, who might display 'good taste' in music but have only little theoretical or technical musical knowledge. This conceptualization shares important features with that offered by e.g. Bourdieu (1968/1993, p. 228; emphasis original), who claims:

> connoisseurship is an 'art' which, like the art of thinking or the art of living, cannot be imparted entirely in the form of precepts or instruction, and apprenticeship to it presupposes the equivalent of prolonged contact between disciple and initiate in traditional education, i.e. repeated contact with the work (or with works of the same class). And, just as students or disciples can *unconsciously* absorb the rules of the art - including those which are not explicitly known to the initiates

themselves - by giving themselves up to it, excluding analysis and the selection of elements of exemplary conduct, so art-lovers can, by abandoning themselves in some way to the work, internalize the principles and rules of its construction without there ever being brought to their consciousness and formulated as such. This constitutes the difference between the art theorist and the connoisseur, who is usually incapable of explicating the principles on which his judgements are based.

Inherent in both, Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer's (2012) and Bourdieu's (1968/1993) understanding of connoisseurship are the notion of tacit knowledge, i.e. the idea that "we can know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 1966, p. 4; emphasis removed). This type of knowledge is distinguished from and situated diametrically opposite of expertise; with the latter being attributed exclusively to category I (e.g. tailors) and category II (e.g. fashion designers) consumers, but not to category III consumers (i.e. connoisseurs).

While this proposition has its merits, not all researchers seem to share this view. Ahuvia (2005, p. 175), for instance, argues "the essence of connoisseurship is discernment," which makes it possible for consumers to appreciate consumption objects for their "abstract aesthetic properties and high level of expertise." Ahuvia (2005) presents quotes from connoisseur consumer 'Pam', demonstrating that she can make and express judgments on, for instance, 'Bugs Bunny' cartoons. Similarly, Holt (1998) maintains that connoisseurs are generally able to articulate and justify their evaluations, and to emphasize aspects of their consumption that other consumers might not see. I concur with the latter stream of researchers. My own research unfolded that explicit and implicit consumer knowledge as well as taste are different aspects of the same phenomenon, namely connoisseurship, and are subsumed in facets such as apprehending, knowing, and gatekeeping.

Furthermore, the authors conclude from their literature review, that literature conceptualizes consumer knowledge as predominantly a cognitive concept that must, therefore, be distinguished from affective concepts (Hoyer & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). However, my discussion in this and previous chapters showed that repeated parasocial interactions can foster conscious or unconscious emotional attachments to consumption objects (Shimp & Madden, 1988). This raises the question if cognitive approaches to consumption objects are absolutely free from all affect components.

Third, Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer's (2012) conceptualization of connoisseurship focusses exclusively on cognition (utilitarianism) and affect (hedonism) respectively. It, therefore, discounts the impact other consumer benefits, such as symbolic values (e.g. Levy, 1959; Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991), have on decision-making. Consequently, it appears their understanding of connoisseurs is that

of disinterested consumers (see Chapter 3). Conversely, other studies (e.g. Charters & Pettigrew, 2006) and my own research identified involvement as a central feature of connoisseurship. In my model, involvement is the key driver of typeface consumption practices. It is needed to apprehend typefaces; to engage consumers in hunting and gathering practices; to promote knowledge construction, and for gate-keeping. The force, however, works reciprocally in the sense that engagement in those activities will in turn increase consumers' involvement in typefaces. To appropriate Bloch, Commuri, and Arnold's (2009) language from involvement research: Involvement is like an 'engine' that keeps consumption practices going, but it is also 'fuelled' by those very same activities.

This brings me to the final distinguishing feature between Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer's (2012) and my own conceptualization of connoisseurship. The former sees a person's connoisseurship of a given product category as a static phenomenon. However, my data suggest that connoisseurship is dynamic in terms of structure, strength, and temporality. Understanding connoisseurship as a multidimensional construct allows the differentiation of consumers concerning the respective facets they display (structure). It gives the gestalt a more nuanced profile. Furthermore, acknowledging that the strength of each dimension may range from low to high adds depth to the concept. Finally, moving away from a categorical phenomenon that is constituted by 'good taste' (Holbrook, 2005) and recognizing that connoisseurship develops over time, reveals its transformative character observed in previous studies as well (e.g. Quintão, Pereira Zamith Brito, & Belk, 2017).

Eisner (2017, p. 69), for instance, argues that "to some degree all people have some degree of connoisseurship in some areas of life. In virtually all cases, however, the level of their connoisseurship can be raised through tuition." The first part of Eisner's (2017) quote supports Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer's (2012) claim that connoisseurship is a function of person and product, i.e. a particular consumer might be a fashion connoisseur but not a typeface connoisseur. This idea overlaps with the conceptualization of product involvement, that assumes the relevance of products varies across consumers (Zaichkowsky, 1985). The last sentence in Eisner's (2017) extract highlights the dynamic feature of connoisseurship. He operationalizes connoisseurship as appreciation and suggests appreciation can be learned. Similarly, Venkatesh and Meamber (2008) conclude that consumption practices may facilitate the development of taste. If we accept the argument that 'good taste' can be learned, we might want to refuse an essentialist view of connoisseurship, i.e. consumers are not born with 'good' or 'little' taste.

Although marketing and consumer literature dealing with the dynamic nature of connoisseurship is scarce, existing research provides initial evidence that temporality is a core feature of connoisseurship. For instance, McQuarrie et al. (2013, pp. 145-146) found that fashion bloggers develop connoisseurship status over time, because positive responses from their audiences reinforce their "capacity to exercise taste …. The blogger acts as a connoisseur with a megaphone." Their study provides information concerning, for example, the trajectory towards the accumulation of social capital, which entails connoisseurship. Maciel and Wallendorf's (2017, p. 729) research situates craft beer "aficionados … between casual drinkers and connoisseurs," and it argues that aficionados engage in specific consumption practices (e.g. taste engineering) to develop and eventually obtain connoisseur status. It appears their understanding assumes some sort of hierarchical typology. Quintão (2015) too demonstrated that coffee consumers transform into connoisseurs because of their engagement in consumption practices. The author calls those practices 'transformation rituals', and he sees them as "connoisseurship rite[s] of passage" (Quintão, 2015, p. 9), i.e. consumption practices that mark different milestones in the change process from consumer to connoisseur.

My own study adds to this body of literature by providing additional support that connoisseurs and their relationships with consumption objects develop over time. This idea is presented and discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Summary

This study identified five superordinate themes: Apprehending; involvement; hunting and gathering; knowing; and gatekeeping. These themes are presented as different 'facets of connoisseurship', the main gestalt that emerged from the data. While connoisseurship is discussed in various domains, including consumer behaviour, this literature (e.g. Holbrook, 2005; Hoyer & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012) seems to put consumer aesthetic taste at the heart of connoisseurship, making the concept rather one-dimensional and static. In line with and extending more recent literature, this chapter argued that understanding connoisseurship as a multi-dimensional and dynamic concept allows to understand the phenomenon "more fully" (Boden & Eatough, 2014, p. 162).

Act two:
trajectories of connoisseurship

6

"As qualitative researchers we have an appreciation for the fluidity and multi-layered complexity of human experience."

(Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 60)

Introduction

This chapter presents research findings related to the temporal development of connoisseurship. As indicated in Chapter 2 (p. 42), literature on interpersonal relationships (e.g. Levinger, 1983), parasocial relationships (e.g. Tukachinsky & Stever, 2019), consumer-brand relationships (e.g. Fournier, 1994) and consumer-product relationships (e.g. Russo et al., 2011) discusses relationship developments with the help of so-called 'life cycle' (or stage) models. The latter are frequently used as heuristic and/or organizing devices (Levinger, 1983; O'Rand & Krecker, 1990) to designate transformations that occur over time.

Although stage models have their shortcomings (see discussion below), they are utilised across various marketing disciplines, including consumer behaviour (e.g. Bauer & Auer-Srnka, 2012; Rogers, 1962/1995; Wells & Gubar, 1966); product management (e.g. C. R. Anderson & Zeithaml, 1984; Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman, & Hansen, 2019; Vernon, 1966); brand management (e.g. Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2005; Nugroho & Harjanto, 2020); organizational studies (e.g. Lippitt & Schmidt, 1967; Mosca, Gianecchini, & Campagnolo, 2021); and tourism management (e.g. Butler, 1980; Tooman, 1997). One explanation for their broad application might lie in the simplicity of the models and "the use of analogies with life cycles of biological organisms" (Jirásek & Bílek, 2018, p. 2), which make them easy to comprehend.

Through contextualisation of my research data, I was able "to organize the emergent themes in terms of the temporal moment where they are located" (J. A. Smith et al., 2009, p. 98). This approach differs from previous research that used developmental stages as a priori codes for their analyses (e.g. Fournier, 1998). It was highlighted earlier, that life cycle models vary, for example, with regard to number of stages. My own research data was best arranged and categorized in four stages. The first stage is called 'initiation' and symbolizes the introduction of consumers to typefaces. At this stage, consumers become initially acquainted with typefaces. In the second stage called 'growth', the level of connoisseurship increases. Connoisseurship reaches its highest level in the 'maturity' stage. However, data revealed that, as time progressed, the relationship between some expert participants and typefaces had changed further, suggesting a 'decline' in their level of connoisseurship at stage four. Figure 24 (p. 205) depicts the initial connoisseurship life cycle model.

In line with prior research on interpersonal relationships (Avtgis, West, & Anderson, 1998), par-asocial relationships (Tukachinsky & Stever, 2019), and consumer-brand relationships (e.g. Fournier, 1994), data suggest that each stage of the initial developmental connoisseur model entails different cognitions, affects, and behaviours, that are presented in this chapter.

Figure 24
Initial connoisseurship life cycle model
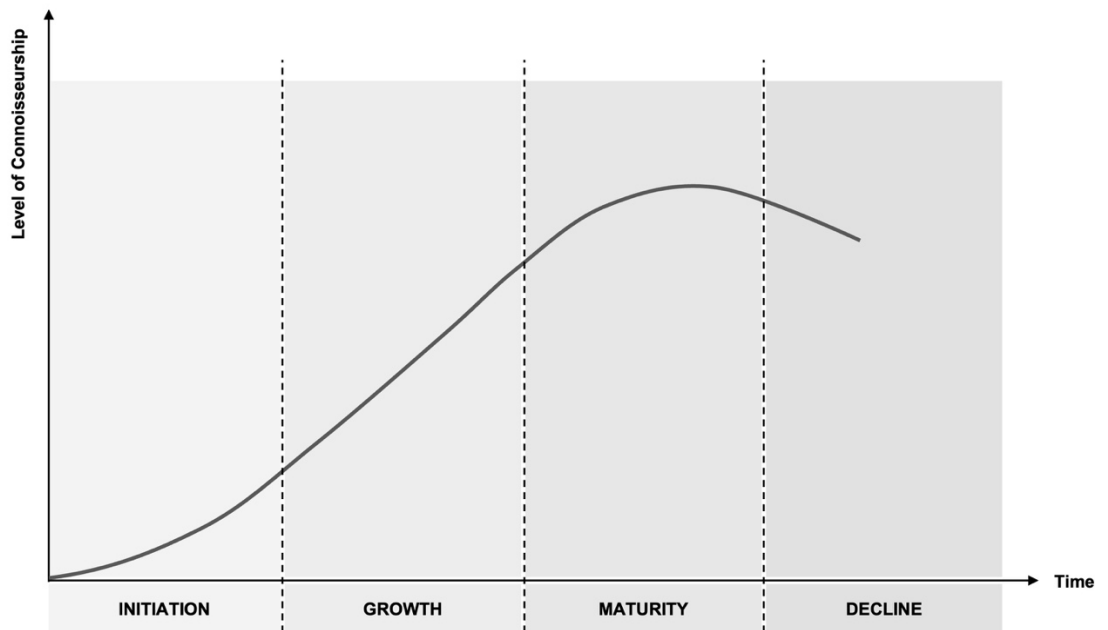
Initiation

The initiation phase refers to the time when consumers first apprehended typefaces. Despite some minor variances between individual cases, relationships with fonts appear to be initiated through social influences (e.g. Thomas, p. 12, INT202-214; Tobias, pp. 21-24, INT372-432). Sarah, for example, reports on the following event, that caused her to apprehend fonts:

> *I thought I was ready to take the book to an offset printer, when I first had the opportunity to talk with professional book designers and major publishing houses … at a conference …. They looked at the prototype of my book and said 'Well, this is all very well and good, but you need a graphic designer to layout the interior and work with the fonts so that they complement the story in a much more dramatic way', and I was crushed …. I had no idea what they were talking about. (Sarah, p. 21, INT361-377)*

This extract from Sarah's interview represents a social interaction between her and other publishers, and it sheds lights on Sarah's psychological responses to that encounter. She uses powerful metaphors to describe how her confidence and all her hopes and expectations for her first book were destroyed by the responses to her prototype. As the phrase *'I thought I was ready'* suggests, Sarah felt confident to finally self-publish her first children book. The word *'ready'* implies that Sarah felt uplifted by the completion of her book. Conversely, the term *'crushed'* signifies the mighty force with which the feedback received from other publishers and designers (i.e. peers) hit her. Sarah is left in a state of confusion and uncertainty; she '*had no idea what they were talking about'*, revealing a lack of knowledge and understanding of typographic principles (cognition), and possibly also a feeling of loss of control and helplessness (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008).

Lacking knowledge and confidence were also important factors in e.g. Ruby's account. She told me: *"Starting … in my career, [I would describe myself as] very naïve about how the design industry worked and where the power laid, and I had absolutely no power"* (Ruby, p. 41, INT733-736). One important aspect that emerges from this first extract is Ruby's systemic view and her assessment of power distributions within and between systems. At this stage, Ruby describes herself as *'naïve'* and powerless (affect)—a self-description that changes over time—as discussed later. Elsewhere during the interview, she shared her early experiences in the industry, saying:

I kind of came out of Uni thinking I had no idea and wasn't good at typography … Well, and then, when I went to–I worked in advertising for a few years in [location reference in Australia] and the UK … there were still such things as in-house typographers, so I would go to them and say, you know, 'What's the style for this client? Can you set this for me?' and they would enjoy it. But then, when I eventually came back to [location reference in Australia], those people didn't exist anymore … the industry's changed a lot since then and, yeah, working in the newspapers and doing multi-paged documents in column typesetting, it just forced me to really understand typography …. Yeah, that gave me a lot of skill. (Ruby, pp. 24-26, INT429-451)

Ruby describes how she was *'forced to really understand typography'* and to develop her typographic skills due to fundamental changes in the industry. As Archer-Parré (2019) confirms, the role of typographers had transformed multiple times over the past six centuries. At the outset of her career, Ruby (like Sarah) thought she *'had no idea'* about typography and evaluates her skills negatively (cognitions). She could rely on industry professionals who specialized in typography and who *'would enjoy it'*. During my analysis, I stumbled over the latter phrase as I wondered if it meant that Ruby would not enjoy doing, and therefore avoid, typographic work—a feeling that was strengthened by her use of the word *'forced'*, implying some sort of involuntariness in her behaviour. It is conceivable that she did not enjoy it because of her negative self-belief and hence lack of confidence and skills respectively.

The most explicit account in this regard is that from Luka. Although I did not prompt him to tell me about his experiences, he thought they had weight for my research:

I didn't mention that … that's gonna be interesting for you–how I got into type design. I actually sucked–I really sucked at type design, and I actually failed a course …. I was super against, like–… I don't wanna do this—this is not for me—I just wanna do graphic design and 3D–I'm not interested in these stupid letters. (Luka, pp. 41-42, INT737-748)

It felt to me like Luka wanted to tell his story because he thought it was atypical. It describes how someone who initially had extremely negative experiences with typefaces became a 'type expert'. At this first stage of his transformation process, he points out repeatedly that he *'sucked at'* designing fonts, and he emphasizes his poor skills with the adverbs *'actually'* and *'really'*. He adds that he had *'actually failed a course'*, which appears to be the starting point of his transformative journey towards becoming a

connoisseur. He illustrates his lived experiences very vividly. Luka has obviously strong negative responses to typefaces and opposes them. He is not just against fonts, but *'super against'* them, which indicates a superlative. It is therefore not surprising that he dissociates himself from typefaces, creating a distance between self and fonts (C. W. Park, Eisingerich, & Park, 2013); he makes clear that *'this is not for him'*—he is *'not interested in these stupid letters'*. Declaring letters to be *'stupid'* suggests not only a negative attitude towards letters (dislike), but it reveals a much stronger negative emotional response to typefaces, such as *hate*. In the context of brand relationships, for instance, Hegner, Fetscherin, and van Delzen (2017, p. 14) maintain that "brand hate is a more intense emotional response that consumers have toward a brand than brand dislike" and find that brand hate might result from e.g. "the possible incongruence between the self-image and the brand image." It could be argued that Luka dissociates himself from typefaces because they are incongruent with his self-identity resulting in hate for fonts. His behavioural response is avoidance; he does not want anything to do with it.

Other participants (e.g. Alicia, pp. 16-17, INT282-292; Jelena, p. 31, INT548-553; Kevin, pp. 55-56, INT973-1005) did not have negative experiences when they became acquainted with type—on the contrary. They portray, for example, how they got *'inspired'* or *'fascinated'* by typography when they completed university projects and/or worked with motivating teachers, revealing the importance of cognitive aspects at this stage of the development towards connoisseurship. Similar observation was made in Emma's case. Her relationship with typefaces was initiated by other students (peers). Today, she self-identifies as: *"Something like … [a dabbler] … experimenting … with different things [typefaces] … just kind of 'stream of consciousness'"* (Emma, p. 95, INT1700-1703). Elsewhere she said: *"I wanted to do a little 'font exploring'"* (Emma, p. 81, INT1448-1449; COL1A; COL5E) and she elaborates further: *"I've just been exploring with different ones [fonts], and, erm, came upon ones that I like and ones I don't like as much"* (Emma, p. 89, INT1594-1597).

These three short extracts from Emma's interview highlight that her relationship with typefaces is characterized by exploration. This cognitive form of engagement suggests some level of curiosity and openness. She wants to learn more about typefaces, indicating initial interest in typefaces. The latter can be understood as "a positive emotion that motivates approach, exploration, and creative encounter" (Izard, 1977, p. 194). Emma does so in a non-systematic fashion, namely by following her *'stream of consciousness'*. As presented in the next section, non-systematic (as opposed to systematic)

exploration appears to be a clear marker of difference between the first and the second stage of the initial connoisseurship life cycle model. From a behavioural perspective, these three extracts show that she experiments with fonts, and that she forms attitudes towards them. It feels like she is engaging in *learning by doing*, which has important affective outcomes:

> *It's also like, it's really cool to find a font that, like, really expresses something about what you've made. You know, that resonates–you do all this work on something and then you find that font, that's just like 'This is the piece.' It's like 'This is a premium proper piece,' or like 'This is a really like shloopy … piece,' and finding the–the font that kinda hints at the whole atmosphere of the piece is kinda cool. (Emma, pp. 95-96, INT1704-1716)*

Exploration and experimentation are rewarded with a feeling of gratification. Emma finds it very satisfying (*'really cool'*) when she discovers the font that *'resonates'* with her ideas and *'expresses'* the identity of the work for which it is intended. This aspect is also emphasized verbally, for example in the phrase: *'This is the piece.'*

Growth

While Emma's engagement with typefaces presented in the previous section was rather *playful*, consumers get more serious at this second stage. It is about growing and refining their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills and the application thereof. Consumers' skill sets and fonts combine to create new artefacts. For example, George (p. 5, INT75-78) says: *"When you're learning design, you admire the work of other people, and you–you want to get down to the skin of why you like that work."* In this particular case, admiration is the starting point for a more sophisticated engagement with type. Admiration may signify a cognitive (disinterested), as well as affective (involved), approach to typefaces. In any case, as the word *'skin'* suggests, it touches one's mind or heart, which is why it affects behaviour—*'you want to get down to the skin of why you like it'*. As opposed to the Emma's metaphor of the *'stream of consciousness'* introduced above, George's figure of speech signifies that he wants to get to the bottom of things. He wants to uncover the reasons for his admiration of the work.

A similar language is used by Raphael. To become more knowledgeable about typefaces, he invites everybody to …

> *look for some trends … Look for what are you trying to portray and then find a lot of examples of that in the world, in professional publications, and see what they're using and create a list; say, okay–let's say you were a fashion designer, and you were interested in, you know, typefaces for logos, for a fashion brand, okay, go through a bunch of logos, see what they're using. See why they're using that, you know. What are the pros and cons, like, it doesn't have to be like 'Oh, you're reading textbooks on typeface'—though that I'm sure would be very helpful for people. Just, you know, take it from a practical standpoint. (Raphael, pp. 40-41, INT714-728)*

What stood out to me, when I studied this passage of Raphael's interview, was his extended use of active verbs and imperative clauses respectively. Raphael gives clear behavioural instructions on how to build typographic knowledge *'from a practical standpoint'*. Systematic and analytic engagement with typefaces appear to be the key. First, one must search (*'look for'*) and 'find' typeface exemplars. These must be documented (*'create a list'*) and eventually analysed (*'why'*, *'pros'* and *'cons'* of usage). This enables consumers to make more informed and *"accurate"* consumption decisions, as well as to generate typographic knowledge (Raphael, pp. 39-40, INT700-708). The latter comprises all aspects of the connoisseurship facet 'knowledge' introduced in the previous chapter, as implied by the term *'see'* that he uses repeatedly. It goes beyond mere perception of typefaces and their qualities. It includes e.g. understanding, discernment, and deduction.

Building systematic typographic knowledge is an important activity at this stage. But it has to be memorized, applied and used in various contexts to create something new, as Sarah (pp. 21-22, INT377-391) explains: *"I did work with a graphic designer, who taught me about typeface and the appropriate use of fonts …. So, when I was creating my second book, of course I had to keep all that in mind."* And all her hard work was eventually recognized …

> *The second book, [name reference], was reviewed by [name reference] … and their review was just phenomenal, and blew me away, because it … focused on … the illustrations, the multi-layered illustrations, that I created for the book, and also … the experience that this reviewer had of reading the book … and how the illustrations worked for her in … synchronicity with … the style of the typeface and … the choice of fonts. And … that to me was a beautiful, you know,*

compliment, and … how I was able to achieve that and that a reviewer appreciated it. So, it was

… one of five finalists for children's book of the year award in [year reference] … So, that was

… a real feather. (Sarah, pp. 51-52, INT904-927)

The review of Sarah's second book was exceptional. The critics appreciated, among other things, her typographic choices. Sarah is amazed by the feedback she had received. From a psychological perspective, it helped her to re-build confidence and to feel happy, suggesting a change in her psychological state: While she was *'crushed'* after hearing the comments on the prototype of her first book, she experienced the review of her second book as *'a real feather'*. A big weight was lifted from her shoulders and allowed her to hold her head high again. The term *'feather'* might also signify a motivational boost, something Luka experienced after he failed his course.

Luka was determined to defy expectations of others and that resolution eventually changed his relationship with typefaces. He explains:

From that point [when I failed the typography course at Uni] I was like: 'I'm gonna show this guy

[teacher]'–like–'the next year' … I said, like, 'I'm … gonna make such a great typeface—every

project is gonna be perfect.' And … I started to really get into typefaces. (Luka, p. 42, INT749-

756)

It is evident that Luka's behaviour described in the above quote is extrinsically and not intrinsically motivated. This means that his engagement with typefaces is not a goal in itself; instead, his objective is to prove others wrong (e.g. R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, through his engagement with type he started enjoying them, or, as he puts it, he *'started to really get into typefaces'*. Here, the adverb *'really'* serves again as an amplifier of his pleasurable experiences. This extract reveals a cognitive (motivational) and affective (enjoyment) shift in his relationship with typefaces. But it also has behavioural consequences. While he avoided typefaces in the initiation stage, he is now actively approaching them. Luka points out that …

when I finished my five years masters, I enrolled into [name reference of school] in [location

reference], which is a school that specializes in type design. It's a … great school—it's the same

school my–my former teacher went to. Yeah, and from then, it kind of–the journey just kept

going on, yeah. (Luka, p. 18, INT307-314)

Luka emphasizes that his *'former teacher'*, who is "a quite famous type designer" (Luka, pp. 16-17, INT287-289; see also p. 42, INT743), went to the same *'great school'*. He reiterates that: *"not a lot of people thought I was gonna … get into … [name reference] school, because I didn't like typefaces"* (Luka, p. 43, INT757-760)—a statement that brings to light elements of surprise and defiance.

The above quotes also feel like endorsement of his own skills and an appreciation of his relationship with type, which both *"started to slowly evolve"* (Luka, p. 43, INT760). The latter is another reference to the developmental character of his relationship with type. Previously, he used the metaphor of a *'journey'* that *'just kept going on'*. His voyage led him eventually to the USA, as he explains:

> *We [type design school] actually got a call from [name reference of an American tech company] for an internship, so they interviewed couple of schools in like UK, and Netherlands, for a position as type design intern. Toward the end, I got that position, and I was also working last year, almost one full year at [name reference of an American tech company] as type designer. (Luka, pp. 19-20, INT360-368)*

Inherent in Luka's accounts is his growing commitment to typefaces—a feature that is missing in Jelena's case. She says: *"The first year [of Uni] … I started with typography and all the other graphic design-related classes and the second year I chose industrial design as my main course"* (Jelena, p. 30, INT528-532). Typefaces play a rather subordinate role in her life (Jelena, p. 32, INT564-565) and her relationship with typefaces has therefore not developed beyond the growth stage.

