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CULTURES OF CONSUMPTION WITHIN RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES: UNDERSTANDING ELDERLY BRICOLEURS' CULTURAL MAPS OF MEANING.

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Table of Contents

Index of Figures

Page

Index of Tables

Index of Appendices

Abstract

Set within the context that the world's population is ageing at an unprecedented rate, it is argued that care of the elderly, and their everyday lived experiences are poised to become prominent concerns. In the shadow of this, the ageing population poses a myriad of challenges not only for the elderly but also for policy makers who put in place systems for the provision of services within residential care homes. By virtue, given that communities of elderly consumers voices are often muted within many academic analyses of social policy and service provision this study illuminates and distils communities of elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes.

Given the absence of suitable literature within the fields of marketing and interpretive consumer research, this study turns to the sociological and anthropological literature of Hall and Jefferson (1976) and Levi-Strauss (1966). In doing so, communities of elderly consumers within residential care homes can be theorised as a cultural community of 'bricoleurs' within a 'cultural map of meaning'. Furthermore, viewed through this lens, such bricoleurs can be seen to understand their meaningful everyday lived experiences within, and through, the use of 'bricolage'.

Emanating from eight existential-phenomenological interviews, a rich picture emerges wherein bricoleurs understandings of residential care homes can be seen to be embedded not only within, but also through, such things as the body, leisure trips, noise disturbances, death, large items of furniture, small hand-sized objects, mobility aids, quality of care and social interaction. Moreover, in the light of the resultant interpretations common themes can be seen to emerge within communities of

bricoleurs social and material understandings of residential care homes, namely the notion of cultures of dependency, trauma and comfort.

This research contributes to marketing knowledge in that it argues that communities of 'elderly bricoleurs' within residential care homes can be seen to be held together by unique understandings of cultures of dependency, trauma and comfort. Furthermore, it is also argued that elderly bricoleurs address themselves to a relatively limited amount of bricolage that enables them to keep alive actual, desired, imagined and fictional community ties. Furthermore, the reality and efficacy of cultural communities of elderly bricoleurs seems to depend on their ability to address 'whatever is to hand' (Levi-Strauss, 1966) in order to construct and understand their cultural maps of meaning within residential care homes.

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter is to identify the broader gerontological issues that surround and provide the impetus for this research project. To these ends, Section 1.1 forwards the notion that the worlds population is ageing at an unprecedented rate. With such issues in mind, Section 1.2 discusses demographic issues within the context of the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Section 1.3 introduces a profile of residents in residential care homes, and Section 1.4 identifies issues of public policy and the impacts on residential care homes. Section 1.5 forwards the notion of a residential care home as a site of consumption, and Section 1.6 concludes this chapter by providing an overview of the study.

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1.1 Population Ageing

> *"Over the past few years, the world's population has continued on its remarkable transition path from a state of high birth and death rates to one characterised by low birth and death rates. At the heart of this transition has been the growth in the number and proportion of older persons. Such a rapid, large and ubiquitous growth has never been seen in the history of civilisation"* (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/agepop.htm).

In the light of the ubiquitous, large and rapid growth in the number and proportion of older[1] persons, the United Nations (Ibid.) have argued that this is a unique historical phenomena that will continue well into the coming centuries. As Kinsella and Velkoff (2001) reiterate, "[a]s we begin the twenty first century, population ageing is poised to emerge as a preeminent worldwide phenomenon. The confluence of lowered fertility and improved health and longevity has generated growing numbers and proportions of older populations throughout most of the world" (Ibid: 1). In one sense, population ageing represents a human success story as societies now have the luxury of ageing (Ibid.). However, the sustained growth of elderly populations in many developed countries, such as the United Kingdom, poses myriad challenges to policy makers in many societies (see Section 1.4 for a more thorough discussion.).

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[1] Moschis (1996) argues that "[t]here appears to be no consensus on the characteristics that define one as an 'older person'. Age per se is not a very good criterion to use because there is a great deal of variability in ageing. Because ageing is multidimensional, that is, people gradually grow older biologically, psychologically, and socially, any age boundary used is not likely to produce a meaningful definition. Simply put, people do not always look their age or act their age" (Ibid: 2).

1.2 The Demographics of Ageing within the United Kingdom

According to the Office of Fair Trading (2005) the United Kingdom population will see considerable growth in the number of people aged 75 years and older. Figure 1.1A sets out the estimates for the proportion older people up to 2043:

Figure 1.1A: Population Projections for the United Kingdom (Persons Aged 60 and over).
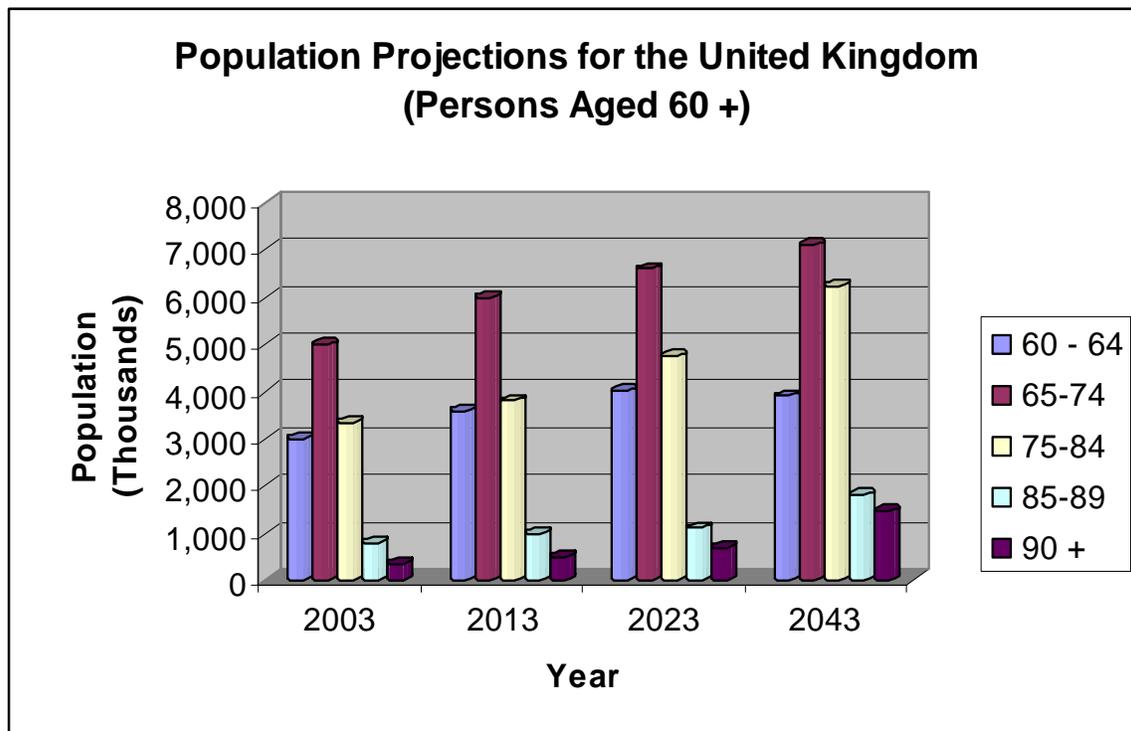
Source: Office of Fair Trading (2005: 27).

However, while the proportion of older people living in the United Kingdom is likely to increase, it is difficult to predict demand for long term care[2] in the future. It seems likely that demand will increase significantly in the next few decades, but the actual level will be influenced by the value placed upon independent living, the availability of social services and social support, elderly peoples' general state of health, financial well being and developments in health care and the treatment of certain diseases in old age (Kinsella and Velkoff, 2001). On the individual level, long term care arrangements are dynamic, representing both a result of prior events and an antecedent to other outcomes. On the societal level, long term care arrangements reflect other demographic, economic, and cultural characteristics which, in turn, influence the composition of those living in residential care homes.

1.3 Profile of Residential Care Home Residents

In an ideal world, elderly people would be in a figural position to recognize that their attentive energetic resources were decreasing at such a rate that suggested their best chance of extended physical survival would be to move into a residential care home[3]. As such, they would have conducted a thorough search for pertinent information, evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the care homes under consideration, and subsequently

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[2] "On the basis of the 2001 census of the UK population, [it] is estimate[d] that for older consumers between the ages of 60 and 64 years only about three in every thousand are living in nursing and residential care homes. This grows to roughly seven in every thousand for those aged between 65 and 74, but after this increases rapidly to around two hundred and fifty per thousand for those aged ninety and over. In the higher age ranges especially, the rates for women considerably exceed those of men" (Office of Fair Trading, 2005: 25).

[3] "Residential homes differ from nursing homes in that residential homes provide assistance with personal care such as dressing and washing if required, staff can care for residents during short periods of illness whilst nursing homes are better suited where more constant medical attention is required" (Office of Fair Trading, 2005: 20).

made an informed 'purchase' decision. However, as the Office of Fair Trading (1998) suggests, many elderly people rarely have enough attentive energy to make a suitable decision about which care home is most likely to meet their specific care needs. The reasons for admission into care homes are outlined in the proceeding table:

Table 1.3A: Reasons for Admission into Care

Reasons for Admission	Percentage
Physical health problems.	69
Mental health problems.	43
Functional disablement.	42
Stress on carers.	38
Lack of motivation	22
Present home physically unsuitable.	15
Family breakdown (including loss of carer).	8
Need for rehabilitation	6
Fear of being a victim of crime.	4
Abuse.	2
Loneliness or isolation.	2
Homelessness.	1

Adapted from Office of Fair Trading (2005: 23)

As the preceding table suggests, for many older people, their need for care may (or may not) have emerged through, for example, slowly progressing physical health problems (such as arthritis). Conversely, others may enter care[4] as the result of sudden crisis due to

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[4] "The sources of admissions of older consumers to residential care also vary widely. In 1995/1996… researchers found that roughly half of all residents moved into care from hospital and about three in ten from a private household" (Office of Fair Trading, 2005: 23).

an accident (such as falling and breaking a leg) or acute diseases (such as bowel problems). On this basis, the decision to place an elderly person into a care home is often taken by others, such as carers, relatives, friends, hospital staff, general practitioners, or social workers who often refer to the advice of NHS Trusts and health authorities, local authority social services departments, general practitioners, the Benefits Agency, care homes and their trade associations, and several major voluntary organisations such as Help the Aged, Counsel and Care, Age Concern, and The Relatives Association (Ibid.). By virtue, "in April 2004 an estimated 410,000 older people lived in care homes in the United Kingdom" (Office of Fair Trading, 2005: 21). In an ageing population, it is reasonable to expect that the demand for care home places will increase" (Ibid: 20).

1.4 Residential Care Homes and Public Policy

Interested observers of social trends within the United Kingdom may have noted the development of national policies that have affected the ways in which care homes are managed. As the Office of Fair Trading (2005: 28) state, "the care homes sector has undergone substantial regulatory and policy changes over the last decade." In the light of this, Andrews and Phillips (2000: 599) claim that "[d]uring the 1980s, the private residential sector for older persons enjoyed substantial financial support for the care of residents. However, since the 1990 National Health Service and Care in the Community Act was implemented in 1993, homes have had to compete with each other in a market, for a finite number of clients funded by limited local budgets held by local authority purchasers." By virtue of the aforementioned policy reform and the subsequent creation

of the 'residential care home market[5]' residential care homes have been competing against each other for potential residents (or customers).

Grant (2004) claims that roughly two care homes[6] a month are closing due to the attempted implementation of the aforementioned Act and the financial pressures that are associated with the effective running of a care home. As a consequence of this, many elderly people will either be consigned to a hospital bed or decanted to another home that may be far away from family and friends (Ibid.). In the shadow of the aforementioned, Daley (2004) suggests that the Consumers Association, backed by many charities – including Help the Aged and Age Concern – have been lobbying to push long term residential care up the political agenda. Until recently, the Office of Fair Trading, either through omission or aversion, had not focussed their attentive energies into and throughout the policies[7] that structure and shape the lived experiences of elderly people in residential care homes. Unfortunately, this pattern has also been mirrored within the scholarly realms of marketing and consumer research. As such, consumer researchers have not focused their attentive energies into and throughout the consumption experiences of elderly people in care homes. As such, it can be argued that this field of study is in urgent need of exploration in order to further an understanding of this realm of

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[5] "In 2004 there were around 15,700 care homes for older consumers, providing roughly 450,000 places across the UK for 410,000 residents" (Office of Fair Trading, 2005: 36).

[6] "Privately run [care] homes accommodate more than half of all those currently in residential care…Most providers in the care homes market are independent small businesses, each running just one or two homes." (Office of Fair Trading, 1998:8).

[7] On the 5th December 2003 The Consumers' Association wrote to The Office of Fair Trading with a complaint about the Care Homes Sector, expressing concerns about the interests of consumers and whether the marker was working well for them. In the light of this, The Office of Fair Trading (2005) has published a market study that focuses on consumer behavior, price transparency, and contracts in relation to current or future fees (http://www.oft.gov.uk/business/market+studies/care+homes2.htm).

social life. By virtue, this study derives energetic inspiration and impetus from the broader gerontological explorations of Price, Arnould and Curasi's (2004) study of how individual's cherished possessions become families inalienable wealth, Marcoux's (2001) examination of the 'Casser Maison' ritual, and Gibler, Lumpkin and Moschis's (1997) study of mature consumers' attitudes toward retirement housing and long-term care alternatives, amongst others.

1.5 Residential Care Homes as a Site of Consumption

"No serious theory of contemporary society can ignore the importance of consumption" (Ritzer, Goodman and Wiedenhoft, 2003: 410).

With issues related to the theorising of modern society in mind, Brownlie and Horne (2001) drawing on Weber (1971) argue that the importance of consumption can be traced back to the puritanical values of the eighteenth century that drove the development of British capitalism and large scale production. Moving forward to the nineteenth century, Brownlie and Horne (2001) in line with Bocock (1993) claim that consumption played a key role in the development of new classes, providing them with ways of marking themselves off from other social groups. Furthermore, and moving this brief history of consumption further forward, the end of the nineteenth century marked the emergence of mass consumption within which all but the poorest socio-economic groups could choose between a growing assortment of products and services (Brownlie and Horne, 2001). The 1980s witnessed the emergence of new groups of consumers based on; emotional states,

fantasies and hedonistic delights (Ritzer, Goodman and Wiedenhort, 2003). Thus, these newer theories of consumption have dealt with a wider range of topics. By virtue, research emphasis has also shifted from the cognitive to the emotional, from the conscious to the unconscious, and from the rational to the non-rational (Brownlie and Horne, 2001: 241). To these ends, Gabriel and Lang (1995) have identified a wide range of subjects of consumption – victim, chooser, communicator, explorer, identity seeker, hedonist, artist, rebel, activist and citizen. However, while the analysis of consumer groups has a relatively rich history from which to draw new theories, the sites of consumption have been relatively neglected as a topic of study within the field of consumer research (Ritzer, Goodman and Wiedenhoft, 2003). However, this is not to say that they have been totally ignored as such studies of Goths (Goulding, Saren and Follett, 2004), death rituals in Ghana (Bonsu and Belk, 2003), the Burning Man Festival (Kozinets, 2002), prisoners (Brownlie and Horne, 2001), white water rafting (Arnould and Price, 1993) etc. reveal. Moreover, Benjamin (1986) claims that the emergence of such studies that examine sites of consumption is linked to the growing importance of living spaces within which consumers construct meaningful lived experiences through consumer goods and services. As such, this study, drawing on the gerontological issues outlined in this chapter, examines elderly consumers understandings of their living spaces within residential care homes to present a consumptive account of their meaningful lived experiences.

1.6 Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is distilled into five main chapters:

Table 1.6A: Structure of the Thesis

Chapter Number.	Content.
1.	Introduces broad gerontological issues.
2.	Meditations on culture and communities of elderly consumers.
3.	Methodological considerations.
4.	Elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes.
5.	Conclusions and signposts for consumer and marketing research.

With the above table in mind, Chapter Two meditates on such issues as culture and communities of elderly consumers. This line of argument is carried forward in Chapter Three where the focus is to elucidate the methodological approach considered most appropriate for the understanding of culture within residential care homes. Chapter Four, rather than forwarding an abstract theoretical account that moves away from elderly consumers understandings, identifies global themes (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) that occur across the interview transcripts. The concluding chapter, brings forward the themes identified in Chapter Four and places these within discussions of culture and

communities of elderly consumers, thereby contributing towards the theory of interpretive consumer research and the practice of marketing management.

Chapter 2

Meditations on Culture and Communities of Elderly Consumers

2.0 Chapter Summary

The previous chapter illuminated and distilled various gerontological issues. Embedded within these it was argued that population ageing is poised to emerge as a pre-eminent worldwide phenomena in the twenty-first century. As such, the subject of population ageing has received increasing attention in the national media and the political domain to the extent that it is proposed that care of the elderly, and their everyday lived experiences, are poised to become prominent concerns. In the shadow of this, it is argued that the ageing population poses myriad challenges, not only for the elderly, but also for policy makers (Kinsella and Velkoff, 2001) who put in place systems for the provision of services (Oldman and Quilgars, 1999) within residential care homes.   As such, this chapter seeks to illuminate the lived experiences of communities of elderly consumers living in residential care homes by reviewing the scholarly marketing, interpretive consumer research, and related sociological and anthropological literature that discusses key issues surrounding and permeating communities of elderly consumers living in residential care homes. With these literary signposts in mind, this chapter will, in broad terms, follow these discursive contours in order to establish a detailed topographical map of the research field. As such, this cartographic endeavour will identify, reveal and review the key insights that have been gained by traveling through these fields of knowledge to further extend scholastic thought.

2.1 The Marketing Literature: Studies of Elderly Consumers

> *"We have been witnessing perhaps the most important demographic shift in the history of mankind – the rapid ageing of the earth's population. Today there are approximately 600 million people over the age of 60 living on this planet. By the year 2050 this figure is expected to quadruple to 2 billion"* (United Nations, 2002: 1).

In one sense, population ageing represents a human success story as societies now have the luxury of ageing (Kinsella and Velkoff, 2001). However, the steady sustained growth of elderly populations affects just about everyone on the planet (Moschis, 2003) and brings myriad challenges to policy makers and service providers in many societies. As Kinsella and Velkoff (2001: 516) write, "[t]his trend is also affecting families and raises issues such as elderly care giving [and] living arrangements in old age." To these ends, policy arrangements regarding the care of groups of elderly consumers in residential care homes is likely to become an increasingly contentious issue (e.g. Andrews and Phillips, 2000; Department of Health, 2000; Wagner, 1984) as more consumers live longer and require residential care in old age. Similarly, Oldman and Quilgars (1999) suggest that managing service provision for groups of elderly consumers within residential care homes is also going to become an increasingly important issue. Moreover, as Wilson (1997; 1991) comments groups of elderly people's voices are muted in many academic analyses of social policies, and service provision is so often shaped by the assumptive worlds of policy makers and service providers. Returning to the related fields of

marketing and interpretive consumer research a literature search of the leading academic journals will reveal that that there is a distinct absence of studies that attempt to provide groups of elderly consumers with a voice on living arrangements and service provision in the form of elderly care giving (Kinsella and Velkoff, 2001). With these scholastic lacunas in mind; which studies within the field of marketing and interpretive consumer research can be used to illuminate a study of groups of elderly consumers lived experiences in residential care homes? Over the last ten years or so, a relatively small but growing cadre of marketing scholars, as the following tables illustrate, have contributed toward an understanding of elderly consumers' experiences of service provision in the form of care giving and living arrangements in old age.

Table 2.1A: Studies of the Consumption of Care Services

Author & Year Published	*Focus*	*Summary*
Moschis, Bellenger, Kennett & Aab (1996).	Targeting the Mature Consumer Market.	The study attempts to ascertain the degree to which health service providers recognise some of the needs of the elderly market and the degree to which marketing programs are addressing these needs.
Mathur & Moschis (1999).	Exploring the Intergenerational Caregiver Market.	The research identifies and profiles family caregivers for the elderly, the types of care they provide for elderly relatives, and marketing communications methods that can be used to reach them.
Moschis, Bellenger and Curasi (2003).	What Influences the Mature Consumers?	The study analyses the differences in the motives for patronising specific hospitals and physicians for mature consumers in the USA based on gerentographic analysis.

To date, as the preceding table illustrates, the majority of scholastic insight within the related fields of marketing and interpretive consumer research has been directed toward and throughout studies of the consumption of care services with particular focus on health service providers (Moschis, Bellenger and Aab, 1996), healthcare choices (Moschis, Bellenger and Curasi, 2003) and the types of familial care (Mathur and Moschis, 1999).

However, critical review of such a body of literature reveals that no studies exist that relate to elderly consumers' *understandings* of the consumption of care services (Wilson, 1997; 1991) within residential care homes. With the related issue of living arrangements in mind, this review now turns to the archives of marketing and consumer research to review this body of literature.

Table 2.1B Marketing and Interpretive Consumer Research Studies of Living

Arrangements in Old Age

Author & Year Published	Perspective	Summary
Gibler, Lumpkin and Moschis (1997).	Mature Consumer Awareness and Attitudes Toward Retirement Housing and long-term Care Alternatives.	Discusses the status of the housing and long-term care markets, including emerging trends in United States. In doing so, the study provides information on housing and long-term care alternatives.
Gibler, Lumpkin & Moschis (1998).	Making the decision to move into retirement housing.	The study illuminates the decision making process of moving into retirement housing while highlighting the role of declining health and retirement.
Gibler, Moschis & Lee (1999).	Planning to Move into Retirement Housing.	This national survey of people age 55 and older indicates interest in retirement community housing among all socioeconomic groups, but especially among women and better-educated seniors.
Kim, Kim & Kim (2003).	Impacts of Senior Citizens Lifestyle on their Choices of Elderly Housing.	Examines how the lifestyle of senior citizens affects their choices of retirement communities in Seoul, Korea.

With these studies of living arrangements in old age in mind, the notion can be forwarded

wherein a small amount of scholarly insight is directed into the related archives of

marketing and consumer research in the form of elderly consumers attitudes and decisions relating to the decision to move into retirement housing (Gibler, Lumpkin and Moschis, 1997; 1998; 1999), and the impact of senior citizens lifestyle on the choices of elderly housing (Kim, Kim and Kim, 2003). However, whilst issues[8] surrounding the lived experiences of elderly people in residential care homes are debated within social gerontology (see, for example Oldman and Quilgars, 1999; Wilson, 1997; Means and Smith, 1994; Wilson, 1991) no such studies currently exist within the realms of marketing or interpretive consumer research.

Given the distinct lack of studies of marketing and consumer research that focus on the consumption of care services and living arrangements in old age, and especially the dearth of understanding relating to the lived experiences of groups of elderly people as consumers within residential care homes, it becomes necessary to pose a question; which body of literature can be used to illuminate the lived experiences of groups of elderly consumers in residential care homes? By virtue, this review now turns to the mainstream marketing literature in the form of studies of market segmentation in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of groups of elderly consumers.

2.1.1 Market Segmentation

Traditionally, marketers have followed in the footsteps of Smith (1956) and Martineau (1958) when attempting to place consumers into identifiable groups. Smith (1956)

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[8] For example, Andrews and Phillips (2000) discuss the moral dilemmas associated with the management of private residential care homes in the United Kingdom.

introduced the term 'market segmentation' into marketing discourse to argue that goods would "find their markets of maximum potential as a result of the recognition of differences in the requirements of market segments…attention to smaller or fringe market segments, which may have smaller potentials individually but are but are of crucial importance in the aggregate" (Smith, 1956:7). With issues of maximising profit through the recognition of smaller, fringe market segments in mind, Martineau (1958) further developed the rationale for market segmentation by attacking the assumption that a rich man is simply a poor man with more money and that, given the same income, the poor man would behave exactly like the rich man. In the light of these behavioural differences Martineau (ibid.) suggests that a member of a market segment defined by social class interprets the world of consumer goods and services in such a way that shapes where and what people are likely to buy, based on different forms of economic and social value.

Following on from these core meditations marketing scholars and practitioners have subsequently devised a multitude of different bases upon which identifiable groups of consumers are targeted. Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong (2002) disaggregate these into four main frameworks; (1) Geographic, (2) Demographic, (3) Psychographic, and (4) Behavioural bases for segmentation. These frameworks are distilled into the following table:

Table 2.1.1A Common Market Segmentation Variables

Segmentation Framework	Base
Geographic	Nations
	States
	Regions
	Countries
	Cities
	Neighbourhoods
	Density of population
	Climate
Demographic	Age
	Sex
	Income
	Occupation
	Education
	Religion
	Family size
	Family life cycle
	Ethnicity
Psychographic	Lifestyles
	Social class
	Personality traits.
Behavioural	Knowledge
	Attitude
	Product use
	Product response.
	Purchase occasion
	Benefits sought
	Loyalty status

Adapted from Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders and Wong (2002: 321-333).

Many marketers believe that behavioural variables offer a best starting point for identifying market segments (see, for example, White and Griffith, 1997; Johnson,

Ringham and Jurd, 1991). However, to suggest that behavioural (or for that matter, demographic, psychographic and geographic) segmentation offers a best starting point to segment the elderly market into recognizable groups of people is somewhat problematic as it can be argued that an accurate behavioural, demographic, psychographic and geographic understanding of elderly consumers is often missing within the marketing literature thereby increasingly the likelihood of stereotyping and ageism.

A common way to divide elderly consumers into subgroups is by using age boundaries (e.g. 56-65, 66-75, 76+ etc.). However, criticism of the age approach is prevalent through stressing the relativity of age and the arbitrariness of age boundaries (Wilkes, 1992; Gunter, 1998). In the shadow of this, alternative approaches are based on 'lifestyle segmentation' (see, for example, Orth, McDaniel, Shellhammer and Lopetcharat, 2004; González and Bello, 2002; Kucukemiroglu, 1999; Haslop, Hill and Schmidt, 1998; Shufeldt, Oates amd Vaught, 1998) and other combinations of variables adapted to groups of elderly consumers. With psychographic instruments such as VALS scales in mind Arnould, Price and Zinkhan (2004) argue that they have received a lot of attention within marketing literature. However, the most important shortcoming of segmenting elderly consumers in this way is based on generally applicable scales is the lack of adaption to this group. Furthermore, Moschis (1996) denounces the psychographic approach by forwarding the notion that lifestyles represent a limited perspective on groups of elderly consumers. His alternative approach, 'gerontographics' (Moschis 1996; 1993) divides groups of elderly consumers living in the United States of America on the basis of life changing events (such as psychological and biological ageing). To this end,

Moschis (Ibid.) claims that groups of elderly consumers can be classified as healthy indulgers, ailing out-goers, healthy hermits and frail recluses. However, critical review of the 'gerontographic' approach to segmenting the elderly market suggests that this concept has three drawbacks: Firstly, gerontographics, as a basis for segmenting elderly consumers, offers little guidance as to how it can be replicated within the context of cultures out with the United States of America. Secondly, gerontographic segmentation can be seen to essentialise the gradual physical decline of groups of elderly consumers. Moreover, whilst ageing and its resultant implications should not be denied, consumer researchers will direct little light onto groups of elderly consumers if they attempt to homogenise elderly consumers in this way.

Moreover, from the standpoint of interpretive consumer research, Schouten and McAlexander (1995) argue that the major limitation pertaining to the previously outlined bases for segmenting elderly consumers is that the outlined approaches tend to ignore "the most powerful organising forces in modern life are the activities and associated interpersonal relationships that people undertake to give their lives meaning. In choosing how to spend their money and their time, people do not conform always or neatly to their ascribed analytic categories currently proffered by academia (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age, VALS group, or social class). They take part in the creation of their own categories" (Ibid: 43). As the preceding quotation implies, interpretive consumer researchers are well positioned to identify and understand the elements (such as consumer goods) that elderly consumers bring to their own lives through their consumption choices which, in turn, leads to the creation of groups (or communities) of elderly consumers own bases for

segmentation. To these ends, critical review of the marketing literature in the form of studies of market segmentation reveals that little subsequent insight can be directed toward understanding the lived experiences of communities of elderly people living in residential care homes. By virtue, and in order to shed further light on this research project this discussion now turns away from the limiting realms of segmentation research to review the interpretive consumer research literature in the form of studies of communities

2.2 Interpretive Consumer Research and Studies of Community.

The theoretical construct of 'community' has a relatively rich history within the field of marketing and interpretive consumer research. As such, the notion of 'community' has been variously defined as; a geographic community (Adelman, 1992), communitas (Arnould and Price, 1993: Goulding, Saren and Follett, 2005), gemeinschaft (Belk and Costa (1998), postmodernism (Cova, 1997), a sociological concept (Fisher, Bristor and Gainer, 1996), a consumption community (Friedman, Vanden Abeele and De Vos, 1993), a neo-tribal formation (Goulding, Shanker and Elliot, 2002), a computer mediated community (Hogg, Laing and Newholm, 2004), a label (Penaloza, 1994; Kates and Belk, 2001; Thompson, 2005), brand and marketplace communities (McAlexander, Schouten and Koenig, 2002), brand communities (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; Muniz and Schau, 2005), microculture (Thompson and Troester, 2002) and subculture (e.g. Goulding, Saren and Follet, 2004; Schouten and McAlexander, 1995).

However, despite this burgeoning body of knowledge, it is noted that, within the related fields of marketing and interpretive consumer research, that the concept of 'community' lacks a precise definition. With this ambiguity in mind, Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (1986: 47) suggest that this is not surprising given that "[t]he term community is one of the most elusive and vague in sociology and is by now largely without specific meaning." Despite this, studies of marketing and consumer research attempt to elucidate the lived experiences of consumer culture through such theoretical framing devices as 'communitas'(Goulding, Saren and Follett, 200) bypass this fundamental theoretical lacuna in order to illuminate what it means to be a 'Goth'.

As such, Goulding, Saren and Follett (2004), refer to Turner's (1995) notion of 'communitas' to illuminate Gothic subculture. Turner (Ibid.) claims that groups of people (such as Goths) can be theorised as an 'in-group' that is characterised by "'we' feelings, loyalty to the group, sacrifice for it, and comradeship amongst its members. The nature of its social interrelations can be thought of as 'normative communitas'" (Ibid: 44). Furthermore, Turner (Ibid.) claims that this constant flow "denotes the holistic sensation when we act with total involvement, when action and awareness are one, (one ceases to flow if one becomes aware that one is doing it), then, just as a river needs a bed and banks to flow, so do people need framing and structural rules to do their kind of flowing. But here the rules crystallize out of the flow rather than being imposed on it from without" (Ibid: 133).

Viewed through Turner's (1995) lens the notion of 'communitas' is not dissimilar to Maffesoli's (1996) scholarly vision of the 'tribus'. Indeed, Goulding, Saren and Follett (2004) refer to both of the aforementioned social theories within their theoretical framework of Gothic subculture . To these ends, Maffesoli's (1996) notion of the 'tribus' is characterised as being neither fixed or permanent (note the similarity with Turner's (1995) notion of the flowing river), but involves constant movement between the tribes and the masses. Accordingly, these "neo-tribes may be effervescent, ascetic, oriented towards the past or the future; they have as their common characteristic on the one hand, a breaking with the commonly held wisdom and, on the other, an enhancing of the organic aspect of social aggregation" (Maffesoli, 1996: 96). Furthermore, as Goulding, Shanker and Elliot (2002) suggest, these groups are often held together by a certain ambience and state of mind. However, critical review of Maffesoli's (1996.) notion of 'tribus' and Turner's (1995) notion of 'communitas' enables several questions to emerge: are the social relations of groups of elderly consumers in residential care homes held together by 'we' feelings, loyalty to the group, sacrifice for it, comradeship amongst its members and a certain ambience and state of mind? Furthermore, do they involve a constant movement between the tribe and the masses? Or, as Brownlie and Horne (2001) in line with Giddens (1991) suggest, are they mediated by a common set of institutional circumstances which are beyond the everyday experiences of the consuming community at large[9]?

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[9] As such, this thesis contributes toward researching "social groupings, which, for many different reasons, function on the margins of society. The work undertaken by Elliott (1995) and McCracken (1987) responds to these issues in considering the addictive, the unemployed and the elderly, respectively" (Brownlie and Horne, 2001: 242).

With these questions in mind, and drawing on Goulding, Saren and Follett (2004) Wenger (1999) and Turner (1995) this study argues that groups of elderly people in residential care homes can be thought of as 'subcultural communities'. As such, subcultural communities of elderly people are characterized by being bound together by a collective unconscious which acts as a matrix for shared group experiences, common interests, and mutual engagement (Maffesoli, 1996). Or, to put it more simply, the notion of subcultural communities characterizes a body of people (such as elderly consumers in residential care homes) with something in common (Cova and Cova, 2002) who create a meaningful lived experience through social and material cultural "webs of meaning" (Geertz, 1973: 5).

2.3 Interpretive Consumer Research and Subcultures of Consumption

Schouten and McAlexander (1995.) introduced the term 'subcultures of consumption' into the realms of interpretive consumer research to refer to the phenomenon of the Harley Davidson subgroup who self-select on the basis of a shared commitment to particular goods, services, brands, consumption activities, a hierarchical social structure, a unique ethos, beliefs, values, jargons, rituals, and modes of symbolic expression.   To these ends, Schouten and McAlexander (Ibid.) follow in a long and well established line of notable anthropologists such as Levi-Strauss (1966) and Geertz (1973) who, in their respective studies of the Caduveo Tribe and the Balinese, initially bracket theory and its findings in order to direct their attentive scholastic energies toward and throughout

illuminating the everyday lived experiences of the aforementioned cultures. Viewed through this scholastic lens, Schouten and McAlexander (1995) examine the experiences of the Harley Davidson bikers by meditating on the subcultural "webs of significance" (Geertz, 1973: 5) that have been spun within and throughout the structure and ethos of the group. As such, it is possible to argue that this study implies that Harley Davidson bikers are not just consumers but also producers of material and social subcultural "webs of significance" (Ibid.). Therefore, the Harley Davidson subculture is perhaps most effectively thought of as a meaningful web of social and material threads that are woven through patterns of lived experience wherein subcultural forms, such as material artifacts and meaningful social experiences, find their articulation. Following on from the aforementioned anthropological tradition adopted by Schouten and McAlexander (1995), as table 2.3A illustrates, a small but growing cadre of consumer researchers have illuminated and distilled a variety of practitioners of various subcultures of consumption.

Table 2.3A Studies of Subcultural Consumption

Author/s	Subculture	Meaningful Expressions of Social and Material Culture

Schouten and McAlexander (1995).	Harley Davidson Bikers	Structure.
		- Hierarchies of Commitment and Authenticity.
		- Aspirants and Barriers to Entry.
		
		Ethos.
		- Religious Aspects of the Subculture.
		- Core Values.
		   o Personal Freedom.
		   o Patriotism and American Heritage.
		   o Machismo
		
		Transforming of Self: Becoming a Biker.

Kozinets (1997)	X-Philes	Negotiating Aesthetic Consumption Standards. Consuming Beliefs About Mysterious Experiences. Connection Through Consumption of Artefacts and Services.
Haslop, Hill and Scmidt (1998).	Gay Lifestyle.	Pubs and bars as part of the gay socialisation process. Condition of environment as consumption influence. Gay subcultural value. Diversity.
Belk and Arnould-Costa (1998).	Mountain Men.	Seeking the primitive through objects and actions. Authenticity. Liminoid and sacred time and place.

		Rites of intensification. Rites of transformation.
Miklas and Arnould (1999).	Gothic	Gothic Religion Keeping normals in their place. Costuming. Ritual and extraordinary consumption. Gothic literature.
Wattannasuwan and Elliott (1999).	Teenage Dhammakaya Buddhists in Thailand	The Buddhist Self: The primary symbolic project of the self - To complete the ideal self. - To avoid and dispose of the unwanted self. - To liberate the samsaric self. Sources of Symbolic Meanings: Mediated vs. Lived Experience. Self-Symbolism vs. Social-Symbolism. Emergent Themes. - Kilesa to be more superior than others. - Kilesa to be a part of greatness and to extend the self across time.
Kozinets (2001)	Star Trek	"For The World Is Hollow and I Have Touched the Sky": Consuming Star Trek as a Utopian Sanctuary. "Get a Life": Star Trek Consumption and Stigma. "A Kind of Higher Existence": Star Trek Consumption as Religious and Mythic. "A More Appropriate Detachment": Affinities and Consumption Practices. "The Philosophy Is More than the Merchandise": Navigating the Utopian and Commercial Enterprise.