Conversely, Kevin (p. 54, INT963-968) explains that typography is *"something that I've grown with over the past few years, and … it's really kind of my niche in graphic design … it's what I specialize in."* Elsewhere, he elaborates:

> *I was using … typography in a very expressive way, not very clean, not very–not ve–not like a graphic designer, really, more like an artist–very ex–expressive … And … since then, over the years working in different places …. my skill and refinement in typography has just naturally progressed. And now I'm a–now I think I'm quite broad with it in terms with its usage. (Kevin, pp. 56-57, 10006-1023)*

As can be seen here, Kevin, like Justin, uses various metaphors (namely growth and progression) to describe how his skills and his relationship with typefaces matured over time. Unlike Jelena, who left

the field of graphic design, Kevin carved out a *'niche in graphic design'* for himself; this is where he positions himself, where he *'specialize[s] in'*, and where he wants to stay (future orientation). Narrowing down his field of activity to a *'niche'* allowed him to broaden his *'skill and refinement'*. The noun 'refinement' signals a certain degree of sophistication in this relationship with type.

Ruby's relationship with typefaces matured when she started teaching it, as it helped her *"to really develop my instincts and style of type"* (Ruby, p. 27, INT469-470). Teaching typefaces opened new horizons for her and as in Kevin's case, her *'instincts and style of type'* developed. She explains further: *"All that I had learned through type was iterated through teaching it … I find I learn a lot through teaching, as well … so that was a great space to just, you know—I've been more confused by that time"* (Ruby, p. 26, INT464-468). Ruby recognizes all she *'had learned through type'* (i.e. by doing it), but she highlights that teaching typography helped her to contextualize her knowledge and to solidify it. Consequently, she obtained more clarity about typography in general and her own skills and *'style'* more specifically.

As the subsequent examples highlight, teaching should be understood more broadly and is not confined to the classroom. Organizational literature shows that 'learning through teaching' is considered the most effective learning mode in companies, that is employees learn, for example, when they share their expertise with others (Cortese, 2005). Wine connoisseurs like Ducker (2011, p. 105) educate "others about wine and its pleasures" outside academic settings, and study participants like Alicia (p. 18, INT323) and Sarah (see next section) offer professional consultation services on typographic matters.

Maturity

The first two stages described how participants' relationships with typefaces are initiated and how they grow over time. In this section, the focus lies on relationship maintenance, which is key in the 'maturity' stage of the initial connoisseurship life cycle model. As the discussion in this section shows, confidence, commitment, and the integration of typefaces into one's self-identity are important features of this stage. Sarah, for example, reports:

> *I wouldn't consider myself an expert … in typographic design or graphic design, although I find*
> *myself doing more and more … consulting on those lines, with authors who contact me about*

illustrating their books and doing … cover design and internal layout design. (Sarah, p. 50, INT887-894)

She acknowledges the importance of lifelong learning and adds: *"It doesn't qualify me as an expert … but … I'm very confident that I know what I'm doing"* (Sarah, pp. 52-53, INT931-937). As these two extracts demonstrate, Sarah transformed from a person that *'had no idea'* to someone who is *'very confident'* in what she is doing, and she even offers *'consulting'* in the field of typography and graphic design. She might not self-identify as type expert because she identifies as storyteller, but she surely uses her clients, who seek her advice, as a form of endorsement—that is, validation—of her skills.

Ruby too self-transformed over the years. She thinks: *"I'm a very different person from when I began my career to where I am now. From naïve to experienced maybe would be the two words I'd use. Yeah–"* (Ruby, p. 42, INT747-751). Today, she is: *"Teaching publication design and how to layout a page to make it completely readable and choose readable typefaces, you know, [and] I would call myself an expert in that area"* (Ruby, p. 36, INT637-641). During the interview, she spoke about her aspirations for her future: *"I have a–a–kind of a dream in life, to take my research and my teaching and design experience to work in the [United] States"* (Ruby, p. 6, INT97-99). This dream of hers is also depicted in her collage (Ruby, COL15), together with her drive for equity (e.g. Ruby, COL2, COL9). As established in earlier parts of this study, equity is a key value for Ruby. It is therefore not surprising that she tries *"to achieve [justice and equity and freedom] through activism—through my research"* (Ruby, p. 6, INT100-108). Now that she has *"some powers as an academic and a senior lecturer with a well-known design college behind me"* (Ruby, p. 42, INT740-742), she can contribute to changing the industry and the power distribution within and beyond that system. Typography has become her reliable ally on Ruby's mission; it is part of who she is.

Although Kevin self-identifies as graphic designer (see previous chapter), typography has become his area of expertise and as such it is part of his professional identity. He considers himself an expert *"in terms of knowing typography and understanding typography"* (Kevin, p. 60, INT1067-1071) and explains that:

anytime that I do anything that's graphic design related, my kind of go to—it's not necessarily a safe space—but my go to field would always be with typography, because I feel, like, it's something that I'm very confident in. (Kevin, pp. 54-55, INT966-973)

Like Sarah (see above), Kevin has gained a high degree of self-confidence in the area of typography. Following prior research (e.g. Perry, 2011), I will use the terms confidence and self-confidence synonymously. In design contexts, confidence is defined as the "certitude of own personal abilities and professional competencies, being able to embrace innovative ideas and to start challenging projects, justifying own beliefs and (ethical) work" (Kunrath, Cash, & Kleinsmann, 2020, p. 301). Self-confidence is thought to comprise cognitive (e.g. self-appraisal), affective (e.g. enthusiasm) and behavioural (e.g. readiness to engage in activities) characteristics (Shrauger & Schohn, 1995). It feeds into self-efficacy (Perry, 2011), which refers to "*beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments*" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3; emphasis in original). According to Kunrath, Cash, and Li-Ying (2016), self-confidence is essential for developing professional identities. Therefore, it is argued that connoisseurship necessitates self-confidence in one's relationship with typefaces. Only then fonts can be incorporated in one's own identity.

Elsewhere, Kevin characterizes his relationship with typefaces qualitatively and quantitatively by using the expression *'love'*. He says: *"I love just working with typography"* (Kevin, p. 58, INT1034-1035), which emphasizes his genuine passion for typography (Vallerand, 2015). Similar was articulated by Luka, who admits that: *"It became, like, 'I really, really like typefaces'"* (Luka, p43, INT755-756). I was fascinated to learn that Luka's relationship with typefaces had gradually transformed from a 'hate' to a 'love' relationship. Today, he: *"work[s] with typefaces that are getting published by other foundries"* (Luka, p. 23, INT411-412).

Like Kevin, who specialized in typography or Alicia (p. 18, INT307-310), who is: *"completing my doctorate in typography, a type-based research looking at typography in [context reference], so … a long-term study for me"*, Luka entered a long-term commitment with fonts, that he projects into the future. *"Setting up like a small design studio, a foundry … that's kind of … my goal now"*, says Luka (p. 44, INT774-776). This suggests that fonts became an integral part of his identity. This is surprising considering that he dissociated himself from fonts when he became acquainted with typefaces. To paraphrase Justin (p. 58, INT1042-1043): *"There is an absolute personal relationship that"* he developed with them.

Decline

At this final stage of the development cycle, the level of connoisseurship begins to decline and the relationship between consumers and typefaces starts to dissolute as they grow apart. The only two cases, in which this theme emerged, were those of George and Justin. During the interview, George was reminiscent of his time as young boy, as the following three quotes illustrate:

> *When I was born, my dad had a printing machine in the garage, a small sort of bench top …*
> *printing machine. And … he'd had that for a number of years, I think, probably since his twenties,*
> *and he had lots of trays of type, and was regularly printing in the garage and I loved going into*
> *the garage. You know, … that's a fantastic kind of space. (George, p. 26, INT455-463)*

> *As soon as I was able to, really, I helped dad set type. (George, p. 27, INT469-471)*

> *I mean, clearly, that would have given me a very strong emotional connection between type and*
> *my dad … and design, and–actually smells–I can, you know, … there's a lot of smells that I can*
> *remember to do with the–the printing, so the printing ink, obviously …. There are … lot of good–*
> *good memories, lot of very sensory kind of emotional attachments … to type. (George, p. 28,*
> *INT488-504)*

These extracts shed light on George's past self and how he built a relationship with type. As he high-lights, the relationship is mediated by his relationship with his father. It is about shared experiences in the past and has almost a nostalgic quality as suggested by the phrase *'lot of … good memories'*. It feels like there is a temporal and psychological distance between past and present, which carries on into the future. Elsewhere, he referred to his former career as *"typographer in advertising"* (George, p. 34, INT597) only in passing, and he made clear that:

> *my work today–my mission today is in mental health … I'm using graphic design every day to*
> *help communicate what I'm doing … and to persuade others to join me, to–I suppose really–…*
> *to produce the tools that I'm making, so yeah … yeah. (George, p. 33, INT582-588)*

His relationship with his father (George, COL3D), his *'work mission'* (George, COL2C) and his desire to be *'an inspiration [for a] better world'* (George, COL 1A) are all depicted in George's collage; and alt-hough he left the typographic world behind him to pursue his new mission, it is still part of him. His

understanding of and thus his relationship with typography was revealed when he manipulated the type-faces in his collage. He explains:

> *I didn't know how to [do that in PowerPoint], but I found how to control the inter-character spac-ing … And it was important to me to have a less intercharacter spacing than the default. (George, pp. 21-22, INT378-382)*

> *I didn't have time to do that on the little subheads, but the main name and the five main labels are all … minus two points so it'd squeeze together. (George, p. 22, 388-392)*

> *I don't think one probably in PowerPoint would normally want to do that, but it was important to me to do that, 'cause I just felt happier when the–the typeface was just a–I suppose again, I was adding my own taste … to the font itself. (George, p. 23, INT397-403)*

I chose to present the above quotes as they disclose an ambiguity in his relationship with typefaces: On the one hand, George claims: *"For me a font is a fairly functional thing"* (George, p. 3, INT45-47), and he adds: *"Often, I'm very happy to use a font that people don't notice because I think the meaning of the words to me is more important"* (George, p. 20, INT347-349). This, however, was not the case here. The selected extracts evidence the hedonic (taste) and symbolic (self-identity) benefits derived from his relationship with typefaces. As he points out repeatedly, *'it was important'* to him to manipulate the fonts. As former typographer, he has the relevant typographic knowledge and he *'just felt happier'* when he customized the typeface. It seems George continues to experience satisfaction from mastering type-faces—a characteristic trait for someone familiar with setting fonts. In brief, his emotional bond with typefaces might be fading, but he is still attached to fonts.

Justin described very similar experiences, although his accounts were more explicit about the growing psychological distance between him and typefaces. As established in previous parts of this research, Justin (p. 5, INT75-80) *"had always had quite a close relationship, if you can call it that, to fonts … in my professional and artistic careers—fonts have been important."* Later in the interview he quantifies his relationship with typefaces: *"I've had [this relationship] with them for decades, you know, decades and decades"* (Justin, p. 58, INT1028-1030). His repeated use of the word *'decade'* reveals and emphasizes the temporal dimension (duration) of his relationship with typefaces. It was not simply a "fling", that is a "short-term, time-bounded … [engagement] of high emotional reward, but devoid of

commitment and reciprocity demands"; instead there are features of "committed partnerships" that are defined as "long-term, voluntarily imposed, socially supported union high in love, intimacy, trust, and a commitment to stay together despite adverse circumstances" (Fournier, 1998, p. 362). However, as the following quotes show, his relationship with typefaces lies in the past. Contemplating my research project, Justin said:

> *That was really interesting, because it did make me think of–it was sort of–… it made me happy actually, because it made me think about these wonderful relationships that I've had with typefaces. (Justin, p. 56, INT994-999)*

At the end of the interview, he concluded: *"What this whole project has done is … just bring me back into that world, which is really nice"* (Justin, p. 71, INT1264-1266). It feels like Justin engaged in a retrospection, a psychological journey, looking back at *'that world'* he had evidently left behind. Justin visited it briefly and it conjured up strong cognitive (thoughts) and affective (emotions) memories from the past. What struck me, however, is the implied existence of multiple worlds, which—based on Justin's experiences—appear to be disconnected.

The ideas presented in the previous chapters open spaces for a critical discussion of the initial connoisseurship life cycle model presented in section one.

Discussion

Although business and marketing scholars acknowledge that the simplicity of life cycle models makes them easy to comprehend and therefore to use, they have also challenged their underlying assumptions (e.g. analogy with biological organisms) and the conclusions derived from them (e.g. predictability of events) (e.g. G. S. Day, 1981; Fournier, 1994; Mosca et al., 2021; Phelps, Adams, & Bessant, 2007). While the many arguments articulated by scholars have their merits, the subsequent discussion focusses on three key shortcomings of the preliminary connoisseurship life cycle model presented in section one of this chapter.

First, prospective consumers (e.g. Briana, Damian, Laura, and Jasmine), who consume fonts pre-attentively, are currently ignored, because the model starts with the initiation phase that supposes

a reflective engagement with typefaces. To remove this deficiency, an additional, 'pre-reflective' stage must be added at the beginning of the model. Following the arguments presented in Chapter 5 (p. 153), the pre-reflection and initiation stages are separated by a Rubicon, that consumers must cross to start 'seeing' fonts and to develop their relationship with them.

The revised connoisseurship life cycle model (see Figure 25, p. 219) bears some visual resemblance to Moore's (1991/2014) revised *technology adoption life cycle* that is based on the *innovation diffusion model* originally proposed by Rogers (1962/1995). The author argues there "is a deep and dividing *chasm* that separates the early adopters from the early majority," suggesting that "this is by far the most formidable and unforgiving transition in the Technology Adoption Life Cycle, and it is all the more dangerous because it typically goes unrecognized" (Moore, 1991/2014, p. 25; emphasis in original). Fonts are neither new technologies nor discontinuous innovations. However, Moore's (1991/2014) notion of two markets is a powerful metaphor for the typeface market. Applied to the present context, it could be argued that one market serves prospects who engage in pre-reflective, everyday consumption. They occupy the pre-Rubicon space. Connoisseur consumers, on the other hand, who have crossed the Rubicon and apprehend typefaces, are situated in the post-Rubicon space. Acknowledging the existence of two distinct typeface markets (or market segments) allows for their better cultivation and development (Kohne, 2016/2019).

Figure 25
Revised connoisseurship life cycle model
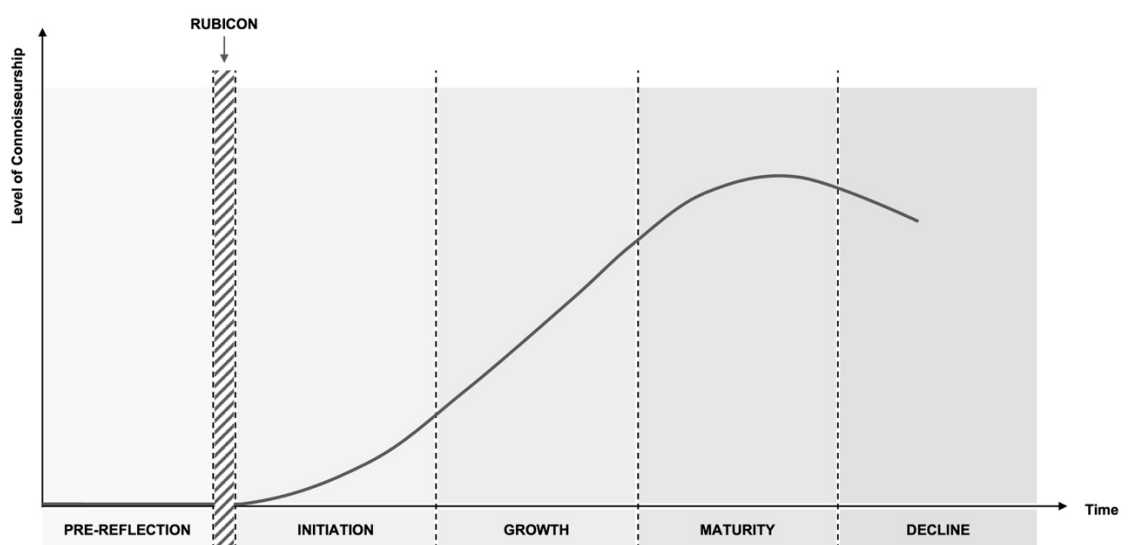
Second, the connoisseurship life cycle model conceals the multi-layered structure of the connoisseurship concept. As outlined in Chapter 5 (p. 153), connoisseurship can be described along five facets (e.g. knowing), and each of the facets can be broken down into different sub-dimensions (e.g. discrimination ability). The underlying constructs determine the path of the connoisseurship life cycle (Eastwick, Finkel, & Simpson, 2019), and the multidimensionality of the construct raises important questions concerning the "appropriate level of aggregation for life cycle analysis" (G. S. Day, 1981, p. 61).

Third, the connoisseurship life cycle model suggests a deterministic, linear development, that emphasizes commonalities between participants and risks moving individual differences into the background (Stubbart & Smalley, 1999). For example, data indicate that George's initial level of connoisseurship might have been higher than e.g. Emma's. Conversely, George's current level of connoisseurship (decline stage) might be lower than Justin's. Jelena, on the other hand, might have peaked in the growth stage already, and she might therefore not move to the maturity stage. Type designer Luka might have reached the maturity stage much sooner than Kevin, which highlights the variability of the model's temporal dimension.

To mitigate the disadvantages of life cycle models, Fournier (1994) proposes using trajectory models, because they "relax the assumptions" of stage models and "extend stage models, which do a good job of illustrating the processes of growth, maintenance, and deterioration, by more clearly distinguishing the multiple arenas in which these processes actually take place" (p. 57). Most lately, Eastwick et al. (2019) introduced an (interpersonal) *Relationship Trajectories Framework* (RTF) in the field of psychology. It comprises five dimensions, that are used to scaffold the subsequent discussion: shape, fluctuation, threshold, composition, and density. By doing so, I am abducting and/or recontextualising their framework, and I am discussing it against the backdrop of person-object and parasocial relationships respectively. I acknowledge the authors' caveat that the RTF was not developed for parasocial relationships, because the authors "do not know whether evaluations in these cases are represented appropriately as arc-shaped trajectories" (Eastwick et al., 2019, p. 4). However, past and recent research on consumer-brand relationships (e.g. Fournier, 1998; Langner et al., 2016; Palusuk et al., 2019; Zarantonello et al., 2018) provides robust evidence that relationship trajectory frameworks are applicable to parasocial relationships. The following subsections introduce and discuss the five dimensions of

the RTF, which shall make up the five dimensions of the proposed connoisseurship trajectories framework.

Shape

The first dimension of the RTF is called 'shape' and relates to three aspects of the arc-shaped trajectory, namely ascent, peak and descent (Eastwick et al., 2019). It is conceivable that, for example, the level of connoisseurship of some consumers (e.g. Kevin and Luka) is rising faster than that of other participants because some enjoy a formalized education in typography and thus accumulated greater implicit and explicit typographic knowledge over comparable periods of time. Consequently, the ascent of their trajectories might be steeper than that of other consumers like Emma and Thomas, as the latter engage with typefaces in a more playful and explorative way.

Peak signifies "the highest level of the smoothed-out curve across the time course of the relationship" (Eastwick et al., 2019, p. 6) and varies between individuals too. Contrasting Jelena's case with that of e.g. Alicia, it is expected that Jelena's trajectory is flatter than Alicia's, because the former peaked earlier in time, when she decided to specialize in a different field than graphic design. Jelena (p. 31, INT548-557) acknowledges that: *"I really learned a lot [in my first year at university] …. But my experience further on is not as deep … my experience afterwards is—I would say—like 'basic'."* Jelena's account stands in stark contrast to Alicia's, who reiterates: *"[I'm] studying it [typefaces] under my PhD—so, I'm embedded within type and I love it"* (Alicia, p. 19, INT325-326).

Relationships may stabilize over time after reaching their peak or they may deteriorate, which leads to a descent in their trajectories (Eastwick et al., 2019). Analogous to ascents, some relationships might deteriorate faster than others, which eventually affects the shape of the prototypic arc-like trajectory. For example, my own research data suggest that George's relationship with typefaces declined at a faster rate than Justin's relationship with fonts. This does, however, not mean relationship trajectories must go towards zero. As previous research suggests (e.g. Fournier, 1994), relationship trajectories may e.g. plateau or even resurge in a cyclical fashion leading to dips and spikes in trajectories. It was argued earlier that the deterioration of Justin's relationship with typefaces was accelerated by the growing psychological distance. Fournier (1998, p. 363; emphasis added) proposes "two general models of [consumer-brand] relationship deterioration. In the *entropy model*, relationships fall apart unless actively

maintained; in the *stress model*, relationships are forcefully destroyed by the intrusion of personal, brand, dyadic, or environmental stress factors." Both, George's and Justin's case, can be best explained by the entropy model as both consumers disinvested material and immaterial resources from their relationships with fonts thereby increasing the temporal and psychological distance in their relationships, which ultimately lead to the deterioration of the latter.

In my view, the RTF can be extended to acknowledge consumers' conscious and unconscious understandings and lived experiences, such as their tacit knowledge of—or implicit emotional attachments with—consumption objects (e.g. Briana with Times New Roman; Damian with Arial; Jasmin and Laura with Calibri). This modification will affect the shape of the trajectory. Let me explicate this using an extract from my interview with Thomas. I asked Thomas how he chooses typefaces. He responded, for example:

> *I don't know. The only one I think is slightly conscious, possibly, is … I … remember thinking: Somewhere—either the New Yorker or the New York Times—uses Garamond …, so I think that's–that's, you know–that should actually be … the highbrow one. (Thomas, pp. 3-4, INT49-56)*

Like other participants mentioned in the previous chapter (e.g. Briana and Laura), Thomas admits that he too consumes typefaces predominantly unconsciously. As his account reveals, his consumption behaviour is guided by implicit associations that were made explicit in this research. This, however, does not mean that Thomas and other participants do not form relationships with typefaces. As established earlier, those relationships are pre-reflective. Accordingly, the connoisseurship trajectory in the pre-Rubicon space might tend to zero but—recognizing the tacit dimension of person-object relationships—the connoisseurship trajectory may not equal zero.

Fluctuation

As outlined in earlier parts of this research, temporality is a key aspect in consumer-object relationships. Parasocial relationships are formed through repeated parasocial interactions over time (Hartmann, 2008). By making sense of those experiences, individuals permanently evaluate their parasocial interactions and hence their parasocial relationships (Klimmt et al., 2006). With its second dimension, fluctuation, the RTF acknowledges that "relationship evaluations can fluctuate on a moment-to-moment,

day-to-day, month-to-month, or year-to-year basis" (Eastwick et al., 2019, p. 6). Luka's account provides valuable insights into this phenomenon. As highlighted above, Luka's relationship with typefaces oscillated between two poles: At its outset, his relationship with type was very negative (hate-like) from which he dissociated himself, but it then transformed into a very positive (love-like) relationship, which he integrated into his self-understanding. Appropriating brand love trajectories to the present context, Luka's trajectory can thus be best described as 'turnabout' (trajectory 5; Langner et al., 2016).

Threshold

The third RTF dimension is called 'threshold'. The framework proposes that relationship partners may evaluate their interactions and relationships differently, because their experiences are influenced by personal thresholds that vary between individuals (Eastwick et al., 2019). To exemplify their point, the authors explain that one person's threshold to engage in sexual intercourse might be lower than that of another person. Similarly, it is argued that individual thresholds may also affect connoisseurship trajectories, as the following two examples demonstrate. The first example draws on typographic knowledge. Individuals might self-evaluate their (subjective) consumer knowledge differently (see e.g. Brucks, 1985). Ruby (p. 34, INT598-599), for instance, says: *"Oh, I put myself very far away from the [type] expert"*, and she consequently self-identifies as non-expert. Her threshold is relative to the benchmark she set. Ruby compared herself with type designers, which consequently raised her personal threshold. She engaged in an upward comparison, which appears to have affected her self-esteem negatively (Swann & Bosson, 2010). As indicated in her quote, Ruby identified a knowledge gap—and possibly skill gap—between her and type designers, which is why she situates herself '*very far away from the expert'*. In contrast, Tobias's self-assessment struck me as bolder and much more confident. He says: *"I would say maybe thirty percent expert, seventy percent non-expert"* (Tobias, p. 26, INT458-459). Tobias's account implies that his threshold for expertness and thus typographic knowledge is lower than Ruby's. I appreciate that their different (self-)assessments might be indicative of the different levels of sophistication of their respective relationships with typefaces, but I will not discuss this aspect further.

The second example highlights individual differences concerning the use of linguistic devices. For example, Alicia used the term 'love' significantly more often in the interview (26 times) than did Luka (six times). Also, the latter did not use the word 'love' to describe his relationship with typefaces; instead,

Luka articulated it predominantly through words such as 'liking', which he emphasized using the term 'really' (e.g. Luka, p. 42, INT754-756). It is conceivable that individuals have different thresholds for experiencing and expressing 'love' in the context of person-object relationships—a phenomenon that anecdotally occurs in interpersonal relationships too.

Composition

A fourth dimension of the RTF is 'composition'. It highlights the hierarchical structure of romantic evaluations (Eastwick et al., 2019). The authors propose, for instance, that romantic relationships may be evaluated globally (top-level) or using sub-constructs like passion, love and commitment (first sub-level). The latter constructs (e.g. commitment) can be further distinguished into subordinate concepts like dedication commitment (second sub-level) and relationship agenda (third sub-level) respectively (Stanley & Markman, 1992). Similar observations were made in the context of consumer-brand relationships and brand love, that some researchers (e.g. Batra et al., 2012) too conceptualize as an higher-order concept.

My research found that—analogous to interpersonal relationships and consumer-brand relationships—connoisseurship is best understood as multidimensional and multi-layered construct. Connoisseurship can be further broken down into five different dimensions (or facets) like involvement and into corresponding subdimensions (e.g. ego-involvement) (see Chapter 5, p. 153). The RTF, therefore, allows the concept of connoisseurship to be studied at various levels of aggregation, in that it recognizes the construct's dimensions and subdimensions. However, it must be acknowledged that trajectories may change over time even if the levels of aggregation remain unchanged, because "specific constructs may have distinct time-courses" (Eastwick et al., 2019, p. 8). For instance, passion might peak earlier in the relationship development; conversely, experiences of (conscious) attachment and commitment tend to set in only later in relationship development (Eastwick et al., 2019). These insights into the configuration of relationship trajectories—and connoisseurship trajectories alike—are important to understand the consumers' lived experiences more fully.