Fung (2002).	Women's magazine readers in Hong Kong	Identification with imagined community. Identification with the transforming power of commodities. Identification with communal bond of support.
Hill (2002).	Poverty	Meagre possessions. Consumer restriction. Role of the media. Consumer reactions. Survival strategies.
Kates (2002).	Gay	The meaning of gay subcultural consumption. - Safety and consumption. The gay community versus the scene. - Gender inflexibility and consumption. - Celebration of sexuality versus aesthetic bodily competition through consuming. Constructing subcultural boundaries through consumption. - Interpreting the consumption performances of others. - The campy aestheticising of consumption. - Inscribing gay festival consumption into subcultural boundaries. Consuming and negotiating individual distinction. - Negotiating subcultural appearance standards. - Niched competing through consumption. - Consumption comparisons with other gay men and the ghetto queen. Playing with consumption stereotypes.
Goulding, Shanker and Elliott (2002).	Rave.	Identity and narcissistic expression. Emergence of new communities. The need to escape – working weeks and rave

		weekends
		Engagement
		Prolonged hedonism.
Goulding, Saren and Follett (2004).	Gothic	Goth as communitas.
		Goth and the vampire myth.
		Goth as performance.
		Goth as commodity.
		Blurring of gender boundaries.
Goulding & Shanker (2004).	Rave	"Felt age", "look age" & self-expression.
		Age as a reflection of group referral.
		"Do age" and escape.
		"Interest Age" and engagement.

One of the most striking features of the outlined literature is that a growing body of scholars have depicted an extraordinary diversity of the ways of living – from Harley Davidson bikers (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995), Mountain Men (Belk and Arnould-Costa, 1998), teenage Dhammakaya Buddhists (Wattanasuwan and Elliott, 1999), Star Trek enthusiasts (Kozinets, 2001), and so on to the extent that there appears to be a variety of everyday lived experiences in which groups of consumers perceive and express themselves through the meanings associated with the goods and services of consumer society. However, as the preceding table reveals this body of literature does not offer any studies of elderly consumers. In the shadow of this, how can these studies be used to illuminate the lived experiences of groups of elderly people in residential care homes?

To these illuminatory ends, some of these studies are useful in the sense that they suggest that elderly consumers within residential care homes can be initially theorised as a communal subculture of consumption that is bound together by a collective unconscious which acts as a matrix for shared group experiences, common interests, and mutual engagement (Maffesoli, 1996). Or, to put it more simply, the notion of subcultural communities characterizes a group of people (such as elderly consumers in residential care homes) with something in common (Cova and Cova, 2002) who express themselves within and throughout social and material cultural "webs of meaning" (Geertz, 1973: 5).

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However, whilst the outlined studies provide this thesis with some insights into how subcultural communities of elderly consumers may be understood, they are not without criticism. Firstly, with Table 2.3A in mind, and in particular the column that illuminates and distils the meaningful everyday lived experiences of social and material culture, it is possible to argue that the development of this body of literature has taken place without a common theoretical grounding that pertains to the social and material expressions of any given subcultural community. In a partial attempt to fill this lacuna, Arnould & Thompson (2005) review the 'Consumer Culture Theory' literature wherein they attempt to map twenty years of socio-cultural, experiential, symbolic, and ideological aspects of consumption within the geographic setting of the United States of America. Whilst the parameters of Arnould & Thompson's (Ibid.) review are restricted to articles published within the Journal of Consumer Research (e.g. Schouten & McAlexander, 1995: Belk and Costa, 1998; Kozinets, 2002) some of their scholastic meditations encompass and illuminate the broader field of 'subcultures of consumption'. To this end, Arnould &

Thompson (2005) suggest that studies of 'subcultures of consumption' are not grounded within a common intellectual assemblage point. Rather, this literature appears to be rooted in a multitude of different theoretical perspectives, which have invariably ensured that the growth of the discourse has been hindered by the lack of a series of core theoretical questions – particularly those that acknowledge studies of social and material culture. As such, critical review of these studies (e.g. Schouten & McAlexander, 1995: Belk and Costa, 1998; Kozinets, 2002) reveals that they provide an inadequate account of the theorization of subculture, particularly the material and social aspects of cultural formation and their links to patterns of everyday lived experience.

A further limitation of the subcultures of consumption literature is noted by Kozinets (2001). Drawing on, and reflecting the discourse of Thornton (1997) and Hannerz (1992) Kozinets (2001) argues that the prefix 'sub' implies that lived cultural experiences should be viewed as an inferior reflection of mainstream culture. As such, social groups investigated in the name of 'subcultures of consumption' are often represented as subordinate, deviant, or qualitatively inferior (e.g. Hall and Jefferson, 1976). Having established that the use of the prefix 'sub' introduces some inappropriate and confusing connotations, Kozinets (2001) strengthens his argument by referring to Hannerz (1992) who questions whether a subculture is "simply a segment of a larger culture, or is it something subordinate to a dominant culture, or is it something subterranean and rebellious, or is it substandard, qualitatively inferior? While the first of these alternatives is undoubtedly the most solidly established in academic discourse…all of the others have a way of sneaking into at least more popular usage, and at least as overtones, with a

potential for confusing issues" (Ibid: 69). In the light of this Kozinets (2001) in line with

Holt (1997) claims that "the empirical development of the 'subcultures of consumption'

concept infers that the shared consumption of the same object…necessarily expresses a

commonly shared identity. A new conceptualisation may assist in avoiding this inference

so as to reveal potential heterogeneity among the identities and other beliefs and practices

of ostensibly homogenous subgroup members" (Kozinets, 2001: 68). To this end,

Kozinets (Ibid.) proposes that the term 'Cultures of Consumption' may be "used to

conceptualise a particular interconnected system of commercially produced images, texts,

and objects that particular groups use – through the construction of overlapping and ever

conflicting practices, identities and meanings – to make collective sense of their

environments and to orient their members experiences and lives" (Kozinets, 2001: 68).

These communal cultural experiences are the very fabric of meaning and experience

(Geertz, 1973) and are ensconced in particular social situations and roles and

relationships (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Despite this, a fundamental limitation of the

subcultures of consumption literature is that there is inadequate substantive engagement

with the core foundational studies of the Chicago School[10], or the Birmingham Centre for

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[10] The Chicago School provided the scholastic foundations and resources for the first Department of Sociology and Anthropology to emerge in 1892. From this time until c1920 Chicago sociology became, in effect, American Sociology (Smith, 1988; Thornton, 1997). "With the growth of competing departments around the United States, [the] Chicago [School] came to be seen as an advocate of qualitative empirical research, distinguishing it from the pure theoretical tendencies of Harvard's sociology department or the statistical investigations of Columbia's" (Ibid: 11). By virtue, the roots of subcultural studies are commonly perceived to be grounded in the Chicago School's studies of urban micro-sociology. Intertwined within these roots, Chicago School scholars such as, Erving Goffman, Robert E. Park, Ned Polsky, Ralph Turner and William Foote Whiteout, shared certain beliefs about society and culture, and subsequently forwarded a range of empirical investigations to illuminate human behaviour (Thornton, 1997). In doing so, they challenged the dominant psychological interpretations of deviance, which suggested the existence of a 'criminal personality' by proposing that deviance, when studied in its socio-cultural context, could be shown to be determined by cultural norms (Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004).

Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) meditations on the production and reproduction of community bonds and a feeling of togetherness.

2.4 Sociological Studies of Subculture

The CCCS was established in 1966 with the goal of advancing subcultural knowledge. Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) illuminate the inner life world of the CCCS by claiming that the centre adopted the Chicago School premise that subcultures provide the key to an understanding of deviance as a normal response to a set of particular deviant social circumstances. By virtue, the CCCS reworked the model of subcultural deviance as a means to interpret the stylistic responses of working class youth in post-war Britain which, it was argued, represented a series of collective reactions to structural changes taking place in British post-war society (Ibid.). As such, the CCCS subsequently forwarded the notion that the emergent style-based youth cultures were indicative of newly acquired spending habits and symbolized that class divisions were still very much a feature of post-war British society (Ibid.). To these ends, the CCCS directed its scholastic energies toward illuminating and distilling the relationships between ideologies and social and material culture with particular focus on investigating such subcultures as the Teddy boys (Fyvel, 1963), Punk rockers (Frith, 1980) and drug cultures (Willis, 1978; 1976). As such, the CCCS's illuminated the distinctive material artifacts of these youth subcultures, the broader realms of the working class and the dominant mass culture. Within the maelstrom of these scholastic endeavors emerged the seminal CCCS (1976) publication 'Resistance through Rituals' which, according to Clarke (1981), became the new orthodoxy on youth. This study, in line with Willis (1978), Hebdige (1979) and

McRobbie (1980) remains highly influential in academic research on the subject of youth culture (Bennett & Kahn-Harris, 2004), in the sense that a multitude of scholars have focussed their attentive energies towards various interpretations and understandings of different subcultures (see, for example, Clarke, 1981; Brake, 1985; Cohen, 1987; Redhead, 1990; Harris, 1992; Gelder & Thornton, 1997; Bennett, 1999, Bennett & Kahn Harris, 2004).   Of these, Bennett (2004: 4) claims that "the Chicago School's conceptualisation of subculture as a means of understanding deviance in a socially situated context provided a key tenet for subculture's use as a theoretical framework by the CCCS."

Using the original Chicago School premise that subcultures provide a key to the understanding of deviance as normal behaviour in the face of particular social circumstances, the CCCS conceptualisation of 'subcultural deviance' became the scholastic assemblage point for interpreting the stylistic responses of working class youth in post-war Britain. This, it was claimed, represented a series of collective reactions to structural changes taking place in British post-war society. Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) point out that the concept of youth resistance employed by the CCCS is adapted from the cultural Marxism of Gramsci (1971), who argued that class relations in late capitalist societies centred on an ongoing hegemonic struggle. According to Gramsci (Ibid.), as capitalism progresses, the power of the bourgeoisie can no longer be assured through domination but it has to be through consent. This involves a shift from economic to ideological (that is, hegemonic) control. However, the very nature of hegemonic power means that it can be subjected to challenges from the subordinate classes. Relating

Gramsci's model to post-war working class youth, the CCCS maintained that "the process of creating subcultural solutions to material problems involved simultaneously the winning of space – cultural space – in the neighbourhood and institutions, real time for leisure actual room on the street corner" (Clarke *et al*. 1976: 45). The negotiation of space for the collective expression of subcultural identities, Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) argued, constituted a challenge to authority that formed part of the 'theatre of struggle' which characterised class relations between skinheads (Clarke et al. 1976), Teddy boys (Jefferson, 1976) and mods (Hebdige, 1979) and elite power in late modern society.

"Ultimately though, for all their symbolic creativity represented by post-war subcultures, resistance does not and cannot alter the fundamentally class-based order of society. Subcultures 'solve', but in an imaginary way, problems which at the concrete material level remain unresolved" (Clarke *et al*. 1976: 47-48). Moreover, according to Hebdige (1979), the resistant qualities of any given subcultural style are ultimately compromised because of its incorporation and commodification by the fashion industry. Reflecting on a similar issue, Frank (1997) outlines that the subcultures of the Mods, Teds, Skin-heads, Punks and so on were merely formed through the application of marketing strategies. According to Frank (Ibid.) upper echelon business people deplored routine and conformity as much as the youthful rebels of that time. However, the youth were trying to subvert the evils of the capitalist world system; whereas the business people simply thought that "revolution" would revitalise business and the consumer order. "The counter cultural style has become a permanent fixture on the American scene, impervious to the

angriest of assaults of cultural and political conservatives, because it so conveniently and effectively transforms myriad petty tyrannies of economic life – all the complaints about conformity, oppression, bureaucracy, meaninglessness, and the disappearance of individualism that became virtually a national obsession during the 1950s – into rationales for consuming. In other words, the Sixties sub and counter culture created a cultural perpetual motion machine in which disgust with falseness, shoddiness, and every day oppressions of consumer society could be enlisted to drive the ever accelerating wheels of consumption" (Frank, 1997: 28). In the light of this it is possible to argue that once a popular subculture becomes visible to the mainstream, it is commodified and marketed to larger audiences through the media until its reservoir of signifiers is exhausted and its stylistic emblems are stripped of their value. As Chomsky (1989: 8) states, "[I]n short, the major media, particularly the elite media that set the agenda that others generally follow – are corporations "selling" privileged audiences to other businesses. It would hardly come as a surprise if the picture of the world they present were to reflect the perspectives and interests of the sellers, the buyers and the product." Once assimilated, the subculture is either forced to transform itself and appropriate new stylistic emblems or witness its own death.

2.4.1 Further Critiques of the CCCS's Concept of 'Subculture'

Further critiques of the CCCS's concept of 'subculture' are relatively commonplace in sociology and cultural studies. As such, subcultural studies have been criticized for focusing on young people (Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004), essentialising people

according to broad social categories (Gaudelli, 2001; Appiah, 1992; Allport, 1954), ignoring individual experiences (Clarke, 1981), being gender specific (Martin *et al*, 2006), failure to consider local variations (Waters, 1981), the use and meaning of the prefix 'sub' (Kozinets, 2001; Thornton, 1997; Maffesoli, 1988), totalising the subculture (Hobsbawm, 1996), focusing on unqualified notions of 'working class' resistance (Muggleton, 2000), and being unable to capture the essential fluidity of contemporary lifestyle patterns (Bennett, 1999; Hodkinson, 2004). In the light of these predominantly sociological critiques of the concept of 'subculture' Bennett and Kahn Harris (2004) claim that "the 'debate' over subculture has therefore remained locked within the parameters of a rather narrow and critical discourse" (Ibid: 2). As such, very little of this scholarly insight has been reflected into the field of interpretive consumer research. To this end, some of the core theoretical meditations of the CCCS and especially threads of theory drawn from Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) can be used to further illuminate and distil the lived experiences of cultural communities of elderly consumers living in residential care homes. In particular, it is proposed that discussions focussing on the role of the mass media, the expression of culture, the concepts of 'cultural maps of meaning', 'bricolage' and the 'bricoleur' can be used to frame this particular research project.

2.4.2 Mass Media Depictions of Subculture

The collective will power of the CCCS was ensconced within in-depth, empirical, and objective analysis of the phenomenon of youth culture that built on, and complimented

Chicago School micro-urban sociology (see Gelder and Thornton, 1997 for a more thorough discussion) while at the same time moving away from the representations of youth culture that were depicted in mass media accounts. According to Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976), these mass media accounts became a part of the phenomenon of youth culture itself by focusing on the spectacular aspects of adolescence, style, music and the use of leisure time that led to the reification of the myths surrounding youth subcultures, as opposed to illuminating and distilling an academic understanding of the phenomenon.

Returning to the early twenty first century, and with the notion of 'cultural communities of elderly consumers within residential care homes' in mind, it is possible to argue that, given the inadequate interpretive consumer research explanations and theorizations of cultural communities, there is a pressing need to provide a theoretical, in-depth, grounded empirical study that builds on, and compliments, the existing literature as formulated by the CCCS that, at the same time, moves away from mass media representations of residential care home consumer culture. These mass media accounts range from representations of the ageing population and the financial implications of care for the elderly in residential care homes (see, for example Morris, 2004; Duffy, 2003; Carvel and Meikle, 2002), the stress associated with relocating elderly people from one residential care home to another (see, for example Grant, 2004; Portlock, 2003; Sapsted, 2002), government legislation and the subsequent closure of residential care homes (see, for example Butler, 2003; Cunningham, 2002) and physical and mental abuse of elderly people in residential care homes (see, for example Marsh, 2003). In the light of these

mass media representations the notion emerges whereby these accounts may have become a part of the phenomenon by focusing on governmental policy and the visible aspects of residential care home culture. Thus, as with early accounts of youth culture, it can be argued that the mass media have contributed more to this contemporary myth than to a scholarly understanding of it.

2.4.3 Culture and the Expression of Lived Experience

In the light of the opportunity to provide an account of elderly consumers cultural communities within residential care homes, Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) direct insight into this lacuna by meditating on the ways in which everyday lived experiences are expressed within a community; "[t]he culture of a particular group or class is the peculiar and distinctive way of life of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems of belief, in customs and mores, in the uses of objects and material life. Culture is the distinctive shapes in which this material and social organisation of life expresses itself" (Ibid: 10). With 'culture' as Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (Ibid) defined it in mind, and in particular the meanings, values and ideas that are embedded in social relations and the uses of material artifacts, it can be theorized that, whereby communities of elderly consumers in residential care homes experience meaningful cultures of lived experience emerge through the distinctive shapes and patterns in which social and material cultures express themselves.

Viewed in this manner, it becomes necessary to question just how these distinctive shapes and patterns of social and material culture express themselves? McCracken (1986) claims that "culture is the "blueprint" of human activity, determining the co-ordinates of social action and productive action and specifying the behaviours and objects that issue from both" (Ibid: 72). Or, in other words, "culture constitutes the world by supplying it with meaning" (Ibid). More specifically, and returning to Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) theoretical lens of culture, the nature of elderly consumers lived experiences may be formed and organised through the meanings, values, and ideas that are embodied in the distinctive communal social and material cultures that permeate, for example, leisure activities organised by the managers of residential care homes[11].

Emanating from Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (Ibid.) theorisation of culture a question emerges; how do cultural communities of elderly consumers in residential care homes understand and experience social and material cultures and how do these link to everyday lived experiences? To these ends, Latour (2000: 10) comments that "no one has ever observed a human society that has not been built with things…[and that] things do

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[11] Holbrook, Stephens, Day, Holbrook and Strazar (2001) in line with cultural anthropologists such as, Bateson and Mead (1942), Collier (1967) and Collier and Collier (1986) and visual sociologists such as (Becker 1986; 1995), Chaplin (1994) and Harper (1988) advocate the use of photographs to illustrate cultural issues. To this end, photographs taken at a yearly tea-dance reveal that the quality of these lived experiences may shape, and be shaped by, for example, an elderly woman directing her energetic and attentive resources toward dancing to waltz music (see Appendix B). Alternatively, the elderly woman may decide to enhance the quality of her lived experience by sitting at a table, talking to fellow residents, eating cake and drinking tea or coffee (see Appendix B). Set within this context, the quality of lived experience of social and material culture may take the form, and be formed by, specific material artifacts, such as; the sound system, cables, wires, plugs, a compact disc, the dance floor; or tables, chairs, table clothes, napkins, knives, forks, spoons, tea, coffee, cakes, or any other material artifact for that matter, that becomes an expressive and meaningful symbol of the cultural milieu at the time of the tea dance.

not exist without being full of people, and the more modern and complicated they are, the more people swarm through them". Given that Latour (Ibid.) suggests that there is an inherent link between people and their things the notion can be forwarded that elderly consumers everyday lived experience emerge through the maelstrom of social and material culture. Or, as McCracken (1986) succinctly claims, cultural "meaning is constantly in transit" (Ibid: 71). By virtue, Latour (2000) suggests that it is possible to argue that communities of elderly consumers lived experiences are constructed by "mixing pure forms chosen from two great reservoirs, one in which would lie the social aspects of meaning or subject, the other where one would stockpile the material components belonging to…the science of materials" (Ibid: 10). By virtue, the notion emerges whereby social and material culture can be viewed as two elements of the same phenomena in the sense that material artifacts are used as a social sense making device (Grafton-Small, 1993; 1987), and act as landmarks around which social culture is structured (Grafton-Small, 1993). To these ends, material artifacts can be seen to merge with people by virtue of the existence of social relations between persons and material artifacts (Gell, 1998). "Quite simply, humans are in no way pure, natural beings," (Knappett, 2002: 98) and that "[t]o speak of 'humans' and 'non-humans' allows only a rough approximation that still borrows from modern philosophy the stupefying idea that there exist humans and non-humans" (Latour, 2000: 12).

Geisler and Venkatesh (2005) in line with Venkatesh, Karababa, and Ger (2001) further Latour's (2000) line of thought by claiming that the notion of humans and non-humans (such as material artifacts) is based on Descartes philosophy of Cartesian metaphysics

that, in general terms, organises humanistic enquiry in the social sciences. "According to Descartes (and implicit in the majority of marketing and consumer research), the Human Mind is sacrosanct or essential and exactly defines what it means to be human. The material world, in contrast, remains external and somewhat secondary since it can only be epitomized via mind-centered representation techniques (Geisler and Venkatesh, 2005: 1). Furthermore, "[n]either does thought determine reality nor, in the sense intended by the realist, does reality determine thought…The history of philosophy rather showed, that there are no final answers to the traditional questions about 'knowledge', 'truth' and 'representation.' Consequently they should be rejected" (Ibid: 2) since they cannot be used to explain why a statement becomes a fact, since it is only after it has become a fact that the effect of reality is obtained. Following on from this line of thought various scholars associated with the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (SSK) and/or the New Sociology of Science (NSS) such as Latour, Callon and Law argued that science is essentially a social activity that is rooted within heterogeneous networks of actors (Jallinoja, 2000). With issues such as the aforementioned in mind, Callon and Latour (1981) formulated Actor Network Theory (henceforth ANT) to illuminate and distil how "the solid, durable macro-actors which we see forming everywhere in human societies are actually constructed" (Ibid: 283).

2.4.3.1 Actor Network Theory and Beyond

The ANT approach is distilled in a seminal article by Callon and Latour (1981) in which they pose the question: "how are the solid, durable macro-actors which we see forming everywhere in human societies actually constructed?" (Ibid: 283). Through studying the differences between humans and herds of baboons, Callon and Latour (Ibid.) asserted that the existence of macro-actors depended on more than just the rational calculus of self-interested individuals entering into a social contract. Materials, bodies, marks, and non-humans also mattered. Their thesis was that to stabilise society, to create macro-actors, one must "bring into play associations that last longer than the interactions that formed them (Ibid: 283). Unlike baboons, human actors are able to rely not only on symbolic relations, but also on more durable materials that the micro-sociologies such as ethno-methodology and symbolic interaction forgot to include in their analyses. As Callon and Latour (1981) state "we must gather up what their analysis leaves out and examine with the same method the strategies which enlist bodies, materials, discourses, techniques, feelings, laws, organizations. Instead of dividing the subject into the social/technical, or with the human/animal, or with the micro;/macro dichotomies, we will only retain for the analysis gradients of resistivity and consider only the variations in relative solidity and durability of different sorts of materials" (Ibid: 284).

For example, set within the context of a visit to the local Post Office, an elderly person could form an actor network with an electronic wheelchair through the way they choose to interact with the local terrain. To this end, the chair (comprising of a metal frame,

padded seat, wheels, footrests and electronic controls) provides continuous information and must be interacted with if the pot holes en-route are to be avoided. The weight of the elderly person is supported partly by the metal frame, padded seat and footrests. In addition, the elderly person must continually adjust the amount of acceleration and the steering controls in order to keep moving in such a direction that avoids any potholes. With this in mind, it is the interaction between the electronic wheelchair and the elderly person that enables them to arrive at their chosen destination in relative comfort, and without damaging the wheelchair. With a similar example in mind, Dant (1999) suggests that it is the multiple articulation between the elderly person, the chair, the controls and the path which enables decisions to be made in relation to the journey. Moreover, these decisions cannot be reduced to individual human actors as they occur in the context of the material discourse of the actor network.

However, critical reflection of the preceding line of thought reveals that ANT does not provide the researcher with a tool to gain a clear understanding of the role of any given material artifact within peoples everyday lived experiences since deconstruction ad infinitum is always possible. By virtue, ANT provides no clear understanding of stable patterns of lived experience beyond the reductionalist notion that networks exist because the will within the actor-network has ordained they exist. With similar issues in mind, Monterio and Hanseth (1996: 399) forward the notion that ANT "cannot properly deal with institutions." To this end, Latour (1996: 304) seems to accept this point of criticism by noting that actor "networks…become empty when asked to provide policy, pass judgment or explain [such] stable features" as the provision of services in the form of

elderly care giving (Kinsella and Velkhoff, 2001) within residential care homes. Moreover, ANT theorists such as Latour are also open to the criticism that they should be dismissed as intellectual vandals or "philosophical unsophisticates" (Bunge, 1991: 552) because they are bent on undermining the very foundations of disciplines like sociology and anthropology through the use of subtle linguistic tricks, "deliberate confusion" (Ibid.) and neology (Collins and Yearly, 1992).

For these reasons, this review moves beyond discussions of the ANT approach in favour of viewing communities of elderly consumers in residential care homes in line with the seminal sociological work of Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976), Hall (1977) and Hebdige (1979). By virtue, the following literature review has its roots in sociological and anthropological theory that views the everyday lived experiences of communities of elderly consumers as distinctive motions of material and social culture and that these coagulate and become inseparable, meaningful, valuable and understandable *webs of meaning* (Geertz, 1973) within the lived experiences of elderly consumers.

2.4.3.2 Cultural Maps of Meaning

Hebdige (1979) and Hall (1977) further the emerging argument by notionally capturing the joint motions of material and social culture within 'cultural maps of meaning' by suggesting that these 'maps' enable people to create intelligible, meaningful and navigable cultures of lived experience. Viewed through Hall's (Ibid.) and Hebdige's

(1979) meditative lens, the notion of 'cultural maps of meaning' enables a question to emerge; how do communities of elderly consumers in residential care homes direct their attentive energies toward and throughout their cultural maps of meaning in order to make sense of their everyday lived experiences?

Hebdige (1979), in line with Hall (1977), suggests that consumers' lived experiences are ensconced within cultural maps of meaning that cut across, and through, a range of meanings, making certain meanings available and ruling others out. "We tend to live inside these maps as surely as we live in the 'real' world: they 'think' us as much as we 'think' them, and this is quite natural. All human societies reproduce themselves in this way through a process of naturalisation. It is through this process – a kind of inevitable reflex of all social life – that particular sets of social relations, particular ways of organising the world appear as if they were universal and timeless" (Hebdige, 1979: 14). With issues relating to cultural maps of meaning and naturally living in and organising social and material culture in mind, Thompson, Locander and Polio (1989) claim that that a social and material cultural "pattern is a segregated whole that emerges from a context. While being perceptually distinguishable, a pattern does not exist as a complete and separate entity from its surrounding context" (Ibid: 135). Seen in this way, it is possible to argue that a cultural map of meaning comprises many distinguishable social and material patterns that reflect the broader cultural context. Or, in the words of Thompson, Locander and Polio (1989) "individuals are not separate from the environment in which they live" (Ibid: 135). Thus, it can be argued that cultural maps of meaning can be seen as emerging within, and reflect, the broader cultural milieu.

Furthermore, Pollio, Henley and Thompson (1997) argue that a cultural milieu consists of the "relationship[s] between people and their world, whether the world as the moment consists of other people, nature, time, one's own body, personal or philosophical ideas, or whatever" (Ibid: 4-5). Geertz (1973) enlivens these patterns of lived experience by forwarding the metaphor of a kaleidoscope in which one always see the chips distributed in some sort of ill-formed or irregular pattern. "The number of patterns producible in this way may be large if the chips are numerous and varied enough, but [they] are not infinite. The patterns consist of the disposition of the chips vis-à-vis one another. And their range of possible transformations is strictly determined by the construction of the kaleidoscope" (Ibid: 352). And so it may be with communities of elderly consumers' cultural patterns of lived experience within a residential care home as elderly consumers may shuffle the chips of social and material culture to enable meaningful social and material cultural patterns of lived experience to emerge within their respective kaleidoscopic cultural maps of meaning which form and are formed by their everyday lived experiences within the broader cultural milieu.

On the basis of the previous review, the notion is forwarded whereby cultural maps of meaning can be seen to position communities of elderly consumers' lived experiences of social and material culture (in the broadest possible sense including relationships with and between other people, nature, time, the body, personal or philosophical ideas etc.) as they emerge from the cultural milieu. By virtue, rather than separating and then objectifying aspects of elderly consumers social and material cultures of lived experience, these patterns are seen as being located within a cultural map of meaning. However,

critical review of Hebdige (1979) and Hall's (1977) notion of 'cultural maps of meaning'

reveals that perhaps the concept is somewhat narrow as it does not sufficiently detail the

co-constituting elements of social and material culture that enable figural patterns to

emerge within elderly consumers' cultural maps of meaning. So, how do things become

meaningful within elderly consumers' cultural maps of meaning? With this question on

mind, Thompson, Locander and Polio (1989) illuminate the notion of meaningful

experiences of social and material culture by claiming that "[a] particular setting can

afford different experiences as certain aspects of the context stand out while others recede

and become background for the experience" (Ibid: 136). To these ends, social and

material cultures of lived experience can be seen as relatively dynamic phenomena in

which certain cultural experiences emerge from the broader cultural milieu and become

figural elements that shape elderly consumers cultural maps of meaning while other

experiences recede and fade away over time. Or, as McCracken (1986) claims, cultural

"meaning is constantly in transit" (Ibid: 71).   The implications of this mean that

communities of elderly consumers' everyday lived experiences emerge in the context of

reflected patterns (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) of social and material culture

that are relatively unique reflections of life.

By concretising Hall (1977) and Hebdige (1979) CCCS notion of 'cultural maps of

meaning' with the cement of Thompson, Locander and Polio's (1989) scholastic labours,

an argument has been forwarded that positions communities of elderly consumers social

and material cultural patterns of lived experience as "a kind of inevitable reflex of all

social life – that particular sets of social relations, particular ways of organising the world

appear" (Hebdige, 1979: 14) as patterns within the foreground (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) of everyday cultural maps of meaning. Thus, communities of elderly consumers' lived cultural experiences can be viewed as a meaningful pattern wherein the day-to-day meaning may change, but these changes are not arbitrary. Seen in this light, lived experiences of social and material culture are both dynamic and to a certain extent organised by the broader cultural milieu. By virtue, a particular cultural map of meaning can frame different experiences as figural aspects while others recede to the background (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989).

2.4.4 The Material Culture of Communities

Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) in line with Strehlow (1947), Levi-Strauss (1966), Barthes (1971) and Jary and Jary (2000) claim that all material artifacts shape, and are shaped by social culture through, for example hunting for food and the cultivation of plants, modes of transportation, housing and clothing, food preparation and cooking, art, magic and religious paraphernalia -- and thus constitute material culture. With the material culture of the Western and Northern Aranda in mind, Levi-Strauss (1966) forwards the example of the 'Churinga' to illustrate how material artifacts shape, and are shaped by the social culture of the aforementioned communities. As such, "the churinga are stone or wooden objects, roughly oval in shape with pointed or rounded ends, often engraved with symbolic signs, sometimes just pieces of wood or un-worked pebbles. Whatever its appearance, each churinga represents the physical body of a definite ancestor and generation after generation, it is formally conferred on the living person

believed to be this ancestor's reincarnation. The churinga are hidden in piles in natural caves, far from frequented ways. Periodically they are taken out to be inspected and handled, and on these occasions they are always polished, greased and couloured, and prayers and incantations are addressed towards them" (Ibid: 238). "The churinga are the palpable proofs of mythical times, the Alcheringa, which could still be conceived without them but of which there would no longer be any physical evidence" (Ibid:242).

Theorised in Straussian terms, objects of material culture enable history to have a tangible presence within peoples' everyday lived experiences. However, this line of argument is not meant to imply that peoples past experiences would disappear if everyday material artifacts were lost or subject to disposition. Rather, and as Levi-Strauss (1966) suggests, the past would still exist but it would be preserved in nothing but text, institutions, or a particular situation. Furthermore, in theoretical terms, objects of material culture can be seen to be the embodied essence of past events (Levi-Strauss, 1966) that act as vehicles for bringing past time into the present. By virtue, the notion emerges whereby contemporary consumers can be seen to form close connections with objects of material culture. To these ends, both the consumer and object sustain each other (Zwick & Dholakia, 2006) to the extent that they form webs of significance (Geertz, 1973) that embrace a wide variety of material artifacts and social history.

In an attempt to identify the implications of this emerging line of argument Levi-Strauss (Ibid.) draws on the anthropology of Strehlow (1947) who claims that "[m]ountains and creeks and springs and waterholes are, to him [the native] not merely interesting or scenic

features…; they are the handiwork of ancestors from whom he himself has descended. He sees recorded in the surrounding landscape the ancient story of the lives and the deeds of immortal beings whom he reveres; beings, who for a brief space may take on human shape once more; beings, many of whom he has known in his own experiences as fathers and grandfathers and brothers, and his mothers and sisters. The whole countryside is his living, age old family tree. The story of his own doings at the beginning of time, at the dim dawn of life, when the world as he knows it now was being shaped and moulded by powerful hands" (Strehlow, 1947: 30-31 in Levi-Strauss, 1966: 243). Thus, in theoretical terms, the objects of material culture that have been shaped by powerful forces (such as mountains, creeks, springs and waterholes that constitute the surrounding landscape of the Aranda) are the embodied essence of past events (Levi-Strauss, 1966) that constitute material culture. As Dant (1999) suggests, what is important is that these material objects in the landscape are not undifferentiated but 'call out' various responses that the Aranda responds to.

Returning to contemporary society, Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) in line with Barthes (1971) claim that we only have to look at the language of material artifacts – advertising – where there is no such thing as a simple 'sweater': there is only a 'sweater' for 'autumnal walks in the wood', or a 'sweater' for 'relaxing at home on Sundays', or a 'sweater' for 'casual wear' and so on." Within the aura of Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts. (1976) and Barthes (1971) mediations on the social embeddedness of material artifacts, the notion emerges whereby material artifacts become meaningful and shape, and are shaped by consumers' cultural maps of meaning. As such, material artifacts can

be seen to shape, and be shaped by cultural maps of meaning in such a way that enables various patterns of meaning to emerge by way of durable and/or transient associations and connotations (Latour, 2000) that reflect the broader cultures of lived experience within a given context. Theorised in this way, cultural maps of meaning can be thought of as the route maps of material culture that are constituted through a social process of experience involving the adjustment of meaning (Mead, 1962). Thus, objects of material culture are noticed, are given attention, are drawn into relevance and constituted as meaningful through social interaction (Dant, 1999). Viewed through this particular lens, the realm of material culture can be seen to constitute cultural maps of meaning in which social beings interact. For example, each item of furniture in a room has value and is integral to the construction of meaning.

However, as Latour (2000) argues, artifacts of material culture do not mean any one thing as they shape, and are shaped by people's ever changing beliefs, motives, purposes and reasons within a given cultural context that enable cultural patterns to emerge within a cultural map of meaning. For example, the wooly hat, warm and comfortable clothing, and a walking stick do not in themselves mean 'elderly' and 'frail'. But so powerful is the social culture which surrounds these material artifacts that it would be difficult for anyone else to dress like that without anyone thinking that the person was elderly. In the light of these social codes that surround material artifacts a question emerges; how significant are consumer goods in this process? McCracken (1986) in line with Douglas and Isherwood (1978) and Sahlins (1976) claims that "consumer goods have a significance that goes beyond their utilitarian character and commercial value. This

significance rests largely in their ability to carry and communicate meaning"
(McCracken, 1986: 71). The significance of these consumer goods, or material artifacts,
in the lives of cultural communities of elderly consumers in residential care homes is the
topic that this review now turns toward in the following section.

2.5 Conceptualising Material Culture as 'Bricolage'

Hebdige (1979) suggests that discoveries made in the field of anthropology are helpful to
shed further light on how elderly consumers' material cultures are shaped through, and
by, cultural patterns of lived experience. In particular Hebdige (Ibid.) suggests that the
concept of 'bricolage' can be used to explain how material artifacts are used to create
social patterns of lived experience within a cultural map of meaning. To this end,
Hebdige (Ibid.) draws on Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976), Hawkes (1977), and
especially Levi-Strauss (1966), to forward the notion that 'bricolage' refers to the
objectification of material artifacts wherein the 'bricoleur' carefully and precisely orders,
classifies, arranges and transforms the meaning of material artifacts through novel uses,
or unconventional arrangements of unrelated things, into structures that are greater than
the sum of their constituent parts (Ibid.). Or, to directly quote Levi-Strauss (1966: 18),
the bricoleur "has to turn his back to an already existing set of tools and materials, to
consider or reconsider what it contains and, finally, to engage in a sort of dialogue with it
and, before choosing between them, to index the possible answers which the whole set
can offer his [or her] problem. He [or she] interrogates all the heterogeneous objects of
which his [or her] treasury is composed to discover what each of them could signify and

so contribute to the definition of a set which has yet to materialize but which will ultimately differ from the instrumental set only in the internal disposition of its parts."

Thus, as Levi-Strauss (1966) further elucidates, the bricoleur is adept at creating socio-cultural patterns of lived experience with the aid of a treasury of recently discovered signifiers or 'whatever is at hand'[12]; "that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions that there have been to renew or enrich the stock to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions" (Ibid: 17). Or, in the words of Hebdige (1979) and Hawkes (1977) these deconstructions and/or constructions of bricolage are "improvised or made up as ad hoc responses to an environment, that serve to establish homologies and analogies between the ordering of nature and that of society, and so satisfactorily 'explain' the world and make it able to be lived in (Hawkes, 1977 in

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[12] Levi-Strauss (1966) drawing on the field notes of Conklin (1954) provides an illustration of how 'native' man develops a treasury of 'whatever is to hand': "At 0600 and in light rain, Langba and I left Parina for Binli…At Aresaas, Langba told me to cut off several 10 x 50 cm. strips of bark from an anapla kilala tree for protection against leeches. By periodically rubbing the cambrium side of the strips of saponaceous bark over our ankles and legs – already wet from the rain soaked vegetation – we produced a most effective leech-repellent lather of pink suds. At one spot along the trail near Aypud, Langba stopped suddenly, jabbed his walking stick sharply into the side of the trail and pulled up a small weed which he told me he would use as a lure…for spring-spear boar trap. A few minutes later, and we were going at a good pace, he stopped in a similar manner to dig up a small terrestrial orchid (hardly noticeable beneath the other foliage). This herb is useful in the magical control of insect pests which destroy cultivated plants. At Binli, Langba was careful not to damage those herbs when searching through the contents of his palm leaf shoulder basket for…slaked lime…to offer in exchange for other betel ingredients with the Binli folk. After an evaluative discussion about the local forms of betel pepper Langba got permission to cut sweet potato vines of two vegetatively distinguishable types…In the camote patch, we cut twenty-five vine tip sections of each variety, and carefully wrapped them in broad fresh leaves of the cultivated saging saba so that they would remain moist until we reached Langba's place. Along the way we munched on a few stems of tubu miuma, a type of sugar cane, stopped once to gather fallen bunga area nuts…and another time to pick and eat the cherry-like fruits from some bugnay shrubs…We arrived at the Mararim by mid-afternoon having spent much of our time on the trail discussing changes in the surrounding vegetation in the last few decades" (Conklin, 1954: 15-17 in Levi-Strauss, 1966: 7).

Hebdige (1979: 103). Viewed in this manner the notion of improvised or made up ad hoc responses that serve to establish an understanding of socio-cultural patterns of lived experience can be seen as a way of creating socio-cultural maps of meaning to enable communities of elderly consumers to interpret and understand the meaningful and figural bricolage within their everyday lived experiences.

Levi-Strauss's (1966) use of the term 'bricoleur' was used to distil how so called 'primitive people' used the implicitly coherent magical modes (superstition, sorcery and myth) in order to establish enlivening and colourful systems of connection between things that would perfectly equip their users to satisfactorily 'think' and 'explain' the world and make it able to be lived in. Furthermore, Levi-Strauss (Ibid.) claimed that these magical 'modes' and 'systems' of connection have a common feature: the basic elements (or patterns) can be used in a variety of improvised combinations to generate new meanings. This means that, within the context of the discussion relating to the lived experiences of cultural communities of elderly consumers living in residential care homes, that the theoretical notion of the 'bricoleur' could be forwarded as a means to illuminate and distil how bricolage can be used in a variety of combinations to create socio-cultural patterns of lived experience within cultural maps of meaning. Whilst it is recognised that a bricoleur in a residential care home may not use all, or some, of the coherent magical modes (superstition, sorcery and myth) in order to think their own lived experience he, or she, may (or may not) direct their attentive energies into, and throughout, their available bricolage in order to establish systems of connection that enable them to think their own socio-cultural patterns of lived experience within their

meaningful cultural maps of meaning. As such, it is possible to argue that bricoleurs improvised and ad hoc responses to life in a residential care home may be seen to establish cultural patterns of lived experiences through a variety of combinations of bricolage that enable cultural maps of meaning to emerge within bricoleurs residential care home life worlds.

By virtue, the notion emerges whereby the bricoleur may transform the finite and heterogeneous items of bricolage through novel uses or unconventional arrangements of unrelated items of bricolage within their everyday lived experience. This being the case, it is pertinent to enquire as to how this may be achieved within the context of a residential care home? Levi-Strauss (1966) furthers the emerging discussion by claiming that bricolage cannot be defined in terms of a project (which would presuppose besides, that, as in the case of the engineer, there were, at least in theory, as many sets of tools and materials or 'instrumental sets', as there are different kinds of projects). Bricolage is to be defined only by its potential use because "the elements are collected or retained on the principle 'they may always come in handy'" (Ibid: 18). Viewed in this way, the notion of 'bricolage' should not be viewed as a tool box in which specific tools are designed for a particular purpose, rather bricolage, could be seen to represent a collection that has been retained by bricoleurs in residential care homes on the basis that *it might come in handy* in enabling socio-cultural patterns of lived experience to emerge within bricoleurs cultural maps of meaning.

According to Levi-Strauss (Ibid.) the first practical step in enabling meaningful socio-cultural patterns of lived experience to emerge within bricoleurs' cultural maps of meaning is through their retrospective reflections. In the midst of this, the bricoleur may find that they have to turn their back on an already existent set of bricolage to consider, or reconsider, the inherent meanings in order to ascertain whether these fit with current socio-cultural patterns of lived experience. The second step is based around, and throughout, the notion that the bricoleur, interrogates all of the heterogeneous pieces of bricolage that are ensconced in the cultural map of meaning to discover what each of them could contribute to the creation of a cultural map of meaning which has yet to materialize but which will ultimately differ from the current cultural map of meaning only in the internal distribution of its bricolage (Hebdige, 1979). For example, a particular child's drawing could be used to 'brighten up a room', or it could be a familial link – which would allow comforting meaning to radiate into the bricoleur's cultural map of meaning within a residential care home. In one case it will serve as an functional piece of bricolage, in the other as a 'radiator of comfort' that brightens up a room. The decision as to which piece of bricolage to put in each place also depends on the possibility of putting a different piece of bricolage, so that each choice which is made will involve a complete reorganization of the bricoleur's social and material cultural patterns of lived experience within their cultural map of meaning, which will never be the same pattern as only one vaguely imagined nor as some other which might have been preferred to it (Levi-Strauss, 1966).

Within the maelstrom of the emerging argument lies a question; given that the bricoleur addressees a collection of oddments and derives meaningful patterns of lived experience through the notion that he, or she, enables meaning to emerge within and through material artifacts, how do bricoleurs actually etch out material cultures of lived experience? To this scholastic end Levi-Strauss (Ibid.) suggests, bricolage can be considered as the material culture component within the bricoleur's cultural map of meaning, and that the bricoleur can be considered as part of the patterns of social culture. In the light of this discussion, the proposition emerges whereby theoretical insight can be directed toward the framing of bricoleurs cultural map of meaning through the bricolage within a residential care home. With the notions of the 'bricoleur' and 'bricolage' in mind, it may be possible to forward a question that enquires; to what extent do bricoleurs' create and improvise responses to enhance the social and material cultural patterns of lived experience within a cultural map of meaning in a residential care home? To this end, and by further drawing on Clarke *et al.* (1976), it could be that the bricoleur shapes their bricolage, and their bricolage shapes them, in such a way that enables sufficient cultures of lived experience to emerge within their cultural map of meaning. Moreover, as Clarke *et al*. (Ibid.) and Hebdige (1979) reiterate, the extent of these cultures of lived experience are not as important as how bricoleurs live their lives through their bricolage.

Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) intensify the strength of the emerging argument by suggesting that bricoleurs live their lives through their understanding of meaningful items of bricolage which constitute material culture that are repeatedly assembled into characteristic forms that may enhance socio-cultural patterns of lived

experience. However, when the bricoleur re-locates his, or her, bricolage in a different position within their cultural map of meaning using the same material artifacts, or when that object is placed within a different total ensemble, a new socio-cultural pattern emerges that conveys a different message (Ibid.). Or, by drawing on Levi-Strauss (1966), it could be argued that the bricoleur makes 'new from old' by playing with the formal harmonies and disharmonies suggested by the nature of their lived experiences within residential care home. As such, and with the theoretical building blocks of Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) and Levi-Strauss (1966) in mind, it is possible to argue that the bricoleur will be revealed in the particular way he, or she, exploits and transforms their bricolage according to a coherent 'deformation' of them that is unique to him or her, by doing so in such a way as to create socio-cultural patterns of lived experience through the use of bricolage within a residential care home.

Furthermore, as Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1976) suggest, the cultures of lived experience found in, and around, bricolage cannot be imputed to individual subjects alone; it is perfectly possible for communities to act as bricoleurs in their search for full self-realisation and self-affirmation. In fact, such communities of bricoleurs can be seen in the text of Hebdige (1979: 104) who claims that "the teddy boys' theft and transformation of the Edwardian style revived in the early 1950s by Saville Row for wealthy young men about town can be construed as an act of bricolage. Similarly, the mods could be said to be functioning bricoleurs when they appropriated another range of commodities by placing them in a symbolic ensemble which served to erase or subvert their original straight meanings. Thus pills medically prescribed for the treatment of

neuroses were used as ends in themselves, and the motor scooter, originally an ultra-respectable means of transport, was turned into a menacing symbol of group solidarity. In the same improvisatory manner, metal combs, honed to razor like sharpness, turned narcissism into an offensive weapon. More subtly, the conventional insignia of the business worlds – the suit, collar and tie, short hair etc were stripped of their original connotations – efficiency, ambition, compliance with authority – and transformed into empty fetishes, objects to be desired, fondled and valued in their own right." As the preceding examples of the Teddy boys and the Mods indicate, patterns of social and material cultures of lived experience contained within cultural maps of meaning can also be thought of in collective terms. As such, the notion emerges whereby common themes may emerge within a collective setting and that these figural experiences may shape and structure social and material culture in such a way that may shape the everyday lived experiences within residential care homes.

2.6 Conclusion: Communities of Bricoleurs and Cultural Maps of Meaning

This review has followed elderly consumers from their initial conception within the traditional and mainstream marketing and consumer research literature to conceiving of 'communities' of elderly consumers, at least in theoretical terms, as 'bricoleurs' that create experiential patterns of social and material culture within a 'cultural map of meaning'. In the process this review has moved beyond the restrictive and conservative realities of mainstream marketing and interpretive consumer research conceptions of 'elderly consumers' and 'subcultures of consumption'. From the deeper and more fertile

cultural perspective offered within these pages the everyday lived experiences of communities of elderly consumers in residential care homes are positioned in patterns of social and material culture that are ensconced within cultural maps of meaning, in which bricolage can be used in a variety of combinations to generate new social and material cultures of consumption. However, where does this leave the status of the elderly consumer in marketing theory? The proposed theory of communities of bricoleurs could be seen to be all encompassing wherein a wide range of artifacts of material culture can feasibly be viewed as part of an experiential pattern within bricoleurs' cultural maps of meaning within a residential care home. However, it should be noted that the concept of 'culture' developed in this review is not meant to be interpreted and understood as the total way of life of elderly bricoleurs within residential care homes. Rather, in line with Geertz (1973) the concept of culture elaborated here positions elderly "[wo/]man as an animal suspended in webs of significance [s/]he [her/]himself has spun. [This review] take[s] culture to be these webs, and the analysis of it therefore to be not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Ibid: 5).

With the theoretical notion of the 'bricoleur' in mind, it is valuable to question whether such a theory provides any realistic opportunity to further an understanding of modern marketing and consumption processes? Whilst the theoretical arguments might seem convincing they leave us with a view of consumption that does not necessarily involve any purchase, any material acquisition and relatively little exchange with the service provider. However, it could argued that the proposed theory may help to illuminate policy statements stating how society can best deliver meaningful lived experiences to elderly

consumers in residential care homes. As such, the theory suggests that the aforementioned policy statements are flawed as they do not prioritize, or take into consideration, bricoleurs' understandings of their items of bricolage and cultural maps of meaning and how these shape their everyday lived experiences. Furthermore, the theoretical elucidation indicates that bricoleurs patterns of everyday lived experience are shaped through their understanding of their bricolage. As such, bricoleurs' understanding of such bricolage is framed in such a way that reveals that the social relations within a community of consumers as forms of bricolage that illustrate particular cultures of consumption.

This review forwards a set of theoretical building blocks that enable the concept of consumption to be expanded beyond the limitations of conventional marketing and the interpretive consumer research literature. However, this should not excuse the proposed theories from closer scholastic scrutiny. To this end, there is always an inherent danger that an alternative set of theoretical building blocks that seem to illuminate, distil and offer an explanation of an otherwise perplexing and complex phenomena will be embraced without the necessary critical scholarly ruminations required of all other theories. By virtue, it is important to recognise that the theory relating to the concepts of the 'bricoleur' and 'bricolage' elucidated in this review have little or no specific empirical evidence to support them within the fields of mainstream marketing or interpretive consumer research. In the shadow of this, Chapter Four comprises an empirical study that will form the basis to appraise the conceptual credibility of the aforementioned theoretical building blocks.

In more general terms, viewing the consumer as a bricoleur means that the possible sites for researching contemporary consumption are vast. An investigation such as this need not be restricted by any one view of consumption and consuming, although there is no reason why this theoretical approach could not be applied in contexts which are already understood as sites of consumption. The theory of the consumer as bricoleur, in one sense, liberates consumers from the traditional and conservative restrictions of marketing and consumer research discourse. The challenge of perceiving consumers as bricoleurs is to relate the inherent conditions of consumption to areas of consumer culture that have traditionally been omitted from marketing investigation, or present certain difficulties when considered through the lens of the market. The purpose of this study then is to examine a consumption context in which bricoleurs' cultural maps of meaning can be considered empirically. The specific location chosen for this investigation is in one sense secondary to the task of examining the theoretical propositions developed in the previous two chapters. Having considered several possibilities and locations for conducting this enquiry into the related realities of cultural consumption and the bricoleur, residential care homes were selected as an appropriate and interesting case for investigation.

Chapter 3

Methodological Considerations

3.0 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate a methodological approach for the study of cultures of consumption within residential care homes and in particular the 'participants'[13] understandings of their social worlds. To these elucidatory ends, Section 3.1 begins with a discussion of the need for the study in the light of the conceptual notions developed in the preceding literature review. Section 3.2 then considers the philosophical and conceptual underpinnings relevant to designing research within the related fields of marketing and interpretive consumer research. Section 3.3 illuminates and distils the field of interpretive consumer research through an examination of research design and studies of subcultural consumption. Section 3.4 discusses the adopted interpretive approach through a discussion of the opportunities offered by the philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology. Furthermore, Section 3.5 distils issues related to the interpretive process, and Section 3.6 concludes this chapter by providing a summary of the discussions contained within this chapter.

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[13] In line with Eccles, Hamilton and Elliott (Working Paper), Elms and Eccles (2005) and Eccles (2002) the term 'participant' rather than 'informant' or 'subject' is used as it more closely supports the existential-phenomenological notion that an interview should follow the lines of a conversation between two people who 'participate' in circular dialogue (Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989).

3.1 The Need for the Study

In the shadow of the phenomena of population ageing (see Chapter 1 and Section 2.2 for a more thorough discussion), policies regarding service provision within residential care homes are likely to become an increasingly contentious issue. Moreover, as Wilson (1997, 1991) comments older consumers' voices are generally muted within such a context. Consequently, the fundamental role of this study is not based on trying to discover scientific truths as in natural scientific study (Creswell, 1998; Barritt, 1986) but rather the need for an increased *understanding* about how communities of elderly consumers relate to their everyday lived experiences and the implications this has for the content and characteristics of service provision within residential care homes. To these ends, the objectives of this study are to elucidate the following issues: (1) What are the experiences of communities of elderly consumers in residential care homes? (2) How do communities of elderly consumers understand their experiences in residential care homes? (3) What material artifacts shape the experiences of communities of elderly consumers in residential care homes? (4) How do communities of elderly consumers make sense of material artifacts in residential care homes? To these ends, the subsequent intention is to apply an examination of these issues to such concepts as discussed with the previous chapter; the 'bricoleur' and 'bricolage' (Levi-Strauss, 1966), 'cultural maps of meaning' (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts, 1976) and 'community' (Goulding, Saren and Follett, 2005; Turner, 1995) and to represent these with as much clarity as possible within the concluding chapter.

3.2 Philosophical and Conceptual Underpinnings

The research questions raise several methodological issues that need to be considered before the specific research design can be discussed. To these ends, the most important issue in terms of enabling the voices of participants to be clearly heard concerns the problem of representation[14] and "how we render ordinary, everyday experience comprehensible" (Brownlie, 2001: 52). With similar issues in mind, Silverman (2001) notes that different research methodologies not only produce different types of data, they also enable different assumptions about how participants produce and reproduce culture to emerge. As McCracken (1986: 72) argues, "a specific culture establishes its own special vision of the world, thus rendering the understandings and rules appropriate to one cultural context preposterously inappropriate in another. In sum, by investing the world with its own particular meaning, culture "constitutes" the world". With these different assumptions and understandings about the production and reproduction of culture in mind, the notion can be forwarded that "each culture establishes its own special vision of the world" (Ibid: 72). As such, and within the context of this methodological discussion, it is of value to question how these cultural visions can be best represented within the context of this research project.

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[14] Patton (2002: 79) in line with Denzin and Lincoln (2000) claim there has been a "crisis of representation that focused on issues of reflexivity, power, privilege, race, gender, and socio-economic class – all of which undermined traditional notions of validity and neutrality." As such, the related fields of marketing and consumer research have given rise to studies that, for example, question the notion of a crisis (Brown, 2003), discuss the integration of divergent representational practices in advertising and consumer research (Hackley, (2003), debate modes of representation in marketing research (Brownlie, 2001), discuss qualitative research and the politics of knowledge representations in advertising and academia (Hackley, 2001) and elucidate the role of literary criticism within consumer research (Stern, 1998).

Turning to the archives of consumer studies and research design, Beckmann and Elliott (2001) argue that "[c]onsumer research is the area of marketing, which is most divided by the paradigm debate between positivist and interpretivist approaches to theory and methodology" (Ibid: 1). In the light of these divisions between different approaches to theory and methodology, the annals of consumer research consist of a range of studies that have used a multitude of methodological approaches that are based along the lines of logical positivism (see Crotty, 2003 for more discussion). However, as Beckmann and Elliott (2001) suggest, there are other alternative methodological approaches that can be used to provide participants' with a voice (Wilson, 1997; 1991) to articulate the essence of their meaningful lived experiences within residential care homes. Belk (1995) distils these methodological approaches into two groups: quantitative or positivist research, and qualitative or interpretative research.

Figure 3.2A Positive versus Non-positive Perspectives in Consumer Research.

Positivist (Quantitative)	Non-positivist (Qualitative)
Experiments/Surveys	Ethnographies
Quantitative	Qualitative
A priori theory	Emergent theory
Economic/Psychological	Sociological/Anthropological
Micro/Managerial	Macro/Cultural
Focus on buying	Focus on consuming
Emphasis on cognition	Emphasis on emotions
American	Multicultural

Adapted from Belk (1995:61)

As the preceding table illustrates, both the positivist (or quantitative) and non-positivist (or qualitative) perspectives of consumer research are shaped by, and shape their own musings relating to their philosophical traditions and methodological practices and represent patterns of reality through different framing devices (e.g. the positivist emphasis on 'buying' or the non-positivist emphasis on 'consumption'). However, by meditating on the opposing choices between the philosophical traditions and methodological practices of positivism and non-positivism a question emerges; is this distinction conceptually troublesome? Despite pertinent ruminations that illuminate and

distil the differences between the two approaches (Silverman, 1993; Hunt, 1991; Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989; Calder and Tybout, 1987; Anderson, 1986) there are equally significant differences within the positivist and non-positivist methodological paradigms (Crotty, 2003). For instance, with the non-positivist (or qualitative) methodological paradigm in mind, there are some fundamental disagreements within the related fields of marketing and consumer research about what constitutes grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology (Goulding, 2005).

Whilst accepting that different social research traditions are based on different notions about the nature of the social world and how it is experienced by individuals, most quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are based on the assumption that knowledge can be gained by experiencing the social world in various ways and through the application of various specialised methodological techniques. As such, evaluation and selection of an appropriate research methodology is highly dependent upon the preconceptions held about participants' understandings of their social worlds, the characteristic patterns contained therein, and more importantly, how these can be best represented within this thesis. Moreover, the debates over styles of methodology are not simply concerned with how empirical data should be collected and analysed but reflect other deeper concerns about the purpose and nature of social science. Debates that consider whether marketing and consumer research are scientific endeavors (Anderson, 1983; Peter and Olson, 1983) that seek to establish a factual body of knowledge, or whether they should be aligned to the humanities and the arts are closely linked to issues related to research design and implementation.

As such, the intention of this section is not to suggest that interpretivism offers a more legitimate and constructive methodology than positivism since both approaches are based on their own philosophical foundations and have their own relative strengths and weaknesses (Patton, 2002). For example, "[i]f you want to know how much people weigh, use a scale…If you want to know what there weight *means* to them, how it affects them, how they think about it, you need to ask them questions, find out about their experiences, and hear their stories" (Ibid: 13). In this respect, the two methodologies are not comparable as quantitative methods lend themselves to numerical answers and qualitative methods facilitate in depth and detailed understandings (Patton, 2002). As such, "the choice between different research methods depend on what you are trying to find out" (Silverman, 2001: 25). To these methodological ends, and considering the different requirements and expectations of research, there would seem to be little reason to advocate that positivistic research is useless since, in some contexts, it is highly appropriate and desired (Gordon & Langmaid 1988).

In the light of the aforementioned, it is argued that while positivistic styles of research that attempt to answer economic or managerial questions relating to the operation of residential care homes exist out-with the realms of this particular study, positive styles of research can offer some benefits to managers of residential care homes. For instance, as national minimum standards for residential care homes are fine tuned over time, regulators will look for measurable evidence that requirements are being met and a good quality of life is being provided to the users of the home in question (Care Standards Act, 2000). As such, managers of residential care homes may not be willing to make

decisions based solely upon interpretative methods. However, given the nature of this research this project means that positivistic quantitative techniques are not appropriate. The selected methodology must enable meaningful *understandings* to emerge that sheds light on the participants social worlds within residential care homes. As such, it is befitting that the participants' should be given the opportunity to talk about the issues that are meaningful to them, as opposed to the researcher imposing his preconceived beliefs on them. Moreover, it would be farcical to suggest that the participants' understandings of their social worlds can be measured and objectively examined due to the *meaningful* nature of their lived experiences.

By virtue, the main objective is not to search for inalienable facts, whether something has happened, or how the occurrence of an experience is related to the prevalence of other conditions or events (Van Manen 1990), but to shed light on participants' *understandings* of their social worlds within residential care homes. This will enable an empirical elucidation of the structure and themes of their lived experiences to be formulated (see Chapter 4 and 5 for more discussion). More importantly, the theoretical positions that underpin this research have not been solely derived from scientific experimentation but from theoretical debate and argument emanating from the social theory of Levi-Strauss (1966), Hall (1974) and Hebdige (1979). With these scholastic endeavors in mind, the research design will be ensconced within a paradigm that acknowledges the academic discourse in which the study is grounded and will ensure that the objectives of the study are met. Therefore, the question that the proceeding section seeks to address is not whether positivism is in some way inferior to qualitative styles of research but rather

which of the various qualitative techniques is most appropriate to generate appropriate data about the participants understandings of their social worlds.

3.3 Interpretive Consumer Research: Research Design and Studies of Subcultural Consumption

Contemporary understandings of consumer research have identified that an increasing number of scholars have adopted interpretive research designs in order to shed new light on consumption[15]. As such, the archives of interpretive consumer research consist of studies that are designed upon, for example, existential-phenomenology (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989), hermeneutics (Thompson, Pollio and Locander, 1994), and introspection (Gould, 1991; Brown and Reid, 1997; Shanker, 2000). To these ends, researching the individual consumer has evolved beyond the need to explain consumption through psychological and/or economic theory and the search for managerial implications (Beckmann & Elliott, 2000). As such, Goulding (2005: 294) in line with Brown (2003) argues that "[w]ithin the field of marketing the positivism versus interpretivism debate is showing signs of slowing down, with a growth of the acceptance of the diverse range of methods of representing marketing phenomena." As such, an increasing number of consumer researchers are evolving alternative methodologies for

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[15] Early understandings of the concept of consumption were directed toward and throughout the notion of acquiring products (Cohen, 2003). As a consequence, this notion was the energetic driving force behind a multitude of studies within the scholastic field of marketing (see, for example, Kent, 1986; Box, 1983; Cannon, 1978; Schary and Becker, 1976; Cunningham and Clarke, 1975) until the mid 1980's when the concept of consumption was broadened to include three entities in the conceptual form of acquisition, usage and disposal (Shanker and Goulding, 2001; Holbrook, 1995). As such, legitimate scholastic thought embraced the joint notions of what consumers' did with their purchased products and how they disposed of them (Goulding and Shanker, 2001).

studying the consumer. This is clearly reflected in the collection of articles published in *Interpretive Consumer Research*[16]*,* in which can be found papers addressing philosophical and paradigmatic issues (Ostergaard & Jantzen, 2000; Brownlie, 2000), innovations in methodological practice (Meamber & Venkatesh, 2000; Haimerl & Roleff, 2000), and the application of interpretive methodologies in consumer research (O'Donohue, 2000; Fitchett & Bott, 2000). In general terms, these papers are typically based on the premise that "reality does not present itself, as any one truth, until it is encountered, and that every encounter is from a point of origin and at an angle. This means that as points of origin and angles vary, so will the truths that are encountered" (Fırat & Gould, Working Paper). With this in mind, interpretive methodological research design is concerned with interpreting reality in an attempt to better understand the participants unique points of origin and angle of lived experience. For this reason, interpretive techniques are highly compatible with the theoretical ideas that structure the research objectives (see Section 3.1) of this project.

However, with issues of interpretive research design in mind, proponents of interpretive methods accept that there is, and never can be, one ultimate interpretive methodological tool. To this end, interpretive research methods are prone to criticism because they uphold variations of an ontological perspective that is socially and culturally relativistic. As such, interpretive consumer researchers believe individual's construct multiple meaningful realities through the consumption of goods and services (see, for example Fırat and Dholakia, 1998). Critical review of this socially constructed reality of

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[16] See -- Beckmann, S.C. & Elliott, R.H. (Eds) (2000), *Interpretive Consumer Research: Paradigms, Methodologies and Applications,* Copenhagen Business School Press.

consumer goods and services reveals that if reality is constructed in this way then it follows that consumer researchers are also active and implicated in the ways in which they interpret this process. As such, the interpretive position enables consumer researchers to see the world in increasingly varied ways and that each interpretive method can enable enlightening views of the social world to emerge. Therefore, the interpretive consumer researcher's goal is not the truth because it can never be proven (Fırat and Gould, Working Paper); rather their goal is a hermeneutic understanding (Thompson, 1997; Castaneda, 1996a; Thompson Locander and Pollio, 1989). Moreover, the choice of interpretive research design will guide the entire research process from data collection to analysis and finally interpretation. For example, with the subcultures of consumption literature in mind, the following table provides an insight into how interpretive research design has shaped this body of literature through the application of different methodological approaches:

Table 3.3A: Research Design and Studies of 'Subcultural Consumption'.

Author/s.	Sub/Culture	Research Design
Schouten and McAlexander (1995).	Harley Davidson Bikers	Ethnography.
Kozinets (1997)	X-Philes	Ethnography.
Haslop, Hill and Schmidt (1998).	Gay Lifestyle.	Depth interviews. Focus groups.
Belk and Arnould-Costa (1998).	Mountain Men.	Participant observation. Depth interviews.
Miklas and Arnould (1999).	Gothic	Introspection. Desk research.
Wattannasuwan and Elliott (1999).	Teenage Dhammakaya Buddhists in Thailand	Ethnography. Existential Phenomenological interviews.
Kozinets (2001)	Star Trek	Ethnography.
Fung (2002).	Women's magazine readers in Hong Kong	Depth interviews. Participant observation.
Hill (2002).	Poverty	Ethnography.
Kates (2002).	Gay	Ethnography.
Goulding, Shanker and Elliott (2002).	Rave.	Phenomenological interviews.
Maxwell (2003).	Malian music	Ethnography.
Goulding, Saren and Follett (2004).	Gothic	Grounded theory.
Goulding & Shanker (2004).	Rave	Participant observation. Depth interviews. Story telling

In the light of the preceding table, it can be seen that studies of subcultural consumption tend to use a variety of methodological tools to shed light on consumer culture. Of these, perhaps the most popular approach is that of ethnography. This interpretive approach can be defined as "a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system. The researcher examines the group's observable and learned patterns of behaviour, customs, and ways of life" (Harris, 1968 in Creswell, 1998: 58). To these ends, "[t]he ethnographic method is often used in social anthropology and sociology[17] to study communities of people" (Jary and Jary, 2000: 192). By virtue, and in order to provide a rigorous ethnographic account, the researcher gathers data by living and working in a particular community, in so doing the researcher seeks to immerse themselves as fully as possible into the activities under observation, but at the same time keeping careful records of these activities (Jary and Jary, 2000).

In general terms, the success of an ethnographic study "hinges on the researcher's ability to fit in by becoming as similar as possible to the members of the cultural system under investigation and as well-integrated as possible into the relevant social activities of interest" (Holbrook, 1997: 221). In other words, the success of an ethnographic study depends upon how well the researcher uses the communal codes and practices associated with behaviour, language and the use of material artifacts (Creswell, 1998). To these ends,

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[17] "Recently, scientific approaches to ethnography have expanded to include "schools" or subtypes of ethnography with different theoretical assumptions and aims such as structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism, cultural and cognitive anthropology, feminism, Marxism, ethnomethodology, critical theory, cultural studies and postmodernism (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). This has led to a distinct lack of orthodoxy in ethnography as a general approach to the description and interpretation of a cultural or social group, and authors need to be explicit about what school they espouse when discussing this approach" (Creswell, 1998: 59). In the light of the notion that the majority of studies of sub/cultures of consumption tend to avoid the need to discuss which school of ethnographic thought they ascribe to, this thesis refers only to key texts emanating from core research methods texts, sociological and anthropological discourse, and studies of critical marketing to discuss issues relating to ethnographic research design.

Holbrook (1997) albeit somewhat whimsically, comments that in this way "one thinks of studies by sociologists who have joined street-corner gangs, who have dyed their skin in order to pass for members of the African-American community, or who have undergone sex change operations in order to gain a full appreciation of issues and problems confronting members of the opposite sex" (Holbrook, 1997: 221).

In outlining some of the key issues within the ethnographic tradition in this way, Holbrook (Ibid.) suggests that the ethnographer needs to be able to adapt to the social setting within which he or she is investigating. Critical review of the aforementioned issues, enabled this researcher to reject adopting an ethnographic approach to the study of communal subcultures of consumption within residential care homes on the basis that he believed that he could not adhere with the fundamental ethnographic objective of being as 'experience near' (Geertz, 1973) as possible. As such, the researcher believed that he lacked the necessary frail physique, associated patterns of behaviour and the necessary life experiences to be able to fit into the cultural system under investigation.

Alternatively, the researcher considered the possibility of working as a carer in a residential care home. To this end, and in order to assess the feasibility of this approach the researcher volunteered to work within Robinlew House for a short period of time. Upon reflection of these experiences, this approach was ruled out on the basis that it would provide the researcher with an understanding of what it meant to live within a residential care home from a carer's perspective and not the residents. With the preceding

issues in mind, the author elected to pursue an alternative approach in the form of existential-phenomenological interviews.

The existential-phenomenological approach is by no means the only methodological approach that could have been adopted. However, in the light of Wilson's (1997: 1991) comments that elderly peoples' voices are often muted within many academic elucidations of social policies, and that service provision is often shaped by the assumptive worlds of policy makers and service providers, it is argued that it is an appropriate method to explore the research questions and to enable elderly consumers' voices within residential care homes to be clearly heard and understood before any recommendations are made pertaining to public policy and service provision.

Furthermore, a major factor in selecting existential-phenomenology as a methodological tool is that it focuses on the individual *within* his/her world, rather than as a part of the world at large. Viewed in this way, existential phenomenological methods can be seen as a tool for gaining a deep understanding of the nature of what it *means* to live within a residential care home. By virtue, and as Van Manen (1990) comments, "[a]nything that presents itself to consciousness is potentially of interest to phenomenology, whether the object is real or imagined…Consciousness is the only access human beings have to the world. Or rather, it is by virtue of being conscious that we are already related to the world. Thus all we can ever know must present itself to consciousness. Whatever falls outside of consciousness therefore falls outside the bounds of our possible lived experience…A person cannot reflect on lived experience while living through the experience. For example, if one

tries to reflect on ones anger while being angry, one finds the anger has already changed or

dissipated." (Ibid: 9-10). With Van Manen's (Ibid.) thoughts in mind, the notion can be

forwarded that existential phenomenological methods are a legitimate tool within the

context of this research project – they enable elderly people to retrospectively reflect on

their lived experiences in such a way as to reveal the various rich instantiations of meaning

that are grounded *within* their conscious everyday lived experiences within residential care

homes.

3.4 Interpretive Approach - Existential-Phenomenology

Existential Phenomenology[18], as a methodological approach, has been frequently used in

interpretive consumer research to explore and understand the complexities of consumption.

To these exploratory ends, and as Goulding (2005: 301) states, "[w]ithin the field of

marketing, it is probably the work of Craig Thompson that has done more to highlight both

the underlying principles of phenomenology (Thompson, 1997, 1998; Thompson, Locander

and Pollio, 1989) and its application to various research situations." Examples of these are

outlined within the following table:

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[18] The term phenomenology is subject to considerable ambiguity. It can refer to a philosophy (Husserl, 1967), an inquiry paradigm (Lincoln, 1990), an interpretive theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) a social science analytical perspective or orientation (Harper, 2000; Schutz, 1970, 1967) a major qualitative tradition, (Creswell, 1998), or a research methods framework (Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, according to Quinn Patton (2002:104), varying forms complicate the picture even more; transcendental, existential, and hermeneutic phenomenology offer different nuances of focus – the essential meaning of individual experience, the social construction of group reality, and the language and structure of communication, respectively.

Table 3.4A: Existential-Phenomenology and its Application to Studies of Interpretive

Consumer Research

Author/s and Year Published.	Application to Research Situation.
O'Guinn and Faber (1989).	Compulsive shopping.
Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1990).	Everyday consumption experiences of married women.
Mick and Demoss (1990).	Exploring gift giving.
Thompson and Hirschman (1995).	Analysis of self-care practices and self-conceptions.
Thompson (1996).	Exploration of gendered consumption and lifestyle.
Thompson and Haykto (1997).	Deconstruction of the meaning of fashion discourses.
Woodruffe-Burton, Eccles and Elliott (2002).	Gender and addictive consumption.
Goulding, Shanker and Elliott (2002).	Analysis of rave culture.
Seebaransingh, Patterson and O'Malley (2002).	The relationship between cosmetic surgery and construction of identity.
Eccles (2002).	Women as addictive consumers.
Cherrier (2005).	Exploring the meanings of ethical consumption.

Adapted from Goulding (2005: 301)

These studies of marketing and consumer research have evolved to typically reveal how existential-phenomenology is used in the field. However, it is necessary to understand the philosophical origins and methodological techniques in order to distinguish existential-phenomenology from other the other interpretive techniques (such as ethnography) that are commonly used within the subcultures of consumption literature.