Figure 26 (p. 225) exemplifies the (partial) composition dimension of the connoisseurship trajectory for Luka. At its outset, the global connoisseurship trajectory (orange) is shaped by the profound typographic knowledge (green), that Luka accumulated at university as well as the hate (red) he initially experienced for typefaces. Later, the global connoisseurship trajectory (orange) is affected by Luka's

love (red) for fonts as well as his involvement with fonts (black) that continuously increased over time and his growing commitment to typefaces (blue) that set in subsequently.

Figure 26

The composition dimension of the connoisseurship trajectory for participant Luka
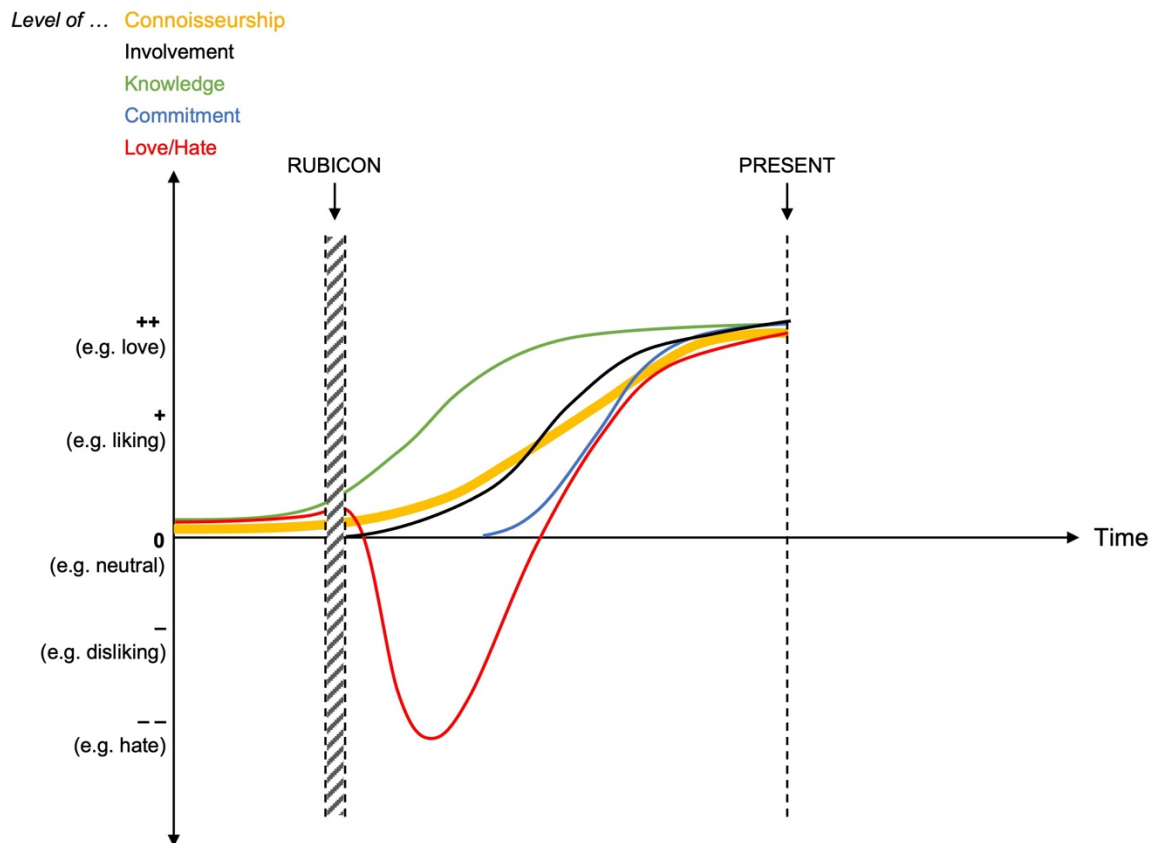
Note. This figure demonstrates compositional elements of the (partial) connoisseurship trajectory for participant Luka. The global connoisseurship level (orange) depicted in this figure is driven by sub-dimensions like involvement (black), knowledge (green), commitment (blue) and love (red), which occur at different points in time.

The connoisseurship trajectories framework, therefore, unifies other person-object trajectories, such as those of brand love (e.g. Langner et al., 2016) and brand hate (e.g. Zarantonello et al., 2018) respectively.

Density

The fifth and final dimension of the RTF—called 'density'—considers the number of relationships individuals form over their lifespans. Eastwick et al. (2019) speak of 'dispersed' trajectories when individuals wait for longer periods of time before they start new interpersonal romantic relationships. Conversely, individuals' relationships with other persons might be considered 'dense' if romantic relationships overlap, or if individuals are entering new romantic relationships relatively quickly once an existing relationship was terminated. While the implicit assumption that individuals strive to constantly move from one relationship to another is problematic, a critical discussion thereof lies outside the scope of this research. Instead, I outline next how the dimension 'density' could be adopted in the context of connoisseurship.

In Chapter 5 (p. 153), I introduced various accounts from participant Raphael, outlining how being a photographer became part of his identity, as well as the measures he undertook to become a connoisseur of photography. In the present chapter (p. 210), I highlighted the recommendations Raphael made to understanding one's font consumption more fully. It appears that Raphael acquired connoisseurship qualities in his relationship with other consumption objects (e.g. photography) and transferred them to his relationship development with typefaces. Put differently: Raphael has gone through the process of learning about and getting involved with the consumption of e.g. music and photography and he is more likely to develop a similar relationship with other consumption objects, like fonts. It is conceivable that he is a 'polymorphic' connoisseur—to appropriate the term from Merton (1949/1968), i.e. Raphael is a connoisseur of many objects simultaneously (rather than sequentially). It could be, of course, that polymorphic connoisseurship is more likely to occur in instances where consumption objects share certain features or where the latter belong to the same category, like 'creative arts' as in Raphael's case. Polymorphism was also observed in other contexts, where individuals started out as e.g. influencers in one area (e.g. beauty) and then extended to other areas—like fashion (Valsesia, Proserpio, & Nunes, 2020). In the cases described here, connoisseurship trajectories might overlap and thus be rather dense.

This should of course not suggest that all relationships with objects are maintained at the same time. As indicated above, the shape of the connoisseurship trajectory is plastic rather than rigid. Furthermore, relationships do not have to terminate completely as suggested in Eastwick et al.'s (2019; figure 6) RTF, but they can continue at different levels of sophistication. Examples that come to mind

are Justin's and George's relationship with fonts. They might presently experience a psychological distance to typefaces, but they could theoretically rekindle their relationship at any time.

However, dense or polymorphic trajectories are not the only possible ones. Data presented earlier suggest, for example, that Jelena never 'matured' as typeface connoisseur, although she had crossed the Rubicon. Instead, she pursued other interests and became a connoisseur of industrial design objects. Assuming that this is her only connoisseur relationship with an object over her lifespan, then her relationship is monomorphic (Merton, 1949/1968) and the trajectory is—for the lack of a better word—exclusive. The trajectory would become dispersed if sometime in the (distant) future Jelena formed a connoisseur relationship with a different object.

Finally, it could be argued that there are consumers who never cross the Rubicon with any object and therefore never acquire connoisseurship status. That does not mean they cannot function in the world or that they are unable to consume objects. It just means that they have not yet developed— or do not wish to develop—connoisseurship.

Summary

In this chapter, I argued that consumers form parasocial relationships with typefaces over time. At their outset, relationships are conspicuously pre-reflective. Once consumers cross the Rubicon, they start to apprehend typefaces consciously (see Chapter 5). Initially, it was suggested that consumers move through a connoisseurship life cycle consisting of four stages: Initiation, growth, maturity and decline. Upon closer reflection, however, the connoisseurship life cycle model presented three major challenges: Firstly, participants consuming fonts pre-reflexively were ignored. Secondly, the multi-faceted and multi-layered character of the connoisseurship construct remained concealed. Thirdly, the sequential and deterministic nature of the consumer life cycle veiled the idiographic experiences of participants. To mitigate those problems, I extended the initial connoisseurship life cycle model by including a pre-reflection stage before the initiation stage. To appreciate the idiosyncrasies of each participant, I then appropriated the (interpersonal) Relationship Trajectory Framework (RTF) (Eastwick et al., 2019), to the context of person-object relationships.

Solidifying my arguments with participant accounts, I proposed that idiographic connoisseurship trajectories too can be described along five dimensions: Shape, fluctuation, threshold, composition and density. The latter two dimensions indicate that the connoisseurship trajectories framework allows for the integration of other theories on consumer-object relationships (e.g. brand love/hate) and that consumers—if they cross the Rubicon—may become polymorphic or monomorphic connoisseurs. The next chapter outlines a resolution to this conceptualization of connoisseurship. It then highlights implications of the study and provides a critical appraisal before making recommendations for future research.

Conclusion

7

"A typographer by any other name."

(Marshall, 1993, p. 130)

Review of research questions

The present work sought to understand the conscious and unconscious lived experiences with font consumption. Prior research suggests that traditional marketing structures in the type industry are becoming increasingly obsolete because font users are increasingly diverse. The democratization of typefaces and of relevant software permits font consumers not only to use typefaces in more elaborate ways, but also to create their very own fonts. As a result, the 'naïve' font user has the potential to transform into a 'sophisticated' consumer or even prosumer (see Chapter 1). This research addressed Cahalan's (2004/2007) call to explore the meanings typefaces have for the heterogeneous target audience of fonts by looking into the relationships individuals form with typefaces. Two main research questions (RQs) were designed:

1. How can relationships between individuals and fonts be described analytically?
2. How do mundane products like fonts contribute to the construction of identities?

Although presented as distinct questions, both RQs are highly interrelated. This study argues that meanings arise from parasocial interactions (PSIs). This is where *I* (font user) and *Thou* (typeface) engage in a dialogical encounter and where the *Thou* speaks to one's very own self-understanding. In this event, which is also called the fusion of horizons, the *Thou* addresses us directly by asking: Who are you?

Moreover, the study maintained that repeated PSIs foster consumers' parasocial relationships with fonts. In Chapter 2 (literature review), various consumer theories were presented to shed light on identity construction processes. These included, for example, self-expansion (Aron & Aron, 1986) and self-extension theory (Belk, 1988), as well as product-personality congruence (Govers, 2004) and self-brand connection theory (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Established consumer-object and parasocial relationship theories indicated that meanings were likely to change as consumer-object relationships evolved over time. The notion of relationship trajectories was subsequently introduced.

From the outset of the study, it was argued that humans are situated in, and enmeshed with, a pre-given world and its entities, including fonts. We interact with our world using various modes. For example, we read or see typefaces (visual), we use fonts in human-computer interactions to write or design artefacts (touch), and we ultimately communicate through typefaces (speak). This multimodal engagement can be reflective, pre-reflective, and pre-linguistic.

This multimodal study used three different types of texts—visual (collages), written (narratives) and spoken (interviews)—to explore conscious and unconscious lived experiences with font consumption more fully. Following the procedures set out in interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), a core methodology in consumer psychology (Chakravarti & Crabbe, 2019), experiences were described phenomenologically and analysed hermeneutically. Results suggest that consumers' relationships with typefaces and hence the meaning fonts have for individuals are shaped by their degree of connoisseurship. This is a new, temporally dynamic and multidimensional concept comprising five facets: Apprehending; involvement; hunting and gathering; knowing; and gatekeeping. To make sense of the construct, it is necessary to reconceptualize 'connoisseurship' and to grasp its metaphorical rather than its literal meaning. Connoisseurship, as understood here, refers to the soul of person-object relationships.

Reconceptualization of connoisseurship

The notion of 'connoisseurship' was introduced in Chapter 5 with the caveat that there is no universally accepted definition of the construct. This makes it somewhat difficult to delineate it from, and to compare it with, other concepts. Rather than seeing this as a disadvantage, it is argued that this ambiguity opens new possibilities. I concur with Walsh's (2019) assessment that terms are oftentimes contested—a circumstance that offers some latitude in the interpretation and categorization of overlapping concepts. In the following, metaphors are employed because they are more flexible than other rhetorical figures (Korg, 1959). It is worth highlighting that metaphors are approached from a marketing rather than from a purely linguistic perspective, while drawing on insights from psychological literature.

The use of metaphors in business and marketing literature is not new, and the body of works keeps growing (e.g. S. Brown & Wijland, 2018; Cornelissen, Oswick, Thøger Christensen, & Phillips, 2008; Hunt & Menon, 1995). Metaphors establish relationships between categories by comparing them in unexpected ways to invoke correspondence (Gibbs, 1993; McQuarrie & Mick, 2003). This is generally done by asserting that *'A is B'* (Kövecses, 2010). For example, the nominal metaphor *'A surgeon is a butcher'* relates the noun 'surgeon' (target or topic) to the noun 'butcher' (base or vehicle) (Gentner & Wolff, 1997). The statement 'consumers are connoisseurs' could therefore be construed as nominal metaphor.

In a recent review of psychological literature published between 1976 and 2016, Holyoak and Stamenković (2018) identified three distinct research streams that aim to explain how individuals interpret metaphors, namely categorization, analogy, and conceptual mapping. Their results suggest that categorization—the comparison of constructs—is used for interpreting basic metaphors like 'Consumers are connoisseurs'. Conversely, analogy is used for making sense of more complex metaphors such as 'Connoisseurship is the soul of person-object relationships', which will be unravelled in this chapter. The following treatment draws on insights from Holyoak and Stamenković's (2018) work.

As highlighted in Chapter 5, Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer (2012, p. 174) apply the term connoisseurs to consumers with good taste who "rely predominantly on a 'gut feel' or sensory aspects in making judgments" (e.g. fashion connoisseurs). It is juxtaposed with two other concepts, namely experts (e.g. tailor) and designers (e.g. fashion designers). The former, it is argued, base their judgement and decisions on cognition (expertise), whereas the latter use both cognition (expertise) and affect (taste). This conceptualization was challenged for being too narrow. The only quality that is being transferred from the category 'connoisseur' to 'consumer' is good (aesthetic) taste. By focusing on good taste only, the construct becomes one-dimensional and categorical—individuals either have good taste or not. It follows as direct corollary that not all consumers are connoisseurs. This idea is expressed diagrammatically in Figure 27 (p. 232). Analogously, if individuals possess and exercise some level of expertise in their judgements, they are not considered connoisseurs but experts or designers (Hoyer & Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). The idea that connoisseurs lack expertise is at odds with Harkins' (2015) conceptualization of connoisseurship.

Figure 27
Conceptual intersection between consumers and connoisseurs
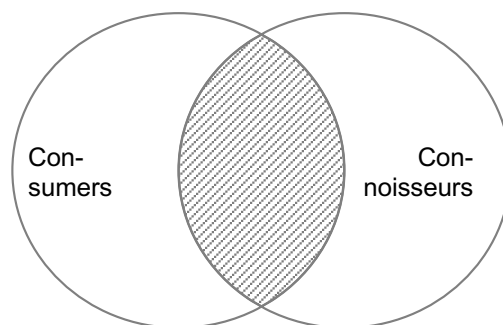
Harkins (2015, p. 8) claims that connoisseurs "may have an expert ability to identify, interpret, appreciate, and articulate a subject, yet not have the experiential knowledge and ability required to complete an undertaking, in this case designing type, successfully." Here, the distinguishing feature of experts is the ability to design fonts, not expertise (cognition) per se. As revealed in Chapter 5, there are some participants who share this view (e.g. Justin, pp. 24-25, INT431-434; Luka, pp. 23-24, INT403-415; Raphael, p. 18, INT 307-209; Ruby, pp. 34-36, INT595-641). Applied to the present study, Harkins' (2015) conceptualization would suggest that most participants qualify as connoisseurs. Luka, on the other hand, would be considered an expert because he has the knowledge and experience of creating fonts. But what about font users like Kevin who dabble in font design? Should we classify them as experts or as connoisseurs? This is what Kevin (p. 60, INT1067-1073) has to say about this:

> *In terms of the making of typefaces, this is still something that I'm working on. But in terms of knowing typography and understanding typography, I would say that I am an expert and–yeah, just making typography for me is still something that's … new to me.*

It is evident from Kevin's quote that he has a nuanced understanding of expertise. Kevin has expert knowledge in the field of typography and typefaces respectively, but he is a novice at designing fonts. Should he therefore be labelled connoisseur, or does it suffice, as Harkins (2015, p. 8) claims, to "position the expert [Luka] and connoisseur [Kevin] in neighbourliness and vicinity to each other and also towards the centre or fringe of our discrete subject conceptualization … to build our view of that subject domain?" In Harkins' (2015) work, the centre is the subject of typeface design. This conceptualization is problematic in the context of the present research. Firstly, it approaches the issue from a traditional 'producer' perspective. It seeks to identify experts in font design and places other constructs in relation to that 'centre'. This study, however, started from a different premise. It assumed that font users are increasingly diverse (Cahalan, 2004/2007) and that traditional marketing structures might thus be obsolete (see Chapter 1). Secondly, Harkins (2015, p. 9) proposes that his vicinage model could be adapted, for example by introducing stages, because this "may help to determine different kinds of qualities of expertness we identify, compare, and describe." As argued in Chapter 6, stage models create additional problems which is why the connoisseurship trajectories framework was presented. The latter allows the description of the five multi-layered facets of connoisseurship (see Chapter 5) over time while

appreciating idiosyncratic differences. Finally, and analogous to the above, Harkins' (2015) conceptualization too is one-dimensional as it looks at one factor only, namely knowledge. Experts and connoisseurs share typographical knowledge, but only the former know how to create fonts. Taking these arguments into account, it can be argued that not all experts are connoisseurs—and vice versa (see Figure 28, p. 234).

Figure 28
Conceptual intersection between experts and connoisseurs
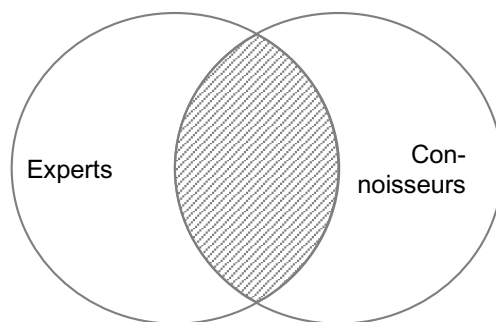
The third and final delineation of connoisseurship considered in this section was proposed more than half a century ago in the context of influencer marketing. Dichter (1966, p. 154) found that some influencers can be described as connoisseurs:

> Into this group fall those cases in which the listener was chiefly influenced by the speaker's close and authentic, but nonprofessional, contact with the product. The connoisseur may know as much or more about the product and its background than the expert, but he [*sic*] does not make his [*sic*] living in connection with it; he [*sic*] merely enjoys it and his [*sic*] know-how about it. But he [*sic*] is still a consumer, and as such is perceived by the listener [follower] as someone like himself [*sic*] but with more special product knowledge.

It must be acknowledged that our understanding of influencer marketing has evolved significantly since the publication of Dichter's (1966) work, in particular with the rise of social media. Today, it represents a multi-billion-dollar business for brands, as well as highly diverse influencers (e.g. celebrities, experts, consumers, children and pets), who operate at different follower scales (e.g. mega versus nano influencers) and in diverse contexts (e.g. beauty versus consumer electronics) (for a review see e.g. Guoquan, Hudders, De Jans, & De Veirman, 2021; Gurrieri, Drenten, & Abidin, 2020; Vrontis, Makrides, Christofi, & Thrassou, 2021).

Dichter's (1966) definition was chosen to provide a backdrop for the following considerations. Firstly, and corresponding with the previous conceptualizations, it can be noted that not all influencers belong to the group of connoisseurs. Dichter (1966) identified in total seven clusters of influencers—the connoisseur group is just one. Secondly, it is reasonable to suggest that not all connoisseurs share characteristic influencer attributes (and vice versa). This suggests that both constructs might overlap only partially (see Figure 29, p. 235). For example, not all connoisseurs may be motivated by a need for self-confirmation (Dichter, 1966), seek public individuation (Chan & Misra, 1990), actively engage in influencing practices (Jansen & Hinz, 2022), or "express friendship by providing others with consumption-related information" (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015, p. 246).

Figure 29
Conceptual intersection between influencers and connoisseurs
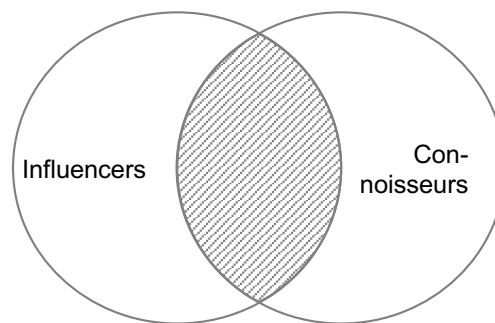
The latter statement is of particular relevance as it reveals a fourth aspect. It stresses that influencers form relationships primarily with other individuals (e.g. Coco & Eckert, 2020)—objects become mediators in person-person relationships. Connoisseurship, in contrast, is mainly a feature of person-object relationships.

Finally, postmodern thinkers challenge the modernist conceptualization of marketing structures that is implicit in Dichter's (1966) definition. For example, Fırat and Dholakia (2006, p. 138) argue that "consumers … may no longer be perceived as 'end users', located at the 'end' of value chains." Contemporary marketing literature recognizes that diverse market actors, including influencers and connoisseurs, co-create and co-destruct economic and non-economic value (e.g. Bu, Parkinson, & Thaichon,

2022; Quach & Thaichon, 2017). The traditional distinction between professional (e.g. designers) and non-professional market actors (e.g. non-designers) seems, therefore, questionable. This critique can be extended to Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer's (2012), as well as to Harkins' (2015), conceptualizations introduced earlier.

The purpose of the above treatment was to demonstrate that connoisseurship is not a monolith, but—to appropriate Arnould's (2006, p. 605) expression—a "contextually malleable construct." It over-laps with other concepts, but none of them seems to grasp connoisseurship fully. I acknowledge that the delineation remains somewhat crude and could be refined in various ways. For instance, influencers could be divided into opinion leaders and opinion formers (e.g. Ruby), highlighting the latter's formal expertise (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). The arguments provided in this study suggest that traditionally defined experts like typesetters (e.g. George), font designers (e.g. Luka), graphic designers (e.g. Alicia), as well as consumers (e.g. Emma), can be classified as connoisseurs. Furthermore, other overlapping concepts such as product enthusiasts (e.g. Raphael) could be added (Bloch, 1986). The intersections between connoisseurs and the various constructs are exemplified in Figure 30 (p. 236).

Figure 30
Examples of conceptual intersections between connoisseurs and other theoretical constructs
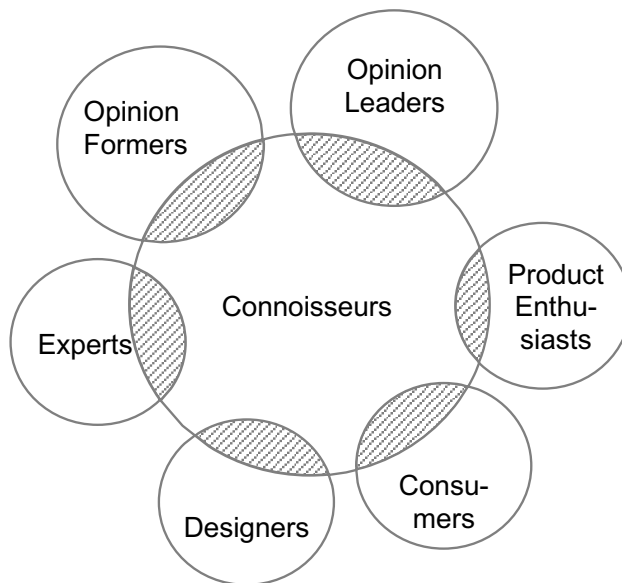
Although useful for shedding light on conceptual overlaps, Figure 30 (p. 236) conceals important qualities of connoisseurship as conceptualized in this study. First, constructs intersecting with connoisseurs might overlap again. For example, there are commonalities between opinion leaders and product enthusiasts, as well as between consumers and product enthusiasts (see e.g. Bloch, 1986). These conceptual overlaps are schematized in Figure 31 (p. 237). I appreciate that those constructs can be arranged differently to reveal even more intersections. This, however, would increase the complexity unnecessarily. The simplified graphic was designed as visual heuristic rather than complete model.

Figure 31

Conceptual intersections between connoisseurs, opinion leaders, product enthusiasts, and consumers
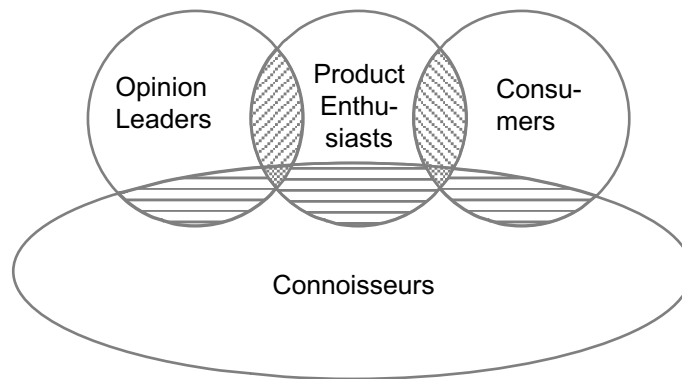
Second, and building on the previous point, Figure 30 (p. 236) might suggest that connoisseurship is a static state, i.e. that individuals might occupy a specific space in the diagram and remain there forever. However, this study constructed connoisseurship as a temporally dynamic phenomenon. It captures the lived experiences of person-object relationships that evolve over time. Luka, for example, moved from consumer to graphic designer to font designer. George, on the other hand, was introduced to typesetting at a very young age. He eventually became a typographer and occupied the 'expert' sphere. However, George had left that space some time ago, and he might thus be situated in a different one.