Existential-Phenomenology is a paradigm that blends the philosophy of existentialism with the methods of phenomenology, and is concerned with "the study of essences or the act of putting those essences into the flux of life experiences" (Castaneda, 1996: 2 citing Husserl, 1970). The philosophy of existentialism has evolved through the meditations of Dilthey (1958), Sartre (1962), Heidegger (1962), and Merleau-Ponty (1962). Similarly, the research methods of existential-phenomenology are ensconced in Gestalt psychology (Koffca 1935; Kohler 1947; Wertheimer 1945). Reflecting these philosophical and methodological developments into the field of consumer research, Thompson, Locander & Polio (1989) forward the notion that existential-phenomenology is an alternative interpretive method for understanding and researching human experience. As such, existential-phenomenology can be viewed as an appropriate interpretive methodological approach for illuminating and distilling the participants' understandings of their lived experiences within residential care homes. Furthermore, it is argued that existential-phenomenology is an interpretive approach that can provide an empirically based and rigorous understanding of the participants' understandings of the underlying themes and structures of lived experience within residential care homes. To these ends, how can the existential-phenomenological methodological approach best be delineated and discussed?

Eccles, Hamilton and Elliott (working paper) in line with Thompson Locander and Pollio (1989) claim, the philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology can be brought to life through a discussion of its various metaphors of pattern, figure and ground, and seeing.

The Pattern Metaphor

Drawing on Koffca (1935), Kohler (1947) and Gibson (1979), Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989) claim that "[a] pattern is a segregated perceptual whole that emerges from a context. While being perceptually distinguishable, a pattern does not exist as a complete and separate entity from its surrounding context (Ibid.). With these issues in mind, interpretive consumer researchers who use existential-phenomenological methods "do not seek to study individuals separate from their environment in which they live or the interaction of the two (which implies separation); rather the study is of the totality of human-being-in-the-world" (Ibid: 135). The pattern metaphor relies on the notion that a pattern can be perceived within a context; it does not exist as a separate phenomenon but is distinguishable as it emerges from the surrounding context (Eccles, Hamilton and Elliott, Unpublished Working Paper), or to use phenomenological terms, as it is lived (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989).

With the objectives of this research project, and the pattern metaphor in mind, the notion emerges whereby the participants understandings of their everyday lived experiences and material artifacts can be seen as elements of a perceptual pattern that cannot be separated from the residential care home in question. Thus, this study does not seek to study

participants in such a way that separates them from their understandings of their experiences and material artifacts within the residential care home in which they reside. Rather, the study is of the totality-of-participants-lived-experiences-in-the-residential care home.

The Figure/Ground Metaphor

In line with Valle and King (1978) Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989) claim that the figure/ground metaphor is based on our perceptual ability to bring certain aspects of our experience to the fore (becoming the figure) whilst other parts recede to become ground. To these figural ends, "a particular setting can afford different experiences as certain aspects of the context stand out while others recede and become background for the experience. Neither figure nor ground causes the other; instead, both are co-constituting (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989: 136). As Eccles, Hamilton and Elliott (Unpublished Working Paper) state, "our experiences can be viewed as intentional phenomena, dynamic and varying with context, because of this process of perceptual figure/ground focusing and refocusing."

Within the context of this research project, the figure/ground metaphor enables a perspective of the participants to emerge wherein a particular setting (such as an interview with this researcher within a residential care home) that enables the participant to bring different understandings of their everyday lived experiences and material artifacts into the foreground of their lived experience interview (see, Chapter 4 for more

detail), while others recede into the background of the participants lived experience. As such, the participants lived experiences within residential care homes can be viewed as varied and dynamic because of this perceptual process of figure/ground refocusing (Eccles, Hamilton and Elliot, Working Paper).

The Seeing Metaphor

The seeing metaphor emphasizes reflected and un-reflected human experiences (Eccles, Hamilton and Elliott, working paper; Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989; Pollio, 1982). When people communicate life experiences they reflect on a particular lived event, and see a pattern emerging. In light of the preceding, it can be argued that the seeing metaphor is closely related to the figure/ground metaphor whereby reflected meanings and symbols emerge from the ground of unreflected experiences.

With the objectives of this research project, and the seeing metaphor in mind, the notion emerges whereby the participants reflect on their understandings of their everyday lived experiences and material artifacts within residential care homes to see a pattern emerge within the foreground of their lived experience at the time of the interview.

The preceding elucidations provide the metaphoric foundations for describing the core strengths of the interpretive methodological approach of existential-phenomenology. Furthermore, it is argued that the philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology enables a view of the participants understandings of their lived experiences within

residential care homes to emerge within the context of this thesis. Of course, the existential-phenomenological methodological approach is by no means the only approach that could have been taken, but it is argued that it is the most appropriate in order to explore the participants understandings of their lived experiences and material artifacts within the context of residential care homes. This coupled with the possibility that the participants may discuss potentially traumatic life events, ensured that it was necessary to embrace an interpretive methodology that enabled the researcher to be sensitive to the participants care needs (see Section 3.4.1.2 for more discussion).

The worldview of existential phenomenology is contextualist, whereby human experience is seen as a pattern that emerges from a context (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989). Or, in the words of Crotty (1998:79), "the object cannot be adequately described apart from the subject, nor can the subject be adequately described apart from the object. Thus, existential phenomenology bespeaks the relationship between people and the world. We are beings-in-the-world. Because of this we cannot be described apart from our world, just as our world – always a human world – cannot be described apart from us". By virtue, the participants understandings of their underlying themes and universal structures of lived experience within residential care homes are co-constituted. To this end, by seeing the participants as part of their lived experience, the aim is to provide a detailed account of this phenomena.

This discussion now moves away from distilling the interpretive approach to elucidating its use within the context of this research project.

3.4.1 The Use of Existential-Phenomenological Methods

In the initial stages of the research project, letters were written and addressed to the owners and/or managers of several residential care homes in the United Kingdom. Such letters contained information about the nature of the research project and enquired whether it would be possible to conduct interviews with elderly people within that particular care home. To these participatory ends, the following residential care homes were targeted: Fenton Lodge, Robinlew House, Bridgesview, The Flowers and Cedar View (names changed). One of the benefits of targeting residential care homes in this way was that it enabled the researcher to speak to several managers of residential care homes within the United Kingdom. As a consequence of this, and as a means to develop trust between the researcher and the owners/managers of such institutions, the researcher asked if it would also be possible to speak to them about their experiences of managing residential care homes. By virtue, the owners and/or managers at Robinlew House and Cedar View agreed to be interviewed and discussions focused on issues relevant to the research project[19].

However, it is noted that the research implications of adopting this approach mean that it is likely that only professionally run care homes with nothing to hide responded to the researcher's letter. As a consequence, the research findings and interpretations contained within Chapter Four are likely to contain findings and interpretations that, at least in part,

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[19] Such as the Care Standards Act (2000) and the implications for residential care homes in terms of service provision in the form of the types and nature of leisure activities organised for elderly people.

reflect the quality of the care received by elderly people living within these institutions. Conversely, it is assumed that if the researcher had managed to gain access to residential care homes that were not professionally managed then the findings and interpretations would be structured in such a way that identified what it would mean to live in one, or more, of these homes.

Furthermore, the identification of suitable residential care homes that could enable the initialisation of the fieldwork also depended on practical considerations such as the type of residential care home[20] and the number of people who were fit enough to be interviewed. As such, the research programme involved several visits to the residential care homes in question in order to ascertain those potential participants who would be willing and able to speak to the researcher given a suitable opportunity. With this in mind, it was necessary to work around the routines of daily living, such as meal times, visiting professional carers (such as physiotherapists, vicars, chiropodists etc.) or social activities (such as trips to the theatre, tea dances, visiting friends etc.), in an attempt to ensure that any interview would not disrupt the social and/or care needs of the potential participants. In light of this, sixteen potentially suitable participants were approached and informed of the research objectives in the hope that they would agree to participate. Of this group, six exercised their right to privacy, one agreed to be interviewed so long as it was not audio-taped, and nine participants happily gave their consent to be interviewed

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[20] Residential Care Homes can be disaggregated into institutions providing specialised nursing care or personal care (Help the Aged, 2005). As such, elderly people living in homes that are designed to meet personal care needs were chosen on the basis that this type of establishment was likely to house elderly people who were fit and well enough to be interviewed.

at a mutually agreeable time. Unfortunately, of this group of nine, one died the day before she was to be interviewed. As such, this study consists of eight accounts of lived experiences within residential care homes. These are identified within the following table:

Table 3.4.1A Participants Within the Study

Case.	Name	Age	Residential Care Home.
1.	Violet.	94.	Robinlew House.
2.	Lottie.	92.	Robinlew House.
3.	Doreen.	77.	Robinlew House.
4.	Harry.	90.	Robinlew House.
5.	Rita.	78.	Robinlew House.
6.	George.	94.	Cedar View.
7.	Anne.	70.	Cedar View.
8.	Bill.	94.	Cedar View.

3.4.1.1 In-depth First Person Descriptions of Lived Experience

Existential-phenomenology is an interpretive methodological approach that enables the researcher to gain in-depth first person descriptions of participants lived experiences (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) within residential care homes. In this case, the researcher invited each participant to give a relatively unrestricted account of his or her life within residential care homes. By virtue, each participant was invited to talk about some of the things in their room with the goal of obtaining first person descriptions (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) of these things.   With similar issues in mind, Saunders (1982) argues that "[t]he first crucial rule of the [existential] phenomenological researcher is: more subjects do not yield more information. Quantity should not be confused with quality. The phenomenologist must learn to engage in in-depth probing of a limited number of individuals" (Ibid: 356).

As Saunders (Ibid.) suggests, within the context of existential-phenomenology, quantity should not be confused with quality, and that an existential-phenomenological researcher should not attempt to measure the truth by the statistical significance of the sample, or indeed, the length of the transcripts. Rather, the existential-phenomenological researcher engages in circular dialogue that facilitates individual participation in depth discussions pertaining to participants lived experiences within a certain context (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989).   As such, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that the quality of the subsequent interview text should enable the researcher to gain confidence in their analytic generalisations.   This helps to minimise far-reaching reconstructions

that lead to a mass of trivialities (Banister & Fransella, 1980). With the goal of obtaining good quality interview text in mind, Creswell (1998) further suggests that existential-phenomenological researchers' need clear criteria in mind when attempting to locate suitable people to interview. In terms of this particular study, the fundamental criterion was that potential participants lived in a residential care home, were not suffering from dementia, and were fit and able to enter into discussions with the researcher. The rationale for this choice is based on the notion that to rigorously elucidate potential participants understandings of their cultures of consumption within residential care homes necessitates that any potential participants have the necessary vital energies in order for their voices to be heard in a clear and meaningful way.

3.4.1.2 The Interview

Having established that existential phenomenological interviews are an appropriate way of illuminating and distilling the participants understandings of their lived experiences within the residential care homes (see section Chapter 4 for more discussion), consideration was given to constructing a suitable foundation upon which any interview could be conducted in a holistic and sensitive manner. With issues of sensitive research[21] design in mind, Lee and Renzetti (1993) define sensitive research projects as those that have potential costs (or threats) to the participant and the researcher. They also identify several areas of research that are likely to be sensitive, including research

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[21] "Sensitive research addresses some of society's most pressing social issues and policy questions. Although ignoring the ethical issues in sensitive research is not a responsible approach to science, shying away from controversial topics, simply because they are controversial, is also and avoidance of responsibility" (Sieber and Stanley, 1988: 55 in Lee and Renzetti, 1993: 11).

that "intrudes into the private sphere or delves into some deeply personal experience…such as bereavement. Research into such areas may threaten those studied through the levels of emotional stress they produce" (Ibid: 6). With these issues in mind, and in light of the untimely death of one this study's potential participants, a safety scaffold was constructed of professional organisations to provide additional support to any participants whom may have encountered, for example, a traumatic experience in the form of the death of a close friend or relative. For example, Cruse Bereavement Care was contacted to gain an understanding of the services they supply. Subsequently, information sheets were obtained to provide to participants should they need further bereavement counseling services.

Set within the existential-phenomenological tradition, each interview began by informing the participants about the purpose of the study, and that the interview would be audio-taped for subsequent transcription and interpretation. With this dialogue in mind, the researcher provided each participant with a consistent and detailed description of the research, and informed him or her that they could take the interview in any direction they desired. The rationale for taking this type of approach was to see if the participants would be energetically motivated to discuss any personal and/or painful and/or confidential information through their own volition. In light of the aforementioned, each interview began with a general request to: 'Tell me about some of the things in your room.' This allowed the participants to identify a suitable starting point and to tell a story related to it. From that point onwards, the interview continued in the form of a conversation. Clearly, each participant was motivated to tell a story about different

things within their life world. As a consequence, the researcher participated in the conversation in whatever manner seemed to be the most appropriate to the individual participant. In some cases, this meant that the researcher became an ardent listener and either nodded in agreement or provided the odd word of encouragement. Conversely, on other occasions, some participants seemed to be waiting for the researcher to ask specific questions or provide instant feedback.

In order to unlock these types of interview situation it was sometimes necessary for the researcher to introduce some of his experiences of the phenomena under discussion. For instance, if one of the participants decided to talk openly about the death of a family member or friend then, where appropriate, the researcher, in line with Bergen (1993) and Mies (1983), indicated conscious partiality, "which stresses partial identification with the 'participants' based on personal interaction and the treatment of participants as subjects with real emotions and feelings. In short, interviewing with conscious partiality demands the researcher assume the role of empathetic listener and neither exploit or manipulate the researched" (Bergen: 1993: 201). The reality of this meant that it was of paramount importance to concentrate on the discussion at hand and to be a flexible as possible to ensure that the participants didn't become overwhelmed with emotion. As a result of having to concentrate for long periods of time no notes were taken during the interview as it was felt that this would interrupt both the interviewer and the participants concentration, thus stilting the flow of discussion.

All of the interviews were conducted in the participants rooms. Consequently, this enabled the participants the opportunity to feel relatively relaxed within their own familiar territory. Moreover, it also meant that the researcher could see the wider context, and capture some of their taken for granted aspects of their lived experiences. For instance, on more than one occasion, the participants said that objects do not play much of a role in their lives at the start of the interview, and then, at a later point, returned to discuss some of the items that they interact with on a daily basis. Good examples of this is things like walking sticks, frames, hostess trolleys, jugs of water and glasses that may well play a big part in the participants lived experience but were very rarely discussed during the early stages of the interview. To witness these taken for granted objects in close proximity to the participants thus facilitated close insight into the role that these material artifacts play in their lived experiences within residential care homes.

At the end of the interview, the tape recorder was switched off and each participant was reassured that the interview tapes would be treated in the strictest of confidence. The immediate post-interview period also allowed participants the time to relax and ask further questions, or to discuss unrelated topics. Furthermore, this period was also characterised by the researcher writing up field notes, observations, thoughts and detailing any last minute off hand comments made by participants. The rationale for this was to attempt to gain an understanding of the context of the interview, and to allow the researcher to catch the things that they take for granted, or may be unwilling to disclose during the interview.

3.5 Interpretive Approach

"It is one thing to interview [participants] using existential phenomenology, it is another to analyze the considerable volume of data generated by the interviews" (Cherrier, 2005: 129).

With issues of analyzing the considerable volume of data generated within this project, it is of value to raise a fundamental question; how can the researcher rigorously analyse the interview data? To answer this, it is necessary to forward yet another question; within the field of interpretive consumer research who has effectively applied existential-phenomenology to a range of research situations? Turning, to the archives of interpretive consumer research it is noted that examples of this type of study emanate from Thompson's (1996) exploration of gendered consumption and lifestyle, Thompson and Hirschman's (1995) analysis of self care practices and self conceptions, Thompson, Locander and Pollio's (1990) study of everyday consumption practices of married women, and Thompson and Haykto's (1997) deconstruction of the meaning of fashion discourses and the link to identity and self conceptions. Moreover, these studies form part of a scholastic lineage that dates back to Thompson, Locander and Pollio's (1989) theoretical meditations on consumer experience and the philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology. Within the aforementioned study, Thompson, Locander and Pollio (Ibid.) argue that the philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology enables consumer researchers to focus on *consumer experience* within a particular context. By virtue of this atheoretical descriptive aim, the interpretive objective is to

describe experiential patterns emerging from a context (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997; Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989). With similar issues in mind, Pollio, Henley and Thompson (1997) in line with Merleau-Ponty (1945) Gadamer (1960), Giorgi (1983) and Polkinghorne (1989) claim that "atheoretical interpretation does not imply that a neutral view is adopted; on the contrary, all interpretation is rendered from some perspective. Descriptive approaches, while atheoretical, require their own assumptions, and their goal is not to support an apriori theory nor to coerce phenomena into categories that conform to theory" (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997: 36). To these interpretive ends, Locander and Pollio (Ibid.) draw on Koffca (1935), Wertheimer (1945), Kohler (1947), Dilthey (1958), Sartre (1962), Heidegger (1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1962) provide a theoretically grounded interpretive approach that served as the basis for the further applied studies outlined within the early stages of this paragraph. As such, this research project also adopts the foundational interpretive process of Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989) in order to illuminate the participants' understandings of their lived experiences within residential care homes. This interpretive process is summarised in the following table.

Table 3.5A: Interpretive Process

Stage Number.	Interpretive Objective.
1.	Use participants own terms and category systems within the emerging interpretation.
2.	Treat the text as an autonomous body of literature.
3.	Bracket preconceived theoretical notions about the phenomena.
4.	Use previous passages to improve interpretation within each individual transcript.
5.	Read each transcript many times.
6.	Seek an individual understanding of the transcript.
7.	Identify common patterns across the transcripts.

Adapted from Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989: 140-142).

3.5.1 The Use of Participants' Own Terms and Category Systems

Firstly, Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989) forward the notion that the aim of existential-phenomenological research is to represent experience as it as lived rather than in conceptually abstract terms. By virtue, it follows that using participants' own terms and category systems is the first methodological procedure for staying at the level of lived experience (Ibid). For example, the following extract, derived from this study,

attempts to present George's lived experiences within a residential care home in his own words:

Table 3.5.1A: Representing George's Lived Experiences in his own Words and Category Systems

Interviewer: Why don't we start by talking about some of the things in your room?

G: Although I am severely incapacitated now, I still read my Telegraph from cover to cover. I try to keep up to date with business, sport, and all the rest of it, you see. You've got to. The trouble is old people tend to relax and not do anything, which is a tragedy. I try to stimulate these old boys but I can't get anywhere. There are one or two ladies that I talk to, and I stimulate them a bit, and I get a bit out of it, I get a response.

Interviewer: How often do you read The Telegraph?

G: Seven days a week. I like the Telegraph because I can cover the sport, I can cover the markets, I check the markets everyday. This is the way you keep alive isn't it?

Interviewer: Have you been following the movements of the markets recently?

G: They are stabilising you know. I think, I think, erm, taking a broad view, our economy is fairly stable. People don't realise the millions upon millions involved in the markets and all the rest of it. It's a very complicated thing.

Interviewer: It's certainly not something that I can claim to fully understand.

G: Although I was a YMCA secretary, I was in Manchester where I had four assistants you know. My senior assistant was a qualified accountant and so I have had a pretty big business experience. That's all helped to stimulate one's interest in life. I've had a wonderful life and I am very thankful. I am very sorry for people who have no outside interest, that's a great pity. I would just fold up. That's what happens. Don't misunderstand me, I'm enjoying my life as much as is possible under these conditions. I'm so grateful for the wonderful support you get here. They are a wonderful crowd. It's loving care, it's not, you know, and of course there are over thirty people involved here in one way or another.

A notable aspect of these opening passages is that George's descriptions reveal that

his experiences within Cedar Court can be seen to include; loving care, a severely incapacitated body, memories of being a YMCA secretary and a Telegraph newspaper which is used to *"stimulate"* both George and other residents in an attempt to *"keep alive."* These latter experiences can be seen to play a meaningful role within George's life and can be clearly seen in the preceding and proceeding sections of interview text. To this end, the dialogue indicates that George read the Telegraph newspaper on a daily basis with particular attention directed toward the business and sport sections. The recollection of these experiences enabled George to forward the comment *"[t]his is the way you keep alive isn't it?"* Seen in this light, reading the Telegraph newspaper could be interpreted as a meaningful element of George's life that directs his thoughts away from issues of mortality.   This interpretation is strengthened in the light of the text wherein George also attempts to direct other residents' attention toward life affirming issues by discussing reports of business, the movement of the markets and sport that are contained within his Telegraph newspaper. For example, when describing fellow residents who do not appear to regularly read newspapers and/or have no outside interests George used phrases like *"I feel sorry for people with no outside interests, that's a great pity. I would just fold up,"* indicating the meaningful role of the Telegraph within his life.

The passages under discussion also indicate that whilst George was *"enjoying his life as much as possible under these conditions"* he was still very much dependent on the *"loving care"* he received from a *"wonderful crowd"* of over thirty carers within Cedar View. This finding suggests that the *"loving care"* he received enabled him to

enjoy his life within Cedar House despite being *"severely incapacitated"*. By virtue, George's experiences of this *"loving care"* can be seen to enable him to *"enjoy his life"* and be *"stimulated"* by the discussions of sport, the economy and the movements of the markets reported within the Telegraph newspaper.

As the preceding example highlights, the use of George's own terms and category systems enables the interpretation to stay at the level of *his* lived experience. As such, *he* made reference to *"enjoying his life as a much as possible"*. However, if the text contained within table 3.5.1A were to be analysed in conceptually abstract terms, it is possible that George's descriptions of his *"life"* may be linked to the concept of 'lifestyle' which might include references to such attributes as consumer activities, interests, likes, dislikes, attitudes, consumption patterns, and expectations (Arnould, Price and Zinkhan, 2004), whereas George described two significant *"life"* meanings*:* stimulating himself and other consumers as a means to keep alive, and the wonderful support he receives within Cedar View.

3.5.2 Treating the Text as an Autonomous Body of Literature.

The second stage of Thompson, Locander and Pollio's (1989) interpretive process is to treat the interview text as an autonomous body of data comprised of the participants reflections on their lived experiences. By virtue, the interview text should not include any inferences, and conjectures that exceed the evidence provided by the transcript

(Ibid.).   Similarly, explaining the participants lived experience in theoretical terms is inappropriate because theoretical explanations are viewed as abstractions rather than descriptions of lived experience (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997).   Returning to table 3.5.1A and in particular with the first paragraph of interpretation in mind, it is suggested that an inappropriate way to treat George's interview text might look something like this:

Table 3.5.2A: An Inappropriate Way of Treating George's Interview Text

A notable aspect of these opening passages is that George's descriptions reveal that within the foreground of his lived experiences (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) within Cedar Court can be seen to include a Telegraph newspaper which is used to buffer both George and other residents from the horror of death (Bauman, 1992). With the notion of buffering thoughts of death in mind, one theoretical position that supports this is the concept of terror management theory (Solomon, Greenberg and Pyszczynski, 1991) which posits that the purpose of culture is to minimise the anxiety associated with the awareness of mortality.   Viewed through the lens of terror management theory (Ibid.), the notion can be forwarded whereby George finds the thought of death to be traumatic (Bauman, 1992).

Alternatively, by treating the text as an autonomous body of literature the resultant section of text would look like the first paragraph of interpretive insights located within table 3.5.1.A[22].

3.5.3 Bracketing Theory

Bracketing is the third phase of the interpretive process and, as Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1990) suggest, is best characterised as a buffer between the researcher and the participant in which there is no place for the researcher's theoretical beliefs, preconceptions and presuppositions.   Likewise, as Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989) claim, any interpretation needs to be devoid of inferences, conjectures and conceptual biases that may serve to distort the researcher's interpretive vision (see Table 3.5.2A, and Appendix A for worked examples). As such, each transcript is seen as an autonomous body of data in which existential-phenomenological understanding emerges. However, as Thompson, Locander and Pollio (Ibid.) acknowledge, the bracketing of meaning, or the suspension of judgment, is at best very difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish when it moves beyond the realms of a philosopher's intellect into practical

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[22] This is reproduced here for the benefit of the reader: "A notable aspect of these opening passages is that George's descriptions reveal that within the foreground of his lived experiences within Cedar Court can be seen to include; loving care, a severely incapacitated body, memories of being a YMCA secretary and a Telegraph newspaper, which is used to *"stimulate"* both George and other residents in an attempt to *"keep alive."* These latter experiences can be seen to play a meaningful role within George's life and can be clearly seen in the preceding and proceeding sections of interview text. To this end, the dialogue indicates that George read the Telegraph newspaper on a daily basis with particular attention directed toward the business and sport sections. The recollection of these experiences enabled George to forward the comment *"[t]his is the way you keep alive isn't it?"* Seen in this light, reading the Telegraph newspaper could be interpreted as a meaningful element of George's life that directs his thoughts away from issues of mortality. This interpretation is strengthened in the light of the text wherein George also attempts to direct other residents' attention toward life affirming issues by discussing reports of business, the movement of the markets and sport that are contained within his Telegraph newspaper. For example, when describing fellow residents who do not appear to regularly read newspapers and/or have no outside interests George used phrases like *I feel sorry for people with no outside interests, that's a great pity. I would just fold up,"* indicating the meaningful role of the Telegraph within his life."

reality. Thus, in order to avoid conceptual inadequacy, bracketing is best elucidated as a

way of *seeing* the text without the obfuscation of theory. For example, if the interview

text were to be seen through a theoretical lens it might look something like this:

Table 3.5.3A: Seeing George's Interview Text through a Theoretical Lens

A notable aspect of these opening passages is that George's descriptions reveal that

the foreground of his lived experiences (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) can

be seen to include a Telegraph newspaper which is used to buffer both George and

other his fellow residents from death related thoughts. As Bauman (1992) argues,

"[t]here is hardly a thought more offensive than that of death; or, rather, of the

inevitability of dying; of the transience of our being in the world (Ibid: 12). With the

notion of the 'offensive thought of death in mind', one theoretical position that

supports this is the concept of 'terror management theory' (Solomon, Greenberg and

Pyszczynski, 1991) which posits that the purpose of culture is to minimise the anxiety

associated with the awareness of mortality. Viewed through the lens of terror

management theory (Ibid.), we can infer that George finds the thought of death to be

traumatic (Bauman, 1992) and uses his Telegraph newspaper to minimise the anxiety

associated with death related thoughts.

Alternatively, if George's interview text were to be seen without the obfuscation of theory it would resemble the first section of interpretive insight located within table 3.5.1A[23].

3.5.4 Using Previous Passages to Improve Interpretive Vision

Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989) outline the fourth step in the interpretive process by claiming that the interview text, and in particular previous passages, should be used to improve interpretive vision by taking into account that no part of an interview should be interpreted out with its overall context. Viewed in this way, the process of interpretation can be seen is a continuous back and forth process of relating parts to the whole in order to construct interpretive meaning. To these visionary ends, each sections of the transcript must be constantly re-evaluated in the light of proceeding passages (Ibid.). For example, with George's interview transcript in mind, the following passages could be used to improve interpretive vision:

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[23] This is reproduced here for the benefit of the reader: "A notable aspect of these opening passages is that George's descriptions reveal that within the foreground of his lived experiences within Cedar Court can be seen to include; loving care, a severely incapacitated body, memories of being a YMCA secretary and a Telegraph newspaper, which is used to *"stimulate"* both George and other residents in an attempt to *"keep alive."* These latter experiences can be seen to play a meaningful role within George's life and can be clearly seen in the preceding and proceeding sections of interview text. To this end, the dialogue indicates that George read the Telegraph newspaper on a daily basis with particular attention directed toward the business and sport sections. The recollection of these experiences enabled George to forward the comment *"[t]his is the way you keep alive isn't it?"* Seen in this light, reading the Telegraph newspaper could be interpreted as a meaningful element of George's life that directs his thoughts away from issues of mortality. This interpretation is strengthened in the light of the text wherein George also attempts to direct other residents' attention toward life affirming issues by discussing reports of business, the movement of the markets and sport that are contained within his Telegraph newspaper. For example, when describing fellow residents who do not appear to regularly read newspapers and/or have no outside interests George used phrases like *I feel sorry for people with no outside interests, that's a great pity. I would just fold up,"* indicating the meaningful role of the Telegraph within his life."

Table 3.5.4A: Using Previous Passages to Improve Interpretive Vision within George's

Interview Transcript

Page Number.	Passage.
231.	*Although I am severely incapacitated now, I still read my Telegraph from cover to cover. I try to keep up to date with business, sport, and all the rest of it, you see. You've got to. The trouble is old people tend to relax and not do anything, which is a tragedy. I try to stimulate these old boys but I can't get anywhere. There are one or two ladies that I talk to, and I stimulate them a bit, and I get a bit out of it, I get a response.*
232-233.	*I am very sorry for people who have no outside interest, that's a great pity. I would just fold up.*
236.	*I've enjoyed working with other people very much, but I miss them very much. It's so rewarding working with other people.*
243.	*There is only one person, who comes to see me from church, they are not outward looking unfortunately.*
247.	*I manage to keep active, that's the thing.*
250-251.	*I believe the secret of life is positive thinking. You can literally help to keep yourself alive.*

With the above table in mind, and in order to improve interpretive vision, the reader is encouraged to read and move back and forth between the preceding passages and relate them to each other. In doing so, it is possible that the reader will arrive at the interpretation that George attempts to "*stimulate*" his mind and "*keep active*" by reading the Telegraph newspaper. Furthermore, with reports of business and sport in mind he tries to "*stimulate*" his further residents, in an attempt to prevent them from "*folding up*". This activity appears to be based on the notion that George attempts to prevent himself from "*folding up*" and keeping "*active*" through "*positive thinking*."

3.5.5 Multiple Readings of the Transcript

The process of interpretation involves going over each interview transcript a multitude of times to shed light on the participants' understandings of their lived experiences as opposed to representing these factors in the researcher's preconceived terms (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989). Furthermore, within the context of existential-phenomenology, multiple readings of interview transcripts are framed through the notion of the 'hermeneutic circle' (Thompson, 1997). This refers to a part-to-whole method of interpretation that overcomes the seemingly linear nature of reading text and relating this to earlier portions in order to gain subsequent understanding and vice versa (see, for example, Appendix A). As such, any given passage in the text is always understood in relation to the whole, both preceding and following, rather than as a decontextualised thing-in-itself (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997). As Thompson (1997) states, in existential phenomenological hermeneutic interpretation, the part-to-whole process

occurs in two phases; at individual (See Appendix A for a worked example) and communal levels (see Chapter 4).

3.5.6 Seeking an Individual Hermeneutic Understanding of the Transcript

The interpretive researcher[24] seeks an individual hermeneutic understanding of each interview text, which involves viewing each transcript as whole and relating passages of the transcript to its overall content[25] (see Appendix A for a worked example). Upon completion of this phase a new part-to-whole phase is undertaken in which separate interviews are related to each other and common patterns identified (see Chapter 4).

3.5.7 Identifying Common Patterns Across the Transcripts

Thompson, Locander and Polio (1989) in line with Kvale (1983) and Wertz (1983) state that the search for common patterns (or global themes) entails a new part-to-whole process in which separate interview transcripts are related to each other and common patterns identified. Of course, this is not meant to imply that global themes offer exhaustive descriptions of phenomena, rather they shed light on figural aspects that emerge within the foreground of the participants lived experiences (Thompson, 1997). Furthermore, identifying common patterns across interviews is another methodological

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[24] The interpretive researcher can be part of a group (Thompson, Locander and Polio, 1989) or work independently (Thompson and Haytko, 1997) noting emergent themes.

[25] It is difficult to explicate the hermeneutic process beyond this characterisation because "the process is more a matter of tacit knowledge than explicit application. The process has a fundamental ambiguity to it in that the researcher must "know" how to interpret" (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997: 50). Moreover, the actual practice of hermeneutics "may also be a nonrepresentable form of knowledge" (Ibid.).

means for improving interpretive vision, not a means for attaining some type of convergent validation (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989). The interpretation thus seeks to describe common patterns in the participants lived experiences.

3.6 Summary

The goal of phenomenological research is to describe phenomena as they are lived rather than to give an abstract explanatory account. Phenomenological interpretation is premised on a set of assumptions concerning the nature of human existence. Although these assumptions serve as a basis for phenomenological understanding, they do not presuppose what meanings any specific experience will have for any specific person in some situation" (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997: 46).

With the philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology in mind, the notion is forwarded whereby the chosen methodological approach appears as if it is an exciting and somewhat challenging means of enabling participants to describe their own lived experiences, without the constraints of any pre-determined interview criteria. Set within the context of this study, the fact that the researcher had not experienced what it was like to have led a long life, or understood what it was like to have a frail body, and to be living in a residential care home may have allowed the participants to discuss their lives without feeling threatened or judged. As will be seen in the following chapter, the voices

of the participants indicate what it is like to live in a residential care home through their own descriptions of their lived experiences.

However, it is noted the adopted approach should not be viewed as a perfect process. Nonetheless, the research design utilised within this project aims to provide data comparable to that used in other studies of subcultures of consumption that have used existential-phenomenological methods. In this sense, the research design is appropriate as the following chapter demonstrates.

Chapter 4

Elderly Consumers' Understandings of Residential Care Homes

4.0 Chapter Summary

In accordance with Thompson, Locander and Pollio's (1989) interpretive process (see section 3.5), rather than forwarding an abstract theoretical discussion that moves way from elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes, this chapter identifies global themes that occur across the interview transcripts (for a worked example of identifying themes across an individual interview transcript, see Appendix A) in an attempt to further improve interpretive vision. By virtue, this chapter seeks to describe common patterns as revealed within elderly consumers experiences of residential care homes. To these ends, Section 4.1 delineates elderly consumers understandings of the body and leisure trips. Section 4.2 identifies understandings of the body, noise disturbances and death. Section 4.3 illuminates and distils understandings of large items of furniture, small hand-sized objects, mobility aids, quality of care, social interaction and death.

4.1 Elderly Consumers Understandings of the Body and Leisure Trips.

Set within elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes lie various things that enable them to speak (Levi-Strauss, 1966) about their everyday lived experiences. These things can be seen (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) to take the shape of: the body in terms of failing eyesight, sleep problems, legs and feeling cold; food and drink; and leisure trips such as church visits and outings.

4.1.1 The Body

This section seeks to interpret elderly consumers everyday lived experiences within residential care homes through their meaningful understandings of failing eyesight, sleep problems, legs, keeping warm and food and drink.

4.1.1.1 The Body: *Anne's failing Eyesight and God's Influence on her Life.*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Anne's understandings of her lived experiences within Cedar View through discussions relating to her failing eyesight and God's influence on her life as the following passage illustrates:

> **Interviewer***: Earlier you mentioned you were partially sighted. How far can*
>
> *you see? **A***: I can just see wood around the clock face on the wall. I can't*
>
> *see the face of the clock to tell the time. I've got a black and white clock here*

that I can see better. Things are much worse than they used to be when I first

came. My sight has not improved, it's not improved at all, and it's got worse.

But, I'm quite prepared to go blind. They said to me "You never lose your

sight entirely." But now they are not quite certain. I'm prepared for either...I

don't think things happen by chance. I think they are organised and allowed

by God. There is never a dull moment though; at least that's how I view life.

Things change, when you are born you may be musical or perhaps you are

very good at some sort of handwork, woodwork, or similar. But, er, you just

don't know how life is going to turn out. It's very interesting.

Multiple readings of the text under consideration enables an understanding of Anne's extract to emerge that includes aids to living in the form of a black and white clock, and a belief in God. Such things enable Anne to tell the time, or to think that her life has been *"organised and allowed by God."*   As such, Anne's understanding of her life world and dependence on her aids to living is revealed within such statements as; *"My sight has not improved, it's not improved at all, and it's got worse. But, I'm quite prepared to go blind" and "I think they are organised and allowed by God. There is never a dull moment though; at least that's how I view life."* Moreover, the link between Anne and her aids to living highlights that while *"you just don't know how life is going to turn out"* she appears to have become increasingly dependent on these things in order to understand her lived experiences within Cedar View.

4.1.1.2 The Body: *Violet's failing Eyesight and the Researcher*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Violet's understandings of her lived experiences within Robinlew House through discussions relating to her failing eyesight:

V: I really am truly happy [Knock on door] and I have a lovely room too. Yes, come in. **Female***: Hello there.* **V***: Who goes there?* **Female***: Its Helen. I've got your tea and coffees. I'll let you pour for Violet, OK?* **Interviewer***: No problem.* **V***: Now, whose pouring out Helen?* **Female***: I've asked the gentleman to be mother.* **V***: Thank you.* **Female***: If you need anything just ring [Female leaves room].* **V***: [Laughter] I can't pour out without spilling.* **Interviewer***: No worries, I'll do it.* **V***: If visitors come in here they always get tea and coffee on the tray sent up.* **Interviewer***: Are you a big fan of tea and coffee then?* **V***: Isn't it funny I prefer tea just now. Coffee in the morning but after that I like to have my tea.* **Interviewer***: Milk and sugar?* **V***: Milk only please.* **Interviewer***: Right OK how much milk do you normally take?* **V***: Well, enough you know.* **Interviewer***: I'll start by putting a little in. If you want any more just ask.* **V***: That's great [Referring to the tray of refreshments] I don't know what they have brought now.* **Interviewer***: Well, you've got, erm, they look like buttered scones and there's chocolate crispies.* **V***: You have a chocolate crispy.* **Interviewer***: Thank you.* **V***: This is a barm-cake, it's a barm-cake.*

A hermeneutic reading of the text under consideration enables an understanding of Violet's extract to emerge that seems to be mediated by aids to living in the form of a female carer and the researcher. As such, these things enable Violet to consume food and drink within the context of the interview. As such, Violet's understanding of her life world and dependence on her aids to living is revealed within such statements as; *"Who goes there?", "Now, whose pouring out Helen?", "I can't pour without spilling", I don't know what they have brought now"* and *"This is a barm-cake, it's a barm-cake."* Moreover, at the time of the interview, the link between Violet and her aids to living highlights that she appears to have become increasingly dependent on these things in order to understand her lived experiences within Cedar View.

4.1.1.3 The Body: *Harry's Walking Stick and a Hereditary Toe Problem*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Harry's understandings of his lived experiences within Robinlew House through discussions relating to the experience of toe problem:

> **H**: *For a while now I've had something wrong with a toe, that's upset the whole foot, so I'm still in the process of dealing with that. I'm also having to adapt to get used to walking with a stick which is a bit of a pain, especially as I used to walk around with indecent haste not so long ago.* **Interviewer**: *Have you used a stick before?* **H**: *No not really. Except on a holiday I may have used a stick.* **Interviewer**: *How are you coping using the stick?* **H**:

One soon gets accustomed to it. So many people use sticks now.

Interviewer: *How did you damage your toe?* ***H***: *Don't know. The doctor can't tell me and, er, he says there is something not right and that, I don't know, a nerve I think. It seems to trouble me more at night than it does during the day. I've got the stick so I can walk quite comfortably.*

Interviewer: *Is your toe getting better?* ***H***: *Er, I would like to think its getting better. I'll be seeing a doctor again sometime and see what he says. He is a very good doctor. The strange thing is that my mother had toe trouble too and, er, the doctor tried to hide the possibility that that might come to me too. I find that these specialists now are very reluctant to do anything drastic. They seem to wait and see whether nature will heal it itself, and that suits me.*

Multiple readings of Harry's extract reveals that his understandings of his lived experience within Robinlew House appear to be mediated by his walking stick and a hereditary toe problem. To these ends, these linkages frame Harry's understandings of the time before his toe problem in such a way that enabled him to reveal that he *"used to walk around with indecent haste not so long ago."* However, Harry's understandings of his lived experience seem to have changed in the light of his toe problem in such a way that enabled him to state that he is getting *"accustomed"* to using his walking stick. Furthermore, Harry's links with his understandings of his toe problem suggest that he has become increasingly dependent on his walking stick and that his mother had also experienced a toe problem. However, the extract latterly reveals that Harry understands

that his toe problem is not an issue and that he seems quite content *"to see whether nature will heal it itself, and that suits me."*

4.1.1.4 The Body: *George's Legs*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates George's understandings of his lived experiences within Cedar View through discussions relating to his legs:

> *G: I am so well cared for here. It's quite wonderful really. I had no idea it was a care home. I said, "I will take your first vacancy", and then I went down to put my flat on the market, and while I was doing that I fell and crashed my right leg, and they had to put a steel plate in to hold me together. So, that ended everything. Up 'till that point I was busy doing everything, and then I came to a full stop.*

The text under hermeneutic consideration reveals that George's understanding of his lived experience within Cedar View appears to be mediated by aids to living in the form of carers and steel plate in his right leg. Such everyday items can be seen to enable George to relive the experience of putting his flat on the market and falling and crashing his right leg. While this attempted act of consumption *"ended everything. Up until that point I was busy doing everything, and then I came to a full stop"* George's subsequent understanding of his life world and dependence on his aids to living is revealed within such statements as; *"I am so well cared for here. It's quite wonderful really"*

Furthermore, at the time of the interview, the link between George and his aids to living highlights that he appears to have become increasingly dependent on these things in order to understand his lived experiences within Cedar View. Moreover, with George's steel plate in mind the interpretation emerges whereby the importance of this aid to living is enhanced due to its attachment to the body.

4.1.1.5 The Body: *Violet's Legs*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Violet's understandings of her lived experiences within Robinlew House through discussions relating to her legs:

> **V**: *I can't get out and around with the legs. The doctor gave me this [walking frame] in the infirmary. I thought it was wonderful. The old folk, poor things, in here just seem to lie in bed. But I can walk around with this, it's really wonderful…A friend of mine said "I think I will put a motor on it for you." I said, [laughing] "I wouldn't do that!"*

Multiple readings of Violet's extract enables an understanding to emerge that indicates that Violet's understanding of her lived experience within Robinlew House appears to be mediated by aids to living in the form of a doctor and a walking frame. As such, while Violet appears to be dependent on these things they seem to have enabled Violet to *"walk around"* as opposed to the other *"old folk"* who *"just seem to lie in bed."* The extent to which this aid to living enables Violet to understand her lived experiences is revealed

through such phrases as; *"It's really wonderful…A friend of mine said "I think I will put a motor on it for you." I said [laughing] "I wouldn't do that!"* In the light of such comments, Violet's understandings of her walking frame can be seen to enable feelings of dependency and comfort to emerge within her life-world.

4.1.1.6 The Body: *Bill's Experiences of Feeling Cold.*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Bill's understandings of his lived experiences within Cedar View through discussions relating to feeling cold:

> **B***: If I want something I just pull this cord that operates a buzzer down there. They come up and turn it off in here and see what the trouble is.* **Interviewer***: Do you pull the cord often?* **B***: No, very rarely. Although, I use it when I'm in bed there. I actually used it earlier this, or was it yesterday morning? I can't tell which. They come in and said, "What's the matter?" "Cor," I said, "I think I'm getting cold." Of course, everyone here sleeps with their windows and doors shut. I can't sleep with the window shut, I must have it open. Of course, I've never smoked in my life, never. But anyway, they said, "What's the matter?" I said, "I'm cold, I can't sleep." So they put some more blankets on.*

The text under consideration reveals that Bill's understanding of his lived experience within Cedar View appears to be mediated by aids to living in the form of; a help cord, carers and some blankets. As such, the text indicates that while Bill *"very rarely"* used

this combination of aids to living his recent understandings of his lived experiences seemed to be set within the problem of not being able to *"sleep with the window shut"*, feeling cold and not being able to sleep, and being dependent on the carers solving his problems. As such, the text forwards the notion the carers solved Bill's problem by providing him with some blankets. Furthermore, at the time of the interview, the link between Bill and his aids to living highlights that he appears to have become increasingly dependent on these things in order to understand his lived experiences within Cedar View.

4.1.1.7 The Body: *Anne and the Provision of Food and Drink*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Anne's understandings of her lived experiences within Cedar View through discussions relating to the provision of food and drink:

> *[**Knock on door**]. **Female**: Steak pie, plaice or salad tomorrow? **A**: If I have steak pie can I have horseradish sauce please? **Female**: Yes, you can. **A**: I am very fond of horseradish sauce. **Female**: Er, ravioli, crumpets or toast? **A**: Oh, I don't like ravioli. **Female**: Crumpets? **A**: Yes, I don't mind crumpets. **Female**: Crumpets and jam? **A**: Oh no, crumpets and savory. I don't like sweet. **Female**: Do you want a bit of cheese with it? **A**: Yes please. Not hard cheese though. Soft cheese please. I can manage that best because I've not got many teeth. **Female**: OK. Thank you my darling. [**Female leaves the room**]. **A**: I find this little bottle of water very rewarding*

when I've been talking a lot. When you've gone I shall just suck away at my bottle and replenish my fluids. You get hold of it yourself. You see, it's quite heavy. It's screwed enough so that it doesn't leak. I believe they are about to introduce one fruit taste to make it more palatable.

The text under consideration reveals that Anne's understanding of her lived experience within Cedar View appears to be mediated by aids to living in the form of carers and the provision of food and drink As such, these things enable Anne to make a choice related to the consumption of food and drink. As such, and as the text reveals, Anne claimed that she did not like, or could not eat; ravioli *("Oh, I don't like ravioli")*, sweet foods *("I don't like sweet")* and hard cheese and would rather eat; steak pie and horseradish sauce, and crumpets and soft cheese *("I can manage that best because I've not got many teeth left")*.

The passage under consideration also reveals that Anne's understanding of her lived experience within Cedar View appears to be mediated by an aid to living in the form of a bottle of water. As such, the text suggests that Anne's understanding of this indicates that she is dependent on this to *"replenish her fluids."* Furthermore, the extent to which this aid to living enables Anne to understand her lived experiences is revealed through such phrases as; *"I find this bottle of water very rewarding when I've been talking a lot."*

4.1.1.8 The Body: *Rita and the Provision of Food and Drink*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Rita's understandings of her lived experiences within Robinlew House through discussions relating to the provision of food and drink:

> **R: [Knock on the door]** *Come in [Female enters the room with a tray of tea, milk, sugar, and doughnuts].* **Female**: *There we are. You just help yourself.* **Interviewer**: *That's lovely. Thanks very much. Let me do that for you [Female leaves the room].* **R**: *If you get visitors you always get a tray brought up.* **Interviewer**: *Is that your mug?* **R**: *That's my big one with the two handles.* **Interviewer**: *Would you like some tea as well as your water?* **R**: *Just a little.* **Interviewer**: *That pot is certainly very full [Sound of tea being poured into a cup].* **Interviewer**: *Milk?* **R**: *That's fine.* **Interviewer**: *There we go [Sounds of cups and saucers].* **R**: *Do you take sugar?* **Interviewer**: *Thanks.* **R**: *There's a spoon there.* **Interviewer**: *How many sugars do you have?* **R**: *Two. My hands aren't so good now.* **Interviewer**: *How long have your hands been bad?* **R**: *Twenty-eight years. I was in my fifties when I took arthritis. Would you like a doughnut?* **Interviewer**: *I'll save mine for later if you don't mind, as it's not long since I had my lunch.*

The text under consideration reveals that Rita's understanding of her lived experience within Cedar View appears to be mediated by aids to living in the form of carers, the

researcher, the provision of food and drink and her big mug with the two handles. As such, at the time of the interview, these aids to living enabled Rita to consume a cup of tea and a doughnut despite suffering from arthritis. As such, and as the text reveals, Rita's understanding of her lived experience were dependent on slowly coming to terms with arthritis *("I was in my fifties when I took arthritis"),* and that this may have led to the purchase of her two handled mug. Furthermore, Rita's understandings of her lived experiences were also dependent on the researcher to serve tea because her *"hands aren't so good now."*

The preceding findings and interpretations indicate that elderly consumers understand part of their everyday lived experiences within residential care homes through understandings of various bodily parts. To these ends, the notion emerges whereby elderly consumers can be seen to be dependent on such things as, for example, a black and white clock (Anne), walking sticks (Harry), and the timely provision of food (Anne). However, this is not meant to imply that elderly consumers' everyday lived experiences within residential care homes are relatively isolated. As such, embedded within the proceeding passages elderly consumers describe their understandings of residential care homes through such social occasions as leisure trips.

4.1.2 Leisure Trips

This section seeks to interpret elderly consumers everyday live experiences within residential care homes through their meaningful understandings of going to church, and on outings.

4.1.2.1 Leisure Trips: *Harry's Church Visits*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Harry's understandings of his lived experiences within Robinlew House through discussions relating to church visits:

> **H**: *I've got an arrangement, I'm being taken every Sunday, so that's that. Again, I must say my thanks, not only to the minister who takes me to church, but to all those who have helped in the interim period, many ministers helped. I am grateful to them all.*

The text under consideration reveals that Harry's understanding of his lived experience within Robinlew House appears to be mediated by aids to escape in the form of the many ministers who have enabled him to 'escape' from Robinlew House and go to church every Sunday. As such, and as the text reveals, Harry's understanding of his lived experience demonstrates that he is dependent on his 'aids of escape' and is *"grateful to them all."* Moreover, it follows that Harry is dependent on these ministers in maintaining Harry's religious beliefs and enabling him to keep in contact with his minister friends.

4.1.2.2 Leisure Trips: *Violet's Outings*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Violet's understandings of her lived experiences within Robinlew House through discussions relating to outings:

> *V: In the summer time you go away for runs in the car and the bus. Very, very good. **Interviewer**: Where do you go in the car and bus? **V**: You go for a wee run out and about. Well, we went to a memorial. Oh what's his name now? He was a local man who died. He was an SAS; he was a private in the SAS. Did you know that? **Interviewer**: No I didn't. **V**: Well when that was unveiled we were taken to see that. It was just down the road. Very nice. We were taken to Stirling Castle, but I wasn't feeling so well. It didn't matter it was awful nice to get back.*

The text under consideration reveals that Violet's understanding of her lived experience within Robinlew House appears to be mediated by aids to escape in the form of a bus, car and presumably a driver that have enabled her to escape from Robinlew House and go on outings to visit a memorial and Stirling Castle. As such, and as the text reveals, Violet's understanding of her lived experience demonstrates that she is dependent on these 'aids of escape' to the extent that she described these outings within such phrases as *"Very, very good"*, and *"Very nice."* However, the text also reveals that while these links with aids of escape enabled Violet to gain an understanding of her lived experiences within Robinlew House, she had also derived further understanding though the not feeling well on her visit to Stirling Castle. Furthermore, the extent to which this impacted on her

understanding of her life at the time is revealed through the phrase; *"We were taken to Stirling Castle, but I wasn't feeling so well. It didn't matter it was awful nice to get back."* However, as the proceeding extract reveals, Violet's understanding of her life within Robinlew House no longer consists of outings:

> *V: But I am so blind now it's not much use if I go walking, I don't see and I don't hear. I miss an awful lot, not hearing and then I can't see. So I gave that up.*

The text under consideration reveals that Violet's understanding of her lived experience within Robinlew House appears to be mediated by the notion that she no longer need aids to escape as she has become increasingly deaf and blind. The extent to which this impacted on her understanding of her life at the time is revealed through such phrases as; "*I don't see and I don't hear*".

4.1.3 Summary and Conclusion to the Section

An iterative reading (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) of Section 4.1 enables the notion to emerge whereby elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes can be seen to be embedded not only within issues related to the body and leisure trips, but also through such things (Levi-Strauss, 1966). Set within, and through, elderly consumers' understandings of their bodies can be seen aids to living in the form of a clock, God, carers, the researcher, a steel plate in a leg, a doctor, a walking frame, a help

cord, blankets, food, drink and a two handled mug. Furthermore, set within, and through,

elderly consumers' understandings of leisure trips can be seen as aids to escape such as

friends, a bus, a car and a driver. Moreover, in the light of multiple iterative readings of

the interview transcripts and the resultant interpretations a common theme can be seen to

emerge within and throughout this section – *cultures of dependency*. For example, it can

be argued that, with issues of the body in mind, Anne is dependent on her black and white

clock to be able to tell the time. Furthermore, with leisure trips in mind, the notion can be

forwarded that Harry is dependent on his minister friends to take him to church.

The discussion of global themes (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) now moves on

to delineate further understandings of the body, and also introduces elderly consumers

descriptions of noise and death.

4.2 Elderly Consumers Understandings of The Body, Noise Disturbances and Death.

Set within elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes lie various things

that enable them to speak (Levi-Strauss, 1966) about their everyday lived experiences.

These things can be seen (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) to take the shape of ;

the body and its hospitalisation; noise disturbances outside a room; death in the form of

the death of friends, relatives, a former patient, suicide attempts, manslaughter and

imprisonment.

4.2.1 The Body

This section seeks to illustrate how the body can impact upon how elderly consumers understandings of their meaningful lived experiences within residential care homes through discussions relating to hospitalisation, and a toe problem.

4.2.1.1 The Body*: Doreen's Hospitalisation*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Doreen's understandings of her lived experiences within Robinlew House through discussions relating to the experience of hospitalisation:

> ***D****: I was up at the infirmary doing the domestic work. I was working one day and I cut my finger, and I took ill. I couldnae keep my feet, and ma arms went all limp, and they took me in. They put me in ward four, I was only in ward four a couple of hours, no half an hour, and they took me away to the emergency room. I was completely paralyzed and I couldnae speak and they give me a tracheotomy and a breathing machine. I was in intensive care for about six weeks. **Interviewer***: How did you cope with that?* ***D****: Oh dear, I was sent to that big hospital in Edinburgh for therapy. You got intae the pool so that your arms and legs can move and that. Oh, it was a ugly place. I thought I would never get out [laughter], oh dear. **Interviewer***: How long where you in for?* ***D****: Och, I don't know I never took a note of it. Och, it*

was terrible. You try and move your legs and your arms. You'd scream and scream it was that sore trying to get them back to move. That was that.

Interviewer: Do you still have any problems? D: I'm no very good sometimes. So, there's always something. That was 1975.

The text under consideration reveals that Doreen's understanding of her lived experience within Robinlew House seemed to be mediated by an experiential link to a period of hospitalisation. As such this experiential link is framed within the cutting of a finger and the subsequent feelings of physical pain and emotional trauma that ensued. As such, these feelings of trauma can be seen within such phrases as; *"I cut my finger and took ill", "I couldnae keep my feet and my arms went all limp", "I was completely paralysed and I couldnae speak", "they gave me a tracheotomy and a breathing machine"* and *"I was in intensive care for about six weeks."* With Doreen's subsequent understanding of her recovery in mind, the passages under consideration are marked by phrases like – *"Och, it was terrible. You try and move your legs and your arms. You'd scream and scream. It was that sore trying to get them to move again"* and *"I thought I would never get out"* indicating that Doreen understood this portion of her life with a relative sense of incapacity and through feelings of trauma.

The preceding findings and interpretations indicate that Doreen's understands part of her everyday lived experiences within Robinlew House through her understandings of her experiences with illness and hospitalisation. To these ends, the notion merges whereby Doreen can be seen to exist within understandings that have been mediated by the

experience of illness and subsequent hospitalisation. However, this is not meant to imply that Doreen's understandings of such experiences are isolated within recollections of her life experiences. Rather, and as multiple readings of the following passages reveals, Doreen's understandings of trauma within Robinlew House can also emerge through disturbances outside of her room:

4.2.2 Noise

This section seeks to illustrate how instantiations of noise can impact upon how Doreen understands her lived experiences within Robinlew House through discussions relating to disturbances.

4.2.2.1 Noise: *Disturbances outside Doreen's Room*

Thee proceeding passage distils and illuminates Doreen's understandings of her lived experiences within Robinlew House through discussions relating to disturbances outside her room:

> **D:** *See this room, it has got a divider and they are talking and everything. It's an awful room. Monica gave me a chance a long long time ago to shift over to one of the rooms over there. I didn't like it. It wasnae like this. I mean, it was small.* **Interviewer:** *Do you get interrupted by noise often?* **D:** *Sometimes they stand by the door and talk some of them. They come along and go into that bathroom there. They have got bathrooms in their room*

that's the funny thing [laughter]. They open that door and, oh dear [laughter]. It looks frosty out there. **Interviewer***: Yes it is [Noise interruption – buzzing sound] what is that noise?* **D***: It must be somebody in the bath. They keep that buzzer in case someone needs help. They put you in the bath and go away and leave you to go to somebody else's room.* **Interviewer***: How often does the buzzer disturb you?* **D***: Not often. There has been some building work going on recently though. It goes on and on and on.* **Interviewer***: How much building work has been carried out?* **D***: No. It was the lady that died a fortnight ago. Her room, didnae have a window facing outside or something. So they are making a new window. Banging and banging and banging, putting this new window in. It's just a wee tiny room, no toilet or anything in it [Noise interruption from the bathroom] that's the chair being put up and down getting in to the bath.*

The dialogue under consideration identifies that Doreen understands part of her lived experiences within Robinlew House through various instantiations of noise in the form of; talking outside her room, a buzzing sound derived from someone pulling the help cord in the communal bathroom, the sound of the motorised chair that was used to get residents in and out of the bath and the sound of builders installing a window. Whilst it would be expected that these intrusive elements would enabled Doreen to understand her lived experiences through feelings of trauma it seems that Doreen had also accepted these elements were part of her day-to-day life understandings of her life within Robinlew House. This notion is given further credence when considered in the light that Doreen

had been given the opportunity to move to another albeit slightly smaller room but decided to remain in her room.

The preceding findings and interpretations indicate that Doreen understands part of her everyday lived experiences within a residential care homes through the trauma associated with the various disturbances outside her room. Whilst this can be seen to be a localized and traumatic event, Doreen also understood her life within Robinlew House through encounters with a more common phenomena – death.

4.2.3 Death

Various instantiations of death can be seen to influence elderly consumers understandings of their lives within residential care homes. These can be distilled into discussions relating to the death of friends, family, a former patient, suicide attempts and manslaughter and imprisonment.

4.2.3.1 Death: *The Death of Doreen's Friends*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Doreen's understandings of her lived experiences within Robinlew House through discussions relating to the death of her friends:

> *Interviewer: Why don't we start by talking about some of the things in your*
>
> *room. D: The wee tiger sitting there, that was Betty's, her that died. Och,*

months and months ago, she came along to my room, as she was about to

have a bath that night and asked for some soap, and I managed to do that.

She said that she would "Have to give me something for it." I said, "I don't

want anything," it was only a wee bar of soap. She came along and gave me

the tiger. I said, "I can't take that, that's far too much" [sad laughter]. It's

lovely.

The passage under consideration reveals that Doreen's *"wee tiger"* appears to provide her with a link that establishes an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) that consists of her dead friend Betty. Furthermore this link appears to suggest that this imagined community (Ibid.) is framed within the experience of Betty's bath night. Set within this lies Doreen's understanding of how she enabled her friend to have a bath by responding to Betty's request for some soap. Furthermore, the text reveals that, at some point after Betty finished having her bath, *"she came along"* and gave Doreen the tiger. The extent to which the link with the *"wee tiger"* and Doreen's imagined community (Ibid.) enables her to understand her lived experiences within Robinlew House is revealed through the notion that the wee tiger was the first thing that Doreen discussed within the interview. Seen in this light, the wee tiger could be interpreted as a means of bringing memories of the deceased to the foreground of Doreen's understanding of her lived experiences and as a means of establishing a connection with the departed in which memories of significant experiences with Betty can be relived. However, in describing the story of the *"wee tiger"* it became clear that whilst this object had the power to elicit these memories and to form a connection with

the dead this was not interpreted as a pleasant phenomenon. Rather, Doreen was visibly traumatised when describing the circumstances surrounding the exchange of the aforementioned objects despite describing the tiger as *"lovely."*

Furthermore, it emerged that Doreen's understandings of her life had also been influenced by the death of a further friend as the following passages indicates:

> *D: Willy just died a fortnight ago [tears], his funeral was a week past on Friday. He was ninety-one. I was at the funeral. They all seem to be getting cremated now. There was just the three of us there. Janey, Helen and me, just the three of us there. They had the cremation. They don't like to have the wreaths and that, so there was just three red flowers on the top of the coffin. So I got them, I just put them out yesterday. They lasted a long time. You used to be able to get roses that had a lovely smell. They don't seem to have any smell now [Doreen looks as if she is about to cry. Tape recorder turned off.]*

As the text indicates, Doreen's understandings of her lived experience had been influenced not only by the death of her friend Betty, but also by her friend Willy. As such, not only did Doreen's life world consist of such objects as the *"wee tiger"* and the imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) tie to her deceased friend Betty, it had also included memories of *"three red flowers"* that were on the top of Willy's funeral coffin. As such, the memory of these *"three red flowers"*

provides a link to further imagined community (Ibid.) that frames her memories of Willy and his death.   In addition, the text indicates that Doreen had compared the three flowers to memories of others and had concluded that the flowers had become meaningful in the light of the fact that they didn't smell as much as flowers used to and that the lack of smell seemed to enhance her understanding of Willy's traumatic death.

4.2.3.2 Death: *The Death of Doreen's Mother and Father*

The interview with Doreen subsequently moved on to discuss the role of country dancing within Doreen's life.   Set within this lie Doreen's descriptions suggest that her 'cultural pattern of trauma' also included the death of both of her parents:

> *Interviewer: When did you stop country dancing?* ***D:*** *Oh, I don't know. I think it was just after my father died, I think I stopped. It was nineteen eighty-four. Aye. Oh dear. I had my mother die in nineteen fifty-six. She was only sixty-one. I havenae got any brothers or sisters. She went into hospital with appendicitis, and erm, they said, the nurses, that she had come through it and she was fine, and this was on the Monday. On the Saturday morning there was a knock at ma door and a policeman came and got me out of ma bed. [incredulous tone] A policeman out of ma bed eh. He said, "Your mother's died." I said, "Eh?" Fancy getting woken up by a policeman, eh? Out of your bed [sighing and sad laughter].* ***Interviewer:*** *I imagine that must have been very difficult.* ***D:*** *My father was standing*

beside the policeman before the policeman spoke. He says, "Wake up your

mothers' dead"...my father. Just like that, oh dear. You still think of those

things, eh?

The passage under consideration reveals that Doreen is also part of an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) that consists of her deceased mother and father and a policeman. Furthermore this link between Doreen and these people is set within the experience of finding out about her mother's death and illustrates the depth of her feelings of trauma at the time of the interview. For example, the passage under discussion indicate that Doreen's understanding of the events surrounding the death of her mother extend to the feelings of incredulity that she experienced when describing how a policeman informed her of the circumstances surrounding the death of her mother. For example, the dialogue illustrates that she felt numb and shocked when the policeman told Doreen and her father that her mother had died in hospital. Moreover, Doreen emphasised the highly meaningful nature of the experience, by stating that *"[y]ou still think of those things, eh?"* in the light of such comments, Doreen understanding of this experience seems to be embedded within feelings of trauma.

4.2.3.3 Death: *The Death of one of Doreen's Former Patients*

The interview with Doreen subsequently moved on to discuss her experiences of nursing. Set within this lie Doreen's descriptions which suggest that her understandings of life had also be shaped by the death of a former patient:

D: I went away to nursing when I was seventeen, at Edinburgh City Hospital.
I lived in a nursing home, with a TV. I studied, but I never passed my exams
[laughter].   I was there for four year, and then went to Falkirk Royal
Infirmary. I never liked it. I didnae like it, hmm. I passed my first exam
there, the preliminary exam, I passed it. If you were a probationer you had
the pink dress on and then the next stage you had a blue dress. Maybe the
sister would be off duty and they would put you in charge, och, dear, dear. I
didn't like that at all, too early. One day this man took a stroke and died and
I was trying to get oxygen, and I couldnae get it, and oh dear. When the
sister came back she said, "It wasn't your fault at all". I says, "That's all
right then" [nervous laughter], and that was that. I didn't like it, I left after
two year.

The passage under consideration reveals that Doreen is also part of an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) that consisted of a nursing sister, and a former patient that had died whilst under her care. Furthermore this link between Doreen and these people is set within the experience of struggling to pass her preliminary exams to be a nurse, and working as a probationer in a *"pink dress"*, and being put in charge when the sister was off duty. As such, the text identifies that Doreen's understanding of this experience is grounded in trauma associated within one of her patients who experienced a stroke and died whilst Doreen was trying desperately to get some oxygen. Despite the sister dissolving her of any blame by saying *"It wasn't*

your fault" Doreen's understanding of these events led her to quit her job after two years and still seemed to bring about feelings of trauma at the time of the interview.

The findings and interpretations now move away from discussing Doreen's traumatic understandings of her life within Robinlew House to illuminating and distilling further meaningful emanations of death through Bill's repeated suicide attempts:

4.2.3.4 Death: *Bill's Attempted Suicide*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Bill's understandings of his lived experiences within Cedar View through discussions relating to his suicide attempts:

> **B***: I'm one of a family of thirteen and I've got two brothers and two sisters'*
>
> *left. The two brothers, one is in Australia and one is in New Zealand. I've*
>
> *been there three times. The last time I was there for eighteen months. It was a*
>
> *lovely place. I was living with my daughter then and, er, my daughter's*
>
> *husband. I done a damn silly thing while I was there. I thought I'm stuck,*
>
> *why am I staying here for so I tried to end my life. What did I do?*
>
> *Paracetamol, I took about thirty of them, and then I put a plastic bag and that*
>
> *over my head and lay down on the bed. I thought this is gonna be it. Do you*
>
> *know, it didn't make a scrap of difference, not a scrap. I lay there and I*
>
> *thought, oh I'm gonna give this up. I told my brother in-law about what I*
>
> *tried to do. He say, "Have you thought about what would have happened to*
>
> *me if you did do it?" I say, "I never gave it a thought, but I'm sorry, I'm still*

alive and I want to put things right." My daughter said to me, well I told him

not to tell my daughter but he did. She said, "I think you had better go back

home." I said, "There's no need for that." But, she insisted that I come back

here.

The text under consideration reveals that Bill's understanding of his lived experience within Cedar View seemed to be mediated by an experiential link to a community (Kozinets, 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; Belk and Arnould-Costa, 1998) of family members who live in New Zealand. At the time of the interview, Bill's understanding of this link was grounded in the shadow of his suicide attempt. Arguably, Bill's understandings of his suicide attempt is made meaningful through such a phrase as *"I thought I'm stuck, why am I staying here for so I tried to end my life."*, and through his recollections of the objects that he used to try to end his life – about thirty Paracetomols, a plastic bag, and a bed. To these ends, the specific experiential setting for these objects can be seen within the text of how Bill tried to end his life; *"What did I do? Paracetomol. I took about thirty of them, and then I put a plastic bag and that on my head and lay down on the bed. I thought this is gonna be it."* However, as Bill reveals within the text *"[d]o you know it didn't make a scrap of difference. Not a scrap. I lay there and I thought, oh I'm gonna give this up."* To this end, Bill's subsequent understanding of this experience reveals that his suicide attempt appears to have ripped apart some of the cherished familial memories, beliefs and attitudes that were formerly associated with his family's understandings of Bill to the extent that they insisted that he move back to the United Kingdom.

B: So I came back, and walked the usual rounds, and I was in the pitch and putt club then. I enjoyed that. I walked round and one of the members saw me, and she said to her husband, "I saw Bill today." He said, "You couldn't have done, he's in New Zealand."...Interviewer: Did you feel better in yourself when you came back to Britain? B: My friends were surprised to see me. The pitch and putt club had a social side so I got to know all them people, but I was fed up with life so I tried to commit suicide again. Nothing went right, nothing made a blinking difference at all. I didn't feel any different from when I started to when I finished.

The text indicates that, at the time of the interview, Bill's understandings of his lived experiences of moving back to the United Kingdom included memories of his experiences of socializing at the pitch and putt club. As such, despite the fact that Bill *"got to know all them people"* these experiences frame a further failed suicide attempt. As such, Bill's understanding of this experience is set within such a phrase as "[n]*othing went right, nothing made a blinking difference at all*" thereby indicating that Bill's understanding of his lived experiences within Cedar View were often set within feelings of trauma.

4.2.3.5 Death: *Bill's Experiences of Manslaughter and Imprisonment*

Set within the context of the interview Bill also claimed that he had faced death through the connected experiences of manslaughter and imprisonment as the following passage reveals:

B: One thing I haven't told you yet about my life is that I've been in prison. I bought a motorbike on hire purchase and I got involved in an accident. I was coming down the Dereham Road and I went past a bus. The lights of the bus shone out and there was a dark space underneath. I thought to myself, I don't know who is in that dark space. I went through that dark space and collided with another motorcycle. I spent about six or seven weeks in hospital up at the old Norfolk and Norwich and then I came out, and what happened then? Oh yeah, I got prosecuted. The police came after me and said "Manslaughter." So, I appeared before the judge and I thought I'm for it now. Anyway, they gave me what they called nine months in the second division. You got a mattress that was the only difference.

The text under consideration reveals that Bill's understanding of his lived experience within Cedar View also seemed to be mediated by an experiential link to a motorcycle accident in which he was charged with manslaughter and faced time in prison. At the time of the interview, Bill's understanding of this link was grounded in the experience of traveling *"down Dereham Road"* and going past a bus with its lights on. Or, to use Bill's words, "t]*he lights of the bus shone out and there was a dark space underneath. I thought to myself, I don't know who is in that dark space. I went through that dark space and collided with another motorcycle."* Despite the traumatic experience of being involved in a fatal accident and spending six or seven weeks in hospital Bill was subsequently charged with manslaughter. The extent to which Bill understood his lived

experiences is revealed in the text wherein he appeared before the judge, and *"thought, I'm for it now"* and *"they gave me nine months in the second division. You got a mattress. That was the only difference."* To these ends, Bill's understandings of life *"in the second division"* are revealed in the following extract:

> **B***: So anyway, I got there and they said to me, "So where we going to put you?" "Do you mind if I make a suggestion" I said. "No", he says "You've got to do as you are told." So anyway, they put me in the carpentry shop. He says to me "Now where did you want to go?" I says "There's no need to ask you've put me where I wanted to go." A lot of them want to go into the kitchen you see, there's plenty of food there. I got on well there. Any special jobs that came along, making this, making that, they came to me to make it. Anyway, they put a red band around my arm which meant I could walk anywhere in the prison. But, you know, I couldn't walk through a locked door. I had to wait for someone to unlock it. So anyway, I eventually got released and my brother went and met me at Thorpe station. It seemed strange to be back again, but I was back and carried on as normal.*

The additional text under consideration reveals that Bill's understanding of his lived experience within Cedar View also seemed to be mediated by an experiential link to a time in prison that occurred as a result of being charged with manslaughter. Set with this, the text gives the impression that any trauma that Bill may have felt in relation to this charge seems to have dissipated to the foreground of his life as he got to work in the

carpentry shop. Bill's understanding of these linkages can be seen within such text as *"[a]ny special jobs that came along, making this, making that, they came to me to make it. Anyway, they put a red band around my arm which meant I could walk anywhere in the prison.* As such, the text indicates that Bill understood his experiences of imprisonment, not through feelings of trauma, but rather, relative feelings of comfort.

4.2.4 Summary and Conclusion to the Section

An iterative reading (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) of section 4.2 enables the notion to emerge whereby elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes can be seen to be embedded not only within issues related to the body, noise and deaths, but also through such things (Levi-Strauss, 1966). Set within, and though, elderly consumers' understandings of residential care homes lie further global themes that can be disaggregated as; experiential links, disturbances and imagined communities (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991).   Embedded within and through these experiential links lie understandings of; cutting a finger, feeling limp, becoming paralysed and ending up in hospital; a suicide attempt and links to a community of family members in New Zealand; and a motorcycle accident, a manslaughter charge and time in prison. Furthermore, elderly consumers understandings of disturbances consist of instantiations of noise in the form of talking, a buzzing sound, a motorised chair and building work. In addition, elderly consumers understandings of imagined communities (Ibid.) can be seen to consist of; deceased friends, a dead mother and father, a nursing sister, and a deceased patient. Moreover, in the light of multiple iterative readings of the

interview extracts and the resultant interpretations a common pattern can be seen within and throughout this section – *cultures of trauma.* For example, with issues related to the body in mind, it can be argued that Doreen's understandings of her time in hospital were traumatic. Likewise, noise disturbances outside Doreen's room can also be interpreted to be traumatic.