Third, Figure 30 (p. 236) does not specify which features are being transferred from the base (connoisseurs) to the target (e.g. consumers). Previous studies have been criticized for their one-dimensional conceptualization of connoisseurship. In contrast, this research suggests that connoisseurs can be described along five multi-layered facets. Once individuals apprehend typefaces, their relationships

with fonts—or with mundane products more generally—begin to take shape. Individuals get involved with everyday objects, start to hunt and gather them, develop object-related knowledge, and they eventually become gatekeepers by drawing symbolic and social boundaries as well as by building market structures. It is conceivable that all five facets of connoisseurship are transferred to target constructs like experts, consumers or opinion leaders, but manifest in different ways.

Finally, individuals might pursue different goals when consuming fonts. However, these motives remain hidden in Figure 30 (p. 236). For instance, experts might be driven by the creation of artefacts, whereas consumers might be motivated to engage with fonts as commodities in their own right. In both cases, connoisseurship is about individuals and their relationship with objects. The relationship is oriented inwardly. Conversely, as proposed earlier, opinion leaders might use typefaces to build relationships with other individuals. Because opinion leaders are motivated to influence others, their relationships are oriented outwardly.

The following sketches out the steps undertaken to develop an integrated model of connoisseurship that addresses the shortcomings outlined above and that reveals the intricate characteristics of connoisseurship more fully. The model focuses on six partially overlapping concepts: consumers, designers, experts, opinion formers, opinion leaders, and (product) enthusiasts. These are represented graphically in a Venn Diagram (Figure 32, Panel A, p. 239). Recognizing the argument that connoisseurship might overlap in parts with the aforementioned constructs, a grey triangle was placed on top of the Venn Diagram to create an additional intersecting layer (see Figure 32, Panel B, p. 239). Connoisseurs are situated inside the triangle (e.g. Alicia, Emma, Ruby, and Sarah), whereas non-connoisseurs are placed in the intersecting spheres outside the triangle (e.g. Briana and Damian). The triangle shall therefore be called 'connoisseurship triangle'. It is the focal point of the integrated connoisseurship model depicted in Figure 33 (p. 240).

Figure 32

Development of the connoisseurship triangle
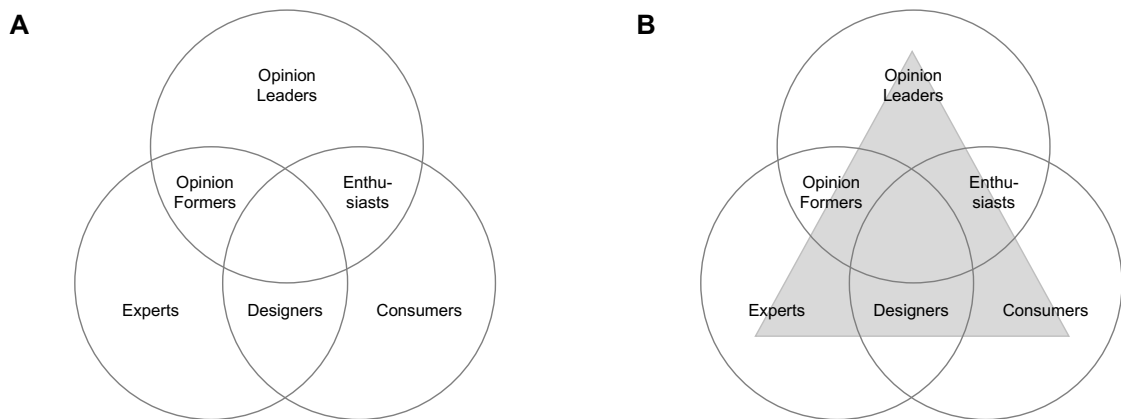
Note. Panel A: Venn diagram of the constructs *opinion leaders*, *expert* and *consumers* as well as *opinion formers*, *designers* and (product) *enthusiasts* situated at their intersections. Panel B: The grey area is called the connoisseurship triangle. This detail of the Venn diagram is the focal point of the integrated connoisseurship model.

The connoisseurship triangle in Figure 33 (p. 240) is framed by the five multi-layered facets of connoisseurship (see Chapter 5) and the five dimensions of the connoisseurship trajectories framework (see Chapter 6). Together, they represent the scaffold of the integrated connoisseurship model. The connoisseurship triangle is filled with the colour spectrum to highlight the fluidity of the concept—while some individuals may occupy only one space in the triangle, the colour spectrum suggests that they can move around freely within the entire triangle. Here, the trajectory is multi- rather than unidirectional.

Each corner (vertex) of the triangle indicates a core motivation that might drive individuals. Opinion leaders are situated at the tip (apex) of the triangle to juxtapose them with experts and consumers who are located at the base of the triangle. As proposed earlier and indicated on the sides (legs) of the triangle, experts and consumers form person-object relationships that are inwardly oriented, i.e. the relationships are about them and the object. Conversely, opinion leaders use objects to form relationships with other individuals, i.e. objects become mediators in person-object-person relationships. Influencers' relationships with objects are thus oriented outwardly towards others. This does not suggest that, for example, consumers or product enthusiasts cannot think about objects in use, but they are not consuming them to create relationships with others.

Figure 33

An integrated model of connoisseurship
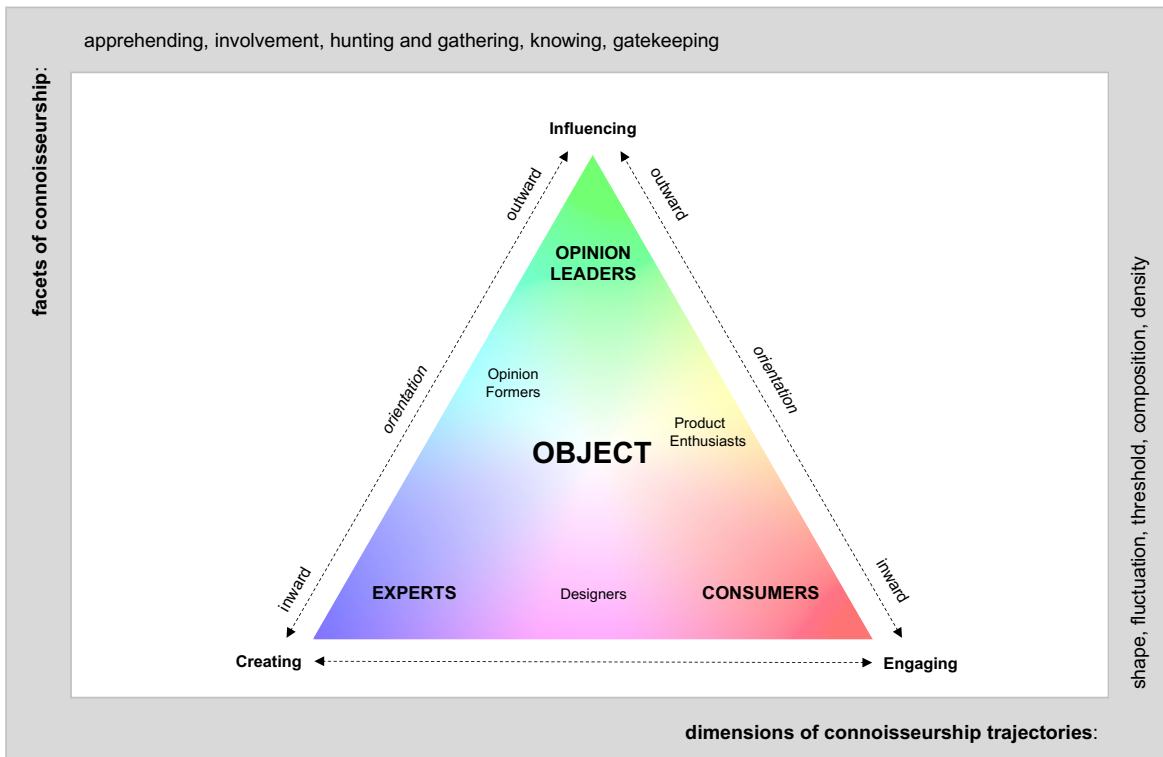
The everyday object, i.e. the font, is placed at the centre of the connoisseurship triangle. No matter what shape connoisseurs take, their connoisseurship will always revolve predominantly around a consumption object. Differently put, connoisseurship is not simply about being an expert, consumer, opinion leader, et cetera—it may overlap with those constructs, but it is not quite the same thing. Furthermore, the underlying assumption is that individuals apprehend them as commodities in their own right. Only then do individuals become sensitive to their lived experiences with mundane objects and connoisseurship can develop (see Chapter 5). This is why, in this study, connoisseurship is constructed "as proportional metaphor in the form A is the C of B" (Stamenković, Ichien, & Holyoak, 2019, p. 111), namely as 'the soul of person-object relationships'.

There is evidence that suggests the meaning of this novel concept is understood through analogy by creating associations between four terms, whereas only three of them are explicitly named (Holyoak & Stamenković, 2018; Stamenković et al., 2019). Connoisseurship [A] is being related to

person-object relationships [B] like souls [C] to humans [D]. The latter, however, is implicit and must be construed by the reader. I appreciate that the term 'soul' is ambiguous and may invoke controversial thoughts or feelings. My aim was to emphasize that—once we apprehend typefaces and other everyday objects—person-object relationships become living entities. Connoisseurship is the soul, our sense of identity, that is shaped by and transcends those relationships. As argued in this study, our self-understanding as well as our relationships with objects change. We can become more or less enmeshed with entities in the world. Our relationship with objects may be, as well as our relationships with objects, psychologically close (e.g. Luka) or distant (e.g. George), sophisticated (e.g. Alicia) or naïve (e.g. Emma), long-lived (e.g. Justin) or recent (e.g. Tobias) as well as polymorphic (e.g. Raphael). But if we do not apprehend mundane objects (e.g. Briana), they simply remain inanimate entities void of any meaning.

The results of this study in general and the reconceptualization of connoisseurship as the soul of person-object relationships has several implications for marketing theory and practice. The most pertinent issues are reviewed next.

Marketing implications for theory and practice

The central tenet of this study was that font users become increasingly diverse (Cahalan, 2004/2007). For this reason, a purposeful, maximum variation sampling strategy was employed to allow for the exploration of lived experiences from a variety of perspectives. As a result, participants of this research presented different socio-cultural backgrounds as well as varying personal and professional experiences with font consumption. For instance, included in the sample were font designers, graphic designers, and traditional end-consumers.

In response to the first research question, namely how relationships between individuals and fonts can be described analytically, this study offered the gestalt of connoisseurship. As established earlier, connoisseurship is a novel, temporally dynamic meta-concept, that integrates the lived experiences of diverse font users. It has been described as the soul of person-object-relationships. While the language might be challenged by some readers, it nonetheless invites us to rethink current conceptualizations not only of connoisseurship (see above), but also of person-object relationships.

My review of marketing and business literature indicates that the study of person-object relationships is approached from, essentially, one single 'vantage point' (Gadamer, 1960/1989), namely from that of the traditionally defined end-consumer. Research exploring person-object relationships from other perspectives—like employees or stakeholders more generally—is scarce, which is surprising considering their central role in the co-creation and co-destruction of monetary and non-monetary value (Gill-Simmen, MacInnis, Eisingerich, & Whan Park, 2018; R. Jones, 2008; Voyer, Kastanakis, & Rhode, 2017). This implies that our marketing understanding of person-object relationships might be too narrow, especially when marketing is conceptualized as ecosystem (Vargo & Lusch, 2017).

In this study, the exploration of multiple perspectives shed light on important characteristics of participants' relationships with fonts, which might have otherwise remained concealed. One feature that has particular relevance for marketing academics and practitioners alike is *fluidity*. As maintained earlier, font users, who crossed the Rubicon, can occupy one or more spaces within the connoisseurship triangle. That is, they can evolve in different directions. However, in marketing theory and practice, there is still a tendency to treat those spaces as isolated and static spheres.

Ten years ago, the consulting firm Ernst & Young (2012, p. 2) published a report in which they called attention to "the prevalence of the 'chameleon consumer,' a constantly changing persona, who defies the confines of traditional market segmentation." The authors of the report concluded that organizations "must undergo a similar radical transformation" (p. 2) to survive. Despite the need for change, mainstream marketing practice, theory, and education seem to adhere to the classic principles of market segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) (see e.g. Kotler, Armstrong, & Opresnik, 2021; W. R. Smith, 1956; Tuten & Solomon, 2018; Vinuales, Magnotta, Steffes, & Kulkarni, 2019). Evidence from previous typographic research (Duru, 2013) indicates that font designers approach segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) activities in a less systematic fashion (see Chapter 5). More elaborate theories and applications (e.g. dynamic market segmentation or the use of artificial intelligence) are needed to better understand and successfully engage with the shape-shifting audience to co-create value.

The potential for metamorphosis has additional tangible implications for marketing practice. On a more direct level, it is suggested that organizations can nurture connoisseurs. Conversely, on a more abstract level, marketing managers must be mindful that connoisseurship is the soul of person-object

relationships. The space between individuals and fonts is where meaning is constructed. One recommendation for marketing practitioners is to create platforms where diverse font users can interact with fonts. Most recently, Wichmann, Wiegand, and Reinartz (2022) presented five building blocks of digital platforms: transaction, community, benchmarking, guidance, and inspiration. These are designed to address specific consumer goals: commercial exchange, social exchange, self-improvement, epistemic empowerment, creative empowerment. Let me illustrate their idea with examples taken from font users of this study. For instance, the building block 'guidance' provides a space where font users like Raphael could experience 'epistemic empowerment'. Conversely, the building block 'community' affords users like Ruby to engage in 'social exchange' and thus to make use of her "superpower of connecting people" (Ruby, p. 38, INT677) as well as to promote equity by addressing power asymmetries or making other designers visible (Ruby, p. 12, INT203-206). Font users like Luka, who gets bored with seeing the same typefaces repeatedly, could experience 'creative empowerment' in the 'inspiration' block. Finally, users like Kevin could experience self-fulfilment—a term I prefer over self-improvement—in the 'benchmarking' block. For example, by devising creative challenges (i.e. gamification), font users could be encouraged to engage in the personalization and prosumption of fonts.

A cornerstone of this research was the claim that the digitisation and democratization of fonts are disrupting the type industry because they facilitate the emergence of a prosumer culture (Post & Lentjes, 2015). An aspect that remained somewhat underexplored is the democratization of type: How does democratization manifest and how exactly does it propagate prosumption or—more broadly speaking—the co-creation of value in the context of everyday products like fonts?

Earlier in this study, it was established that fonts (software) unfold their value in use. Analogous to other everyday consumption products (e.g. energy and water), fonts require other objects (e.g. computer hardware and software) to achieve their end (e.g. personalization – see Chapter 2). This underscores that individuals' lived experiences with fonts are mediated instrumentally.

Participants' lived experiences reveal that a person's endeavour to develop connoisseurship and to engage in prosumption will depend on their capacity and motivation to do so. As shown in Chapter 4, Laura (p. 76, INT1350) describes herself as *"technophobe"*. Elsewhere, she explained her approach to the creation of her collage as follows…

I had an hour to do it [task]– so I had to be– use something familiar… and …. So, I didn't have time … to learn a new technique. I needed something that I'm used to using, because I wanted to put my efforts into the content rather than the platform. (Laura, pp. 76-77, INT1361-1367)

While Laura had access to Microsoft Office software, she did not have the capacity and motivation to engage in prosumption. This is indicated by the expression 'learn a new technique' as well as the time limit she set herself. This becomes most evident when comparing her approach to that of other participants. For instance, Alicia afforded significantly more time to the task at hand:

From the time I got to it, I sat down, read it, the brief, visited Unsplash, completed the work, it was probably about four hours? (Alicia, p. 10, INT174-176)

Laura's experience stands also in stark contrast to Luka's relationship with technology and fonts…

I'm a fanboy of all technologies … and then I'm really a fanboy of how things will express themselves through that technology– how type will work. (Luka, p. 45, INT796-800)

The juxtaposition of Laura's and Luka's accounts underscores the mediated character of font consumption; it hints that a person's attitude towards instruments (i.e. technology) may constitute a gateway to font consumption (e.g. personalization) and to prosumption respectively. As illustrated above, Laura responds with avoidance, whereas Luka embraces new technologies (approach). The mediating role of technology can also be grasped in George's experiential statement introduced in Chapter 6:

I didn't know how to [do that in PowerPoint], but I found how to control the inter-character spacing … And it was important to me to have a less intercharacter spacing than the default …. It was important to me to do that, 'cause I just felt happier when … I was adding my own taste. (George, pp. 21-23, INT378-403)

To appropriate Laura's own statement, George was open to put his effort into learning a new technology and mastering the platform unknown to him (Microsoft PowerPoint). By exercising control and adding his 'own taste', George personalized the type design and was able to extend his sense of self (Belk, 1988)—see Chapter 2 (p. 41).

These observations provide initial indications that our capacity and motivation to engage in prosumption differs between individuals. However, the examples employed throughout this study point towards differences in objects as well. That is, prosumption might be easier in certain domains because there is (more) capacity for it.

It is fair to suggest that access to and the capacity to handle technology in the context of font consumption and prosumption is different from, for example, the context of utility consumption (see e.g. Chapter 5, p. 158). While recent technological developments empower consumers to produce energy themselves, these instruments (e.g. solar panels) are most likely less democratic than those used in the context of typefaces (e.g. software)—the latter can be located and accessed more easily. Equally, there might be other domains of everyday consumption objects, such as gas and water, where we simply do not have the capacity to prosume.

The issue, however, is not restricted to utility or font consumption. Take the example of fragrances. We might have the capacity to create some sort of fragrance base, but we will most likely not be able to distil the essence. This suggests that our level of involvement and/or participation in the customization/personalization process is restricted by the capacities available in the domain. In contrast to products like fragrances, the capacity to prosume fashion clothing might be far higher. In Chapter 4, Laura explained…

> *I've always been obsessed with clothes and fashion …. I used to make my own clothes and make them for my dolls, and, you know, I've always loved clothing. (Laura, pp. 68-69, INT1220-1225)*

What struck me is that Laura has evidently developed connoisseurship and the capacity to prosume in the domain of fashion, but not in the area of typefaces. This implies that the notion of capacity is neither inherently object-related nor person-related. On the contrary, it suggests that the capacity manifests in the space between object and person. In the case of typefaces, that space is mediated instrumentally. From a practitioner perspective, it is therefore of utmost importance to equip spaces like software and platforms with capacities so that connoisseurs with the capacity to engage in prosumption can do so.

Future research directions

Based on the above discussion, this study considers three main directions for future research. First, a better understanding of relationship trajectories is needed. Marketing and consumer researchers tend to study specific relationship phenomena in isolation (e.g. brand love/hate). However, by introducing a connoisseurship trajectories framework, the present research was able to grasp relationships between

individuals and fonts more fully. The compositional dimension highlights that connoisseurship is a higher-order construct, that allows for the integration of other concepts. The density dimension prompted a rethink of consumers and the formation of person-object relationship. It revealed that individuals are not empty vessels that engage in consumption practices—past and present are projected into the future (Gadamer, 1960/1989). This is the essence of connoisseurship as the soul of person-object-relationships metaphor. Analogous to interpersonal relationships, person-object relationships will always be part of us and shape other relationships we develop with the entities in our world. Here, the notion of mono- and polymorphic connoisseurs was introduced. Some researchers have started to extend the scope of their trajectory research from specific phases of the consumption process to the full cycle (e.g. Karanika & Hogg, 2013), but our understanding of polymorphic person-object relationships remains limited. This could be an interesting avenue to pursue in future, perhaps longitudinal, research.

Second, marketing and consumer researchers could explore the meaning of typefaces and font consumption more generally by including more perspectives. Although the participants of this study were diverse, some voices remained silent. It would be interesting to hear how, for example, brand, sales, and advertising managers make sense of font consumption and what they believe are the implications for their profession (identity). As argued throughout this study, meaning emerges from the space between I and Thou. This suggests that brand managers cannot control meaning or set boundaries for interpretative possibilities (for a review see Hackley & Hackley, 2018), but they can facilitate it. Should we therefore—for the lack of better terms—consider brand managers as midwives and platforms as incubators of product meanings?

Finally, and building on the above, researchers are invited to revisit some of the language employed in this study as well as in the marketing and consumer literature more generally. In Chapter 2 (p. 53), I appropriated the question *'What do I call us?'* from Hadden et al. (2018) to highlight problems in naming relational concepts. If language is indeed the only being that can be understood, then an exploration of our vocabulary seems highly relevant and must include a critical evaluation of our own prejudices (Gadamer, 1960/1989). For example, postmodern marketing scholars recognize the blurring of the traditional value chain (e.g. Fırat & Dholakia, 2006), yet mainstream marketing literature keeps applying modernist language and logic. This tension is also implied in more contemporary concepts like prosumption, which not only tends to be more consumer-centred than oriented towards the marketing

ecosystem but uses the traditional roles to anchor language (e.g. prosumer or produser). A more refined and reflective language would enhance academic understanding of our (post) postmodern reality (e.g. Holt, 2002) and potentially avoid the pitfall of continuing calling the "rose by any other name" (Shakespeare, 1599/1967, 2.2.43-44).

Evaluation

Careful consideration was given to the validity and quality of this IPA research (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). General criteria for the evaluation of qualitative research (Yardley, 2015) were combined with IPA specific indicators (Nizza et al., 2021) to assess this study. This seemed sensible because IPA was used as a scaffold for this work. The following uses Yardley's (2000) framework to organize the key outcomes of the evaluation under four headlines: (1) sensitivity to context; (2) commitment and rigour; (3) coherence and transparency; as well as (4) impact and importance.

I appreciate the availability of alternative criteria (e.g. Guba & Lincoln, 1989; J. A. Smith, 2011a; J. A. Smith et al., 2022), yet I believe that the chosen framework is the most purposeful for this research.

Sensitivity to context

Through all stages of this study, great effort was undertaken to review multidisciplinary literature in an attempt to critically analyse existing concepts, contextualize new ideas, solidify arguments, and to justify choices made. The latter include, for instance, the multimethod (multimodal) research design and heterogeneous sampling strategy. Both afforded the researcher to explore idiographic, conscious and unconscious lived experiences with font consumption more fully. This was achieved, for example, by using various projective techniques, like collage creation and circular interview questions.

Appropriate space was attributed to the contemplation of legal and ethical implications of doing visual research. The devised research design changed the voice of the study and helped restore power balance between participants and researcher. The diverse nature of the sample prompted me to listen carefully to what the individuals had to say in their multimodal texts, and ultimately to dive even deeper for pearls (J. A. Smith, 2011c). Through my engagement in the triple hermeneutic process (Kirkham et

al., 2015), I was able to highlight commonalities and differences between individuals and to construct novel meaning.

Commitment and rigour

From the outset of this research, I was drawn and committed to conducting an IPA study. The reasons for this were fundamentally twofold. Firstly, IPA allowed for flexibility and creativity in the complete research process—that is, from the conception of the study to the presentation of its results. As mentioned in Chapter 3, I appreciate the concerns that critiques of IPA have raised, but I concur with other scholars (e.g. Dennison, 2019) that these IPA features are rather strengths than limitations. Having said this, I must admit that the latitude IPA research offers can be daunting at times. But by engaging with literature, dwelling on research data, attending conferences, as well as conversing with other IPA researchers and supervisors, I was able to continuously grow my skills and confidence, which ultimately led to the fusion of IPA and a modified version of the collage life story elicitation technique (Van Schalkwyk, 2010).

Secondly, I believe the particular strength of IPA is its commitment to idiography, i.e. lived experiences at micro level (e.g. J. A. Smith, Harré, & van Langenhove, 1995). This distinguishes IPA from other approaches like phenomenological psychology (e.g. Giorgi, 1970) and grounded theory (e.g. Glaser & Strauss, 1967) because their research focus is on phenomena and processes at meso and macro level respectively (J. A. Smith et al., 2009; Willig, 2013). Furthermore, many qualitative research approaches, like thematic analysis (e.g. Braun & Clarke, 2006) or template analysis (e.g. King, 2004), tend to emphasize phenomena located at the centre (commonalities) rather than at the fringes (differences) of experiences.

The construction, analysis and presentation of 48 data sets required not only particular commitment to idiography, but also rigour in e.g. transcription as well as the application of the hermeneutic circle, i.e. analytical reading and development of experiential accounts (Nizza et al., 2021).

Coherence and transparency

As author (playwright) of this study, I understand my responsibility towards the participants (cast) and research community (audience). Great care was taken to present experiential statements and analytic arguments coherently and trustworthily.

For this constructivist study, IPA provided the scaffold, Gadamerian phenomenological herme-neutics the foundation, and participants' lived experiences the bricks for the construction of an integrated connoisseurship model. My interpretations combined with insights from literature solidified its structure. This demonstrates a strong fit between theory, methodology, data generation and analysis as well as presentation of results. The latter included my endeavour to create an unfolding narrative that would emphasize the particular, for example through the juxtaposition of lived experiences.

Heightened attention was also directed to making decisions (e.g. collage and pilot), processes (e.g. transcription and analysis) and presentation (e.g. citation of experiential statements) transparent. Reflections placed at the beginning and end of this study, as well as woven into the narrative were additional measures to increase transparency of this research.

Impact and importance

This study applied the 'problematization technique' (Chatterjee & Davison, 2021; Sandberg & Alvesson, 2010) to establish chiefly that individual research strands and theories (see Chapters 2-3) have limited capacity to explore the meanings fonts have for increasingly diverse font users (Cahalan, 2004/2007). This particular approach has, furthermore, helped to highlight that current conceptualizations of con-noisseurship do not fully capture the kind of relationship individuals forge with fonts—despite connois-seurship being a widely used construct within, and across, various academic disciplines (see Chapters 5-7). What became evident from the above treatment is that subject area knowledge of connoisseurship remains predominantly disconnected (e.g. consumer, typographic and influencer research). As a con-sequence, the potential to generate new insights through, for example, cross-fertilization remains un-derexploited.