The discussion of cultural patterns of meaning now moves on to delineate elderly consumers understandings of large items of furniture, small, hand-sized objects, mobility aids, quality of care, social interaction and further understandings of death.

4.3 Elderly Consumers Understandings of Large Items of Furniture, Small, Hand-Sized Objects, Mobility Aids, Quality of Care, Social Interaction and Death.

Set within elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes lie various things hat enable them to speak (Levi-Strauss, 1966) about their everyday lived experiences. These things can be seen (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) to take the shape of; Material objects in the form of large items of furniture such as a desk, and electric chair/bed; Mobility aids such as a wheelchair, an artificial leg and walking sticks; Small hand sized objects such as newspapers, magazines, books, photographs, pictures, flowers, drinks; Quality of care derived through owners, managers and carers; Social Interaction in the form of conversations, visiting friends and family, leisure trips; and death in the form of burial services and bereavement counseling. The following sections

illuminate and distil elderly consumers understandings of these elements of their lives within residential care homes.

4.3.1 Large Items of Furniture

This section seeks to describe and explain elderly consumers understandings of life within residential care homes through meaningful descriptions of material objects in the form of large items of furniture such as a desk, and electric chair/bed.

4.3.1.1 Large Items of Furniture: *Bill's Desk*

The following passage distils and illuminates Bill's understandings of a large item of furniture in the form of a desk that he kept within his room at Cedar View:

> **B**: *My mother died in 1929 and my father remarried with a large family. I knew the woman and she was a very nice lady. I got on well with her, very well with her. When she died, I attended her funeral and what have you. I had never done that sort of thing before. It was strange. You see that desk there? My father won that when he was in the cadets. My stepmother said, "You'd better have that." I've never seen another one like it.*

The passage under consideration reveals that Bill's desk appears to provide him with a link that establishes an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson,

1991) that consists of his deceased relatives, such as his mother, stepmother and presumably father. Furthermore this link to an imagined community (Ibid.) frames the intergenerational transfer of meaning associated with Bill's desk. As such, Bill spoke with great pride about how his father won this desk when he was in the cadets and the circumstances surrounding its disposition to Bill. To these ends, Bill also described the desk's features and benefits as the following extract reveals:

Interviewer: Do you keep anything in there? **B:** *I keep a little money in there. I've got a key here somewhere. I can't remember where I put things…[pause]…Now this opens the draw. [Sound of key in lock]* **Interviewer:** *Wow. That is absolutely amazing. It's beautiful.* **B:** *What's that? Oh, it's only an old bit of paper. You open that.* **Interviewer:** *[Referring to the in built calendar] Do you change that daily?* **B:** *I just push this.* **Interviewer:** *That's beautiful, absolutely beautiful…[sound of key in lock]…there's your key back.*

The preceding extract reveals that not only does Bill's desk provide him with a link to an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) that consists of his deceased mother, stepmother and presumably his father, it also has a functional use in the sense that it can be seen as a toolbox for everyday items such as *"a little amount of money"* and *"an old bit of paper"*.

4.3.1.2 Large Items of Furniture: *Rita's Electric Chair/Bed*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates Rita's understandings of a large item of furniture in the form of an electric chair/bed that she kept within her room at Robinlew House:

> **R**: *This is my own chair. It's an electric chair. You can make it into a bed if you want to. I got it here so that I can see the telly. It will go right back into a bed. Sometimes, if I'm up early in the morning, I come back and sit here. The legs come right out. I'm supposed to sit with my legs up [R demonstrates some of the features of the chair].* **Interviewer**: *Shall I move that basket away from your feet? [R continues demonstrating her chair]* **Interviewer**: *Wow that is something else.* **R**: *It can be quite a comfortable bed. My daughter was home from Hong Kong and I was in hospital and she says I'm going to get you an electric chair. So, she got it and brought her cheque book to pay for it. It was £700. Really, it's the best thing I've ever owned. It's so comfortable. You can't put it anywhere else if you want to see the television. The light shines the wrong way. I had it over there at first, but we decided we would try it here. I like it here.*

Multiple readings of the passage under consideration reveal that Rita's electric chair/bed appears to provide her with an experiential link to her daughter. Furthermore this link appears to have been established, and is framed within the experience of traveling from

Hong Kong to visit her mother. To this end, this experiential link seems to have been strengthened through the purchase and post-purchase consumption of the electric chair/bed. Moreover, given the prominent position of Rita's electric chair/bed within her room and that she described it as *"the best thing I've ever owned. It's so comfortable"* indicates that Rita's understandings of her electric/chair enable her to experience physical comfort through sitting in her chair and emotional comfort through the experiential link with her daughter.

Whilst Bill and Rita understood their everyday lived experiences through large items of furniture within residential care homes this was a relatively rare phenomena within the context of this research project. Rather, and as the following extracts reveal, elderly consumers often understood their lives through relatively small, hand sized objects:

4.3.2 Small, Hand-Sized Objects

This section seeks to interpret elderly consumers understandings of life within residential care homes through descriptions of small, hand-sized objects in the form of a Telegraph newspaper, books, photographs, artificial flowers, funeral flowers and whisky & lemonade.

4.3.2.1 Small, Hand-Sized Objects: *George's Telegraph Newspaper*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates George's understandings of small, hand sized objects in the form of a Telegraph newspaper:

*G: I still read my Telegraph from cover to cover. I try to keep up to date with business, sport, and all the rest of it, you see. You've got to. The trouble is old people tend to relax and not do anything, which is a tragedy. I try to stimulate these old boys but I can't get anywhere. There are one or two ladies that I talk to, and I stimulate them a bit, and I get a bit out of it, I get a response. **Interviewer**: How often do you read The Telegraph? **G**: Seven days a week. I like the Telegraph because I can cover the sport, I can cover the markets, I check the markets everyday. This is the way you keep alive isn't it?*

The passage under consideration reveals that George's Telegraph newspaper appears to provide him with a tentative link to a desired community that consists of his fellow residents within Cedar View. As such, the text reveals that George uses his Telegraph newspaper in an attempt to establish a link with this desired community (Kozinets, 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; Belk and Arnould-Costa, 1998). In particular, it seems as if George reads the sport and markets sections of the Telegraph on a daily basis and then attempts to use his understandings of these reports to integrate himself into his desired community (Ibid.) by trying to *"stimulate these old boys"* and talk to one or two ladies. To these ends, it appears as if George has achieved some form of integration into his desired community (Ibid.), as he claimed that he gets *"a response."* Moreover, the importance of the link between George and his Telegraph newspaper is revealed through the phrase *"[t]his is the way you keep alive isn't it?"* Seen in this light, George's

understanding of his newspaper seems to take the form of feelings of comfort that enable him to direct his thoughts, and those of others, away from issues of mortality.

4.3.2.2 Small, Hand-Sized Objects: *Doreen's Books*

Similarly, Doreen also appeared to understand her lived experiences through small, hand sized objects in the form of reading material:

> **D***: I get a lot of books from the library.* **Interviewer***: What sort of books do you like to read?* **D***: Doctors and nurses' romances, and murder. Years ago I used to like autobiographies. I used to like them…***Interviewer***: How do you obtain your books?* **D***: They put them in a thingame downstairs. They come around every so often. I don't know how long it is. They take all the old books away and put new ones in. If you want anything special, you just ask for it.* **Interviewer***: Do you read much?* **D***: Every night. For a while there I had twelve books from the library and I had read them all.*

The passage under scrutiny seems to suggest that Doreen's understanding of reading books has evolved beyond reading autobiographies to reading about *"[d]octor's and nurses, romances and murder."* Furthermore, the extent to which Doreen understands these lived experiences can be seen within such a phrase as; *"[I read] every night. For a while there I had twelve books from the library and I had read them all."* Seen in this way Doreen's extract reveals that her interaction with such library books may provide her with a link to fictional communities that consist of doctors, nurses, romantic couples, and

murderers and that these fictional communities enable her experience feelings of comfort within Robinlew House.

4.3.2.3 Small, Hand-Sized Objects: *Doreen's Photographs*

The proceeding passage further distils and illuminates Doreen's understandings of small, hand sized objects in the form of photographs:

> *D: Have you seen all the photographs up there?* **Interviewer***: Tell me about them.* **D***: Up there, that's my mother and aunt, and my father. I was never married. My father, that's my father and me there. My dad, and that was taken at Portabella [laughter]. That's me and ma dad again, not my dad my partner. That's Betty there, Betty that died. That is her niece, Betty's niece Carol. This is Harry, he used to be a resident before he died. This was taken two Christmas's ago. We had a party at, er, a big place in, I cannae remember the name of it. I keep forgetting things. There were all different homes there and we had a lovely dinner, and dancing, and drink and everything.* **Interviewer***: It looks as if you are enjoying yourself.* **D***: When you have your photograph taken you try to smile [laughter], oh dear [pause]. That one was taken with the wee dog. One of the residents, she brought the wee dog in. She was taking photographs one day and I said "Can I get him on ma lap?" She said "Yes." Muffin he was called [laughter]. He was a lovely wee dog.*

The passage under consideration reveals that Doreen's photographs appears to provide her with a visual link that establishes an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) that consists of; relatives such as, her mother, father, partner and aunt; deceased friends such as Harry and Betty, and Betty's niece Carol; and animals, such as Muffin the dog. Furthermore this link between Doreen's photographs and an imagined community (Ibid.) seems to enable Doreen to relive certain occasions in which she interacted with her father at Portabella, with Harry and a Christmas party that included interaction with the residents of other residential care homes, "*a lovely dinner, and dancing, and drink and everything.*" Moreover, the link between Doreen and her photographs can be seen to enable her to continue her relationship with relatives, friends, and animals within her imagined community and to subsequently enable her to laugh and derive comfort from their continued presence within her room.

4.3.2.4 Small, Hand-Sized Objects: *Lottie's Artificial Flowers*

The notion that small hand sized objects can preserve personal ties is also evident in the following passage that describes the comforting presence of artificial flowers in Lottie's life-world.

> **L***: Those artificial flowers where given to me by two friends and that's two years ago. So I have had my flowers a long time. More will be coming at Christmas so I'm afraid I will have to part with them and give them to somebody else. People say don't just give them away as they have memories too.* **Interviewer***: What sort of memories?* **L***: Of the people who gave them*

*to me…**Interviewer**: Tell me a little bit more about the people who bought you the flowers. **L**: If it wasn't the people who gave me the flowers it would be their fathers and mothers who gave them. Or, it was their fathers and mothers who were my friends and then passed it on to their young people and all those stories belong to me.*

The passage under consideration reveals that Lottie's artificial flowers appear to provide her with an experiential link that connects her to two friends and their fathers and mothers. Furthermore this link between Lottie's flowers and other people can be seen to frame *"all those stories"* that Lottie associates with these people. However, it seems as if this experiential link is likely to have a relatively short life span, as Lottie claimed that she was going to *"part with [the artificial flowers] and give them to somebody else"* as she was expecting more flowers around Christmas time.   Moreover, the link between Lottie and her artificial flowers can be seen to objectify the subsequent link between Lottie and her friends and their mothers and fathers and to subsequently enable her to derive comfort from their presence within her room.

4.3.2.5 Small, Hand-Sized Objects: *Doreen's Flowers from a Funeral*

The proceeding passage further distils and illuminates Doreen's understandings of small, hand sized objects in the form of flowers from a funeral:

D: Willy just died a fortnight ago [tears], his funeral was a week past on Friday. He was ninety-one. He had been in bed for a long, long time. I was

at the funeral. They all seem to be getting cremated now. There was just the

three of us there. Janey, Helen and me, just the three of us there. They had

the cremation. They don't like to have the wreaths and that, so there was just

three red flowers on the top of the coffin. So I got them, I just put them out

yesterday. They lasted a long time. You used to be able to get roses that had

a lovely smell. They don't seem to have any smell now.

The passage under consideration reveals that Doreen's understanding of her flowers appears to provide her with an experiential link with Willy (a recently deceased resident of Robinlew House), and Janey and Helen. Furthermore, this link can be seen to frame Doreen's understanding of the cremation, and especially the observation that *"[t]hey don't like to have the wreaths and that, so there was just three red flowers on the top of the coffin."* The extent to which this experiential link enabled Doreen to understand this part of her life is revealed through Doreen's understanding of her flowers seemed to be based on the notion that while they had lasted a long time, they lacked any real sense of smell. However, the experience of caring for the three flowers may have comforted Doreen whilst she was experiencing bereavement.

4.3.2.6 Small, Hand-Sized Objects: *Doreen's Whisky and Lemonade.*

The proceeding passage further distils and illuminates Doreen's understandings of small, hand sized objects in the form of whisky and lemonade:

*D: I like ma whisky and lemonade. **Interviewer**: What type of whisky do you drink? **D**: Bells sometimes and what's the other one? Famous Grouse and Crawford's. I try them all. I got one the other day. What was it? Monica and Willy and me went into Stirling to do some shopping and went into this shop on King Street. They had Glenclova. I had never heard of it. Never heard of Glenclova. That was nice. **Interviewer**: Since I've been in Scotland I have come to appreciate whisky. I have tried a few but I haven't heard of Glenclova. **D**: I couldn't drink it straight. Do you drink it straight? **Interviewer**: Normally with a touch of water. **D**: I have one every night. One whisky every night.*

The passage under consideration reveals that Doreen's consumption of whisky and lemonade enables her to establish an experiential link that consists of memories of Doreen, Monica and Willy. Furthermore, this link appears to have been established and/or strengthened on a shopping trip to Stirling wherein Doreen purchased a bottle of *"Glenclova"* whisky. To this end, Doreen claimed that this brand of whisky was *"nice"*. Moreover, in general terms, the text gives the impression that Doreen enhances her understanding of her lived experiences within Robinlew House by consuming a variety of different whiskies, and by drinking a glass of whisky and lemonade every night. As such, the notion emerges whereby Doreen's bottles of whisky and lemonade seem to have a relatively short life-span and subsequently need to be replenished on a regular basis in order to ensure the continuity of meaning.

As the preceding findings and interpretations highlight, George, Doreen and Lottie understood their everyday lived experiences through objects that were relatively, small and hand sized. Furthermore, an iterative reading of these findings and interpretations enables the proposition to be forwarded whereby these objects can be seen to provide a comforting presence within elderly consumer rooms within Cedar View and Robinlew House. In addition, and embedded within the following extracts, lie descriptions of objects that enable elderly consumers to understand their lives out-with their rooms through the use of various mobility aids:

4.3.3 Mobility Aids

Whilst Bill and Rita's large items of furniture enabled them to derive a comfortable existence within their respective residential care homes the following passages identify that mobility aids also play a role in enabling elderly consumers to understand their everyday lived experiences as the following extracts reveal

4.3.3.1 Mobility Aids: *Bill's Zimmer Frame and Wheelchair*

The proceeding passage further distils and illuminates Bill's understandings of his lived experience within Cedar View through a description of his Zimmer frame and wheelchair:

B: When I first came here I got up myself, but not now, I can't. I used to get

up pretty early and go for a walk. I used to meet some of the early workers

coming in, and they used to say, "What are you doing here?" I used to say,

"I'm just going for a walk." But once I found I couldn't walk I got that

frame. I hadn't had that for long before they put me in that chair – I operate

it myself, which I do.

The preceding extract reveals that Bill's understandings of his lived experience within

Cedar View appear to be mediated by his Zimmer frame and wheelchair. Furthermore,

this link between Bill and his Zimmer frame and wheelchair seems to enable him to relive

a time before these objects existed within his life. Bill's understandings of this time can

be seen within such phrases as: "*When I first came here I got up myself, but not now, I*

can't. I used to get up pretty early and go for a walk. I used to meet some of the early

workers coming in, and they used to say, "What are you doing here?" I used to say,

"I'm just going for a walk." This suggests that Bill's understandings of his life within

Cedar View appear to be based within feelings of independence, and that these can be

seen to thread the text together to the extent that Bill's subsequent understanding of his

life seems to revolve around being able to independently operate his wheelchair.

4.3.3.2 Mobility Aids: *George's Artificial Leg, Two Walking Sticks and a Wheelchair*

The proceeding passage distils and illuminates George's understandings of mobility aids

in the form of an artificial leg and wheelchair:

*G: This is an artificial leg [demonstrates by pointing toward left leg, clenches fist and knocks on leg]. I've carried an artificial leg all my life. **Interviewer**: Really? **G**: Yes [laughing]. I drove through Austria and Italy and all sorts during the war [laughing]... **Interviewer**: So how long have you had your artificial leg? **G**: 1932. Motorcycling. I tell you the most interesting thing, when I went into casualty one of the nurses said, "He's one of our blood donors". Of course, in those days, there was no blood bank, it was more or less on a one to one basis. They used to ring me up sometimes at home, and I would say "Ah, you want some blood, alright." I would get on my motorbike, and off I would go. **Interviewer**: How did you feel when you lost your leg? **G**: Well, it was a damn nuisance. My surgeon, who took my leg off, he refused to allow me to use crutches. He said, "You've got to learn to walk on two sticks, you'll learn to get balance," and of course it was absolutely true. Now of course this leg is getting dodgy and I can't rely on this one, so I have to be terribly, terribly careful.*

The passage under consideration reveals that George's artificial leg and walking sticks appear to provide him with an experiential link that establishes an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) that consists of nurses and a surgeon. Furthermore this link appears to frame George's understanding of this imagined community (Ibid.) to the extent that he was able to comfortably relive the events surrounding the donation of blood, his motorcycle accident and subsequent recovery. As

such, the text gives the impression that George had trouble coming to terms with the loss of his leg and that his surgeon has helped him to come to terms with his loss by refusing to let George use crutches. George's understandings of this experience indicate that; "[w]*ell, it was a damn nuisance. My surgeon, who took my leg off, he refused to allow me to use crutches. He said, "You've got to learn to walk on two sticks, you'll learn to get balance," and of course it was absolutely true."* However, in the intervening period, as the following extract reveals, George had also experienced problems with his other leg:

G: Up here, in this leg. This leg is a problem; there is some problem with it. So, I can't walk very, I can walk a little way with two sticks, but I can't walk too far. As I say, I try to walk but sometimes I have to take the chair, which is quite helpful. **Interviewer:** *Is that your chair?* **G:** *I took the footrest off because they took up such a lot of room. I can manage without. Actually, erm, it's a little bit hard going with the arms you know. But, as I say I use it as a zimmer to go round to one of the other rooms, yes. I manage to keep active, that's the thing.*

With this extract in mind, it emerged that George's understandings of his lived experience within Cedar View were mediated by two walking sticks and a wheelchair. As such, the text gives the impression that George can no longer comfortably navigate his life world, and that he was becoming more reliant on his walking sticks and wheelchair. Threaded through these discussions it appears as if George's understandings of his life revolve around the comforting notion of keeping *"active"*. By virtue, the text suggests, that

George's understanding of keeping *"active"* has taken the form of customizing his wheelchair by removing the footrests in an attempt to make it *"less hard going with the arms."* By virtue, the text reveals that George's subsequent understandings of his wheelchair are more in keeping with viewing *"it as a Zimmer to go round to one of the other rooms."*

With an iterative reading of the preceding findings and interpretations in mind, the notion emerges whereby elderly consumers can be seen to understand their lives through the use of various mobility aids that enable them to go for *"a walk"* and *"keep active"*. To these ends, circular reading of the following passages enables a deeper understanding of the emerging discussions within this section to emerge by examining how other people (owners, managers and carers employed by residential care homes) attempt to provide quality care:

4.3.4 Quality of Care

This section seeks to further illuminate and distil elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes that relates to the quality of care within Robinlew House and Cedar View. To these ends, quality of care will be distilled to include discussions relating to owners and mangers, and staff.

4.3.4.1 Quality of Care: Doreen and Violet's Interaction with the Owners of Robinlew House

The proceeding passages further distil and illuminate Doreen and Violet's understandings of the quality of care within Robinlew House through their interaction with the owners of this residential care home:

> ***D****: Monica and Grant [owners of Robinlew House], you know they've got their boat up at Largs, and, er, one day Monica, she said she found a teddy bear on the ground, lying on the ground. She took it in and washed it, and I don't know if she put it in the boat, she put it somewhere. She was looking for a home for it and gave it to me.*

> ***V:**** Monica and Grant [Robinlew House owners] are awfully good those two, very, very good. She owns the place but she can turn her hand to anything at all, making beds, washing floors, the kitchen, everything. There is very few folk who can do that, they get other folk to do it. She has, but then she can take the pace, and Grant's wonderful too. The new regulations from the government came through on the first of July and if it hadn't been for Grant and Monica I don't know what I would have done. Of course, first of all, the papers were lost, and two or three times they had to send them to me. They see to everything that way. We are very lucky to have them.*

In the light of the preceding passages it can be seen that, for Doreen and Violet, their understandings of their lived experiences within Robinlew House, are mediated by Grant and Monica. To these ends, Doreen, Violet, Monica and Grant can be seen as part of an institutional community wherein Monica and Grant can be seen to strengthen these bonds by giving Doreen a teddy bear, and through Violet's observation that Monica can *"turn her hand to anything at all. Making beds, washing floors, the kitchen, everything."* Furthermore, Violet also indicated that Grant was associated with the quality of care that she received in that he had helped her to understand the new rules and regulations regarding her stay in Robinlew House. The extent to which Grant and Monica play an important role within the aforementioned institution community is revealed through Violet's comments that *"Grant's wonderful", "if it hadn't been for Monica and Grant I don't know what I would have done"*, and *"we are very lucky to have them."* As such, and in the light of the preceding comments, the interpretation emerges whereby it appears as if Doreen's and Violet's interactions with Monica and Grant enable them to understandings of lived experience to be grounded within feelings of comfort.

4.3.4.2 Quality of Care: George's Interaction with the Manager of Cedar View.

The proceeding passage illuminates George's understandings of the quality of care within Cedar View through his interaction with the manager of this residential care home:

> *[Knock on door]* **Female***: [The Manager of Cedar View enters the room]*
> *Hello, how are you getting on Tim [the interviewer]? Are you alright?* **G***:*

*Come in my dear. **Female**: [To the interviewer] I've been so busy, I'm sorry, I had to leave you. **G**: You were bright and early this morning. **Female**: Yes, I have to be on a Monday morning. **G**: My dear friend here [referring to the interviewer], I don't know why he is putting up with me. **Female**: Well, I've just come to see where he was. I thought I haven't seen him for ages. Are you getting on OK? **Interviewer**: Yes, wonderful thanks. **Female**: OK. All right then. **G**: Thank you Anne dear. **Female**: That's all right. **G**: She is a lovely person. She was here at a quarter to eight this morning. **Interviewer**: I have spoken to Anne two or three times on the phone, very helpful, very nice. **G**: Oh absolutely. Of course, there are the reports they have to write as well. Everything is logged. Anything that happens to you is all logged meticulously.*

In the light of the preceding passage it can be seen that George's understandings of his lived experiences within Cedar View are partly mediated by Anne. To these ends, Anne can be seen as part of an institutional community wherein she can be seen to strengthen these bonds by working hard and by writing reports. As George commented "*[e]verything is logged. Anything that happens to you is all logged meticulously.* The extent to which Anne plays an important role within the aforementioned institution community is revealed through George's comment that *"She is a lovely person."*

As a consequence of Doreen's, Violet's and George's description the notion could be forwarded whereby the accepted standards of care adhered to by the owners of Robinlew

House and the manager of Cedar View are vitally important in maintaining elderly consumers everyday lived experiences within residential care homes. By virtue, the notion emerges whereby the majority of elderly consumers seem to appreciate, or be comforted, by these leaders of institutional communities.

4.3.4.3 Quality of Care: *Harry and Doreen's Experiences of Carers Employed by Robinlew House.*

Whilst Doreen, Violet and George were comforted by the leaders of institutional communities Harry and Doreen were able to partly understand their lived experiences within Robinlew House through their respective experiences of carers:

> *H: My first job is to get to know the permanent staff here. Only last night, about ten o'clock, one of the staff came and said, "Would you like a sleeping pill tonight?" I said, "No I don't think I will need one, although perhaps it will be quite a good thing." So, he came back and gave me a sleeping pill, and I had a very good nights sleep. But, that's one of the things that is coming, this close association with the staff. They are marvelous, I must say. They are so considerate. There are a few people here who are very disabled, and to see them at work, and the trouble they take makes you feel as if you are heading the same way yourself, and that you will probably be glad of all this assistance given to you as given to them.*

D: One of the carers, Kirsty, is a serious Joe Longthorne fan, she goes to all his shows and to Blackpool and all around and everything. Betty that died, she went to see him once with Kirsty. I said, "Oh I like him", and Kirsty gave me a photograph.

In the light of the preceding passages it can be seen that, for Harry and Doreen, their understandings of their lived experiences within Robinlew House, are mediated by carers and objects in the form of Harry's sleeping pill and Doreen's photograph. To these ends, Harry and Doreen, and the carers can be seen as part of an institutional community that is strengthened through Harry and Doreen's understandings of the carers and the small hand sized objects identified within the text. As such, the link between the carers and Harry 's understanding of his life within Robinlew House can be seen within the following extract; "[t]*hey are marvelous, I must say. They are so considerate. There are a few people here who are very disabled, and to see them at work, and the trouble they take makes you feel as if you are heading the same way yourself, and that you will probably be glad of all this assistance given to you as given to them."* In the light of such comments, Harry's, and perhaps to a slightly lesser extent, Doreen's understandings of the carers employed by Robinlew House can be seen to enable feeling of comfort to merge within their respective life-worlds.

4.3.4.4 Quality of Care: *Violet's Experiences of Carers Employed by Robinlew House.*

The proceeding passage illuminates Violet's understandings of the quality of care through her experiences of the carers employed by Robinlew House:

V: So I came here and it's just been wonderful. I got the chance, a very good chance coming here. I couldnae have got any better. The staff are excellent too. They are very good and very cheerful…Another thing that is good round here is that the cook comes round daily to find if you enjoyed your meal. He tries to please everybody; you'd expect that.

In the light of the preceding passage it can be seen Violet's understandings of her lived experiences within Robinlew House, are mediated by the *"excellent"* carers and the cook. To these ends, Violet's understandings of her lived experiences can be seen to be part of an institutional community. As such, this link between the carer, the cook and Violet can be seen in the following mini vignette; "*[t]he staff are excellent too. They are very good and very cheerful…Another thing that is good round here is that the cook comes round daily to find if you enjoyed your meal. He tries to please everybody; you'd expect that.*" In the light of such comments, Violet's understandings of the carer and cook employed by Robinlew House can be seen to enable feeling of comfort to merge within her life-world.

With an hermeneutic understanding of the preceding findings and interpretations in mind, the notion emerges whereby elderly consumers can be seen to understand their lives through their interaction with the owners, managers and staff employed by Robinlew House and Cedar View. Furthermore, circular reading of the following passages enables

a deeper understanding of how elderly consumers understand their social interactions with people other than those employed by residential care homes.

4.3.5 Social Interaction

This section seeks to further illuminate and distil elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes that relates to social interaction within Robinlew House and Cedar View. To these ends, social interaction will be disaggregated into discussions relating to; the researcher, friends, family and a partially deaf friends.

4.3.5.1 Social Interaction: *Doreen's Conversation with the Researcher*

The proceeding passage illuminates Doreen's understandings of social interaction in the form of a conversation with the researcher:

> **D**: *Well we've had a long talk. I didn't think I would be able to talk at all. Betty was the only one I really used to talk to. The rest of them you couldnae get a conversation out of them [laughter].*

For Doreen, it appeared as if her social interaction with the researcher, as opposed to most of her fellow residents, enabled her to understand her lived experiences within Robinlew House at the time of the interview. As such, this link between Doreen and the researcher seemed to be a comforting experience as she comments, *"I didn't think I*

would be able to talk at all. Betty was the only one I really used to talk to. The rest of them you couldnae get a conversation out of them.

4.3.5.2 Social Interaction: *George's Social Interaction with Friends*

The proceeding passage illuminates George's understandings of social interaction in the form of interaction with friends:

> *G: I've got some dear Bristol friends who keep in touch with me and let me know what's going on. I had a lovely surprise the other day. I had gone round and I was sitting in the reception area and, "George, there is a lady asking for you", I recognised her face, she was from St Peters, and we talked about people who were in the church. It was a wonderful thrilling experience... I keep in touch with the fellowship group. I write to one of them, so they know what's going on, yes.* **Interviewer***: So do they write to you very often?* **G***: Margaret, one of the members, has been to see me once or twice. She was coming regularly. She had a daughter who lived about ten miles away, and, er, I always remember the second Christmas I was here, she was sorry that her daughter was no longer well enough to drive to see me. Now her daughter has died, so Margaret doesn't come. But Margaret keeps in touch with the telephone. I keep in touch with old friends, which is very nice.*

The passage under consideration reveals that George is part of a community of friends that include people who live in Bristol, a lady from St Peter's and Margaret. Furthermore this link between George and his friends is set within experiences of; sitting in the reception area of Cedar View and the visit of Margaret. With this latter experience in mind, it emerged that the nature of this had changed in the light of the death of Margaret's daughter who used to transport her mother so that she could visit George. In the shadow of this, it became apparent that George and Margaret's social interaction now took place with the aid of a telephone. The extent to which George appears comforted by this, and other friendships, is illustrated in such phrases as: *"[i]t was a wonderfully thrilling experience"* and *"I keep in touch with old friends, which is very nice."*

4.3.5.3 Social Interaction: *Rita's Interaction with Family*

The following extract reveals that, unlike George, Rita derives social interaction through her family:

> **R***: My daughter has just moved down to Shrewsbury this week. She came home from Hong Kong. She was 25 years in Hong Kong. She's just retired and bought a house in Shrewsbury. She was here last week.* **Interviewer***: How long was she here for?* **R***: Twelve days. Her brother was here as well.* **Interviewer***: What did you do when they were here?* **R***: We went out for a few meals. We went to Stirling, shopping.* **Interviewer***: Where did you go*

*out for a meal? **R***: *We went to Bridge of Allan. **Interviewer***: *Anywhere in particular? **R***: *We went to Clive Ramsey's.*

The passage under consideration reveals that Rita part of a community of family members that include her daughter and son. Furthermore this link between Rita and her next of kin is set within experiences of; shopping in Stirling and going to Bridge of Allan for a meal in Clive Ramsey's. The extent to which Rita understands her lived experiences through her interactions with her friend in Robinlew House is also revealed in the following extract:

> **Interviewer***: Who are the people that you have become friendly with in here?*
> **R***: Well, a lady that used to live in Dunblane. I used to live in Dunblane.*
> **Interviewer***:   What's her name?   **R***:   Miss Jeffries (name changed).*
> **Interviewer***: Oh, Lottie Jeffries. **R***: Yeah. The only trouble is she is so deaf its quite hard entertaining her because I've got a low voice and she doesn't hear a word I say [laughs]. She, erm, is quite deaf. She is a nice lady though. I just tell her to come down if she needs any company.*

The passage under consideration reveals that Rita is part of a small community that consists of Lottie. Furthermore this link between Rita and Lottie is set within Rita's room. Whilst Rita laughing admitted that "[t]*he only trouble is she is so deaf its quite hard entertaining her because I've got a low voice and she doesn't hear a word I say.*

She, erm, is quite deaf."   The text indicates that Rita seems comforted by these experiences as she described Lottie as a *"nice lady."*

With an hermeneutic understanding of the preceding findings and interpretations in mind, the notion emerges whereby elderly consumers can be seen to understand their lives through their interaction with a researcher, friends and family.   Furthermore, circular reading of some of the following passages enables a deeper understanding of how some elderly consumers understand their interactions with imagined communities (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) through meaningful encounters with death..

4.3.6 Death

This section seeks to describe and explain elderly consumers understandings of everyday lived experiences within residential care homes through descriptions of death in the form of experiences of burial services and bereavement counseling.

4.3.6.1 Death: *George's Experiences of Conducting Burial Services*

The following extract moves away from the preceding discussion by outlining how George understood his lived experiences within Cedar View through recollections of burial services and bereavement counseling:

G: "I've worked with a lot of very interesting people. I was a rector for over forty years. I used to take my services and even bury people. I always remember my great nephew at the christening, he said "Uncle George can bury people but he can't christen them [laughter]." I couldn't perform a sacrament you see, but I buried quite a lot of people. **Interviewer***: Did you bury people for many years?* **G***: I retired at sixty-five you see, and I was heavily involved with the church, and, erm, and very often when one of our old people died the vicar said "George, this is one yours, you've been their minister, I haven't, and so you must bury them" [laughter].* **Interviewer***: How did you feel when you buried people?* **G***: I was so happy. I rendered their last service, you see.*

The text under consideration reveals that George's understanding of his lived experience within Cedar View seemed to be mediated by his experiences as working as a church rector. As such, these experiences depicted within the text highlight that George was part of an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) that included his great nephew and a vicar. Furthermore, this link between George and his experiences as a rector seems to enable him to relive his *"heavy involvement with the church"* through descriptions relating to burial services. To these ends, George's understanding of his life world is revealed within such statements as; *"I retired a sixty-five you see, and I was heavily involved with the church, and, erm, and very often when one of our old people died the vicar said "George, this is one yours, you've been their minister, I haven't, and so you must bury them" and "I was so happy. I rendered their*

last service, you see." Moreover, the link between George and his experiences as a church rector can be seen to frame the link between George and his imagined community (Ibid.) and to subsequently enable him to derive comfort through reliving this experience.

4.3.6.2 Death: *George's Experiences of Bereavement Counseling*

Whilst George derived comfort from reliving his experiences of burial services, he also understood his lived experiences within Robinlew House through recollections of bereavement counseling as the following extract identifies:

> **G***: Oh, one rather interesting case I had, he was in his forties and lost his wife, tragically you see and he couldn't do anything. I said, "Bill I think you remember from our early days when you and your wife decided to change your car?" He said "yes." "Well" I said, "why haven't you done so?" "Well" he said, "there is no point is there?" I said, "Bill, you and your wife were going to have a new car". "Now" I said, "you go and change and get the car that you and your wife were going to buy," and do you know that lifted the latch. It sounds stupid but it just broke the bereavement. It's a difficult job dealing with bereavement, isn't it?*

The text under consideration further reveals that George's understanding of his lived experience within Cedar View seemed to be mediated by his experiences as working as a bereavement counselor. As such, these experiences depicted within the text highlight that

George was part of an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) that included Bill and his deceased wife. Furthermore, this link between George and his experiences of bereavement counseling seems to enable him to relive *"one rather interesting case"*. To these ends, George's understanding of his life world is revealed through the story relating to how George helped Bill to come to terms with the death of his wife. By virtue, the notion emerges whereby George encouraged Bill to purchase a car that he and his wife were going to buy, and that this act of consumption *"lifted the latch"* and *"broke the bereavement"*. Whilst George admitted that *"[i]t's a difficult job dealing with bereavement"* the link between George and his experiences as a bereavement counselor can be seen to frame the link between George and his imagined community and to subsequently enable him to derive comfort through reliving this experience.

4.3.6.3 Death: *George's Experiences of Attempted Bereavement Counseling*

However, as the following extract identifies, George's offer to help people come to terms with bereavement can also be rejected:

> **G**: *The vicar, we had had a burial and the vicar said "go and visit this old chap," so I did this for two or three times, eventually I received a letter saying "Thank you, I've decided that I don't want you to come again, I'm not interested in religion". He died a week after [laughter]. Oh dear. I've enjoyed working with other people very much. But I miss them very much.*

The text under consideration reveals that George's understanding of his lived experience within Cedar View seemed to be further mediated by his experiences as working as a bereavement counselor. As such, these experiences depicted within the preceding extract highlight that George was also part of an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) that included a vicar, and an old chap. Furthermore, this link between George and his experiences as a bereavement counselor seems to enable him to relive an interesting counter point to the previous example. As such, George's understanding of his life world is revealed within such statements as; *"I've enjoyed working with other people very much."* Moreover, the link between George and his experiences as a bereavement counselor can be seen to frame the link between George and his imagined community (Ibid.) and to subsequently enable him to derive comfort through reliving this experience.