The present research contributes to consumer psychology theory in three important ways (Fischer & Guzel, 2023; Fischer & Otnes, 2006). Firstly, it 'relates' to research from multiple disciplines to ascertain previously unexplored relationships between them. Secondly, it introduces connoisseurship as the gestalt of person-object relationships in the context of font consumption. This is done by moving away from a one-dimensional concept and '(re)constructing' connoisseurship as a temporally dynamic, multi-faceted and multi-layered phenomenon. Thirdly, in so doing, the study 'redresses' theories from existing body of literature by "identifying and ameliorating elisions or omissions" (Fischer & Guzel, 2023,

p. 3). Main theoretical contributions and implications of this enquiry have been summarized in Table 14 (p. 251). Consequences for marketing theory and practice were presented in Chapter 7 above (see pp. 241, 245).

Finally, this study also contributes to the growing body of IPA literature in general, and multi-modal IPA research more specifically, by introducing a collage construction method, enriching the methodological toolbox in consumer research and beyond.

Table 14

Contributions and implications – An overview

Examples of seminal theories and concepts applied in this study	Domain	Contributions	Implications
Aesthetic Hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1964/1976, 1960/1989)	Philosophy	Gadamer's aesthetic hermeneutics is highly phenomenological in nature. It proposes that works of art speak to each individual. The message is very personal and unfolds when we actively engage in the play, that is sense-making (interpretation).	Researchers should consider extending and complementing literature through problematization (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2010).
		This study used problematization to challenge key assumptions of extant literature (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2010)—see Chapters 2, 3, and 7 (pp. 21, 59, 247).	This approach requires the presentation of one's "own worldview and associated theories/assumptions as a way of enhancing existing research" (Chatterjee & Davison, 2021, p. 228).
		It extends Gadamer's ideas to the context of typeface designs (applied art) and font consumption (consumer psychology) respectively by interconnecting aesthetic hermeneutics with PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIP THEORY and identity theories.	
		Analogies were drawn between play (fusion of horizons) and consumption practices (parasocial interactions). It has been stressed that meaning is generated in the space between I (individual) and Thou (font) through paracommunication ('imagined' dialogue) and parasocial processing (psychological response)—two distinct yet related phenomena. Eventually, meaning is integrated into our self-understanding (identity) and into our orientation towards the world and its entities (e.g. fonts), which forges parasocial relationships with consumption objects like typefaces.	
		As a result, this study was able to create a robust scaffold for e.g. research design, process and theory building.	

Examples of seminal theories and concepts applied in this study	Domain	Contributions	Implications
Brand Relationship Theory (Fournier, 1994, 1998)	Consumer Research	Brand relationship theory makes three fundamental assumptions. First, consumers form relationships with brands by anthropomorphizing them. Second, relationships with brands are perceived as reciprocal because of the brand's marketing activities (communication). Finally, consumer-brand relationships are temporally dynamic and display alternate development trajectories. The present study extends and redresses Fournier's (1994, 1998) work, mainly by integrating PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIP THEORY and the RELATIONSHIP TRAJECTORY FRAMEWORK.	See PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIP THEORY and the RELATIONSHIP TRAJECTORY FRAMEWORK.
Chasm (Moore, 1991/2014)	Marketing	Moore (1991/2014) argues that a 'chasm' separates markets in an 'early market' and a 'mainstream market'. This research adopts the idea of a chasm in the form of the 'Rubicon' (see Chapter 6, p. 219) and highlights that literature on person-object relationships tends to focus on the post-Rubicon stage. As a consequence, marketing academics and practitioners frequently ignore prospect consumers in the pre-Rubicon stage.	Ignored market segment(s) constitute unexploited possibilities for creating monetary (e.g. sales) and non-monetary value (e.g. understanding). Academics and practitioners must invest more resources in developing knowledge and markets more holistically.

Examples of seminal theories and concepts applied in this study	Domain	Contributions	Implications
Connoisseurship (Elliott, 2006)	Cultural Studies	Elliott (2006) endorses the idea that connoisseurship is determined by good taste and describes two processes that tend to occur simultaneously. Firstly, connoisseur-status can be inscribed to objects that were previously not considered in the area of connoisseurship (e.g. coffee). Secondly, objects that already have connoisseur-status (e.g. wine) can be democratized, making them accessible to a wider audience.	Elliott (2006) claims that there are two distinct processes at play: inscription and democratization. The caveat that theories and implications derived from those two spheres might differ can, therefore, not be ruled out.
		Previous research established that fonts have been democratized by moving them from a specialist to a non-specialist space (Cahalan, 2004/2007). In this sense, the democratization of fonts is best captured in the second process described by Elliott (2006). second idea, but reconceptualized connoisseurship as a temporally dynamic, multi-faceted and multi-layered construct rather than a one-dimensionsal concept that focusses on taste (see Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 153, 203).	Further enquiries are needed to better understand the connoisseurship phenomenon, including the exploration of commonalities and differences between inscription and democratization processes.
		Chapter 7 (p. 231) relates exemplary literature from different domains, namely consumer, typographic and influencer research. In doing so, this study was able (1) to shed light on commonaliies and differences between alternate conceptualizations of connoisseurship and (2) to construct a new connoisseurship model, redressing shortcomings of existing theories (see Chapter 7, p. 240).	Another interesting avenue for future research could be the application of the connoisseurship model introduced in this study to other contexts.

Examples of seminal theories and concepts applied in this study	Domain	Contributions	Implications
Market Segmentation (W. R. Smith, 1956)	Marketing	The central idea of market segmentation is to develop markets by dividing the total, heterogeneous market into smaller, more homogeneous markets (W. R. Smith, 1956). As shown in Chapter 7 (p. 242), segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) remains one of the most prevalent principles in marketing theory and practice. This study revealed that font users have the ability to undergo metamorphosis, emphasizing the fluidity of connoisseurship (see also PROSUMPTION). As a consequence, static market segmentation has been challenged and the need for a more dynamic approach to segmentation was articulated.	While 'chameleon consumers' become the new norm, it appears marketers continue to ignore calls for a more 'radical transformation' of organizations that would allow firms to cater for increasingly diverse consumers (Ernst & Young, 2012). Practioners and academics alike are advised to reconsider their use of traditional theories and practices, and to replace them by dynamic ones that acknowledge the new marketing reality.

Examples of seminal theories and concepts applied in this study	Domain	Contributions	Implications
Parasocial Relationship Theory (e.g. Horton & Wohl, 1956; Schramm & Hartmann, 2008)	Communication	This theory postulates that unidirectional, mediated interactions between individuals and persona (e.g. media personalities) shape parasocial relationships over time. In the context of font consumption, parasocial relationship theory was found more suitable than BRAND RELATIONSHIP THEORY because interactions with typefaces lack reciprocity. Parasocial relationship theory was complemented with AESTHETIC HERMENEUTICS. The latter proposes that users engage in (imagined) conversations with typefaces if they participate in the play—a key feature of parasocial relationship theory. However, the integration of BRAND RELATIONSHIP THEORY and RELATIONSHIP TRAJECTORY FRAMEWORK helped to construct the connoisseurship model proposed in this study. The model enriches contemporary marketing literature in at least three important ways. First, it challenges common practice to study phenomena separately (e.g. love/hate). Second, it contributes to our understanding of consumer-product relationships, a phenomenon that—in contrast to brand relationships—remains under-researched. Finally, the present research identified five multi-layered facets of connoisseurship, that develop over time (see Chapter 5, p. 153). These qualities are situated in font users, bestowing them with the capacity to forge relationships with consumption objects like typefaces. This conceptualization differs from constructs found in BRAND RELATIONSHIP THEORY.	Multi-disciplinary research can be an effective way to advance marketing knowledge and practice within and beyond disciplinary boundaries. However, existing literature and newly developed understanding must be carefully related and redressed (Fischer & Guzel, 2023; Sandberg & Alvesson, 2010) to unfold its full potential.

Examples of seminal theories and concepts applied in this study	Domain	Contributions	Implications
Prosumption (Toffler, 1980)	Social History	More than four decades ago, Toffler (1980) described prosumption as the phenomenon where consumers produce and consume their own offers. As outlined in Chapter 1 (p. 4), this development can also be observed in the context of font consumption, where "digitisation completes the transformation of the typographer into an all-round graphic designer *and* the 'semi-professionalisation' of the amateur" (Post & Lentjes, 2015, p. 240; emphasis in original). Consequently, marketing structures become more and more blurred. The discussion in Chapter 7 (p. 243) revealed that font prosumption does depend on at least two factors. First, consumers must have the capacity and motivation to prosume. Second, the capacity to prosume is domain-specific (e.g. fonts versus fragrances). Further, the juxtaposition of, for instance, font and utility prosumption showed that everyday consumption products and services differ in their capacity to promote prosumption. This begins to question the generalizability of prosumption and mundane consumption theory.	A more nuanced understanding of prosumption—particularly in the domain of everyday products and services—is needed as they may entail different antecedents, processes and outcomes.

Examples of seminal theories and concepts applied in this study	Domain	Contributions	Implications
Relationship Trajectory Framework (Eastwick et al., 2019)	Psychology	Eastwick et al. (2019) describe interpersonal relationship trajectories along five dimensions (shape, fluctuation, threshold, composition, and density).	Current research and marketing practice ignore that the notion of person-object relationship is best understood as meta-concept. The study and application of singular concepts (e.g. brand love/hate) may, therefore, be limiting.
		The present research extends the framework to the context of PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIP THEORY by introducing a connoisseurship trajectory framework (see Chapter 6, pp. 220, 225). This ameliorates contemporary understanding of person-object relationships.	Academics and practitioners should explore the phenomenon more holistically to advance marketing knowledge and practice.
		Existing marketing literature tends to focus on the shape trajectories of specific relationship types (e.g. brand love/hate), which might be too narrow.	
		Conversely, the connoisseurship trajectory framework is more comprehensive, because (1) it integrates individual relationship types (e.g. attachment/aversion, [non]commitment, love/hate) in one single dimension (composition), and because (2) it synchronously explores five multi-layered dimensions of the connoisseurship trajectory across different points in time.	
		This integrative framework was therefore able to advance extant understanding of connoisseurship, for example, by introducing the notion of mono- and polymorphic connoisseurs after careful exploration of the density dimension in the context of font consumption. See also SPHERES OF INFLUENCE.	

Examples of seminal theories and concepts applied in this study	Domain	Contributions	Implications
Service Ecosystem Theory (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2017)	Marketing	This theory endorses the idea that market actors (institutions, individuals) and processes are interconnected, forming large marketing networks (ecosystems) to co-create value while striving for individual and collective wellbeing—that is competition and cooperation (co-opetition)—simultaneously. The present research explored what meaning font consumption has for diverse market actors, extending the research sample beyond traditional consumers. This allowed for a fuller understanding of the research phenomenon (see Chapter 7, p. 242).	Academics and practitioners should move beyond dyadic relationships and explore how other market actors (e.g. Adobe; Monotype; consumers) and their respective offerings (e.g. software; ecommerce platforms; communities) affect consumption practices. A more systemic view might reveal new opportunities to develop offerings, markets, and knowledge. (see also PROSUMPTION; SPHERES OF INFLUENCE)
Spheres of Influence (Merton, 1949/1968)	Sociology	Merton (1949/1968, p. 381; emphasis in original) established that individuals differ in terms "of the number of spheres of activity in which they exert interpersonal influence." Accordingly, the author distinguishes between monomorphic (single sphere) and polymorphic (multiple spheres) influencers, respectively. This study appropriates Morton's (1949/1968) idea and introduces the notion of monomorphic and polymorphic connoisseurs (see Chapter 6, p. 226). It proposes that individuals can forge relationships with one or more consumption objects either simultaneously or sequentially.	Marketing literature seems to focus on dyadic and isolated consumer-object relationships, ignoring that we are enmeshed with all entities in the world (Heidegger, 1927/1962). There is, therefore, a risk that our understanding of consumer-object relationships is fragmented, necessitating a more holistic approach to researching consumers' relationships with consumption objects. (see also SERVICE ECOSYSTEM THEORY)

Note. Cross-references within this table are indicated in SMALL CAPITAL TYPEFACES.

Reflexive epilogue

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"In the community of consumer psychologists, qualitative research methods have no overt enemies, but many damn them with faint praise."

(Chakravarti & Crabbe, 2019, p. 61)

Towards the final stages of this research, I began to realize how much the gem *"Just for people like me"* found in Kevin's (p. 60, INT1063) interview transcript had shaped this work as a whole (J. A. Smith, 2011c), and how much it reflects my own reality as a qualitative researcher interested in the psychological study of consumer behaviour.

On deeper reflection, the statement could be construed as an exclusive invitation extended to like-minded readers, who—like me—are aware of the *borderland* (Elenes, 1997) in which qualitative consumer psychological research is situated (Chakravarti & Crabbe, 2019). As such, the quote became meaningful at a fourth hermeneutic level (Boden & Eatough, 2014; Kirkham et al., 2015; J. A. Smith et al., 2009):

1. Participants' pre-reflective and pre-linguistic lived experiences with font consumption.
2. Participants' reflections on their lived experiences with font consumption.
3. Researcher's interpretations of lived experiences with font consumption.
4. Researcher's write-up with for an intended audience (e.g. supervisors and examiners).

Recent studies provide additional evidence that qualitative psychological research in general, and consumer psychological research more specifically, are still not fully accepted research streams, and that they have to face various prejudices at disciplinary, country, institutional, and even personal level (for a review see e.g. Clarke, 2021; Fischer & Guzel, 2023; Gough & Lyons, 2016). My own lived experiences align with these observations.

For example, when I undertook my Master's degree in business psychology at a German university four years ago, the institution's position was that the focus of teaching and learning must be on quantitative—as opposed to qualitative—research methods, because only the former were considered genuinely *scientific*. In a similar vein, when I embarked on my doctoral journey in the United Kingdom, I was advised by a module tutor that conducting qualitative research would significantly narrow my chances of getting published—a message that no early career researcher wants to hear, but that seems to still reflect publication reality (Fischer & Guzel, 2023).

Conversely, my supervisor, Dr. Philippa Ward, encouraged me to rethink my original research proposal, which was essentially quantitative in nature. Her position was that qualitative research could afford a deeper, richer, and fuller understanding of the phenomenon at hand—and she was right.

However, what I did not yet know at that time was that the pursuit of a qualitative psychological study would become more of a journey toward *self-authorship* (Baxter Magolda & King, 2012). I realize today, that it is the latter that allows me to occupy and embrace the borderland space (represented visually in my collage in Appendix 26, p. 376), and I will be forever indebted to my supervisors for guiding me through this critical process. I understand that my development as constructivist researcher is still on-going. Contrary to my suggestion in the reflexive prologue, this work should, therefore, not be considered an outcome but a milestone on becoming who I am (Heidegger, 1927/1962).

This research has helped me to recognize some of my own prejudices, and it has consequently influenced my academic understanding and practice. The following provides select examples to illustrate changes. First, reflecting on my own writing, I wonder if I have adopted Gadamer's (1960/1989) phe-nomenological hermeneutics because it was indeed a *security blanket* (Lynn & Lea, 2005). It gave me some degrees of freedom in the interpretation of meaning, but it equally set boundaries to what is pos-sible. I believe this is implicit in the sentence: *"This leap would be too big for me"* (see p. 64). I am curious what else this study could have revealed if approached differently and that is a question I plan to explore in more depth going forward.

Second, it made me realize that my professional background in brand and product licensing at Hugo Boss and Kenzo might have (a) rendered features of font consumption more salient to me (e.g. deviant behaviour); (b) shaped parameters of the research design (e.g. detailed legal and ethical con-siderations); and (c) fostered an external, customer-centred view of brand management, because I was more involved with protecting brand images—and meanings. Consequently, in academic year 2021/22, I introduced the concept of *stakeholder-brand relationships* in my luxury brand management module, which allowed students to explore the co-creation and co-destruction of value from multiple perspec-tives. Furthermore, I am currently engaging in collaborative research to explore individuals' relationships with multiple—as opposed to singular—brands.

Third, this study prompted me to constantly reflect on the language that I use, and to ask myself what it means to be a constructivist researcher and how constructivism manifests in language. At the beginning of my academic practice, I used language pre-reflectively. My language was rooted in post-positivism—the paradigm that I was most familiar with. As indicated earlier, my training asserted that there was no (scientific) alternative to postpositivism—an alternative worldview and vocabulary was

consequently never taught. As an academic (and postgraduate researcher), I feel the most valuable gift we can give to our students is not necessarily subject or practical knowledge, but self-authorship—that is, the ability to articulate who they are, how they know, and how they relate to entities in the world (Baxter Magolda, 2004; Baxter Magolda & King, 2012). It is, therefore, not about imposing my worldview on students, but to allow them to develop their own stance and to accept differences between myself and others. This entails, in my opinion, a continuous critical discourse with students, as well as with colleagues, about diverse worldviews and their many manifestations to make prejudices explicit to oneself and to others.

Finally, and related to the above, I feel I have become an advocate of not only IPA research but of qualitative psychological consumer research more generally. Up until now, I have been rather a passive member of the British Psychological Society, including its Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section, as well as of the Academy of Marketing and its Visual Methods Research Group. Going forward, I wish to actively promote multimethod/multimodal qualitative research in consumer psychology on a personal, institutional and disciplinary level. As Fischer and Guzel (2023, p. 259) rightly claim: "There is considerable untapped potential for qualitative research to make theoretical contributions that will advance our collective insights on consumer psychology."

In this regard, my study can be seen as a contribution to the field of qualitative consumer psychological research and I hope its title *"Just for people like me"* (Kevin, p. 60, INT1063) is perceived as an invitation to engage in a dialogue beyond paradigmatic boundaries.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 Examples of typographic terms used in marketing and consumer research

Terms used	Exemplary research (author, year)
typeface designs, *typefaces*, or *type faces*	Brumberger (2004); T. L. Childers and Jass (2002); Davis and Smith (1933); P. W. Henderson et al. (2004); Karnal et al. (2016); Mackiewicz and Moeller (2004); McCarthy and Mothersbaugh (2002); Poffenberger and Franken (1923); Schroll et al. (2018); Van Rompay and Pruyn (2011); Webster and Tinker (1935)
type as a standalone or compound term, such as e.g. *type style*, *type font*, or *font type*	Grohmann (2016); Grohmann et al. (2013); Morrison (1986); Tantillo et al. (1995); Zaichkowsky (2010)
font face	Page and Thorsteinsson (2009); N. Zhao et al. (2018)
(letter) font	Doyle and Bottomley (2004); Holm et al. (2009); Shaikh, Chaparro, and Fox (2006)
style of lettering	Doyle and Bottomley (2006, 2009)
letter shape	Doyle and Bottomley (2011)

Appendix 2 Example of the EULA for the font Arquitecta (MyFonts, 2015)

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Appendix 3 Theoretical foundations of IPA

Theoretical foundation	Relevance for IPA research (cited from J. A. Smith et al., 2022)	Manifestation in this research
Phenomenology	"Husserl's work establishes for us, first of all, the importance and relevance of a focus on experience and its perception. In developing Husserl's work further, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre each contribute to a view of the person as embedded and immersed in a world of objects and relationships, language and culture, projects and concerns. They move us away from the descriptive commitments and transcendental interests of Husserl, towards a more interpretative and worldly position with a focus on understanding the perspectival directedness of our involvement in the lived world." (pp. 16-17)	An inductive, multimethod interpretative phenomenological research was designed to tap into individuals' (un-)conscious and (pre-)linguistic, multimodal experiences with font consumption (see e.g. p. 78).
Husserl (1913/1982)	"Like Husserl, we see phenomenological research as systematically and attentively reflecting on everyday lived experience, and with Husserl we see that that everyday experience can be either first-order activity [experiential base] or second-order [scientific knowledge] mental and affective responses to that activity – remembering, regretting, desiring, and so forth. Thus, in IPA we are concerned with examining subjective experience, but that is always the subjective experience of 'something' [intentionality]." (p. 27)	The present study sought to understand individuals' (subjective) lived experiences with font consumption (of something). It did so by adhering to IPA's systematic approach to data generation, analysis, and presentation. Verbatim quotes from visual (collages), written (narratives) and spoken (interviews) texts were used to present subjective experiences.
	"Bracketing, or the *attempt* at bracketing found in reflexive practices, has been taken up by many qualitative research approaches and is seen by IPA as offering an important part of the research process .... While Husserl was concerned to find the essence of experience, IPA has the more modest ambition of attempting to capture particular experiences as experienced for particular people." (p. 11; emphasis in original)	My reflections can be found in the prologue and epilogue of this study and were also carefully woven into the narrative of individual chapters to make my own pre-judices transparent. Furthermore, participants' texts were analysed case-by-case and insights were not purposefully fed into subsequent cases. I kept a research diary to capture my own preconceptions and mull-over own experiences (see e.g. Chapter 4; meeting Alicia [p. 101] and Damian [p. 108] respectively).

Theoretical foundation	Relevance for IPA research (cited from J. A. Smith et al., 2022)	Manifestation in this research
Heidegger (1927/1962)	"The key ideas for IPA researchers to take from Heidegger at this stage are, first, that human beings can be conceived of as 'thrown into' a world of objects, relationships and language; second, that our being-in-the-world is always perspectival, always temporal and always 'in-relation-to' something – and consequently, that the interpretation of people's meaning-making activities is central to phenomenological inquiry in psychology. A crucial feature of *Being and Time* is Heidegger's reading of phenomenology through a hermeneutic lens … [see below]." (p. 13; emphasis in original)	Adopting an interpretivist paradigm, this study espouses the idea that we are born into a pre-given world and that our existence (Dasein) is defined by the meaningful relationships we have (see e.g. p. 64). Our engagement with the world (lived experience) is multimodal and can be both, (pre-)reflective as well as (pre-)linguistic, which is why this study adopted a multimethod research design, using, for example, projective techniques like *collage construction* to tap into unconscious and pre-linguistic experiences (see e.g. pp. 49, 62-64, 71).
		Lived experiences were defined as relational and perspectival, which is also inherent in the Gadamer's idea of the fusing horizons. Temporality manifests in the conceptualization of identity and relationship development (see Heidegger/Gadamer below).
Merleau-Ponty (1945/2014)	"The implications for IPA researchers are, first, that the lived experience of being a body-in-the-world is an important part of understanding someone else's perspective. This might be evoked when people describe feelings or sensations, or when they use emotion words or embodied language to indicate what they care about, or – particularly – what is changed or threatened. Second, while these experiences can never be entirely captured or absorbed, we must attend closely to these meanings in analysis, in order that they are not ignored or overlooked." (p. 15)	Where applicable, I attended to embodied experiences in all three texts (collages, narratives and interviews). For example, participant Alicia acknowledged in the interview: "*I'm embedded within type and I love it*". Her embeddedness is also represented in her collage, where aspects of her identity are encapsulated in the outline of the typeface *Futura* (see e.g. pp. 104, 166). Conversely, Sarah uses the terms *"crushed"* and *"feather"* respectively to describe her cognitive and affective experiences with font consumption (see e.g. pp. 206, 211).
Sartre (1943/1958)	"While IPA analyses will usually be of different topics than those which were presented so vividly by Sartre, his portraits show a penetrating analysis of people engaged in projects in the world and the embodied, interpersonal, affective and moral nature of those encounters." (p. 16)	Sartre's ideas manifest predominantly in the design of interview questions (e.g. to explore projects of participants' future selves) and in the purposeful design of research parameters (e.g. quantitative and qualitative restriction of typeface stimuli) as participants' relationships with fonts may be altered (e.g. participants Damian and Kevin) (see e.g. pp. 82-85).

Theoretical foundation	Relevance for IPA research (cited from J. A. Smith et al., 2022)	Manifestation in this research
Hermeneutics	"For IPA, analysis always involves interpretation. We think Heidegger's reading of *appearing* [aletheia or un-concealment] captures this well. There is a phenomenon ready to shine forth, but detective work is required by the researcher to facilitate the coming forth, and then to make sense of it once it has happened." (p. 28; emphasis in original) "IPA involves a 'double hermeneutic' (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The researcher is trying to make sense of the participant, who is trying to make sense of *x*." (p. 29; emphasis in original)	The notion of 'aletheia' was introduced in Chapter 3 (p. 66) of this research in the context of 'truth claims' and 'the things themselves'. In Gadamer's philosophy, aletheia stands for 'truth-events', where aspects of the phenomenon are revealed in a dialogical encounter between I and Thou after dwelling on it. Building on Kirkham et al.'s (2015) IPA work, the idea of 'double hermeneutics' was extended to 'triple hermeneutics'. The latter highlights that participants make sense of their lived experiences (font consumption) pre-reflectively and pre-linguistically (first level), before engaging in active reflection on their lived experiences (second level). The third hermeneutic level is characterized by the researcher making sense of participants' experiences (data) (see p. 71).
Schleiermacher (1998)	"From an IPA perspective, we should not … claim that our analyses are more 'true' [*sic*] than the claims of our research participants, but it does allow us to see how our analyses might offer meaningful insights which exceed and subsume the *explicit* claims of our participants." (p. 18; emphasis in original) "The texts examined by IPA researchers are usually contemporary or have been produced in the recent past and in response to a request by the researcher rather than a purpose driven by the author. Under these circumstances we think that the process of analysis is geared to learning both about the person providing the account and the subject matter of that account, and therefore, that Schleiermacher usefully speaks to us across the centuries." (p. 31)	As part of the narrative and interview task, participants were asked to reflect on their collages to gain an insider perspective on their experiences in general and research contributions more specifically. Participants' verbatim accounts were used to introduce the cast and their collages (Chapter 4), as well as to describe their lived experiences (see e.g. Chapters 5 and 6). Combining IPA with *story grids* (Van Schalkwyk, 2010) helped to preserve the core of participant meanings (see e.g. pp. 87, 90, 94, 362).

Theoretical foundation	Relevance for IPA research (cited from J. A. Smith et al., 2022)	Manifestation in this research
Heidegger (1927/1962) Gadamer (1960/1989)	"Heidegger and Gadamer give insightful and dynamic descriptions of the relationship [movement] between the fore-understanding and the new phenomenon being attended to. These help to thicken our understanding of the research process." (p. 23) "Making sense of what is being said or written involves close interpretative engagement on the part of the listener or reader. However, one will not necessarily be aware of all one's preconceptions in advance of the reading, and so reflective practices, and a cyclical approach to bracketing, are required." (p. 29)	As indicated in the context of Husserl's work above and the hermeneutic circle below, the researcher engaged in constant hermeneutic dialogue between data sets as well as own pre-conceptions. The latter were noted in a research journal and, where applicable, discussed in this research (see e.g. p. 62). The acknowledgement of the researcher as *human-as-instrument* (see p. 76) underscores the involvement of the researcher and their pre-understandings in the research process. A limitation of IPA is its treatment of Gadamer's works. IPA tends to overemphasize the role that historical texts play in Gadamer's writings and disregards Gadamer's valuable contributions to aesthetics. Gadamer's (e.g. 1964/1976, 1960/1989) aesthetic hermeneutics was chosen as the theoretical perspective for this study and lays its very foundation (see e.g. pp. 68, 249). In the literature review chapter, for example, analogies were drawn between Gadamer's notion of *play*, *I-Thou encounters*, *fusion of horizons,* as well as concepts taken from parasocial relationship theories, most notably *parasocial interactions*, *paracommunication* and *parasocial processing* (see e.g. p. 48 and Chapter 7, p. 229). These lived experiences—it is argued—are integrated into our self-understanding and forge our relationship with the *Thou* (see e.g. conceptual framework, p. 56).
Hermeneutic circle	"The hermeneutic circle [i.e. the movement between part and whole] is perhaps the most resonant idea in hermeneutic theory and is picked up by most hermeneutic writers, rather than being identified with one in particular." (p. 22) "The hermeneutic circle provides a useful way of thinking about 'method' for IPA researchers. Approaches to qualitative analysis tend to be described in linear, step-by-step fashions, and IPA is no exception. But it is a key tenet of IPA that the process of analysis is iterative we may move back and forth through a range of different ways of thinking about the data, rather than completing each step, one after the other." (p. 23)	This research embraces the principles of the hermeneutic circle and acknowledges the iterative research process in IPA studies (e.g. pp. 71, 76, 93, 248), especially where the human-as-instrument is involved (see p. 76). For example, this study adopts the notion of hermeneutic dialogue (Boden & Eatough, 2014) and illustrates how the researcher moved between collages, narratives and interview data to generate meaning (see e.g. pp. 89).

Theoretical foundation	Relevance for IPA research (cited from J. A. Smith et al., 2022)	Manifestation in this research
Idiography	"IPA's commitment to the particular operates at two levels. First, there is a commitment to the particular, in the sense of *detail*, and therefore the depth of analysis. As a consequence, analysis must be thorough and systematic. Second, IPA is committed to understanding how particular experiential phenomena (an event, process or relationship) have been understood from the perspective of particular people, in a particular context." (p. 24; emphasis in original) "In a good IPA study [see 'evaluation' in right column], it should be possible to parse the account both for shared themes, and for the distinctive voices and variations on those themes. This concern with the particular, with nuance and with variation means that IPA is working at quite a specific point in relation to Husserl's ambitious programme for phenomenology. For Husserl it was important to move from the individual instances to establish the eidetic structure or essence of experience. This is of course a noble aim. For IPA, however, a prior task of detailed analyses of particular cases of actual life and lived experience remains the priority at this time." (p. 31)	A core tenet of this research is Gadamer's (1964/1976) claim that works of art speak to our very own self-understanding by surprising and confronting us; the message is personal as if it were said especially to a particular individual. Gadamer's proposition highlights the very idiographic nature of individuals' lived experiences with fonts as conceptualized and studied in this research (see e.g. pp. 37, 48-51, 68-70, 82-86). By analysing all sixteen cases individually before engaging in cross-case analysis to generate group experiential themes (GETs), the researcher was able to establish convergences and divergences between personal experiential themes (PETs), in particular through the presence and absence of data (G. W. Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The latter is even more pertinent given the diversity of the research participants. As evidenced in Chapter 3 (p. 79), there is a growing body of IPA literature adopting a heterogeneous sampling strategy, as IPA researchers are interested in lived experiences that cut through the noise. This study adheres chiefly to the general evaluative criteria for qualitative research discussed in existing IPA literature (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). These criteria are (Yardley, 2000): (1) sensitivity to context; (2) commitment and rigour; (3) transparency and coherence; and (4) impact and importance. An evaluation of this research is provided in Chapter 7 (p. 247).

Appendix 4 Benefits and limitations of using the collage method

Benefits	Source (author, year)
Accessible	John and Chaplin (2019); Scotti and Chilton (2018)
Enjoyable, fun, engaging, activating	Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010); Hofstede, van Hoof, Walenberg, and de Jong (2007); Kalter (2016); Perloff (1983)
Enriching (breadth and depth of data)	Bagnoli (2009); Boddy (2005); Boden and Eatough (2014); Frith et al. (2005); Guillemin (2004); Keats (2009); Koll et al. (2010); Scotti and Chilton (2018); Shinebourne and Smith (2011); Silver (2013)
Participation, empowerment and agency	K. C. Barton (2015); Reavey (2011); Roberts and Woods (2018); Scotti and Chilton (2018); Zaltman (1997)
Change voice of research	Frith et al. (2005); Reavey (2011)
Physicality, representation & embodiment	Roberts and Woods (2018); Scotti and Chilton (2018)
Taps into tacit knowledge, unconsciousness	Boddy (2005); Bond et al. (2011); Butler-Kisber (2008); Frith et al. (2005); Leavy (2017)
Therapeutic	Scotti and Chilton (2018)
Activation of right brain hemisphere	Bond et al. (2011); Frith et al. (2005); Rook (2006)
High data modality	Koll et al. (2010); Rook (2006);
Non-linear, indirect approach	Butler-Kisber (2008); Kirchmair (2011); Mariampolski (2001); Roberts and Woods (2018); Rook (2006)

Limitations	Source (author, year)
Time consuming	Kalter (2016)
Possible barrier for participation (for both, participants and researchers)	Bagnoli (2009); Shinebourne and Smith (2011); Van Schalkwyk (2013)
Lack of objectivity, reliability and validity	Boddy (2005, 2008); Kirchmair (2011); Lilienfeld, Wood, and Garb (2000); Rook (2006); Stricker and Lally (2015)
Ethical and legal challenges	G. Rose (2016); J. Rowe (2011); Scotti and Chilton (2018); M. Temple and McVittie (2005); Wiles, Clark, and Prosser (2011)

Note. Combines insights about visual methods in general and collage techniques in particular.

The aesthetic experience of typeface designs: An interpretative phenomenological approach to Gadamer's hermeneutic aesthetics

Collage Toolkit

Ruffin Relja, PhD candidate

CONTENT

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Content

1

1. INSTRUCTIONS (1/2)

MAIN STEPS

1. Please read this manual carefully as it provides key information on how to create your collages and which material to use. Furthermore, it contains important legal notices.

2. Create your canvas after you have read the manual and familiarised yourself with the materials (in particular with the selected fonts and the website www.unsplash.com, that offers free high-resolution stock photos).

3. Create your collage telling us 'who you are'. To do so, choose one or more typefaces that describe you best (mandatory). The use of photographs is optional.

4. Once the collage has been created (digitally or analogically), write your reflection (please see instructions on page 3).

5. Please send the collage and your reflection (any format) back to me. Feel free to use a file sharing website or app (e.g. wetransfer.com or dropbox) in case the file is too big to be sent via email. Do not hesitate to contact me in case you face any problems.

MATERIALS

Please use exclusively the following materials for the creation of the collages:

a) Fonts: Choose from a selection of 30 fonts bundled with Microsoft Office, e.g. PowerPoint (see section 3, pp. 5-9);

b) Photographs: www.unsplash.com offers cost and royalty free stock photos that shall be used for this study; Do not use private photographs/images to ensure anonymity! (The same applies for names, dates, numbers,. . .)

c) Canvas: Dimensions of your canvas shall correspond to A2 format (measures 42.0 x 59.4 cm and/or 16.53 x 23.39 inches) and can be in either landscape or portrait format;

d) Software: If you decide to create your collage using a software, you may use any software you like. Microsoft PowerPoint might be a suitable option given that the fonts are bundled with the software.

NOTES

a) The terms 'fonts' and 'typefaces' are used interchangeably.

b) Fonts can be used to depict single letters, numbers, words, combinations, etc.

c) All elements (e.g. fonts, photographs,…) may be cut, juxtaposed, scaled, aligned, arranged, edited, transformed, (re-)coloured, etc. without restrictions.

d) Please send us a scanned copy of your collage in case you decide to create your collage analogically.

e) There are no limits for your creativity.

Instructions

2

continued…

1. INSTRUCTIONS (2/2)

YOUR WRITTEN REFLECTION
Please take a few minutes after you have finished your collage to reflect upon your collage, as well as the process of creating the collage.

Reflect how your collage reflects 'who you are,' explaining briefly the elements you have used and their role in your self-understanding. Your reflection may also include e.g. thoughts and feelings that arouse during and after the creation of your collage.

Your reflection should be approximately 300 words long. A reference to the typefaces used in your collage is appreciated.

TIPP
You might find it helpful to make some initial notes
1) after you have selected e.g. fonts, photo-graphs, as well as
2) throughout the process of collage creation.

Instructions

3

continued…

2. LEGAL NOTICE

INFORMED CONSENT

By participating in the collage creation, you re-confirm:

a) your prior consent to participate in the above study;

b) your understanding that the participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw from the study up to 30 days after the interview session, without giving any reason; and

c) your agreement that the collages will be analysed and that its results will be published for research purposes (see also "Grant of Licence" below).

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY, DATA STORAGE AND DISSEMINATION

Pseudonyms will be used to ensure anonymity. The listing of participant names will be kept separately from data. Both, names and data, will be kept safely, and all folders on computer will be protected with passwords.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, please do not use private photos, (your) names, important dates or numbers in your collage.

All data will be stored, analysed and reported in compliance with local legislation. Anonymised data may be used for further research or to support publication.

REPRESENTATIONS AND WARRANTIES

By participating in the collage creation, you agree not to:

a) use your participation for any illegal purpose or in violation of any laws or regulations;

b) violate or encourage others to violate third party rights, including the infringement or misappropriation of intellectual property rights;

c) use, provide, or publish any content that is unlawful, defamatory, libellous, objectionable, profane, indecent, pornographic, harassing, threatening, hateful, or otherwise inappropriate.

GRANT OF LICENCE

By participating in the study, you grant the researcher an irrevocable, unlimited, non-exclusive, worldwide licence to download, copy, modify, distribute, perform, and use your collage, your explanation of the collage, and the transcripts of your interview for free, including for commercial purposes, without your permission.

continued…

Fonts

3. FONTS

GENERAL

a) 30 fonts have been selected for this study (see list on the right)

b) The character sets (uppercase, lowercase, numerals, and punctuations) of each font are presented on pp. 6-9 for better visualisation.

c) Some fonts might appear almost identical. Please take a moment to discover the subtle differences between them and choose your preferred fonts. Remember: There are no wrong choices.

d) Please choose at least one font (minimum) for your collage. There is no upper limit (maximum) for the number of fonts you may choose for your collage.

LIST OF FONTS

The following fonts have been selected for this study:

1)	Minion Pro	16)	Century Gothic
2)	Garamond	17)	Gill Sans MT
3)	Times New Roman	18)	Verdana
4)	Baskerville	19)	Lucida Sans
5)	Bodoni 72	20)	Myriad Pro
6)	Didot	21)	Optima
7)	Charter	22)	Trajan Pro
8)	Kefa	23)	Comic Sans
9)	Helvetica Neue	24)	Mistral
10)	Geneva	25)	Edwardian Script ITC
11)	News Gothic MT	26)	Lucida Blackletter
12)	Franklin Gothic	27)	Cooper Std
13)	Avenir	28)	American Typewriter
14)	Futura	29)	Rockwell
15)	Eurostile	30)	Courier

1. Minion Pro

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

2. Garamond

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

3. Times New Roman

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

4. Baskerville

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

5. Bodoni 72

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

6. Didot

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

7. Charter

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

8. Kefa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

3. Fonts

6

continued…

9. Helvetica Neue

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

10. Geneva

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

11. News Gothic MT

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

12. Franklin Gothic

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

13. Avenir

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

14. Futura

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

15. Eurostile

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

16. Century Gothic

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

3. Fonts

7

continued…

17. Gill Sans MT	**18. Verdana**
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890($£€.,!?)	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890($£€.,!?)
19. Lucida Sans	**20. Myriad Pro**
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890($£€.,!?)	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890($£€.,!?)
21. Optima	**22. Trajan Pro**
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890($£€.,!?)	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890($£€.,!?)
23. Comic Sans	**24. Mistral**
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890($£€.,!?)	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890($£€.,!?)

3. Fonts

8

continued…

25. Edwardian Script ITC

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

26. Lucida Blackletter

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

27. Cooper Std

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)**

28. American Typewriter

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

29. Rockwell

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

30. Courier

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890($£€.,!?)

3. Fonts

9

continued…

4. PHOTOGRAPHS

STOCK PHOTOS
Unsplash offers more than 500,000 free high-resolution
photos, which can be found on www.unsplash.com.

You can look for images by
1) typing in keywords,
2) clicking through the collections, or
3) simply by exploring the photo library.

Important:
Do not use private photographs/images to ensure anonymity!
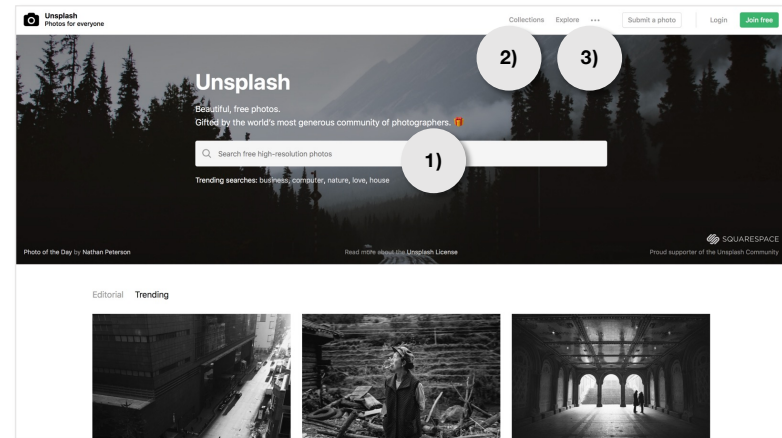
continued…

THANK YOU!

enjoy the task.

I look forward to seeing and reading your contributions. In case of questions, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Ruffin Relja, M.Sc.
PhD candidate at the University of Gloucestershire, UK
ruffinrelja@connect.glos.ac.uk

11

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of the Study:
The Aesthetic Experience of Typeface Designs:
An Interpretative Phenomenological Approach to Gadamer's Hermeneutic Aesthetics

Researcher:
Ruffin Relja
(PhD candidate/post graduate researcher at the School for Art and Design):
University of Gloucestershire, The Park, Cheltenham GL50 2RH. Tel: +xx xxx xx xx xx.
Email: ruffinrelja@connect.glos.ac.uk.

This information sheet contains all relevant information related to the planned research. If you would like to participate in this study, please read the information sheet, the privacy notice and the informed consent form that is attached to it carefully. After you have read them and wish to participate, please sign two copies of the informed consent form and return them to the researcher. You will then receive a copy of the informed consent form – signed and dated by the researcher – for you to keep.

It is important that you feel comfortable about your contribution. Please feel free to ask if any aspect is unclear or in case you need additional information.

Thank you for your time to read the documents.

1. Purpose and aim of the study
This study is part of my doctoral thesis, which I am writing at the University of Gloucestershire (United Kingdom). Its aim is to explore how the aesthetic experience of typeface designs affects individuals' self-understanding. The results of the study may help to better understand the meaning typefaces have in our everyday lives and provide new insights for follow-up studies.

2. Your participation
2.1. Do I have to take part?
You are being invited to take part in this research because we feel that your experience can contribute much to our understanding of the meaning of typeface designs in our everyday lives. This study is voluntary. You will only be included if you provide your permission.

2.3. Can I withdraw from the study?
You will be free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason up to one month after the interview has taken place.

2.2. What happens, if I take part?
In general, the study comprises three major steps, in which your active participation is required. First, you will be asked to create a collage and to explain your collage in writing (approximately 300 words). Second, you will participate in an interview with the researcher. The last step entails your approval, revision or withdrawal of the interview transcript.

If you decide to take part, you will receive a collage toolkit via email. It includes instructions and the materials needed for creating your collage. You will have two weeks to create the collage and to write your brief explanation. Take your time to engage with the task, to explore the stimuli and try out things. Once you have emailed me your collage and explanation, I will need three days to familiarize myself with your works, before we meet for the interview.

The interview will take place face-to-face (or via Skype) in an appropriate setting and at times that are most convenient for you. It will last for approximately one to one and a half hour(s), depending on the information provided during the interview. The interview will be audio-recorded with your permission. The interview is informal and does not follow a fixed structure. At the beginning of the interview, I will introduce myself and the research to you and respond to any questions or issues you might have. After verbally reconfirming your consent to participate in the study (including the audio-recording of the interview), I will ask you questions related to the collage creation process and the collage itself, as well as your person. A debriefing is planned at the end of the interview. As a reminder: you will have another month to withdraw from the study starting the day of the interview.

One week after the interview, you will receive a copy of the transcribed interview. You will be able to review the transcript for accuracy and to withdraw any comments that you wish to be excluded from dissemination. Please read the transcript carefully. Your personal data (i.e. any information from which you can be identified directly or in combination with other information indirectly) will have been removed from the transcript and replaced by e.g. pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Please send your feedback

to the researcher (e.g. approval of the transcript or exclusion of comments) not later than one week after the reception of the transcripts to the researcher.

This whole process takes approximately one month.

2.3. Are there any risks in taking part?
There are no known physical, social or psychological risks associated with taking part in this study. However, the collage creation process, as well as some questions asked during the interview, may be personal and may cause some distress. You do not have to present any details in your collage, to share information in your explanation of the collage or to answer any interview question that you do not want to.

2.4. Are there any benefits to taking part?
There are no monetary benefits to taking part in the study; as your participation is voluntary, you will not be paid. Potential costs and/or expenses will be incurred by you. However, your contribution may help to better understand the meaning typefaces have in our everyday lives and provide new insights for follow-up studies. Please let the researcher know, in case you are interested in obtaining a summary of the study.

3. Anonymity and confidentiality
Your personal information (i.e. any information from which you can be identified directly or in combination with other information indirectly) will be replaced by e.g. pseudonyms in the collages, written narratives and transcripts, to ensure anonymity. Personal information (e.g. names) and data (e.g. collages, written narratives, interview transcripts) will be kept separately and safely. All folders on the computer will be protected with passwords. Local legislation (e.g. the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union) will be respected. Personal information will not be disclosed to anyone outside the University, to third parties or published in the thesis or other publications. Anonymised data may be used for further research or to support publication.

4. Results
Findings will be primarily published in my thesis. During and after completion of the thesis, findings may be presented at conferences or published in academic journals, books or book chapters. Due to the nature of the study, interview transcripts and collages will be published as part of the research. Anonymity and confidentiality are ensured at all times. In case you are interested in the results of the research, please let the researcher know in order to discuss how the findings can be made available to you.

5. Licence
By participating in the study, you grant the researcher an irrevocable, unlimited, non-exclusive, worldwide licence to download, copy, modify, distribute, perform, and use your collage, your explanation of the collage, and the transcripts of your interview for free, including for commercial purposes, without your permission.

6. Funding of the study
There is no funding for this study.

7. Contact information
Ruffin Relja (PhD candidate/post graduate researcher at the School for Art and Design):
University of Gloucestershire, The Park, Cheltenham GL50 2RH. Tel: +xx xxx xx xx xxx.
Email: ruffinrelja@connect.glos.ac.uk.

Should you have any questions, concerns or complaints regarding any aspect of this study, you can contact my supervisor Dr Don Parker (academic subject leader, design post graduate research lead for the School of Art and Design. Tel: +44 1 242 714 927. Email: dparker@glos.ac.uk).

Thank you very much for your participation!
Best Wishes,

Ruffin Relja

Appendix 7 Consent form – Example of participant's copy

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of the Study:
The Aesthetic Experience of Typeface Designs:
An Interpretative Phenomenological Approach to Gadamer's Hermeneutic Aesthetics

Researcher:
Ruffin Relja
(PhD candidate/post graduate researcher at the School for Art and Design):
University of Gloucestershire, The Park, Cheltenham GL50 2RH. Tel: +xx xxx xx xx xx.
Email: ruffinrelja@connect.glos.ac.uk.

Please check, mark or put a circle around your answer.

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a research study.	Yes	No
I understand that my participation involves – the creation of a collage, – the production of a written explanation of my collage (approximately 300 words), – an interview session, and – the review of the interview transcript.	Yes	No
I have read and received a copy of the attached participant information letter.	Yes	No
I have read and received a copy of the attached privacy notice, which is also available on the University's website (http://www.glos.ac.uk/docs/download/Privacy-notices/Research-Partici-pants-Privacy-Notice.pdf).	Yes	No
I understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study.	Yes	No
I understand that I am free to contact the researcher (and supervisor) to take the opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study.	Yes	No
I understand that I am free to refuse participation, or to withdraw from the study at any time before the interview and within one month after the interview, without consequences, and that my information will be withdrawn at my request?	Yes	No
I understand that my data will be kept confidential. I understand who will have access to my information.	Yes	No
I agree that the interview will be audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed.	Yes	No
I agree that this form contains my personal information that can be seen by designated faculty staff and auditors.	Yes	No
I have understood how the data (e.g. collages, explanations of the collages, interview transcripts, etc.) will be used.	Yes	No
I have read and understood section Five of the attached information letter concerning the "licence".	Yes	No
I consent voluntarily to take part in this study.	Yes	No

Printed name of the participant:

Signature:

Date:

Preferred contact number:

Email:

Statement by the researcher

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of the Participant Information Sheet, the Informed Consent Form and the Privacy Notice have been provided to the participant.

Printed name of the researcher: Ruffin Relja

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 8 Debrief sheet

DEBRIEF SHEET

Title of the Study:
The Aesthetic Experience of Typeface Designs:
An Interpretative Phenomenological Approach to Gadamer's Hermeneutic Aesthetics

Researcher:
Ruffin Relja
(PhD candidate/post graduate researcher at the School for Art and Design):
University of Gloucestershire, The Park, Cheltenham GL50 2RH. Tel: +xx xxx xx xx xx.
Email: ruffinrelja@connect.glos.ac.uk.

Dear Participant,

Thank you for contributing to the research study and taking the time participate in today's interview. Please let me explain what happens next.

You will receive a transcript of the interview by …………………………. Please read the transcript carefully and send your feedback (e.g. approval of the transcript or withdrawal of comments from the transcript) until ………………………… to the researcher.

Please remember, that you can withdraw your consent to participate in the study within one month after the interview has taken place. You can do this by informing the researcher via email without giving any reason before ………………………….

If you would like to learn about the results of this study or if you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Ruffin Relja (the researcher) at any time.

Should you have any concerns or complaints regarding any aspect of this study, you can contact my supervisor Dr Don Parker (Email: dparker@glos.ac.uk / Tel: +44 1 242 714 927)

Best Wishes,

Ruffin Relja

Appendix 9 University's privacy policy

PRIVACY NOTICE
Research Participants

In order to undertake academic research and to train students in research methods, staff and students at the University of Gloucestershire collect and process various types of personal data. The University is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses that data and to meeting its data protection obligations.

1. Identity and contact details of the Data Controller
The Data Controller (the organisation responsible for how your data is processed) is the University of Gloucestershire. The University is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and it is committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with Data Protection legislation.

A copy of this registration can be found on https://ico.org.uk/ESDWebPages/Entry/Z5286780.

2. Contact details of the Data Protection Officer
The Data Protection Officer is responsible for advising the University on compliance with Data Protection legislation and monitoring its performance against it. If you have any concerns regarding the way in which the University is processing your personal data, please contact the Data Protection Officer at:
Sue MacGregor, Data Protection Officer
University of Gloucestershire
Registrar's Directorate
Fullwood House
The Park
Cheltenham, GL50 2RH
Email: dpo@glos.ac.uk

3. What information does the University collect?
The University collects a range of information in order to carry out its research activities. This may include personal data such as name and address, date of birth, or information on your views on specific research topics. The University may also collect special category (sensitive) personal data as defined under Data Protection legislation such as information about racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or similar beliefs, health, genetic or biometric data (where used for ID purposes).

The University collects this information in a variety of ways. For example, it might be collected via surveys or questionnaires, through interviews of focus groups, or by taking photographs, audio or video recordings.

For each individual research project you will be provided with a Participant Information Sheet, which explains in more detail the kind of information that will be collected, and how this will be done.

4. What is the purpose and lawful basis of collecting my data?
Undertaking research, publishing research and training students to undertaking are tasks that are in the public interest. Universities undertake these activities so that they can fulfil their function as a Higher Education institution. Some types of research will require the collection of personal data including, where appropriate, special category personal data, in order that the aims of the research can be achieved. The University will only collect the information that is necessary to undertake each specific research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

Where we rely on a different lawful basis such as consent or legitimate interest we will inform you of this in the Participant Information Sheet provided to you.

There is no statutory or contractual requirement to provide your personal data to us through participating in a research project.

The University will not use your personal data for automated decision making or profiling about you as an individual.

5. How and where your data are held
All research projects involving the collection of personal data are subject to an ethics review, to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for the secure storage of your data. If you take part in a research project, you will be provided with a Participant Information Sheet that will outline in more detail how and where your data are stored.