4.3.7 Summary and Conclusion to the Section

An iterative reading (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) of Section 4.3 enables the notion to emerge whereby elderly consumers understandings of residential care homes can be seen to be embedded not only within issues related to large items of furniture, small, hand-sized objects, mobility aids, quality of care, social interaction and death, but also through such things (Levi-Strauss, 1966). Set within, and through these issues lie further understandings of imagined communities (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991), experiential links, desired communities (Kozinets, 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; Belk and Arould-Costa, 1998), fictional communities, and institutional

communities. Embedded within and through these imagined communities (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) lie; a deceased mother, stepmother and father; a deceased mother, father, aunt, partner and a dog; nurses and doctors, a leg operation and blood donation. In addition, set within and through understandings of experiential links reside; a daughters visit, the purchase of an electric chair/bed and a favourable post-purchase evaluation; some funeral flowers, a deceased resident and two carers; whisky and lemonade, the owner of Robinlew House, a deceased friend and a shopping trip; and a Zimmer frame and a wheelchair and memories of walks and meetings with staff. Furthermore, set within and through elderly consumers' understandings of desired communities (Kozinets, 2002; Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001; Belk and Arnould-Costa, 1998) lie patterns of meaning that consist of a Telegraph newspaper, reports of sport and the markets and a desire to stimulate fellow residents. Plus, understandings of fictional communities within and through the reading of books such as doctors and nurses, romantic couples and murderers. In addition, understandings of institutional communities consist of; owners; managers; and staff. Moreover, in the light of multiple iterative readings of the interview extracts and the resultant interpretations a common pattern can be seen within and throughout this section – *cultures of comfort*. For example, with understandings of large items of furniture in mind, it can be argued that Bill is comforted by the desk in his room and the links that it provides him to his imagined community. Alternatively, with understandings of death in mind, it can be argued that George is comforted by his experiences of burial services and bereavement counseling as these enable him connect with an imagined community (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991).

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Signposts for Consumer and Marketing Research

5.0 Chapter Summary

Within this chapter, the global themes (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) of cultures of dependency, trauma and comfort identified within Chapter Four will be carried forward within discussions that contribute towards the theory of interpretive consumer research and the practice of marketing management. This chapter will therefore commence with Section 5.1 which discusses theoretical issues concerning 'elderly consumers', 'bricoleurs', 'bricolage', 'cultural maps of meaning', 'communities' and residential care homes as a site of consumption. Section 5 .2 highlights the implications for public policy and the management of service provision within residential care homes. Section 5.3 identifies pertinent limitations and offers signposts for the theory of interpretive consumer research, and Section 5.4 reflects on lessons derived from using existential-phenomenological methods.

5.1 Musings on 'Bricoleurs', 'Bricolage', 'Cultural Maps of Meaning', 'Communities' and Residential Care Homes as a Site of Consumption

The following theoretical musings are based on the empirical findings and interpretations outlined in Chapter Four. As such these ruminations can be distilled into discussions under the headings of; from 'elderly consumers to elderly bricoleurs'?; 'bricolage'; 'cultural maps of meaning'; 'communities' and residential care homes as a site of consumption.

5.1.1 From Elderly Consumers to 'Elderly Bricoleurs'?

> *"[T]he 'bricoleur'…principally, derives his poetry from the fact that he does not confine himself to accomplishment and execution: he 'speaks' not only with things…but also through the medium of things: giving an account of his personality and life by the choices he makes between the limited possibilities. The 'bricoleur' may not ever complete his purpose but he always puts something of himself into it"* (Levi-Strauss, 1966: 21).

As Chapter Four demonstrates, groups of elderly consumers derive their poetry not by solely confining themselves to a sense of accomplishment in understanding their lived experiences within residential care homes, rather they 'speak' with and through a relatively limited amount of things within, for example, a culture of comfort:

Figure 5.1.1A: Mapping Cultures of Comfort within Residential Care Homes
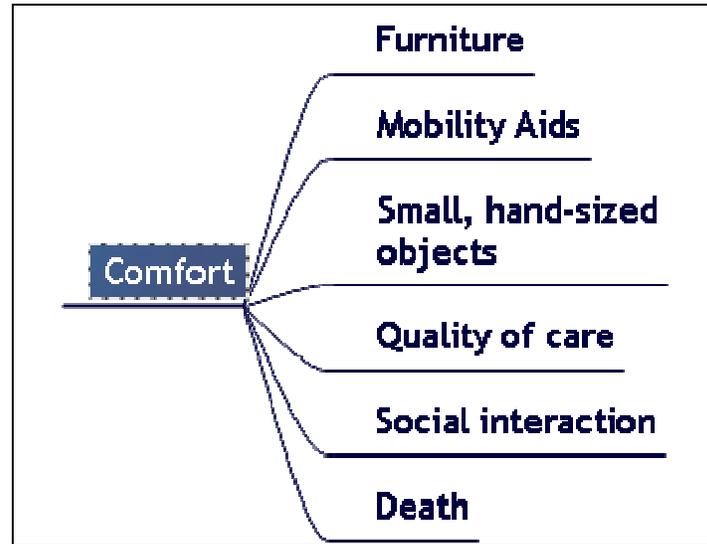
With such comforting things as items of furniture, mobility aids, small hand-sized objects, quality of care, social interaction and death in mind elderly consumers' choose to give an account of how they understand their lived experiences through a relatively limited amount of things. Whilst a complete understanding of these choices may (or may not) elude elderly consumers within residential care homes they always put something of themselves into it (Ibid.). But, what form does this 'something' take? In the light of elderly consumers' understandings of residential care homes outlined in Chapter Four and Figure 5.1.1A, it is argued that this 'something' can be viewed as emanations of meaning that shape, and are shaped by the limited amount of things in the rooms of elderly consumers. In the light of these relatively synchronous meditations it is of value to pose a question: can groups of elderly consumers within residential care homes be thought of as groups of bricoleurs? In order to elucidate this question it is of value to

turn to Levi-Strauss (1966) and ask a further question; what are the key characteristics of a 'bricoleur'?

Levi-Strauss (1966) forwards the notion that:

- *"The bricoleur is adept at performing a large number of tasks"* (Ibid: 17).

- *"Bricoleurs make do with whatever is at hand"* (Ibid: 17).

- *"The bricoleur addresses himself to a collection of oddments"* (Ibid: 19).

These characteristics will now be examined in more detail within the following passages.

5.1.1.1 The 'bricoleur' is adept at performing a large number of tasks

So, are elderly consumers adept at performing a large number of tasks with and through various things? In the light of the findings and interpretations outlined in Chapter Four, it is argued that elderly consumers are not adept at performing a large number of tasks, rather they seem to be adept at performing a *relatively* large number of tasks.   However, the performance of these tasks appears to be crucially dependent on; (1) aids to living; and (2) aids to escape. For example, with Rita's understandings of her arthritic hands in mind, she can be seen to be dependent on such aids to living as a two handled mug to effectively drink a cup of tea as the following extract demonstrates:

Interviewer: Is that your mug? **R***: That's my big one with the two handles.*

Interviewer: Would you like some tea as well as your water? **R***: Just a little.* **Interviewer***: That pot is certainly very full [Sound of tea being poured into a cup].* **Interviewer***: Milk?* **R***: That's fine.* **Interviewer***: There we go [Sounds of cups and saucers].* **R***: Do you take sugar?* **Interviewer***: Thanks.* **R***: There's a spoon there.* **Interviewer***: How many sugars do you have?* **R***: Two. My hands aren't so good now.* **Interviewer***: How long have your hands been bad?* **R***: Twenty-eight years. I was in my fifties when I took arthritis.*

Furthermore, with Harry's understandings of his leisure trips in mind he can be seen to be dependent on such aids to escape as his minister friends who take him to church every Sunday morning as the following extract demonstrates:

H*: I've got an arrangement, I'm being taken every Sunday, so that's that. Again, I must say my thanks, not only to the minister who takes me to church, but to all those who have helped in the interim period, many ministers helped. I am grateful to them all.*

Furthermore, in the context of residential care homes, elderly consumers are no longer in a position to carry out some tasks independently, as Figure 5.1.1.1A reveals:

Figure 5.1.1.1A: Mapping Cultures of Dependency within Residential Care Homes
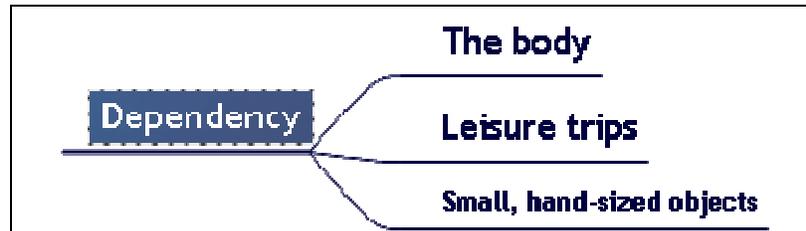
In the light of the preceding cultural map it is revealed that elderly consumers within residential care homes are dependent on a range of meaningful things (such as the body, leisure trips and small, hand sized objects) in order to create meaningful lived experiences.

5.1.1.2 Bricoleurs make do with whatever is at hand

Do elderly consumers in residential care homes make do with whatever is at hand? The findings and interpretations contained within Chapter Four and Figures 5.1.1A and 5.1.1.1A suggest that elderly consumers have to make do with, and are dependent on, a *relatively limited amount* of whatever is at hand. Furthermore, in line with Levi-Strauss (1966) the empirical findings and interpretations suggest that elderly consumers have to make do with a relatively limited and finite set of tools and materials that are located within their respective everyday lived experiences. This is most clearly reflected within the context of residential care homes as all of the elderly consumers presumably would have had to dispose of the family home (Marcoux, 2001) and many of their special

possessions (Curasi, Price and Arnould, 2004; Price, Arnould and Curasi, 2000) before they moved into the residential care home. Thus, in the words of Levi-Strauss (1966: 17-18) "the set of the 'bricoleurs' means cannot therefore be defined in terms of a project. It is to be only defined by its potential use, or putting this another way and in the language of the bricoleur' himself [/herself], because the elements are collected or retained on the basis that they might come in handy" (1966: 17-18). Whilst a relatively small amount of available elements exists within elderly consumers everyday lived experiences these elements that might come in handy can be very diverse as the example of memories of burial services and bereavement counseling in enabling a culture of comfort to emerge within George's life-world suggests. Furthermore, elements in the form of experiential links to the past can be seen within the foreground of elderly consumers lived experiences and that such things enable the elderly to maintain, renew or enrich cultural patterns of comfort, dependency and trauma without the aid of material artifacts.

5.1.1.3 The bricoleur addresses himself to a collection of oddments.

In Straussian terms, do elderly consumers address themselves to a collection of oddments? With the findings and interpretations in mind, it is argued that, rather than addressing a collection of oddments, elderly consumers address a small collection of carefully chosen items to meet their care needs. For example, and as the following extract demonstrates, set within a culture of comfort, George addresses a Telegraph newspaper, and in particular, the business and sport sections, in an attempt to stimulate his and others interest in life and to buffer mortal thoughts:

*G: Although I am severely incapacitated now, I still read my Telegraph from cover to cover. I try to keep up to date with business, sport, and all the rest of it, you see. You've got too. The trouble is old people tend to relax and not do anything, which is a tragedy. I try to stimulate these old boys but I can't get anywhere. There are one or two ladies that I talk to, and I stimulate them a bit, and I get a bit out of it, I get a response. **Interviewer**: How often do you read The Telegraph? G: Seven days a week. I like the Telegraph because I can cover the sport, I can cover the markets, I check the markets everyday. This is the way you keep alive isn't it?*

Or, as multiple readings of the following extract indicate, Rita addresses an electric chair/bed in order to experience memories of her daughter and feelings of physical and emotional comfort:

*R: This is my own chair. It's an electric chair. You can make it into a bed if you want to. I got it here so that I can see the telly. It will go right back into a bed. Sometimes, if I'm up early in the morning, I come back and sit here. The legs come right out. I'm supposed to sit with my legs up [R demonstrates some of the features of the chair]. **Interviewer**: Shall I move that basket away from your feet? [R continues demonstrating her chair] **Interviewer**: Wow that is something else. R: It can be quite a comfortable bed. My daughter was home from Hong Kong and I was in hospital and she says I'm*

going to get you an electric chair. So, she got it and brought her cheque book

to pay for it. It was £700. Really, it's the best thing I've ever owned. It's so

comfortable. You can't put it anywhere else if you want to see the television.

The light shines the wrong way. I had it over there at first, but we decided we

would try it here. I like it here.

Thus, with George and Rita's understandings of their oddments in mind, and as Levi-Strauss (1966) suggests, these elements are "specialised up to a point, sufficiently for the 'bricoleur' not to need the equipment and knowledge of all trades and professions, but enough for each of them to have one definite and determinate use. They each represent a set of actual and possible relations; they are 'operators' but they can be used for any operations of the same type" (Ibid: 18).

5.1.1.4 Summary: Conceptualising Elderly Consumers as 'Elderly Bricoleurs'.

With the preceding discussion in mind, it is argued that groups of elderly consumers in residential care homes are not adept at performing a large number of tasks, nor do they make do with whatever is at hand, nor do they address themselves to a collection of oddments. Thus, Levi-Strauss's (1966) notion of the 'bricoleur' does not perfectly reflect the lived experiences of groups of elderly consumers. However, groups of elderly consumers are adept a performing a *relatively* large number of tasks, they have to make do with a *relatively limited* amount of whatever is to hand, and they do address a *small* collection of carefully chosen items to meet their care needs. In the light of these factors

it is argued that elderly consumers can be thought of not as 'bricoleurs' but as 'elderly bricoleurs' who understand their lived experiences through their relatively limited things, or items of bricolage (Levi-Strauss, 1966) that subsequently enables meaningful cultures of dependency, trauma and comfort to emerge within their everyday lived experiences. Moreover, it is argued that elderly bricoleurs rather than being frail and relatively inactive, are active participants in their life worlds and create meaningful lived experiences not only with bricolage but also through bricolage giving an account of their life by the choices made between limited possibilities.

5.1.2 Bricolage

Furthermore, it can be argued that each of the things outlined in Chapter Four and Figures 5.1.1A and 5.1.1.1A can be conceptualized as items of bricolage that can be seen to function in such a way that enables a culture of consumption to emerge within elderly bricoleurs' everyday lived experiences. By virtue, items of bricolage "are thus viewed less in themselves than for their place in an exchange or ritual which will have an effect" (Miller, 1994: 400). Viewed in this transformative manner, bricolage can be seen to enable elderly bricoleurs to create various instantiations of meaning within cultural patterns of dependency, trauma and comfort. Moreover, as an enunciator, the elderly bricoleur will be revealed in the identification implied by the pieces of bricolage he or she chooses to use (Floch, 2000).

However, as Levi-Strauss (1966) notes, that whilst bricolage enables meaning to emerge the elements which elderly bricoleurs collect and use "are pre-constrained like the constitutive units of myth, the possible combinations of which are restricted by the fact that they are drawn from the language where they already possess a sense which sets a limit on their freedom of manoeuvre. And the decision as to what to put in each place also depends on the possibility of putting a different element there instead, so that each choice which is made will involve a complete reorganization of the structure, which will never be the same as one vaguely imagined nor as some other which might have been preferred to it" (Ibid: 19). Or, as Miller (1994) argues, the ordering of things is central to human culture and that "the dimensions by which an order is constructed either explicitly or implicitly give meaning to the array of forms" (Ibid: 400). Therefore, it can be argued that elderly bricoleurs implicitly give meaning to an array of different forms of tangible or intangible bricolage that appear to be relatively constrained in their use not only because the possible combinations are restricted by the notion that they already possess a sense of how they can be used, but also because elderly bricoleurs are highly dependent on the timely intervention of, for example, owners, managers and staff within residential care homes to enable meaningful cultural patterns to emerge within their respective cultural maps of meaning.

Furthermore, arrangements of bricolage can be seen to be shaped, and shape cultural patterns of trauma as Figure 5.1.2A reveals:

Figure 5.1.2A Mapping Cultures of Trauma within Residential Care Homes
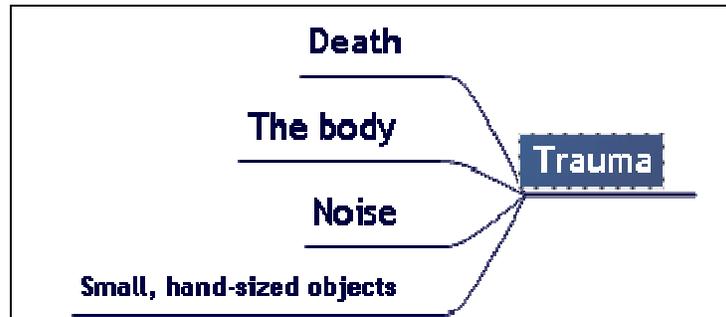
In the light of Figure 5.1.2A and especially encounters with death related phenomena the decision pertaining to which piece of bricolage to include in a particular cultural pattern of meaning depend on the possibility of rearranging the pattern it also depends on the influence of death as a cultural phenomenon within elderly bricoleurs everyday lived experiences. Therefore, it is argued that death has the capacity to disrupt cultural patterns of meaning within residential care homes. As Mellor and Schilling (1993) suggest elderly bricoleurs reflexively constructed sense of what is real and meaningful starts to vanish in the face of a traumatic encounter with death and dying. As such, this realization may occur when an elderly bricoleur, such as Doreen, attempts to come to terms with the grief associated with the death of her friends (see section 4.2.3.1) and family (see section 4.2.3.2), or in the case of Bill and his repeated suicide attempts (see section 4.2.3.4), mortal knowledge may have disrupted any solid, unshakeable, or at least significant cultural patterns of meaning in such a way that they became drained of value.

Perhaps it can also be argued that elderly bricoleurs' cultural patterns of dependency, trauma and comfort and associated forms of bricolage "objectivate group life into meaningful shape and form" (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts, 1975:10). However, with the empirical materials in mind, whilst it can be argued that culture objectivates group life into a meaningful shape, bricolage is not found and neatly bounded in mutually exclusive cultural patterns of meaning that are perfectly shared by groups of elderly bricoleurs. Rather, the empirical materials suggest that elderly bricoleurs' cultural patterns of meaning within residential care homes are distinctive and labyrinthine shapes in which bricolage and emanations of meaning are fully encapsulated. As Hall (1977) states, "[t]his is perfectly consistent with the general proposition that culture, knowledge and language have their basis in social and material life and are not independent or autonomous of it" (Ibid: 319).

5.1.3 Cultural Maps of Meaning

The findings and interpretations presented in Chapter Four suggest that the cultures of consumption within residential care homes, to paraphrase Hall (1977), includes the peculiar cultural patterns of bricolage that relate to the social and material aspects of lived experience, and can be seen to embody certain characteristics, beliefs, values, memories and meanings. By virtue, it is argued that the culture of elderly bricoleurs within residential care homes is enabled through bricolage and takes the form of cultural patterns of dependency, trauma and comfort. Hall (Ibid.) suggests that the enablement of culture embraces meaningful connotations which enable items of bricolage to embody and

exhibit an identifiable configuration, a pattern, a way of living for elderly bricoleurs within residential care homes. In the light of the empirical findings and interpretations outlined in Chapter Four this patterning is, so to speak, the result of the interconnections between elderly bricoleurs items of bricolage and cultures of comfort, dependency and trauma that exist within residential carer homes. These interconnections are encapsulated in the following model:

*Figure 5.1.3A Residential Care Homes: A Cultural Map of Meaning*
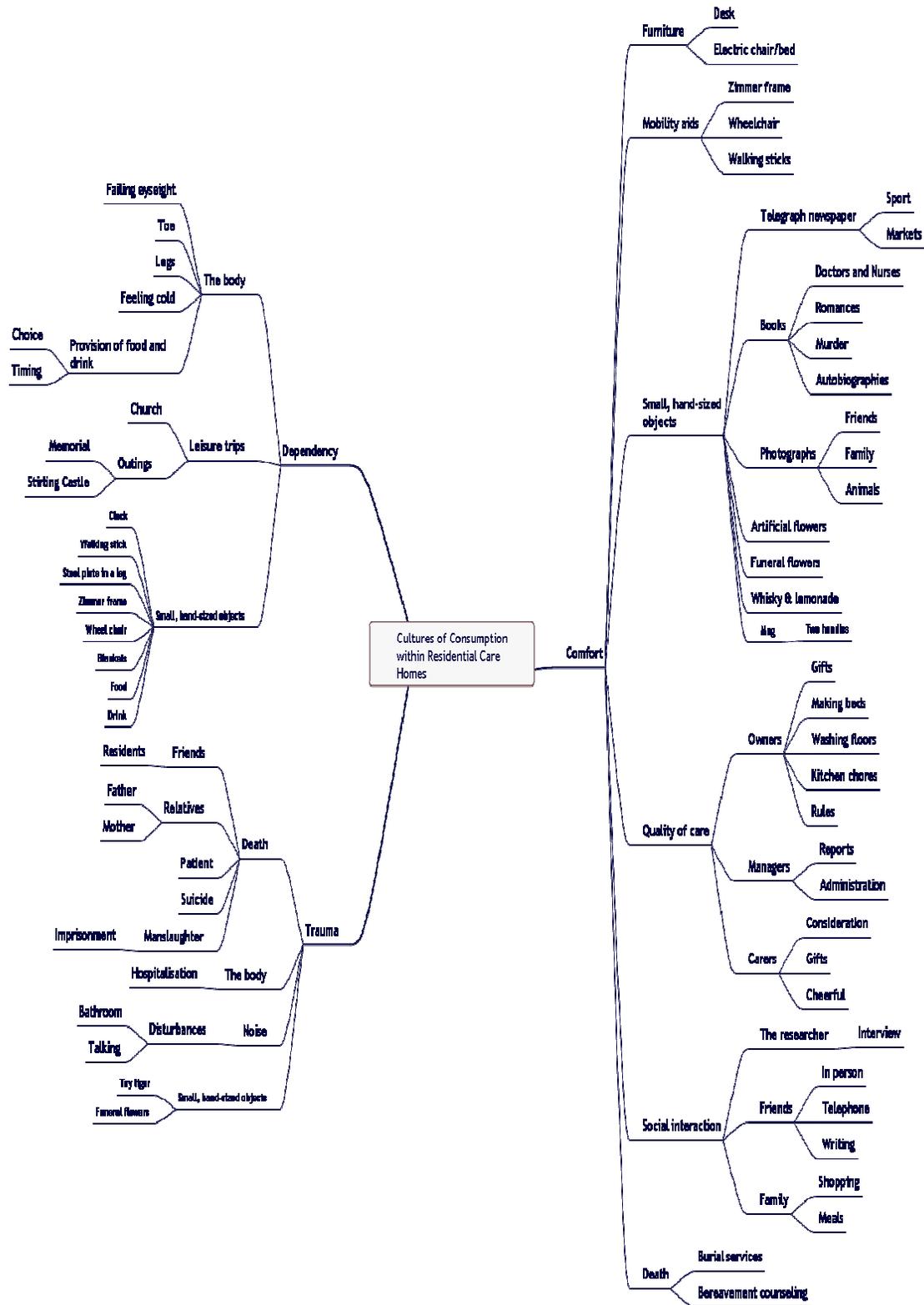
Figure 5.1.3A is based on the findings and interpretations contained within Chapter Four. These can be disaggregated as cultures of dependency, trauma and comfort. Set within these lie elderly bricoleurs' items of 'bricolage' that make reference to a wide variety of social meanings, relations and associations (see Chapter Four for a more thorough discussion). Viewed in this manner, items of bricolage can be seen to embody and reflect the widely distributed beliefs, forms of social knowledge, social practices and the taken-for-granted knowledge pertaining to the cultures of consumption within residential care homes By virtue, bricolage thus constitutes, and classifies cultural patterns of dependency, trauma and comfort within elderly bricoleurs cultural maps of meaning (see Figure 5.1.3A) within residential care homes. Therefore, these "[c]ultural categories are the fundamental coordinates of meaning, representing the basic distinctions that a culture uses to divide up the phenomenal world" (McCracken, 1986: 72).

Hall (1977) suggests that these cultural categories, or patterns, combine to "constitute the 'maps of meaning' of a culture" (Ibid: 330). Or, in the words of Barthes (1967), "[t]o each of these cultural lexicons there corresponds a corpus of practices and techniques; these collections imply on the part of system consumers different degrees of knowledge (according to differences in their 'culture') which explains how the same lexis can be deciphered differently according to the individual concerned. The different areas of social life, the different kinds of relation and practice, appear to be held together in social intelligibility by this web of preferred meanings. These networks are clustered into domains, which appear to link, naturally, certain things to certain other things, within a context, and to exclude others" (in Hall, 1977: 330).

In the light of the preceding cultural map of meaning (see Figure 5.1.3A) elderly bricoleurs individual experiences of cultures of dependency, trauma and comfort can therefore be seen to be held together by webs of bricolage, and that these are clustered together into domains (or areas within a cultural map of meaning) which appear to link elderly bricoleurs to items of bricolage within the context of cultures of consumption within residential care homes. As such, the notion is forwarded whereby elderly bricoleurs can be seen to live inside these cultural maps of meaning. Or, in the words of Geertz (1973: 5), elderly bricoleurs are "suspended in webs of significance [s/]he [her/]himself has spun." As Hebdige (1979) states, "all human societies reproduce themselves in this way through a process of 'naturalisation'. It is through this process that – a kind of inevitable reflex of all social life – that particular sets of social relations, particular ways of organising the world appear to use as if they were universal and timeless (Hebdige, 1979: 14). This is perfectly consistent with the general proposition that culture is based in social and material life and is not independent or autonomous of it. The experience of meaning making within residential care homes, therefore, cannot unmediatedly enable cultural patterns to emerge within elderly bricoleurs cultural maps of meaning.

5.1.4 Communities

In the light of Doreen's understandings of the death of her friends (see section 4.2.3.1), relatives (see section 4.2.3.2) and a former patient (see section 4.2.3.3), Bill's understandings of his suicide attempts (see section 4.2.3.4) and (see section 4.3.1.1),

George's understandings of his telegraph newspaper (see section 4.3.3.1), artificial leg, two walking sticks and a wheelchair (see section 4.3.2.2), experiences of conducting burial services (see section 4.3.6.1) and experiences of bereavement counseling (see section 4.3.6.2), and   Doreen's understandings of books (see section 4.3.3.2), and photographs (see section 4.3.3.3), it is argued that groups of elderly bricoleurs within residential care homes, like all communities, are symbolic and socially constructed (Cohen, 1985). As such, and in line with Cohen (Ibid.) and Berger and Luckmann (1967) it is argued that, elderly bricoleurs' communities are often imagined (Turley and O'Donohue, 2005; Anderson, 1991) (but not always), occasionally fictional, and appear to be rooted within elderly bricoleurs' understandings of a relatively limited amount of bricolage.   Just as arterial roads defined the perimeter of a neighbourhood, psychic boundaries exist that represent the lines of demarcation for a community. Cohen (1985) suggests that these socially constructed boundaries enclose elements considered to be more like each other than different.   Viewed through this lens, "community…is a boundary-expressing symbol. As a symbol, it is held common by its members, but its meaning varies with its members' unique observations to it. In the face of this variability of meaning, community has to be kept alive through the manipulation of symbols. The reality and efficacy of the community's boundary, and therefore, of the community itself, depends on its symbolic construction and embellishment" (Cohen, 1985: 15).

Seen though Cohen's (Ibid.) lens, communities of elderly bricoleurs within residential care homes can be seen to be held together by unique understandings of cultures of dependency, trauma and comfort wherein 'elderly bricoleurs' address themselves to a

relatively limited amount of bricolage that enables them to keep alive actual, desired, imagined and fictional community ties. Furthermore, the reality and efficacy of communities of elderly bricoleurs seems to depend on their physical and mental ability to address whatever is to hand (Levi-Strauss, 1966) in order to construct and understand their cultural maps of meaning within residential care homes.

5.1.5 Residential Care Homes as a Site of Consumption

As the findings and interpretations contained within Chapter Four demonstrate, cultures of comfort, dependency and trauma surround and permeate elderly bricoleurs' everyday lived experiences of cultural socialization within residential care homes. As such, a rich lifestyle picture of what it means to be an elderly bricoleur in a residential care home emerges. In the light of the preceding, residential care homes can be thought of as sites of consumption that enable new expressions of culture to come into being within a communal institutional setting. Furthermore, cultures of consumption within residential care homes can be viewed through the lens of distinctive communities that self select on the basis of being fit and able enough to take part in such shared consumption activities as, for example, leisure trips. By virtue, residential care homes can be thought of as enabling devices for culture to express itself.

Moreover, a study of the expressions of residential care home culture within which elderly bricoleurs understand their everyday lived experiences through the consumption of bricolage offers rich insights into what it means to live in a residential care home. To

this end, these insights can be used to aid marketers in the design of service environments for the elderly. With this in mind, the ambience of residential care home service environments can be seen to be grounded within everyday lived experiences that consist of insiders (such as consumer goods, fellow residents, carers, managers and owners) and outsiders (such as family, friends, therapists, researchers etc.). Viewed through this interpersonal lens, the service environment can be seen to create and produce elderly bricoleurs' everyday lived experiences within residential care homes. In the light of these wide ranging and diverse experiences it can be further argued that residential care home service environments enable the elderly to create a sense of identity and belonging at a time in their lives when the death of friends and relatives is never too far away.

Given the nature of these traumatic experiences the ambience of the service environment needs to be designed in such a way that not only tolerates the diversity of such communal experiences it also respects the individuals right to grieve in a way that is meaningful to that person.

5.2 Implications for Public Policy and The Management of Service Provision within Residential Care Homes

In the light of the fact that communities of elderly peoples' voices are muted in many academic analyses of social policies (Wilson, 1997: 1991) and service provision (see Section 2.1), this study provides a dignified and secure mouthpiece through which these voices can be heard (see Chapter 4). As such, the subsequent discussions contained

within this research project have been based on what the participants within this study have revealed about their everyday lived experiences within residential care homes. As a consequence, it can be argued that, in an ideal world, public policy governing systems of service provision within residential care homes (see Kinsella and Velkoff, 2001) needs to be tailored to meet the cultures of consumption within such institutions (see Chapter 4 and Fig 5.1.3A). More specifically, the emergent understandings of elderly peoples' cultural maps of meaning suggest that public policy needs to be flexible and tolerant enough to enable residents to create communal and/or individual meaningful everyday lived experiences within cultures of comfort, dependency and trauma (or any other culture of consumption for that matter), in combination with the traditional care that they receive to meet their daily needs.

To these ends, it is recommended that policy should be introduced that encourages owners and/or managers of residential care home to take responsibility to train carers in existential-phenomenological methods to enable such employees to encourage elderly people to create meaningful everyday cultures of consumption through discussions of material artifacts that are located within elderly people's rooms. To this end, training should consist of obtaining first person descriptions of the residents everyday lived experiences within residential care homes. As such, policy should be constructed in such a way that ensures the carer participates in phenomenological discussions in whatever manner is the most appropriate to the individual resident. In some cases this may mean that the carer becomes an ardent listener who either nods in agreement or provides the odd word of encouragement. In other cases, in may be necessary for the carer to

introduce some of his, or her, experiences of the phenomena under discussion to enable the flow of meaning. Indeed, as the researcher's experiences indicate, this method can enable residents to speak freely about meaningful material artifacts for a considerable amount of time (i.e. from c 40 minutes to 2 ½ hours). Returning to discussions of the formulation of public policy, it is recommended that phenomenological discussions should take place at least once a month and especially during cultures of trauma when an elderly person may have experienced the death of friends and/or relatives, hospitalization, noise disturbances (see Figure 5.1.3A) or when a resident first moves into a residential care home. This is particularly relevant in the light of the fact that many elderly people are admitted into care on the basis of physical health problems, lack of motivation, family breakdown and loneliness (see Section 1.3 for more discussion) and may be in need of caring and respectful human contact that enables them to establish meaningful cultural links with actual, desired, imagined and fictional community ties (see Section 5.1.4 for more discussion) from the confines of their own room or within a communal space.

However, there is a danger that the implementation of such policy may mean that too much pressure is placed on carers and that they may not have time to fulfill their daily tasks and routines. Furthermore, it is also noted that this particular recommendation may also contribute towards the financial outgoings of a residential care home. As such, consideration should be given to policy that encourages managers of residential care homes to employ residents or local community volunteers (on a part-time basis) who are fit and able to undertake the role of 'enablers of meaning'. Given that poulation ageing is going to become an increasingly important issue in years to come perhaps these

volunteers could be drawn from a pool of people who have retired from work and have increased amounts of leisure time. Furthermore, if a particular resident within a care home (such as George – see Appendix A) is comforted by the memories of his experiences of successful bereavement counseling (see Fig 5.1.3A Cultures of Comfort) then the owners and/or management of the home may consider harnessing these, or similar, skills and competencies in such a way that enables residents to come to terms with the cultures of trauma associated with death related phenomena (See Fig 5.1.3A Cultures of Trauma). To these ends, it is recommended that owners and/or managers of residential care homes should seek to recruit people who are empathetic, can concentrate for long periods of time, are good listeners and, most importantly of all, enjoy the company of elderly people.

Furthermore, on the basis of the findings of this study it would be of value for the owners and/or managers of residential care homes to establish internal marketing strategies in order to ensure that employees and/or volunteers feel comfortable, or gain job/volunteer satisfaction, working/volunteering within the organization. This is especially important in the light of the fact that elderly people, in part, understand their lived experiences through the comforting presence of their carers (see Fig 5.1.3A Cultures of Comfort and Quality of Care). Therefore, it would be of value to introduce such internal marketing programs that aim to build and maintain internal communication through, for example, weekly team meetings, staff meals, newsletters, and skills and competencies workshops to ensure that managers, carers and/or volunteers working within residential care homes feel as if the organization is dependent on their happiness within the workplace.

In addition, owners and/or managers of residential care homes should also consider developing public relations strategies that build and maintain positive local perceptions. This may include placing newsworthy information in the media to attract attention to the residential care home. For example, it would be of value to release information on such issues as staff/volunteer development and the impact this strategy has on enhancing the service environment within a given residential care home.   Furthermore, in order to build and maintain positive local perceptions it would be of value to establish and promote comforting forms of social interaction, such as visits by researchers (see Fig 5.1.3A Cultures of Comfort and Social Interaction), to reinforce the value of the residential care home to the wider community, as these seem to enable cultures of comfort to emerge within the service environment. Or, in the words of Lottie:

> **D**: *Well we've had a long talk. I didn't think I would be able to talk at all.*
> *Betty was the only one I really used to talk to. The rest of them you couldnae*
> *get a conversation out of them [laughter].*

Moreover, and returning to discussions of public policy, it is recommended that policy governing service provision should involve residents, carers and volunteers having more of a voice and influence on the delivery of service provision within residential care homes. In the light of the preceding, it is suggested that policy makers who put in place systems for the provision of services within residential care homes should endeavor to make these as community focused (in the broadest possible sense) as possible As such, these systems of provision should be foundered on the joint notions of respect, dignity

and tolerance and be flexible enough to be tailored to the residents' routines of daily living, such as meal times, visiting professional carers (such as physiotherapists, vicars chiropodists etc) or social activities (such as trips to the theatre, tea-dances, visiting friends etc.) to ensure that elderly people in residential care homes can create meaningful everyday cultures of consumption within the service environment within a given residential care home.

5.3 Limitations and Signposts for the Theory of Interpretive Consumer Research

In general terms, the aim of this section is to argue that the methodological approach, content, interpretation and presentation of the research is justifiable and that the limitations are relatively minor. By virtue, discussions within this section are distilled into the headings; community issues within residential care homes; a snapshot of time; broadening the scope of the study; the use of alternative methods to uncover new insights; replicating the methodological approach to study elderly bricoleurs in other contexts.

5.3.1 Community Issues within Residential Care Homes.

Having explored in depth issues related to the material culture of residential care homes, futures studies would derive benefit from focusing on community issues. In particular, value would be derived from further exploring issues concerned with the symbolic and social construction of such communities, and imagined communities (Turley and

O'Donohue, 2005, Anderson, 1991). This would further flush out, and illuminate, how communities are kept alive through the manipulation of symbols and/or the style in which they are imagined (Anderson, 1991).