6. Who has access to the data?

Your data will be accessed by members of the research team (including Supervisors of student research projects), however, most personal information used in research will be de-identified where-ever possible before sharing more widely or publishing the research outcomes. If it is not possible to de-identify your information, we may ask for your consent to share or otherwise make your personal information available to others. Information shared will be on a need to know basis, not excessive and with all appropriate safeguards in place to ensure the security of your information. It may sometimes be necessary to share your personal information with other researchers for the purpose of achieving the research outcomes. Where researchers wish to use any information that would identify you, specific consent will be sought from you.

If it is necessary for anyone else to have access to the data, or for the data to be shared more widely (including any transfers outside the European Economic Area), this will be made clear in the Participant Information Sheet that will be provided to you before you agree to participate in the research.

7. How does the University protect the data?

In order to protect your rights and freedoms when using your personal information for research and to process special category (sensitive) information, the University must have safeguards in place to help protect that data. The University takes the security of your personal data very seriously and it has policies, procedures, training, technical and organisational measures in place to ensure that your information is protected. All research projects or studies involving personal data that has been identified/deemed higher risk are scrutinised and approved by a research ethics panel or committee.

8. How long is my data kept?

If you take part in a research project, you will be provided with a Participant Information Sheet that will outline in more detail how long the data will be held for and, where applicable, the re-use of the data.

9. Data Subject's Rights

Under Data Protection legislation you have the following rights:
to request access to, and copies of, the personal data that we hold about you;
to request that we cease processing your personal data;
to request that we do not send you any marketing communications;
to request us to correct the personal data we hold about you if it is incorrect;
to request that we erase your personal data;
to request that we restrict our data processing activities (and, where our processing is based on your consent, you may withdraw that consent, without affecting the lawfulness of our processing based on consent before its withdrawal);
to receive from us the personal data you have provided to us, in a reasonable format specified by you, to another data controller;
to object, on grounds relating to your particular situation, to any of our particular processing activities where you feel this has a disproportionate impact on your rights and freedoms.

It is important to understand that the extent to which these rights apply to research will vary and that in some circumstances a right may be limited when the data is being used for research purposes. It should also be noted that we can only implement your rights during the period upon which we hold personal identifiable information about you. Once the information has been irreversibly de-identified or anonymised and becomes part of the research data set, it will not be possible to access your personal information.

If you would like to exercise any of these rights or have any questions regarding your rights, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer, using the contact details under Section 10 below.

10. How to raise a query, concern or complaint

If you have questions about the particular research study you are participating in, please use any contact details you have already been supplied with regarding the research study or project.

If you have general queries, concerns or wish to raise a complaint about how your personal data is used by the University, or if you wish to exercise any of your rights, you should contact the Data Protection Officer in the first instance, using the contact details under Section 2 above.

If you remain dissatisfied, then you have the right to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted at:
Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.org.uk

Appendix 10 Demographic questionnaire

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Title of the Study:
The Aesthetic Experience of Typeface Designs:
An Interpretative Phenomenological Approach to Gadamer's Hermeneutic Aesthetics

Researcher:
Ruffin Relja
(PhD candidate/post graduate researcher at the School for Art and Design):
University of Gloucestershire, The Park, Cheltenham GL50 2RH. Tel: +xx xxx xx xx xx.
Email: ruffinrelja@connect.glos.ac.uk.

Dear participant,

By providing the below demographic information, you will help me to better contextualize my research findings. All information will be handled with care and according to the provisions specified in the participants' information sheet. Please inform the researcher in case you feel uncomfortable to answer any of these questions or need additional information.

Thank you!

What is your age?

What is your gender?

What is your profession?

Please describe your work context:

workplace

☐ agency

☐ firm

☐ freelancer

☐ other:

scope

☐ international

☐ national

☐ regional

How long have you been working in your profession? *(work experience in years)*

What language(s) do you speak? *Please indicate mother tongue(s) with an asterisk (*)*

What is your nationality?

Appendix 11 Visual stimuli used in prior typographic research

Type of Stimulus	Study (Author, Year)	Example/Comment
Placeholder texts *Randomly or other-* *wise generated text in* *different languages* *(e.g. Latin) or text* *without meaning.*	Karnal et al. (2016); Amar et al. (2017) Ovink (1938, p. 174; nonsense text) Morrison (1986, p. 238; third-order approximation) Davis and Smith (1933)	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet Egiadute pocholu minegiten egiak ere sasesuth wid oteren bo now is the time for all good men [*sic*]

Pangrams
Sentences that use
every letter of the al-
phabet at least once.
	Shaikh et al. (2006; Part B)
	Shaikh et al. (2006; Part B)
	
	Shaikh et al. (2006; Part B)
		The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.
		Amazingly few discotheques provide juke-
		    boxes.
		Whenever the black fox jumped the squirrel
		    gazed suspiciously.

Character sets Alphabet, numbers, punctuation, symbols, etc.	Shaikh et al. (2006; Part A) Schroll et al. (2018) P. W. Henderson et al. (2004, p. 63; phase 4) Koch (2011, pp. 76-78)	abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ .:,;(#!?")@#$% ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz The study used complete alphabet and number sets for each typeface. ABCDEFGHIJKL MNOPQRSTUVW XYZabcdefghijkl mnopqrstuvwxyz &0123456789ÆÁ
Combinations	Brumberger (2003b, p. 211; study 1) Shaikh et al. (2006; Part B)	ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789 A quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog. The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog. 1234567890

Appendix 12 Interview schedule to guide semi-structured interviews

1. INTRODUCTION

2. ASKING EASY QUESTIONS

2.1. Your first two tasks in the research process were to create a collage and to write a narrative.
How did you find that? *Possible prompts: e.g. fun, challenging...*

2.2. Can you talk me through the process of creating your collage?
Possible prompts: How did you manage the research process? How did you manage e.g. PowerPoint, unsplash.com, etc.? How did you proceed? Time allocation? Follow up on written narrative...

2.3. What can you tell me about your collage?
Possible prompts: What does it mean to you? Which fonts did you choose and why?* What is the style, tone, colour, and content of the collage? Follow up on participant's written narrative. Share your own observations and/or carefully follow up on them.
*Possible follow-up question: Can you tell me a bit more about the typefaces you have selected?
Possible prompts: Why did you choose them? What characteristics are important to you?

3. ASKING TOUGH QUESTIONS

3.1. Thank you for sharing that with me. Having talked about the collage, I would now like to learn a little more about you. As you know, my research is about typefaces. Can you tell me about your prior experience with typefaces?
Possible prompts: education, hobbies, profession, familiarity with typographic language

3.2. Changing gears and moving away from your educational and professional background to a broader scope of question, please can you tell me something about you as a person?
Possible prompts: Characteristics, including attitudes, motives, behavioral tendencies, strengths, and weaknesses.

3.3. What would your partner (or best friend) tell me about you? How would they describe you?
Possible prompts: Characteristics, including attitudes, motives, behavioral tendencies, strengths, and weaknesses.

3.4. Thinking about yourself in the past: What (personality) characteristics other than the ones you have today did you consider important?
Possible prompts: What characteristics were important to you? Have they changed looking back e.g. 5-10 years?

3.5. Thinking about yourself in the future: What (personality) characteristics will you have?
Possible prompts: What characteristics are important to you? Will they change looking ahead e.g. 5-10 years?

3.6 I appreciate your openness in discussing these personal questions with me. If you don't mind, I would like to pick up our earlier discussion concerning your collage. The instruction was to create a collage answering the question 'who you are.' How might this question have affected your decisions which typeface to include in your collage?
Possible prompts: minimalistic, expressive...

3.7 What name/title would you give your collage? What are the meaning units?

4. TONING DOWN

4.1. How do you feel?
Possible prompts: happy, sad, confused, stressed…

4.2. Do you have any questions?

4.3. Is there anything that I should have asked you but didn't?

5. CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

Appendix 13 Guidelines for interview transcription

Pauses	Significant pauses during talking are denoted with the word (pause) in parentheses.
Laughing	The word (laughing) in parentheses denotes one person, (laughter) in parentheses denotes several persons laughing.
Sighs, etc.	Significant non-verbal sounds and/or noises are indicated in parentheses, e.g. "(sigh)".
Interruptions	When someone's speech is broken off, a dash (en rule) is included at that point where the interruption occurs to indicate when someone's speech is broken off midsentence (e.g., What do you–).
Overlapping speech	Dashes (en rules) are used to indicate when one speaker interjects into the speech of another. The speech of the other is included with "overlapping" in parentheses, then transcriber returns to where original speaker interrupted (if they continue).
	For example:
	R: He said that was impos–
	I: (overlapping) Who, Bob?
	R: No, Larry.
Garbled speech	Words that are not clear are flagged with square brackets and question mark, if guessing what was said, for example, At that, Harry just [doubled? glossed?] over.
	"x"s are used to denote passages that cannot be deciphered at all (number of xs denote approximate number of words that cannot be deciphered), for example: Gina went xxxxx xxxxx xxxxx, and then [came? went?] home.
Emphasis	Caps are used to denote strong emphasis, for example, he did WHAT?
Held sounds	Held sounds are indicated with the word (prolonged) in parentheses, e.g. "I was very (prolonged) happy."
Paraphrasing others	When interviewees assume a voice that indicates they are parodying what someone else said or an inner voice in their heads, use quotation marks and/or indicate with (mimicking voice) in parentheses.
	R: Then you know what he came out with? He said (mimicking voice) "I'll be damned if I'm going to let YOU push ME around." And I thought to myself: "I'll show you!"

Note. This guideline was adapted with changes from Poland (1995, pp. 302-303)

Appendix 14 Sequence of individual case analysis
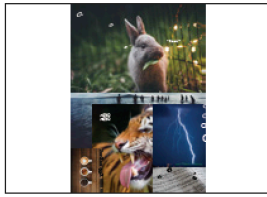
1. Emma

2. Damian

3. Sarah
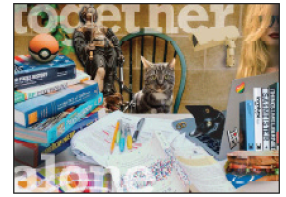
4. Ruby

5. Luka

6. Jelena

7. Alicia
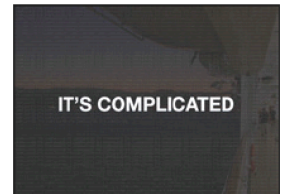
8. Justin

9. Thomas
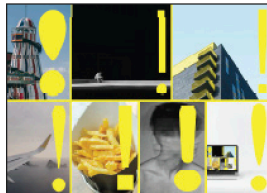
10. Kevin
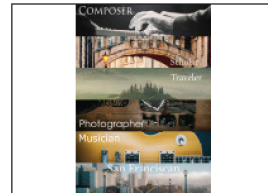
11. Raphael

12. Laura

13. Briana

14. George
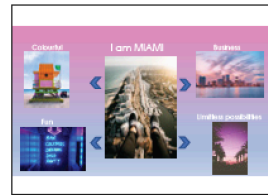
15. Jasmin

16. Tobias

Appendix 15 Extract from Kevin's annotated interview transcript [steps 1 to 3]

Experiential Statements	Original Text (p. 54), line…	Initial Notes (descriptive, linguistic, conceptual and methodological comments)
	955 …	
	956 …	
	957 [Ruffin: Can] you … talk me through your … typographic	
	958 experience? #00:40:02-6#	
	959	
Being a graphic designer defines Kevin's overall sense of self	960 Kevin: Yeah, yeah. So, fundamentally, I am a	Self-identifies as graphic designer
	961 graphic designer, that is my career, that is my	Fundamentally: suggests centrality
	962 practice, that's how–how–how I would always	always: Does this mean today or in future as well? Salient identity?
	963 (prolonged) call myself. However, I've always	always: suggest enduring interest in typography
Kevin has a lasting relationship with type and it grew over the past few years	964 had an interest in typography, and it's something	
	965 that I've GROWN with over the past few years,	GROWN (emphasis): his 'enduring' interest became stronger
	966 and–and it's–it's REALLY kind of my niche	Typography is his niche.
	967 (prolonged) in graphic design–it's–it's what I	his niche: is he differentiating himself form other graphic designers? Is he
By specializing in typefaces, Kevin occupies a niche in graphic design	968 specialize in. So–and anytime that I do anything	identifying with typography?
	969 that's graphic design related, my kind of go to–it's	professional specialization: Commitment to typography?
	970 not necessarily a SAFE SPACE–but my go to	not necessarily a safe space: His need to say this could suggest perhaps
Kevin experiences feeling of competence (mastery, self-efficacy)	971 field would always be with typography, because	it is a safe space?
	972 I feel like it's something that I'm very confident	Feels confident working with typography: Support for idea of safe space?

continued…

Experiential Statements	Original Text (p. 55), line…		Initial Notes (descriptive, linguistic, conceptual and methodological comments)
	973	in. And then–so, career wise, I basically finished	
His relationship with type changed	974	university in [year]. That's when I (pause) just really	that's when: indicates starting point of his enduring interest in typography
after graduation	975	started to get interested in typography, and	Extends interest to include print as well
	976	also PRINT–I–I'm very–I'm very obsessed with	Obsession / love: Does this suggest high level of emotional involvement?
Affective dimension of his relationship	977	print as well and–and I love the two working together.	
with type	978	In that year [at Uni], I was doing a project that was	
	979	all about [reference], and this project for me was	Talks about typography project (study) completed at Uni
	980	interesting, because I wanted to use this–I mean	
	981	it's–it's a study of–it's a study of typography,	
Creating symbolic boundaries	982	very similar to yourself, and except it was just	Identifies with researcher: symmetric power relationship? Emic?
(in-group)	983	specifically focused on [reference], and I wanted to	
	984	create typefaces or create–create typographic	
	985	characters, that could represent different stages of	Repetition of 'create': Shift from 'working with' to 'creating' typefaces? Does
	986	[reference] [Ruffin: Mh.], so, for example, I had a–	this also suggest shift in identity (from user to producer)?
	987	I created some letters, that were based all around	
Kevin creates fonts – shifting identities from consumer to producer – blurring boundaries	988	MEMORY, and they were kind of old font from–from	
	989	small circles and big circles, and how–and	
	990	the–they essentially formed every character. I	

continued…

Experiential Statements	Original Text (p. 56), line…	Initial Notes (descriptive, linguistic, conceptual and methodological comments)
	991 had characters that were created about PERCEPTION,	Describes features of the typeface he created
	992 and they were formed from very thin lines	
	993 that overlapped each other a bit and it really kind	
	994 of played with your eyes at some times and you–you	
	995 couldn't quite see what you were looking at.	
	996 I had some that played with ORIENTATION,	
	997 some that were kind of blurred and rotated and	
	998 have– had this disorientating feeling, and some	
	999 that played with the idea of LANGUAGE. So	
	1000 some, that would break down the character completely	
	1001 and play–and think of how different parts	
	1002 of the–of the letter could work together to almost	
Kevin's relationship with type intensified when he started to design type	1003 have a different MEANING or a different language	Repetition of 'that's when' (see line 974): Indicates starting point.
	1004 all together. So, that's when I started to	Really inspired: I get the feeling that his enduring interest has intensified
Getting affectively involved	1005 first get really inspired by typography and–and	and lit a fire in him. Was he not 'inspired' before that?
	1006 usi– xxx xxx [for instance?] I was using typof–typography	His way to use (and his relationship with?) type changed
Highlighting differences (between groups) helps Kevin to confirm his own self-understanding	1007 in a very expressive way, not very	was using: not anymore? Suggests temporality.
	1008 clean, not very–not ve–not like a graphic	not like a graphic designer: Are there 'standards' for appropriate use?

continued…

Experiential Statements	Original Text (p. 57), line…	Initial Notes (descriptive, linguistic, conceptual and methodological comments)
Creating symbolic boundaries (artists = out-group)	1009 designer, really, more like an artist–very ex–expressive	not like … more like: differentiation from and association with groups?
	1010 [Ruffin: Mh.]. And then–and then since	Transformation from artist to graphic designer? Self-congruence?
	1011 then, over the years working in different places,	since then: indicates starting point. Of what? Skill progression?
	1012 (pause) I worked in Croatia with–with [name reference],	
	1013 [indistinct stutter] a very–(pause) very	
	1014 talented studio that specialize in typography, very	Not only Kevin, but also the studio he worked for in Croatia specialized
	1015 much so with brandin', where I learned a lot and	in typography
	1016 then I went to [location reference in the Netherlands],	Learned a lot – cognitive dimension
	1017 and then I got a job in [location reference	
	1018 in England] and then I've come to [location reference	
Kevin's capacity to create and manipulate type has grown over time	1019 in England], so, over the years, my skill	over the years: indicates time frame
	1020 and REFINEMENT in typography has just naturally	Skill and refinement progressed: Transformation of knowledge and/or
Solidification of graphic designer identity and skill sets	1021 PROGRESSED. And now I'm a–now I	increase in knowledge
	1022 think I'm quite broad with it in terms with its usage–	and now I'm: Is his transformation from artist to designer complete?
	1023 I like to–(pause) use (prolonged) it in terms	Usage: shifts back from producer to user of type
	1024 of BRANDING a lot of the times, so, creating	Creating: Did he shift back to producer of fonts?
	1025 logos very typographically, or I love working	Love: affective dimension
	1026 with layout and posters and any form of print that	

continued…

Experiential Statements	Original Text (p. 58), line…		Initial Notes (descriptive, linguistic, conceptual and methodological comments)
	1027	is very type based. And in my own time, I also	Creates own typefaces when he is off work
	1028	like to try to make my own typefaces and design	In my own time: His relationship with typefaces extends to his leisure time
	1029	them all–I–I tend to design them all in Illustrator	Is this (just) a hobby?
	1030	and then I have a programme called	Try to: he dabbles in typeface design.
	1031	'Mini Glyphs' that–you can put them in from Illustrator	
Extends his relationship with fonts to his leisure time	1032	and then to–to workin' fonts [Ruffin:	
	1033	Mh.]–and, so I do that in my spare time, just for	In my spare time: relationship with type extends to leisure time
	1034	fun, because I–I love just working with typography.	just for fun: hedonic experience. Is he suggesting that he does not have
Kevin's relationship with type is characterized by love	1035	And so far–so far I've got TWO working	ambitions of becoming a 'professional' type designer?
	1036	fonts, but I have maybe three or four all sketched	because I love working with typography: Indicative of emotional involve-
Kevin has developed a small portfolio of own fonts	1037	out, that I need–still need to progress. (pause)	ment with type;
	1038	#00:44:03-4#	
	1039		
	1040	Ruffin: That sounds very exciting. #00:44:05-9#	
	1041		
	1042	Kevin: Yeah. #00:44:08-3#	
	1043		
	1044		

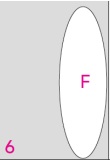# Appendix 16 Extract from Kevin's annotated narrative [steps 1 to 3]

Experiential Statements	Original Text (p. 1), line…		Initial Notes (descriptive, linguistic, conceptual and methodological comments)
Graphic designer is his prominent identity	1	As a graphic designer, I naturally made my collage	Self-identifies as graphic designer
	2	quite graphic using only digital methods. Images	naturally: We get a sense of what he thinks 'define' graphic designers
	3	have been chosen selectively to what I feel best	Selectively: Purposefully
Self-understanding versus perceptions others have of him	4	represents different traits of my personality – not	Focusses on own self-understanding
	5	how others may see me, but certainly how I perceive	
	6	myself.	
Selectively choosing fonts for telling his story – demonstration of expertise	7	For each image I used a different font to what I	Selected different font for each image
	8	think best captured the essence of that personality	Captured the essence: represent core characteristics
	9	trait. I liked the idea of using only one typographic	
Manipulates fonts and the viewer's eye	10	character, so that it really pushes you to	Pushes you: He nudges the viewer/manipulates the viewer's eye
	11	see the subtle differences between each font and	seeing subtle differences: discrimination ability
Sophistication in his relationship with type	12	I found it ironic to do so with an exclamation mark–	ironic: Is this indicative of a sophisticated/intimate relationship with fonts?
	13	the character than [*sic*] demands attention.	demands attention: forces the viewer to look closer and engage with type
	14	The funfair image represents my youth and childhood.	Image represents past self (childhood and youth)
	15	I grew up on a seaside town [location reference]	
	16	called [location reference]. It's a family destination	
	17	full of piers, playgrounds, theme parks	
	18	and arcades therefore I have very fond memories	

Appendix 17 Extract from Kevin's annotated collage transcript (story grid) [steps 1 to 3]

Element	Experiential Statements	Participants' Story (Transcript)	Initial Notes (descriptive, linguistic/metaphoric, conceptual)
COL6F			**Image (COL6):**
	Kevin struggles to self-identify	"The blurred image of the man means to express duality and an unclarity to identify. I think everyday [*sic*] we learn something more about ourselves, sometimes you are capable of something than [*sic*] you never expected."	Black and white image of a man with naked upper part of his body. Could nudity represent vulnerability; transparency; laying bare of lived experiences?
		(Kevin, p. 2, NAR44-48)	Black and white: reinforces notion of 'duality' expressed in narrative and interview. Could this also represent a struggle described as 'good versus bad'?
	No clear sense of self	"The blurred image of th–of the–of the man, is this kind of feeling of SELF-DOUBT and the DUAL-IDENTITY and (pause) basically, just, you know, … I'm still trying to f–I'm still trying to figure out who I am. Obviously, you know who you are at–[hesitation] on paper, but, at your very core, I think, people are changing all the time, and–and I think you're always on a–on a journey of self-discovery, so, I just wanted to include that as well, because I think it's important to KNOW YOURSELF, but (pause) to be open to the idea to know yourself BETTER." (Kevin, p. 21, INT366-378)	you know who you are … but [you don't]
			Man's face is blurred. Motion (blur) technique communicates sense of dynamism, temporality, movement, change. Does motion blur signify present (actual) feeling of ambiguity and self-doubt only or is it also representative of the uncertain future? The latter could be implied in the metaphor 'journey of self-discovery'.
	Negotiating identities for the present and for the future		Blurring renders the image softer – creates a contrast to hard contours of shoulders and the back of the head.
	Finding the self is an on-going process	"the man with the blurred–the blurred motion is quite DARK, and you look at the character and you think 'Oh, that is interesting, because the character really ISN'T–DOESN'T have that same feeling–the character feels a little bit like Comic S–[indistinct stutter] not Comic Sans–feels a little bit like Cooper Black in the sense, that it feels a little bit more informal (prolonged), a bit more casual (prolonged), a bit more childish (prolonged) with its rounded corners and its rounded edges, so I thought that was an interesting (pause)– an interesting COMPARISON–CONTRAST to use those two together, especially how all these images are about self-identity and–and still tryin' to f–figure out who you are–I think that was kind of interesting and fun." (Kevin, pp. 39-40, INT690-706)	**Typeface (COLF):**
			Exclamation mark in yellow colour: Energy. Warmth.
			Font: Courier (classification: Humanist Slab). Slabs are not visible in the chosen type character.
	Sophistication in relationship with type		Image (dark, serious, adult?) and type (bright, informal, childish) have an incongruent feel. Embodiment of experienced duality? That was interesting and fun: Indicative of his relationship with type?