5.3.2 A Snapshot of Time

The interviews, although rich and detailed have inevitably only provided a 'snapshot' of how communities of elderly bricoleurs understand their cultural maps of meaning within residential care homes. To these ends, the subsequent interpretations are very much reliant on the way communities of elderly bricoleurs understood their cultural maps of meaning at that particular time. For example, had Doreen been interviewed during a more comforting, rather than a traumatic time, both the course and content of the interview, as well as the resultant transcript would have required a totally different interpretation. Furthermore, different research approaches may have yielded alternative results, but despite the limitation of existential phenomenological interviews in terms of being a one off contact with elderly bricoleurs, it is still believed to be the most appropriate method to illuminate the research objectives.

5.3.3 Broadening the Scope of the Study

Having explored, in depth, communities of elderly bricoleurs' understandings of their cultural maps of meaning within residential care homes, it would also be useful in any future study to interview relatives, friends and residential care home staff in order to gain

a wider perspective of residential care home culture. For example, what role do close relatives have in choosing a residential care home? What sort of impact do the owners, managers and staff have on elderly bricoleurs' cultural maps of meaning?

Emanating from a similar position, the awareness and understanding of policy formulators has not been explored. If policy makers are aware of elderly bricoleurs and their cultural maps of meaning should, or could, policy formulators do more to assist in shaping residential care home culture?

5.3.4 The Use of Alternative Methods to Uncover New Insights

It is argued that the portrayal of communities of elderly bricoleurs' understandings of their cultural maps of meaning within residential care homes that has emerged as a result of this study is detailed and representative enough to provide a basis for further research. In addition, given that elderly bricoleurs within Robinlew House and Cedar View, seem to enjoy taking part within qualitative interviews, further research focusing on notions of 'community', 'elderly bricoleurs', 'bricolage' and 'cultural maps of meaning' within residential care homes, could attempt to use alternative research methods such as projective techniques. However, it is believed that this would merely support what is already known, rather than uncovering dramatically new insights. As such, participant observations, over at least several months and perhaps up to a year or more would reveal more accurately how cultural patterns of meaning may fluctuate, intensify or recede over time.

5.3.5 Replicating the Methodological Approach to Study Elderly Bricoleurs in Other Contexts

The cultural patterns identified in the previous chapter are important findings in their own right. To this end, they are not just thematic understandings of communities of elderly bricoleurs within residential care homes but also enable an understanding of communities of elderly bricoleurs understandings of cultural maps of meaning to emerge within this thesis. The only work bearing much relation to this cultural approach is that similar to a study carried out by Shih (1998) in the context of cyber-space. Clearly there is much scope to replicate the methodology used here for other communities of elderly bricoleurs within other consumption contexts. Moreover, it is quite possible that other intelligible cultural patterns might exist and be amenable to identification, classification and scholarly rumination.

5.4 Lessons Derived From Using Existential-Phenomenological Methods

The following section adopts a retrospective position and reflects on lessons derived from using existential-phenomenological methods. To this end, the following discussion is disaggregated into meditations on; meaningful insights; unexpected findings; interpretation and representation; and reliance on interpretation.

5.4.1 The Emergence of Meaningful Insight Justifies an Existential-Phenomenological Methodological Approach

In general terms, the findings and interpretations have enabled meaningful insights to emerge pertaining to communities of elderly bricoleurs understandings of their cultural maps of meaning within residential care homes. As such, and in line with the existential-phenomenological hermeneutic interpretive process (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989), a contextualist world-view has emerged wherein elderly bricoleurs everyday lived experiences can be seen to be embedded within a cultural map of meaning that is structured by cultural patterns of dependency, trauma and comfort and arrangements of bricolage. To these ends, the adopted approach enabled the researcher to iteratively interpret global themes (Ibid.) as they emerged throughout and across the text of the interview transcripts. By relating these specific global themes (Ibid.) to each other and to the overall culture of residential care homes, meaningful findings and interpretations have emerged that illuminate and distil cultures of consumption within residential care homes. Moreover, as the following section indicates the methodological approach has not only enabled meaningful insights to emerge it has also facilitated the emergence of some quite unexpected findings.

5.4.2 Unexpected Findings

"Existential phenomenology seeks to describe experience as it emerges in some contexts, or to use the phenomenological terms as it is 'lived'" (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989: 135). With the notion of experience as it emerges from a context, or how it is lived in mind, it is argued that existential-phenomenology as a methodological approach allowed for unexpected findings and interpretations pertaining to elderly bricoleurs arrangements of bricolage and cultural patterns of meaning within residential care homes to emerge. As such, the outlined approach has enabled the formation of an argument that suggests that some elderly bricoleurs within residential care homes create meaningful cultures of trauma through the use of certain items of bricolage. Viewed through this theoretical lens it can be subsequently argued that elderly bricoleurs are embedded in cultural patterns of meaning even in the most traumatic of situations, and that their trauma can be made meaningful through their cultural responses to a limited amount of bricolage. In the shadow of this, it follows that bricolage can be viewed as a 'sponge of grief' that slowing soaks up the elderly bricoleurs emotions thereby helping them to come to terms with the loss of close friends and/or relatives.

5.4.3 Reliance on Interpretation

The analysis of the interview transcripts was a hermeneutic endeavor wherein global themes emerged as a consequence of iterative readings of elderly bricoleurs texts. To these ends, the decision was taken not to employ a qualitative analysis computer program

such as 'Winmax' or 'Nudist' to analyse the text, rather the aim was to explore the texts and generate emerging understandings in a more personalised, hermeneutic way between the author and the text (Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989, 1990; Thompson, 1997). By virtue, the researcher initially studied the transcripts and the emergent themes were noted which led to the generation of interpretive global themes. The process of interpretation was, as is always the case with such interpretive work, an iterative part-to-whole style of analysis to uncover the deep meanings embedded within the transcripts. As a consequence, insight can be gained into how the interpretation of the text relates to the wider social and cultural context. This provided a platform upon which communities of elderly bricoleurs meaningful understandings of their cultural maps of meaning within residential care homes can be placed.

However, in attempting to make sense of the interview transcripts, it is inevitable that the researcher acknowledge that there is no single interpretive truth (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). By virtue, the findings and interpretations presented in Chapter 4 are intended to be an accurate representation of elderly bricoleurs understandings as articulated during the interviews. A related issue is how certain the researcher can be that that 'elderly bricoleurs' are telling the 'truth'. As Lincoln and Guba (2000) suggest, no single method, or collection of methods, can deliver the ultimate truth – "no one would argue that a single method or collection of methods – is the royal road to ultimate knowledge" (Ibid: 178). To this end, the 'elderly bricoleurs' reported elucidations could be best thought of as the truth as they vocalised it at that point in time. As such, the interpretive insights presented in this thesis are intended to be an accurate representation of communities of

elderly bricoleurs understandings of their cultural maps of meaning within residential

care homes at the time at the time of the interview.

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Appendix A

Mapping out George's Lived Experiences within a Residential Care Home through Existential-Phenomenological Hermeneutic Interpretation

Findings and Interpretations: The Case of 'George'

A single case-study description of "George" (name changed) will be presented to offer a demonstration of the interpretive process (see Thompson, Locander and Pollio, 1989) used in the present investigation and to provide a link into the more conceptual discussions contained within Chapter Five. To this end, and in line with the interpretive process outlined in Section 3.5, the text derived from the interview with George is presented verbatim, and the related interpretations are based on "George's" own terms and category systems. As such, these pages do not contain any external verifications, inferences, and conjectures that exceed the evidence provided by the transcript. Furthermore, the entire interview transcript has been read on many occasions, and individual passages have been related to those preceding and proceeding in order to improve interpretive vision[26]. At the time of the interview 'George' was a 94-year old man who lived in Cedar View (name changed). The interview lasted for about one hour and fifteen minutes.

> *Interviewer: Why don't we start by talking about some of the things in your*
>
> *room?*

> *G: Although I am severely incapacitated now, I still read my Telegraph from*
>
> *cover to cover. I try to keep up to date with business, sport, and all the rest of*

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[26] It is difficult to illuminate the hermeneutic process beyond this characterisation because "the process is more a matter of tacit knowledge than explicit application. The process has a fundamental ambiguity to it in that the researcher must "know" how to interpret" (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997: 50). Moreover, the actual practice of hermeneutics "may also be a nonrepresentable form of knowledge" (Ibid.).

it, you see. You've got too. The trouble is old people tend to relax and not do anything, which is a tragedy. I try to stimulate these old boys but I can't get anywhere. There are one or two ladies that I talk to, and I stimulate them a bit, and I get a bit out of it, I get a response.

Interviewer: How often do you read The Telegraph?

G: Seven days a week. I like the Telegraph because I can cover the sport, I can cover the markets, I check the markets everyday. This is the way you keep alive isn't it?

Interviewer: Have you been following the movements of the markets recently?

G: They are stabilising you know. I think, I think, erm, taking a broad view, our economy is fairly stable. People don't realise the millions upon millions involved in the markets and all the rest of it. It's a very complicated thing.

Interviewer: It's certainly not something that I can claim to fully understand.

G: Although I was a YMCA secretary, I was in Manchester where I had four assistants you know. My senior assistant was a qualified accountant and so I have had a pretty big business experience. That's all helped to stimulate one's interest in life. I've had a wonderful life and I am very thankful. I am

very sorry for people who have no outside interest, that's a great pity. I
would just fold up. That's what happens. Don't misunderstand me, I'm
enjoying my life as much as is possible under these conditions. I'm so
grateful for the wonderful support you get here. They are a wonderful crowd.
It's loving care, it's not, you know, and of course there are over thirty people
involved here in one way or another.

A notable aspect of these opening passages is that George's descriptions reveal that his experiences within 'Cedar House' can be seen to include; loving care, a severely incapacitated body, memories of being a YMCA secretary and a Telegraph newspaper which is used to *"stimulate"* both George and other residents in an attempt to keep alive. These latter experiences can be seen to play a figural role within George's lived experiences and can be clearly seen in the preceding and proceeding sections of interview text. To this end, the dialogue indicates that George read the Telegraph newspaper on a daily basis with particular attention directed toward the business and sport sections amongst others. These experiences enabled George to forward the comment *"[t]his is the way you keep alive isn't it?"* Seen in this light, reading the Telegraph newspaper could be interpreted as an important element of lived experience that directs George's thoughts away from feeling mortal. This interpretation is strengthened in the light of the interview text wherein George appears to attempt to direct other residents attention toward life affirming issues by discussing reports of business, the movement of the markets and sport that are contained within his newspaper. For example, when describing fellow residents who do not appear to regularly read newspapers and/or have no outside interests George

used phrases like *"I feel sorry for people with no outside interests, that's a great pity. I would just fold up,"* indicating the meaningful role of the Telegraph within his life. Furthermore, the text also highlights that George attempted to use the Telegraph newspaper as a means to *"stimulate"* his fellow residents' to help them avoid experiencing mortal thoughts.

The passages under discussion also indicate that whilst George was *"enjoying his life as much as possible under these conditions"* he was still dependent on the *"loving care"* he received from a *"wonderful crowd"* of over thirty carers within Cedar House. This finding presents an experience that enables him to enjoy his life within Cedar House despite being *"severely incapacitated"*. By virtue, George's experiences of this *"loving care"* can be seen to form a pattern that enables him to *"enjoy his life"* and be *"stimulated"* by the discussions of sport, the economy and the movements of the markets reported within the Telegraph newspaper.

The direction of the interview then moved to focus on discussions of memories relating to some of George's pre-care experiences as a rector as the following passages reveal:

> *Interviewer: So what other things do you do to keep in contact with the outside world?*

> *G: I've worked with a lot of very interesting people. I was a rector for over forty years. I used to take my services and even bury people. I always*

remember my great nephew at the christening, he said "Uncle George can bury people but he can't christen them [laughter]." I couldn't perform a sacrament you see, but I buried quite a lot of people.

Interviewer: Did you bury people for many years?

G: I retired a sixty-five you see, and I was heavily involved with the church, and, erm, and very often when one of our old people died the vicar said "George, this is one yours, you've been their minister, I haven't, and so you must bury them" [laughter].

Interviewer: How did you feel when you buried people?

G: I was so happy. I rendered their last service, you see. I had one chappy that I visited for nearly a year. Some people take bereavement terribly, and Bill just couldn't get over it, and I am certain that he eventually died of a broken heart. I was convinced of that. Now, others, you can stimulate them and encourage them to do things. Oh, one rather interesting case I had, he was in his forties and lost his wife, tragically you see and he couldn't do anything. I said, "Bill I think you remember from our early days when you and your wife decided to change your car?" He said "yes." "Well" I said, "why haven't you done so?" "Well" he said, "there is no point is there?" I said, "Bill, you and your wife were going to have a new car". "Now" I said,

"you go and change and get the car that you and your wife were going to buy," and do you know that lifted the latch. It sounds stupid but it just broke the bereavement. It's a difficult job dealing with bereavement, isn't it? The vicar, we had had a burial and the vicar said "go and visit this old chap," so I did this for two or three times, eventually I received a letter saying "thank you, I've decided that I don't want you to come again, I'm not interested in religion". He died a week after [laughter]. Oh dear, yes, yes. I've enjoyed working with other people very much, but I miss them very much. It's so rewarding working with other people.

The preceding passages highlight that the George's life experiences at this point in the interview can be seen to include "*happy*" or "*stimulating*" memories of conducting burial services and bereavement counseling. To these mortal ends, George described his memories of burial services and bereavement counseling using phrases like "*I've enjoyed working with other people very much*" and "*It's so rewarding working with other people.*" Seen in this "*rewarding*" light, the interview text subsequently reveals that George's memories consisted of attempts to "*stimulate*" the grieving "*and encourage them to do things*" to help them through the experience of bereavement. As such, the interview text under examination brings to the fore an example whereby George encouraged a parishioner (named Bill) to purchase a car in order to come to terms with the bereavement associated with the tragic death of his wife. With this automotive experience in mind, George thought that, in general terms, it was very difficult job to mentally and/or emotionally "*stimulate*" the grieving, and that while some people responded to George's bereavement counseling,

others did not. For example, the text reveals that George's memories consisted of an offer to help someone through the grieving process that was rejected, and that this person, coincidently, died a week later.

With these examples of burial services and bereavement counseling in mind, and in particular George's attempts to *"stimulate"* the bereaved, parallels can be drawn his attempts to stimulate his fellow residents within Cedar House to focus on issues related to sport, economics and the markets in an attempt *"to stimulate them a bit"* in an attempt to *"keep them alive"* and banish death related thoughts. As seen in the passages currently under discussion, this strategy seems to have its roots in George's pre-care experiences of working as a secretary for the YMCA in Manchester. For example, the text indicates that working for the YMCA enabled George to further his interest in life and that he had taken this interest forward though his experiences as a church minister, and on to and throughout his lived experiences within Cedar House. With this experience in mind, both George's pre-care and care experiences appear to be characterised by a wholehearted attempt to socialize with people whenever possible as the following passages illustrate.

> *G: I've got some dear Bristol friends who keep in touch with me and let me*
> *know what's going on. I had a lovely surprise the other day. I had gone*
> *round and I was sitting in the reception area and, "George, there is a lady*
> *asking for you", I recognised her face, she was from St Peters, and we talked*
> *about people who were in the church. It was a wonderful thrilling*
> *experience. But, as I say, my church here is a very, actually the church*

building is at the end is twenty-five years older than St Peters. It's a very modern, but there is no out-reach. One or two that I have talked to, you know, but this is East Anglia, East Anglian's are like this. I mean I am Norwich bred and born, but Norwich people are so introverted.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

G: I can't get to church now. I've talked to one or two of them and said, "You are so wrapped up in yourselves, one of the missions of the church is to go out and take the church to the people, not wait for the people to come to you." That wasn't quite what they had in mind [laughter].

Interviewer: Having grown up in Norwich I can confirm that Norwich people are a bit introverted. Having moved to Scotland I think I have become more aware of it.

G: In the YMCA, I worked in Manchester for nine years. The Lancashire people are fantastic, they are so out going. I enjoyed Manchester very much, it was thrilling, and then I went back to Bristol, and then my wife died and eventually I came back here. But, Manchester was a wonderful experience, it was so energetic and outward going all the time, it was terrific. We had a wonderful church there. I moved up here because my brother in-law lives in Dereham, and his family, including those in America, come over. While I've

been here I've seen, well I'm the only uncle on their side, and I've seen all six

families, including two who live in Texas. They were all over for my brother

in-laws 90th birthday four years ago. We had a wonderful party, with twelve

or fourteen from America you know, yes. But poor old Eric, he's four days

older than me but he is finding life very difficult, yes, yes [laughter].

The passages under consideration illustrate that, since the death of George's wife, he returned to Norwich to be closer to his brother-in-law and his Dereham based family members. Furthermore, the experience of socializing with friends in Cedar House can be seen to *be "a wonderful thrilling experience."* As such, these visiting friends and/or relatives enabled (or could enable) George to create meaning through being *"stimulated"* by the friends and/or relatives hat he loved and/or respected that normally lived in Bristol, Manchester, Dereham or Texas. However, the text gives the impression that the outlined social visits are a relatively rare event and that he would appreciate it if more of his friends and/or relatives came to visit him in Cedar House. For instance, in the light of the fact that George was not physically able to go to church, he expressed feelings of disappointed that certain churchgoers did not make more of an effort to come and visit him. Returning to the previous discussions pertaining to George's energetic efforts to create meaning by attempting to *"stimulate"* his fellow residents and that he appeared to be a very sociable person then the text identifies that George may have felt disappointment that the people who are involved with the church in Norwich had not made much of an effort to *"stimulate"* him since he moved into Cedar View. As such, the dialogue suggests that this attitude might have arisen as a geographic and cultural consequence of the introverted

nature of people who live in Norwich. The dialogue then moved on to delineate further lived experiences in the form of memories of living in Manchester for nine years. As such, the text exhibits signs that suggest he derived further meaning when talking about the people of Lancashire.

Given the lack of visits he received from people connected to the church in Norwich, George attempted to create meaning through other types of experiences that are ensconced within the forthcoming passages:

G: I am restricted by age, but at least I can still think. Last night I had a, every now and again I have a nasty bout of bowel trouble and sickness which is rather upsetting. But, it quietened off. But, thank God, I sleep so well which is such a blessing. I try to switch off when I go to bed. I am so well cared for here, it's quite wonderful really. I had no idea it was a care home. I said, "I will take your first vacancy", and then I went down to put my flat on the market, and while I was doing that I fell and crashed my right leg, and they had to put a steel plate in to hold me together. So, that ended everything. Up 'till that point I was busy doing everything, and then I came to a full stop.

Interviewer: So when you said "You'd take one" and that you didn't realise that this was a care home, what did you think it was?

G: I was impressed by the architecture, the standard and the people in uniform you see. I thought, this will suit me, and it is in walking distance from my niece and nephew and walking distance from church you see. I decided that I was going to stop running my car when I came up here. I thought that at ninety two that I ought to keep off the road, but my great niece was delighted to have it was a top off the range little Rover 200, right at the top of the range, only a year old.

Interviewer: How long did you have your Rover for?

G: Yes, erm, I went, the Bristol YMCA got into serious trouble and I went back for about eighteen months to sort them out. I didn't, I refused any salary because I said "I can live on my pension, you pay all my expenses." Just before Christmas when we got them re-established the chairman came to see me with a piece of paper. He said, "George, you refused any payment, you see, so they said "give George this with our love and tell him to get a decent car." We went in for a Dolomite, a Triumph Dolomite, lovely car, but of course we had years of happiness in the Dolomite, yes. I have had a most interesting life, for which I am very grateful. Always been involved with people and doing things, which is all very exciting. When I retired I joined the hospital chaplaincy, very busy with the church. I was still taking services until I was ninety. I stopped taking main services on my eightieth birthday, but I took subsidiary services. We were never an evening church, and the

even song got so thin, we decided to move into the chapel for evening prayer.
It met the needs of a lot of elderly people. It was quiet and intimate and they
said "Gerry, this is your idea, you run it" [laughter], and I was very happy
with that indeed because it was really very very helpful. We trundled the
piano over to the back, we had a lovely chapel, it seated twenty five with
comfort, in pews, a lovely alter, it was a lovely, as nice a chapel as I've
known. I enjoyed taking that over the years, it was great, and I was doing it
right until the time I left. We had a wonderful church fellowship group, about
a dozen of us. We used to meet on the first Friday of the month, we used to
meet in a group around the various homes, you see. It was, um, it was a great
club. I keep in touch with the fellowship group. I write to one of them, so
they know what's going on, yes.

Interviewer: So do they write to you very often?

G: Margaret, one of the members, has been to see me once or twice. She was
coming regularly. She had a daughter who lived about ten miles away, and,
er, I always remember the second Christmas I was here, she was sorry that
her daughter was no longer well enough to drive to see me. Now her
daughter has died, so Margaret doesn't come. But Margaret keeps in touch
with the telephone. I keep in touch with old friends, which is very nice. Some
of them are very good at keeping me up-to-date with what's going on because
here, you see, I'm not, I was amused because I was walking round on two

sticks at church and I would sit there, nobody came to me, so I used to walk

round and talk to them. But again, there is only one person, who comes to

see me from church, they are not outward looking unfortunately.

In the light of George's descriptions of his memories in the form of pre-care experiences that are represented in the preceding sections of interview text it became clear that these enabled George to derive further meaning though specific memories that relate how he managed to alleviate the serious financial trouble that was once associated with the Bristol YMCA. Similarly, the text reveals that the people at the Bristol YMCA were also satisfied with the work that George carried out for them to the extent that they objectified their gratitude in the form of a gift of a Triumph Dolomite car. Further memories appear to shape George's experiences in the form of recollections of pre-care experiences relating to the church and hospital chaplaincy. Returning to the previous discussions that relate to George's role within the church and community, the passages under consideration indicate that he had been ensconced within these meaningful experiences until he *"stopped taking main services on [his] eightieth birthday"* although George was *"still taking [subsidiary] services until he was ninety"*. Furthermore, the dialogue identifies that whilst George no longer derived meaning through conducting burial services, or attempting to help grieving parishioners, he continued to create meaning through the experience of taking even-song and prayer at the hospital chaplaincy.

Furthermore, the passages of text under consideration also reveal that George's everyday experiences contained memories in the form of one of the fellowship group members by

the name of Margaret who had been to visit George since he moved into Cedar View. As such, these meaningful visits were made possible by Margaret's daughter who used to bring her mother by car to so that she could socialise in person with George. However, since Margaret's daughter became ill and eventually died so Margaret was no longer able to visit George in person due to a lack of transport. As a consequence, George subsequently appeared to derive meaning through the sadness associated with the lack of Margaret's visits; however the text indicates that George still managed to maintain a form of meaningful contact with Margaret as she still *"keeps in touch with the telephone"*.

The text also highlights that George's experiences may have become increasingly shaped by his susceptibility to accidents, bowel trouble, and sickness. To these *"rather upsetting"* ends, George indicated that he had recently experienced a fall and had *"crashed his right leg"* that led to a period of hospitalisation in which it was necessary for the medics to insert a steel plate into his leg. Furthermore, and as a consequence of this fall and his experiences of *"nasty bouts of bowel trouble and sickness"* the notion could be forwarded whereby the shape and structure of George's meaningful experiences have become *"restricted by age"* and the steel plate in his right leg. Despite these problems George claimed, *"at least I can still think"* thereby indicating the meaning he associates with being able to *"stimulate"* his own mind. Returning to the earlier findings and interpretations that relate to the *"loving care"* he received from the carers employed by the care home, then the notion is forwarded whereby these people can be seen as mediators of meaning.

Furthermore, in the light of the findings and interpretations relating to George's increasingly frail body it had become necessary for him to enlist the services of additional care professionals as the following passages indicate:.

G: [Knock on door] Come in…come. This is my chiropodist.

[Male] It's OK I can pop back, I'm here all day.

G: OK then, come again.

[Male] I'll catch you after lunch.

G: Alright, lovely. Thank you.

Interviewer: Is that OK, I don't want to inconvenience you in any way?

G: That's fine, he's here all day. I'm really very lucky you know he comes once a fortnight and I've only got one foot to deal with of course. This is an artificial leg [demonstrates by points toward left leg, clenching fist and knocking on leg]. I've carried an artificial leg all my life.

Interviewer: Really?

G: Yes [laughing]. I drove through Austria and Italy and all sorts during the war [laughing].

Interviewer: When you said you only had one leg to deal with I was somewhat confused.

G: It annoys me I pay five pounds to have my feet done. I haven't got the cheek to say it should only be two pounds fifty [laughing]. I've just got two nails on the one foot. I just can't get there to do it myself

Interviewer: So how long have you had your artificial leg then?

G: 1932. Motorcycling. I tell you the most interesting thing, when I went into casualty one of the nurses said, "he's one of our blood donors". Of course, in those days, there was no blood bank, or was more or less on a one to one basis. They used to ring me up sometimes at home, and I would say "Ah you want some blood, alright", I would get on my motorbike, and off I would go.

Interviewer: How did you feel when you lost your leg?

G: Well, it was a damn nuisance. My surgeon, who took my leg off, he refused to allow me to use crutches. He said, "You've got to learn to walk on

two sticks, you'll learn to get balance," and of course it was absolutely true.

Now of course this leg is getting dodgy and I can't rely on this one, so I have

to be terribly, terribly careful.

Interviewer: So you've got your artificial leg and a steel plate in the other

one?

G: Up here, in this leg. This leg is a problem, there is some problem with it.

So, I can't walk very, I can walk a little way with two sticks, but I can't walk

too far.   As I say, try to walk but sometimes I have to take the chair, which is

quite helpful.

Interviewer: Is that your chair?

G: I bought it. I took the footrest off because they took up such a lot of room.

I can manage without. Actually, erm, it's a little bit hard going with the arms

you know. But, as I say I use it as a zimmer to go round to one of the other

rooms, yes. I manage to keep active, that's the thing.

A notable aspect of these passages is that they contain descriptions in the form of a

fortnightly visit of the chiropodist to service George's toenails. As such, the text reveals

that this meaningful experience occurs *"once a fortnight"*. However, while George

thought he was *"really very lucky"* he seemed annoyed that had to *"pay five pounds to*

have his feet done" when the chiropodist only has to deal with one foot. With this issue in mind, George revealed that he had "carried an artificial leg all his life" and did not have *"the cheek"* to point out that he should only be paying two-pounds and fifty pence.

Set within this section of the interview text are some of George's meaningful experiences that relate to using of his artificial leg. As such the text reveals various instantiations of meaning are associated with this leg. These take the form of memories that consist of recollections relating to the *"most interesting"* experience of adapting to owning an artificial leg since a motorcycle accident in 1932 and that this item had significant meaning associated with it from the outlined point in time through to the day of the interview. The dialogue under consideration reveals this meaning had developed through close associations with the hospital and staff that feelings of trust and respect may have emerged between the two parties that had subsequently arisen as a consequence of George donating blood to the hospital and that these feelings were further strengthened when he had his damaged leg removed by a surgeon.

In the light of George's admission that he *"can't walk too far"* his descriptions identify that he had recently purchased a wheelchair. George's initial descriptions of his chair indicate that he has customised this object to reflect his mobility needs by removing the footrests as they *"took up such a lot of room"*. However, whilst the wheelchair seems to have facilitated a more mobile lifestyle within Cedar House George readily admitted that he can *"manage without it"*. Although, as the text highlights, perhaps the primary reason for George's claim is based on the notion that the wheelchair is to heavy for him to use

effectively.   As such, this object could have the potential to become more meaningful if only it was slightly lighter.

George then moved the dialogue on to discuss the role of other objects within his experiences within Cedar View as the following passages indicate:

G: I put this extra furniture in, and this [large wooden hostess style trolley that can be used as a portable table] is wonderful because it's on casters and I can swing it round and use it as a table, yes. Of course, now I've got my word processor so that I can write letters, coz I couldn't write letters because I've got arthritis in both hands. When I'm writing anything in the diary I have to be very careful so that I can read it [laughing]. I haven't used it as a word processor for years, I just use it as a typewriter. It means that I can keep my correspondence going. But, things are starting to take more energy than you are used to. Thank God I can still think and read...[pause]...I've had to use the University Hospital a few times. It's a rather big thing, but I've felt very at home in hospital. The modern equipment is amazing. I had to have an enema which was quite a big deal, but I was most interested, they had me up on a operating table, with all the equipment around it, and the x-ray above, and I was fascinated by what was going on.   The modern equipment was terrific. When I think of my hospital days it was so different. As I say, I was so fascinated when I was having my enema which was quite a big job, but I was so fascinated with, er, how, er, all the equipment. So quite

frankly, it was not in the least bit disturbing really. On paper, it's a terrible

thing you see. Pumping stuff into you and then pumping it out again. I was

chatting to the operator while they were doing it. It was fascinating.

Interviewer: So did you have a local anaesthetic then?

G: They put barium into the bowels and then wash it out. Fascinating.

Interviewer: How long were you in hospital for?

G: An hour and a half.

Interviewer: Really?

G: Yeah. You see I had a stoppage somewhere. The doctor checked my

tummy and looked in and checked. I saw this light going down there

[laughing]. It was quite fascinating.

Interviewer: Was that uncomfortable?

G: It wasn't uncomfortable. The modern equipment is so wonderful you see.

It made me realise how things have moved on in that world. Terrific. I

believe the secret of life is positive thinking. You can literally help to keep

yourself alive. I mean, with my great limitations, I still enjoying life. Age does worry you a little bit, but you have to ignore it and keep pace with the day, that's why I find The Telegraph very stimulating. What I tend to do is to take a page out and then read it, so that I don't have to hold the paper up all the time. A Telegraph will keep me quiet for at least a couple of hours.

George's descriptions reveal that his room within Cedar View contained objects that had been purchased with ease of use in mind. For example, George described the large wooden hostess trolley as *"wonderful because its on casters and I can use it as a table..* Similarly, in the light of George's arthritis in both of his hands, he has to be very careful when he uses such items as a pen and paper to write letters, or entries into his diary in order to ensure his writing is legible. With this in mind, George often used his word processor as a typewriter so that he could comfortably correspond with his friends and/or relatives. However, whilst many of these items existed within his room within Cedar View enabled George to *"stimulate"* his own mind *[t]hings are starting to take more energy than they used to."* This is revealing in the sense that whilst George seems to enjoy *"stimulating"* his mind through being able to read and think, he seems to realise that these activities are starting to drain his available energy. Despite this, George went on to claim that *"with my great limitations I still enjoy life. Age does worry you a bit but you have to ignore it and keep pace with the day."* Viewed in the light of previous findings and interpretations, the notion could be forwarded that without the ability and energy to think and read George would no longer be in a position to gain knowledge of current affairs, business and sport. Or, in George's own words, *"I am very sorry for*

people who have no outside interest. That's a great pity. I would just fold up. That's what happens…This is the way you keep alive, isn't it?"

With the text relating to George's deteriorating health in mind, can be seen descriptions relating to a recent trip to hospital for an enema operation. Whilst many people may have found this to be a very disconcerting and uncomfortable experience, George, by contrast, seemed to feel *"very at home in hospital."* Furthermore, George's descriptions further reveal that he "thought the modern equipment [was] amazing" and that he was *"fascinated by what was going on."* To these ends, it can be identified that George created meaning through such objects equipment as the x-ray machine, and the procedure of pumping barium into his body. In describing the procedure, George used the word *"fascinating,"* on four occasions indicating the meaningful nature of his hospilaisation.

Furthermore, George's description of his bowel trouble and subsequent experience of short term hospitalisation lead him to reveal fundamental idiographic aspects of his 'cultural map of meaning' within The Warren – positive thinking. Whilst George's descriptions forward the notion that he is worried by his age and increasingly frail body he tries to ignore this and keep pace with the day. For example, in the light of the passages under consideration and the earlier dialogue pertaining to the meaningful role of George's Telegraph newspaper, the notion is further strengthened that George viewed reading his Telegraph as a means to keep him alive. However, George's description of how he interacted with his newspaper brings to the fore a further significant element of his lived experience – his frail body and especially his arthritic hands. As such, the text

indicates that in the light of this physical condition George is unable to handle and read the newspaper as whole and unified item. Consequently, the text highlights that he has to remove a page at a time as he cannot cope with holding the paper in its entirety. This indicates that while George describes the reading his newspaper as a way of keeping alive, this very strategy is crucially dependent on his increasingly frail and arthritic hands. Similarly, this strategy is also crucially based on the *"loving care"* that he received from the staff employed by the management of Cedar View.. These key people play a significant role in George's life -- this is elucidated in the following passages:

[Knock on door]

Female: [The Manager of The Warren enters the room] Hello, how are you getting on Tim [the interviewer], are you alright?

G: Come in my dear.

A: [To the interviewer] I've been so busy, I'm sorry, I had to leave you.

G: You were bright and early this morning.

A: Yes, I have to be on a Monday morning.

G: My dear friend here [referring to the interviewer], I don't know why he is putting up with me.

A: Well, I've just come to see where he was. I thought I haven't seen him for ages. Are you getting OK?

Interviewer: Yes, wonderful thanks Anne (name changed).

A: OK all right then.

G: Thank you Anne dear.

A: That's all right.

G: She is a lovely person. She was here at a quarter to eight this morning.

Interviewer: I have spoken to Anne two or three times on the phone, very helpful, very nice.

G: Oh absolutely. Of course, there are the reports they have to write as well. Everything is logged. Anything that happens to you is all logged meticulously. The staff come in at seven thirty until four, and then the evening staff come in from a quarter to four until half past nine. There are

four on during the day and three on in the afternoon and two at night, so it's
wonderfully staffed. I was lucky. I've had a very interesting life. I was
involved with churches, organisations and other people and, erm; again why
I've enjoyed it so much is because it's positive action. Very exciting
[laughter].

Interviewer: Well thank you for your time Gerald it much appreciated.

The final passages of the interview elucidate the fundamental mediator of meaning within George's experiences – the *"loving care"* that he received from the staff within Cedar View. In the light of the passages under discussion the interpretation arises whereby this can be seen to have provided the framework for George to have life sustaining interests in the outside world. The experiential trigger for this discussion was pulled when Anne (the manager of Cedar View) came to check on the progress of the interview. For example, when describing the staff within the care home George used phrases *like "she's a lovely person," "my dear,"* and *"thank you Anne dear,"* thereby indicating the meaningful nature of his social interaction with Anne. The dialogue then moved on to outline that George derived *"loving care"* from staff that cover three shifts – morning, afternoon and night, and that they were responsible for meeting the care needs of the people of the home and for logging everything that happens in meticulous detail.

The concluding passages bring to the fore many of the meaningful experiences that form patterns within the text as a whole. As such, George concluded the interview by claiming

that he has led *"a very interesting life"* and was *"involved with churches, organizations and other people."* In the light of these experiences George closed the interview by claiming that he had *"enjoyed it so much because it's positive action."*

Descriptive Summary

A detailed account of the findings and interpretations of the interview with George has been offered. Beginning with a discussion of the role of how George made himself meaningful within the context of Cedar View, it emerged that meaning was embedded within and around his Telegraph newspaper which enabled George to direct his attention to life affirming issues rather than allowing his mind to focus on mortal thoughts. Likewise, the *"loving care"* provided by the staff within the aforementioned care home provided the means by which George could comfortably maintain his interest in the outside world by reading his Telegraph newspaper, or by keeping in touch with friends and relatives. The findings and interpretations also shed light on meaningful experiences that contain memories of his pre care experiences of life as a church rector, with particular focus devoted to burial services and bereavement care. It also became apparent that George had made many friends through the church before he moved into Cedar View but unfortunately few of these still kept in contact. The interpretations also illuminated that the everyday objects that George used within his room in Cedar View enabled George to sustain his meaningful existence through their flexibility and maneuverability despite his increasing frailty. Whilst George's physical health had recently deteriorated he still attained mental *"stimulation"* from his recent visit to hospital and discussed this with great enthusiasm.

Appendix B

Elderly Consumers Experiences of a Tea-Dance

Photograph 1: Dancing to Waltz Music

Photograph 2: Consuming Food and Drink

Photograph 3: A Happy Consumer