Appendix 18 Example of initial scattering of experiential statements for Kevin [step 4]

Appendix 19 Example of clustering of experiential statements for Kevin [step 4]

Choice of right typeface is not a matter of minor importance but is pivotal (p. 31, INT)

Kevin cannot stop seeing typefaces (p. 38, INT)

Kevin's relationship with type is characterised by love (p. 58, INT)

Typography is more than just a career – it is a lifestyle (pp. 2-3, NAR)

Kevin has a lasting relationship with type and it grew over the past few years (p. 54, INT)

Kevin's relationship with type intensified when he started to design type (p. 56, INT)

Kevin's capacity to create and manipulate type has grown over time (p. 57, INT)

For Kevin, fonts are collectibles (p. 28, INT)

Fonts become possessions signalling Kevin's relationship with type (p. 29, INT)

Font collection entails investment of mental energy, e.g. categorising (p. 30, INT)

Font collection entails investment of time, e.g. categorising (p. 33, INT)

Collecting fonts from work places suggests socially deviant consumer behaviour (p. 30, INT)

Font collection is motivated by hedonic benefits: Kevin collects fonts for fun (p. 30 , INT)

Font collection entails discoveries of valuable items (p. 30, INT)

Kevin was able to demonstrate skills and ability to discriminate (p. 4, INT)

Kevin distinguishes relationships with into ceation with versus creation of type (p. 60, INT)

Collecting font as means to demonstrate expertise (p. 28, INT)

Kevin self-identifies as typographic expert (p. 59, INT)

Kevin created some letters (p. 55, INT)

Changed relationship with type – transition from old (consumer) to new world (producer) (p. 59, INT)

Kevin has developed a small portfolio of own fonts (p. 58, INT)

Creation of type as leisure activity (p. 58, INT)

Kevin pursues font design (p. 60, INT)

Kevin is in search of his own identity (p. 21, INT)

Kevin struggles to self-identify (p. 2, NAR)

Finding the self is an ongoing process (p. 40, INT)

Kevin self-identifies as graphic designer (p. 1, NAR, see also pp. 6, 54, INT)

Highlighting differences helps Kevin to confirm his own self-understanding (pp. 55-56, INT)

By specialising in typefaces, Kevin occupies a niche in graphic design (p. 54, INT)

Kevin uses typeface – he does not create them (pp. 59-60, INT)

A. FOCUS ON IDENTITY

The unknown self

Kevin is in search of his own identity (p. 21, INT)
"I'm still trying to figure out who I am"

Kevin struggles to self-identify (p. 2, NAR)
"The blurred image of the man means to express duality and an unclarity to identify"

Finding the self is an ongoing process (p. 40, INT)
"all these images are about self-identity… and still tryin' to … figure out who you are"

The perceived self

Kevin self-identifies as graphic designer (p. 1, NAR, see also pp. 6, 54, INT)
"As a graphic designer, I naturally made my collage quite graphic using only digital methods"
"I'm a graphic designer"
"Fundamentally, I am a graphic designer … that's … how I would always call myself"

Highlighting differences helps Kevin to confirm his own self-understanding (pp. 55-56, INT)
"I was using … typography … not like a graphic designer, really, more like an artist"

By specializing in typefaces, Kevin occupies a niche in graphic design (p. 54, INT)
"It's really kind of my niche"

Kevin uses typeface—he does not create them (pp. 59-60, INT)
"[Foundries] use typography in a different way than I do—they create the typefaces, but I am the one who uses the typefaces …. They make typefaces just for people like me"

The acting self

Kevin created some letters (p. 55, INT)
"I created some letters"

Changed relationship with type—transition from old (consumer) to new world (producer) (p. 59, INT)
"It's a whole new world"

Kevin has developed a small portfolio of own fonts (p. 58, INT)
"So far I've got two working fonts, but I have maybe three or four all sketched out, that I … still need to progress"

Creation of type as leisure activity (p. 58, INT)
"I do that in my spare time, just for fun"

Kevin pursues font design (p. 60, INT)
"The making of typefaces, this is still something that I'm working on"

B. FOCUS ON KNOWLEDGE

Kevin was able to demonstrate skills and ability to discriminate (p. 4, INT)
"I think I could really show some diversity"

Kevin distinguishes relationships with into creation with versus creation of type (p. 60, INT)
"In terms of knowing typography and understanding typography, I would say that I am an expert"

Collecting font as means to demonstrate expertise (p. 28, INT)
"I feel like I could have chosen some [typefaces] that would have really nailed the image even more"

Kevin self-identifies as typographic expert (p. 59, INT)
"I'm an expert in typography"

C. FOCUS ON COLLECTING FONTS

Being desirable

For Kevin, fonts are collectibles (p. 28, INT)
"I collect fonts"

Fonts become possessions signalling Kevin's relationship with type (p. 29, INT)
"I have so many"

Taking ownership

Font collection entails investment of mental energy, e.g. categorizing (p. 30, INT)
"I categorize it all by the different type of fonts it is"

Font collection entails investment of time, e.g. categorizing (p. 33, INT)
"Spend quite some time on it"

Collecting fonts from workplaces suggests socially deviant consumer behaviour (p. 30, INT)
"Everywhere that I have worked, I collect typefaces"

Just for fun

Font collection is motivated by hedonic benefits: Kevin collects fonts for fun (p. 30 , INT)
"I collect them for fun"

Font collection entails discoveries of valuable items (p. 30, INT)
"I find them online"

D. FOCUS ON CENTRALITY OF TYPE

The importance of type

Choice of right typeface is not a matter of minor importance but is pivotal (p. 31, INT)
"choosing the right typeface makes all the difference"

Kevin cannot stop seeing typefaces (p. 38, INT)
"I can't help but see typefaces being used in areas"

The power of type

Kevin's relationship with type is characterized by love (p. 58, INT)
"I love just working with typography"

Typography is more than just a career—it is a lifestyle (pp. 2-3, NAR)
"My hobby and passion is also my career therefore it has become more of a lifestyle for me"

The dynamic relationship with type

Kevin has a lasting relationship with type and it grew over the past few years (p. 54, INT)
"I've always had an interest in typography, and it's something that I've grown with over the past few years"

Kevin's relationship with type intensified when he started to design type (p. 56, INT)
"That's when I started to first get really inspired by typography"

Kevin's capacity to create and manipulate type has grown over time (p. 57, INT)
"Since then, over the years … my skill and refinement in typography has just naturally progressed"

Appendix 21 Table of group experiential themes (GETs) for facets of connoisseurship [step 7]

A. Apprehending

Mundane consumption

Font consumption is unconscious, pre-reflective
"It's not even conscious" (Laura, p. 34, INT603)
"I never thought about it—the honest truth" (Briana, p. 59, INT1047-1048)
"I didn't think about fonts at all" (Emma, p. 88, INT1574)

Font consumption is habitual, based on preference
"I usually like this one [font]" (Jasmin, p. 37, INT658-659)
"It's [Arial] my preferred typeface" (Damian, p. 15, INT256)

Lacking awareness of type design
"People … won't even notice … the typeface, the design" (Luka, p. 8, INT127-128)

Crossing the Rubicon

Emma's perception of typefaces changed—she started to think about them
"Oh, yeah, I never thought of that" (Emma, p. 89, INT1592-1593)

Justin perceives fonts actively—as opposed to many other people
"A lot of people … just passively perceive fonts" (Justin, p. 57, INT1019-1021)

Luka is surrounded by type—he sees them everywhere
"I see it [typeface] everywhere" (Luka, p. 9, INT148-149)

Kevin cannot stop seeing typefaces—involuntariness
"I can't help but see typefaces" (Kevin, p. 38, INT673-674)

George awareness of type started in his early childhood
"My very earliest exposure to type was at a very young age" (George, p. 26, INT454-455)

B. Involvement

When did it all start: The temporal dimension of involvement

Fonts are not important, but pictures are
"They [pictures] are more interesting to me" (Laura, p. 29, INT511-512)
"I really feel more strongly about the images … so *I didn't think too much about using Times New Roman"*
  (Briana, p. 34, INT597-601)

Relationship with fonts is still young
"It's been more of a recent [thing]" (Emma, p. 89, INT1597)
"Prior to that study I had thought a little bit about … the different fonts" (Thomas, p. 23. INT401-403)
"From that point on I learned" (Tobias, p. 24, INT418-419)
"I first had the opportunity to talk with professional book designers and major publishing houses … at a conference"
  (Sarah, p. 21, INT363-366)

Relationship with type is enduring
"Type has always been part of my … life" (Justin, pp. 17-18, INT306-307)
"I have always been drawn to type" (Alicia, p. 17, INT306)
"I've always had an interest in typography" (Kevin, p. 54, INT963-964)
"It [typography] was always important to me" (Jelena, pp. 31-32, INT558-559)

From interest to lifestyle: The level of involvement

Fonts were never important
"I never thought about it—the honest truth" (Briana, p. 59, INT1047-1048)

Fonts are important—but there are even more important things
"It [typography] was always a part … but not the main thing" (Jelena, p. 32, INT564-565)
"Typefaces are quite important … and … play a big role" (Raphael, p. 15, INT253-255)
"I [am] really thinking a lot always about which font I shall use" (Tobias, p. 22, INT387-388)

Fonts are essential—they become an integral part of people's lives
"Fonts are absolutely essential and critical" (Sarah, p. 31, INT547-548)
"Typefaces play a huge role in my world" (Alicia, p. 18, INT321-322)
"Deep, deep … into only type design" (Luka, p. 21, INT374-375)
"It has become more of a lifestyle for me" (Kevin, pp. 2-3, NAR50-51)

What's that got to do with me: Ego-involvement

Font consumption is used to influence others
"What I'm doing here is impression management" (Damian, p. 50, INT899-900)
"It was always important for me that things, that I put out … looks [sic] good" (Jelena, pp. 31-32, INT558-561)

Font consumption is influenced by social norms
"The audience will … start making judgements about the creator [font user]" (Raphael, p. 15, INT262-265)
"It [using a wrong font] would be a judgeable act" (Emma, p. 24, INT415)
"I wouldn't want to be seen like that, really" (Laura, p. 20, INT353-354)
"I would never want to be the centre of attention [because of wrong typographic choices]" (Damian, p. 131, INT2341-2343)

Relationship with type is self-expressive
"It had something to do with me, and those things that are important to me" (Ruby, p. 53, INT940-942)
"I kind of see it [Futura] as a different metaphor for my experiences in life" (Alicia, p. 8, INT137-138)
"I have chosen … all fonts that I have a personal connection with" (Justin, p. 1, NAR20-21)

C. Hunting and gathering

The yearning self

Fonts are objects of desire
"There were some ones [fonts] … where I went like 'Uh, yeah, I would like to add you to my little bevy' but haven't the money to purchase them, so I just looked at them from afar" (Ruby, p. 16, INT275-278)
"This one student turns in this paper in this certain font … I finally asked him what it was … I downloaded it and I started using it" (Emma, pp. 32-34, INT593-608)

Desire for fonts can be satisfied with substitutes
"Certain software will not have one of those [fonts] … but there is another font that's very similar … that's kind of always in my mind" (Raphael, p. 12, INT201-209)
"I can't afford … professional typeface packages, so I tend to use the free downloadable fonts" (Justin, p. 81 INT1445-1448)

Fonts are collectibles
"I collected a lot of different examples" (Alicia, p. 17, INT293-294)
"Find a lot of examples of that in the world" (Raphael, p. 40, INT716-717)
"I collect fonts" (Kevin, p. 28, INT504)

Font collection is motivated by hedonic motives
"I collect typefaces and I collect them for fun" (Kevin, p. 30, INT523-524)

Fonts become possessions signalling sophisticated relationship with type—quantity matters
"I've got a USB stick with all the fonts from a typesetting company in London … I have probably 30,000 fonts" (George, p. 34, INT596-605)
"On average, every machine that I have tends to have about 150 different fonts, at least" (Justin, p. 82, INT1467-1469)
"I have so many" (Kevin, p. 29, INT505)

D. Knowing

To know or not to know: Typographic knowledge

No typographic knowledge
"Literally nil, to be honest" (Briana, p. 37, INT654-655)
"I didn't have any knowledge about it before" (Jasmin, p. 36, INT631-632)

Medium level of typographic knowledge
"My professional experience … is not that … big, so I think, that when you combine those [education and profession], it [knowledge] will be some kind of a middle" (Jelena, p. 33, INT582-585)

Advanced level of typographic knowledge, including appreciation for characteristics and context
"I'm an expert in typography in terms of graphic design" (Kevin, p. 59, INT1050-1051)
"I've never been about designing type, but designing pages with type" (Ruby, p. 25, INT448-449)
"I mean … I worked as a typographer in advertising" (George, p. 34, INT596-597)
"You know when you need to drop Helvetica in … you know when those fonts are appropriate" (Justin, p. 13, INT230-233)
"Advanced, because I have working knowledge and some expertise, but I wouldn't consider myself an expert" (Sarah, p. 50, INT886-888)
"I kind of appreciate all the quirks … and weirdness [about the font Cooper Black], and when you read the history about the typeface and you know more about the … industry, then those things start to be interesting to you" (Luka, p. 26, INT451-457).
"I'm all about the people and the sorties and the context of the typefaces" (Ruby, p. 12, INT209-210)

Seeing with the mind's eye: Having a vision

Ability to imagine how typefaces look like in use

"I knew that ninety percent of the faces that you had selected on there, the list, were not going to be applicable to what I wanted to use for this occasion" (Alicia, p. 13, INT226-229).

"I kind of already knew, what I was … kind of going for" (Luka, p. 52, INT919-920)

"I had in my mind … the ones [fonts] that I most wanted to use" (Thomas, p. 18, INT310-311)

"When I've first thought about doing the collage, I originally wanted … it to be … quite typographically heavy and not imagery heavy, but I didn't want the viewer to be biased about what I wrote" (Kevin, pp. 80-81, INT1437-1441)

"Formatting the 'personality elements' in a grid seemed like the most logical way to convey the information" (Thomas, p. 1, NAR4-8)

Inability to imagine how typefaces look like in use

"I didn't know how to describe myself in a collage and I didn't know in what way to do it" (Jasmin, p. 4, INT67-69)

"It being a collage of fonts … I had a lot of questions" (Raphael, p. 46, INT820-821)

"I guess 'no bunny knows' how to really make a collage of themself" (Emma, p. 79, INT1412-1414)

"It was also quite challenging … doing it without a preconceived notion of what the end result would look like" (Sarah, p. 2, INT20-24)

Same same, but different: Discrimination ability

Ability to see even the smallest differences in type characteristics

"I liked the idea of also just using the one character [exclamation mark] so you could really study the difference between … each font" (Kevin, pp. 52-53, INT934-937)

"[In type design] you can focus on the minute details" (Luka, p. 34, INT602-603)

Differences between typefaces remain hidden/unseen

"In a single shape [character], like a circle [letter 'O'], you can't see that difference [between fonts] … not at least really apparently" (Emma, p. 83, INT1476-1478)

"I can't reliably say if Helvetica indeed comes closest to Arial" (Damian, p. 132, INT2368-2370)

"I thought the first two pages [of the fonts listed in the collage toolkit] were quite similar" (Jasmin, p. 30, INT539-540)

"To me … they were similar, so it didn't matter" (Laura, p. 16, INT278-279)

"I feel silly for not having worked out the difference between [fonts]" (Thomas, p. 59, INT1056-1058)

E. Gatekeeping

Me versus them: Defining symbolic and social boundaries

Relationship with type is a privilege

"I'm very privileged to be in that political grouping in terms of–[to] have the educational knowledge about type" (Alicia, p. 12, INT207-210)

Upward comparison helps to differentiate self from others

"I know so many experts [designers]—it's like 'the more you know the less you know', right? Oh, I put myself very far away from the expert" (Ruby, p. 34, INT595-598)

"You would beg to differ, I'm sure, because you're the expert on this" (Laura, p. 12, INT214-215)

Downward comparison helps to differentiate self from others

"On the topic of typefaces, I wish the average person cared more" (Raphael, p. 39, INT700-701)

Ability to create fonts is a marker of 'true' expertness

"I can do all … the things, font production and stuff, on my own. I don't need any help, so I would classify, yes, … as an expert" (Luka, pp. 23-24, INT413-415)

"I think one has to design their own—you know—you have to design your own typeface to be really an expert in this" (Justin, pp. 24-25, INT431-434)

Made just for people like me: Building marketing structures

Fonts are made for graphic designers ('just for people like me')—not for end-consumers
"I'm designing for designers, not really … for the end-consumer" (Luka, pp. 13-14, INT234-236)
"They make typefaces just for people like me" (Kevin, pp. 59-60, INT1062-1063)
"[I dislike] fonts that have little consideration … for the professional user …. I hate that"
  (Justin, pp. 76-77, INT1361-1363, INT1373)

Difference between designers and non-designers in acquiring and choosing typefaces
"It is rare for a non-designer to seek a face that isn't on the software list" (Alicia, pp. 13-14, INT234-235)
"Usually [I choose fonts] just from the dropdown menu" (Laura, p. 30, INT534-535)
"One might say because I'm quite–I'm vivacious that I would choose really high personality typeface—perhaps if
  I wasn't a type designer or type researcher that may be the case" (Alicia, p. 26, INT461-465)

Note. Given the large sample size, this table highlights convergences and divergences between personal experiential themes primarily at group level, whereas select experiential statements are used to emphasize idiographic experiences
(see J. A. Smith et al., 2022).

Fonts are made for graphic designers ('just for people like me')—not for end-consumers
"I'm designing for designers, not really … for the end-consumer" (Luka, pp. 13-14, INT234-236)
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Appendix 22 Table of group experiential themes (GETs) for trajectory of connoisseurship [step 7]

A. Initiation Stage

Breaking point was turning point in Sarah's relationship with fonts
"I was crushed …. That's a turning point for me" (Sarah, p. 21, INT372-375)

Acknowledgement that Luka's relationship was not always positive. Luka feels big distance between self and typefaces
"I didn't mention that … that's gonna be interesting for you—how I got into type design. I actually sucked … at type design …. I was super against, like, how—I don't wanna do this—this is not for me" (Luka, pp. 41-42, INT737-747)

Change in relationship with type was mediated by third parties
"And since then [customer feedback] I started really to discuss … font types" (Tobias, p. 24, INT426-432)
"I would write them [texts] in something like Times New Roman but then one of my bosses said that you should use a softer font" (Thomas, p. 12, INT203-207)

Lacking feeling of self-confidence and self-efficacy
"I kind of came out of Uni thinking I had no idea and wasn't good at typography" (Ruby, p. 24, INT429-431)

Emma's relationships with type developed through exploration—curiosity/playful approach
"I've just been exploring with different ones [fonts]" (Emma, p. 89, INT1594-1595)

B. Growth Stage

For Raphael, developing relationships with type entails researching and writing down trends—systematic approach
"Look for some trends … and create a list" (Raphael, p. 40, INT714-718)

George wants to know (analyse) why typography touches (speaks to) him
"When you're learning design, you admire the work of other people, and you–you want to get down to the skin of why you like that work" (George, p. 5, INT75-78)

Sarah's relationship with fonts intensified when she learned the rules of the game (appropriateness norms)
"I did work with a graphic designer, who taught me about typeface and the appropriate use of fonts" (Sarah, pp. 21-22, INT377-379)

Change in relationship valence. Typefaces have grown on Luka reducing the self-object distance
"From that point … I started to really get into typefaces" (Luka, p. 42, INT749-756)

Relationship develops over time—it grows stronger
"It's something that I've grown with over the past few years" (Kevin, p. 54, INT964-965)

Sharing knowledge/talking about typefaces refines relationship with type
"To really develop my instincts and style of type was to teach it" (Ruby, p. 27, INT469-470)

C. Maturity Stage

Making a career with type legitimises knowledge of and expresses sophisticated relationship with type
"I find myself doing more and more consulting on those lines [typographic and graphic design]" (Sarah, p. 50, INT889-891)

Transformed self and relationship with typography—Sense of control/mastery
"That Ruby compared to Ruby now … faded all …. I am a very different person …. From naïve to experienced" (Ruby, p. 42, INT739-751)

Relationship with type is characterized by love
"I love just working with typography" (Kevin, p. 58, INT1034-1035)
"I would have loved to have chosen my own typefaces" (Kevin, p. 28, INT500-501)

Luka has developed a strong self-object connection
"It became, like, 'I really, really like typefaces'" (Luka, p. 43, INT755-756)

Commitment to type—future orientation
'Setting up like a small design studio, a foundry, so, that's kind of my–my goal now" (Luka, pp. 43-44, INT774-776)

D. Decline Stage

Reminiscences of past relationships—individuals moved on from their relationships with type
"My mission today is in mental health … I worked as a typographer in advertising" (George, pp. 33, INT583)
"What this whole project has done is … just bring me back into that world, which is really nice" (Justin, p. 71, INT1264-1266)

Note. The experiential statements presented here are 'gems' (J. A. Smith, 2011c) from a small subset highlighting different 'degrees of maturity' in relationship with fonts.

Appendix 23 Table of recurrent group experiential themes (GETs) for facets of connoisseurship

Experiential theme	Experiential statement	Alicia	Briana	Damian	Emma	George	Jasmin	Jelena	Justin	Kevin	Laura	Luka	Raphael	Ruby	Sarah	Thomas	Tobias
1. Apprehending	1.1 Mundane consumption		●	●	●		●				●	●	○				○
	1.2 Crossing the Rubicon	○			●	●		○	●	●			●	○	○	○	○
2. Involvement	2.1 When did it all start: The temporal dimension of involvement	●	●		●	○	●	●	●	●	○			○	●	●	●
	2.2 From interest to lifestyle: The level of involvement	●	●		○		●		●	○	●	●			●		●
	2.3 What's that got to do with me: Ego-involvement	●		●	●		○	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	○		
3. Hunting and Gathering	3.1 The yearning self	●			●	●			●	●		○	●	●	○		
4. Knowing	4.1 To know or not to know: Typographic knowledge	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	○	○
	4.2 Seeing with the mind's eye: Having a vision	●			●	○	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	
	4.3 Same same, but different: Discrimination ability	○		●	●	○	●		●	●	●					●	
5. Gatekeeping	5.1 Me versus them: Defining symbolic and social boundaries	●						○		○	○	●	●	●	●		○
	5.2 Made for people like me: Building marketing structures	●				○			●	●		●		○	○		

Note. Participants are presented in alphabetical order. Black circles (●) indicate that evidence was presented in Chapter 5.

Appendix 24 Recast of research participants

User group(s) [1]	Subgroup(s) [2]	Participant(s)	Role of self in font consumption [3]
Prospect users – consume typefaces predominantly pre-reflectively (pre-Rubicon stage)	I	Briana, Damian	Not applicable. Font consumption is habitual and rather disconnected from self. Utilitarian value prevails.
	II	Laura, Jasmin	Font choice is based on (1) personal attitudes (like/dislike), triggered by the absence of individual's preferred typefaces (Laura), or (2) superficial anthropomorphism. In the latter case, participants create personality profiles, which are paired up with images from Miami (font-image congruence) (Jasmin). Identity plays only a small role.
Interested users – are first to cross the Rubicon and to actively engage with fonts by exploring and studying them.	I	Tobias, Thomas	Participants in this subgroup choose typefaces that have similar personalities as their own (product-personality congruence), whereas congruence extends to all facets of identity. Attachment to fonts may arise.
	II	Emma, Raphael	Consumption practices of this subgroup highlight the role of typefaces in shaping relationships with others outwardly and inwardly. The role of the self in font consumption becomes more intricate. In Raphael's case, fonts are actively used to construct (self-congruence) and signal identities to others (impression management). Emma's data reveal the normative role of font consumption and how incongruent associations (identity threat) between the self, others (e.g. teacher) and fonts (e.g. Comic Sans) changed their relationship.
Effective users – share the capacity and motivation to manipulate typefaces.	I	Jelena, Sarah	The capacity to manipulate fonts on various typographic levels requires a high level of resources (e.g. mental energy and time). Effective consumers are therefore more likely to extend their selves. Similar to the previous subgroup, Jelena and Sarah use fonts for self-presentation. Positive (negative) judgments are likely to increase (reduce) their self-esteem.
Expert users – forged relationships with fonts.	I	Ruby	Expert users in all three subgroups have forged relationships with fonts. These relationships seem to be most similar to self-brand connections, which are based on either symbolic or experiential meaning (Escalas et al., 2019). Ruby (subgroup I) consumes fonts that have a high symbolic meaning (people, stories and context). Conversely, participants in subgroups II and III connect with fonts because of their experiential meaning. The difference between the latter two subgroups is the degree of psychological closeness and therefore the strength of their relationship with fonts. Participants in subgroup III are situated at the final stage of the connoisseur lifecycle and have a more distant (weaker) relationship with fonts.
	II	Alicia, Kevin, Luka	
	III	George, Justin	

Note. This table is a approximate summary of key identity processes that are at play in the context of font consumption. [1] User groups were identified in Chapter 5 (pp. 183-184). [2] Subgroups have been created for the purpose of this summary table to allow for more nuanced pattern to emerge. The sequence presented corresponds loosely with lifecycle stages presented in Chapter 6 (p. 219). [3] Treatment is based predominantly on the theme 'ego-involvement' presented in Chapter 5 (p. 169). Where applicable, empirical findings from other chapters/sections were included (e.g. lifecycle stages).

Appendix 25 Translations of Damian's direct quotes

Direct quotes used in text	Extract from original English transcript	Extract from original German transcript
Damian felt that important points he was making in English felt: "*a little bit thin*" (Damian, p. 26, INT465-467).	"*It feels a little bit thin, this [interview] in my English description, I think, that's a very important point*" (Damian, p. 26, INT465-467).	
"*was challenging … because that's such a deep and personal–nobody gets this [information] out of me–my nearest environment and–nobody can get such a full picture of my setting I'm living in—except for my wife and two or three very close friends*" (Damian, p.1, INT13-18).	"*It was challenging for myself, because that's such deep and personal–nobody gets this out of me– my NEAREST environment and–nobody can get such a full picture of my setting I'm living in—except for my wife and two or three very close friends.*" (Damian, p.1, INT13-18).	
"*I am doing this [interview] with a degree of honesty that is unusual for me*" (Damian, p. 51, INT908-909).		"*Das [Interview] tu' ich einer Ehrlichkeit, die für mein Leben unüblich ist.*" (Damian, p. 51, INT908-909)
"*Those illnesses are very much mine. [I'm] always trying not to let others participate in them*" (Damian, p. 100, INT1792-1795)		"*Die Erkrankungen sind SEHR MEINS, immer mit dem Versuch nach aller Möglichkeit, andere daran nicht teilhaben zu lassen.*" (Damian, p. 100, INT1792-1795)
"*For me, the worst of this experience is the loss of control, because I cannot win against it*" (Damian, p. 81, INT1454-1456).		"*Es ist für mich die schlimmste Erfahrung, dieser Kontrollverlust, weil ich gegen den nicht gewinnen kann.*" (Damian, p. 81, INT1454-1456).
Damian considers the fact that his life is no longer self-determined as: "*the biggest challenge in [my] life*" (Damian, p. 83, INT1483-1486).		"*Dass ich nicht mehr selbstbestimmt bin, das … ist die größte Herausforderung im Leben, die ich habe.*" (Damian, p. 83, INT1484-1487)

Direct quotes used in main text	Extract from original English transcript	Extract from original German transcript
"*I could not have done it [the collage] differently … No matter what I had left out, it would have always … felt incomplete to me*" (Damian, p. 84, INT1509-1512).		"*Ich hätte es nicht anders gekonnt. Also, egal was ich weggelassen hätte, es hätte immer bedeutet, dass ich–dass es für mich unvollständig ist.*" (Damian, p. 84, INT1509-1512)
Damian tends to use "*only … one font*" (Damian, p. 9, INT152)	"*I always try to write ONLY in one font*" (Damian, p. 9, INT151-152)	
Arial–his "*preferred typeface*" (Damian, p. 15, INT256).	"It's [Arial] my preferred typeface" (Damian, p. 15, INT256)	
When he could not find Arial in the collage toolkit, he selected Helvetica (Damian, COLA-COLY), which he "*feel[s] is the closest to Arial*" (Damian, p. 14, INT247-249).	"*Because there was no Arial in your 30 typefaces …. Helvetica is– I feel it's the closest to Arial.*" (Damian, p. 14, INT247-249)	
"*can't reliably say if Helvetica indeed comes closest to Arial*" (Damian, p. 132, INT2368-2370)		"*Seriös betrachtet kann ich nicht sagen, ob Helvetica wirklich Arial am nächsten kommt.*" (Damian, p. 132, INT2368-2370)

Note. This table illustrates direct quotes only. Most extracts from Damian's have been paraphrased and are therefore not shown here (but are referenced in the main text).

Appendix 26 Ruffin's collage