



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

“WHATEVER HAPPENS, I WILL NEVER
SELL THE MOUNTAINS”

A reparative analysis of the temporal, political, emotional and
intellectual aspects of crafting

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate time and the values connected to different uses of time. What use is legitimate, and what is seen as a waste of time? I will argue that a general notion of time as 'bad' or 'useless' will place objects, subjects and practices in the marginal, but also establish what should be seen as important or not, which makes us value things into good and bad, effective and ineffective, worthwhile and useless. In order to discuss these issues I will use crafting and different approaches to the practice of crafting, such as temporal, emotional, political and intellectual, and economical.

Drawing on theorists such as Jack/Judith Halberstam, Elizabeth Freeman, and Sara Ahmed I will investigate how time is connected to different values and norms that decide what is possible to do, when and how. By interviewing elderly women who in one way or another (some as a leisure-time activity, and others as a professional artistic practice) deal with textile and the practice of crafting, I analyse this in four different themes: 'Bodily Practices & Tacit Knowledge' where I am discussing how the body is emotionally and temporally involved in the crafting practice, but also how this practice can be read through the understanding of 'tacit knowledge' as an intellectual knowledge, which is a way to challenge the dichotomy between body and mind. Theme two is called 'Textile in Action' and focuses on the textile material, its agency and effects, and in the third theme 'Time/Memory/History' I examine how old textile artifacts serve as a link to the past that challenges chronologic structures and notions of time. I argue that these artifact do not only make you remember thing, but can also bring you back in time and space. In the last theme called 'Crafting Conversations' I argue that crafting and writing can be read as two ways of practicing a female writing. Drawing from the theory of *écriture féminine* I will show how the crafting practice can be used, and seen as a resistance towards an economy of efficiency.

Keywords: Crafting, chrononormativity, tacit knowledge, embodiment, time, reparative reading, writing, economization of time.

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CHAPTER 1 | *Introduction*

SILK WORK – TURNING FABRIC INTO OTHER FABRIC / CHILDHOOD BLANKET
WITH THE SATIN BINDING / SKIN HUNGER / BRO’S PILLOW “PIFFO,” HIS
DROOLING, “MAKING FISHES” ON IT / MAY SAY SOMETHING ABOUT HOW
HUNGRY OUR SKIN WAS FOR TOUCH; BUT ALSO ABOUT OUR HAVING THE
PERMISSION TO DEVELOP AUTONOMOUS RESOURCES / TREASURE SCRAPS
OF SILK / SOMEHOW THE SILK AND SHIT GO TOGETHER – THE WASTE
PRODUCTS, FANTASIES OF SELF SUFFICIENCY, NOT DEPENDENT, SPINNING
STRAW INTO GOLD.¹

I enter this work with a question about time and the values connected to different uses of time. What use is legitimate, and what is seen as a waste of time? The effectiveness in today’s society is hard to escape, and maybe that’s also a reason for the new boom of crafters around the world, seeking some kind of space and/or practice that lies outside the normalized understandings of effectiveness and economical profit as an axiomatic truth. Today there are thousand upon thousand of forums, meeting places and cafés for people interested in crafts; as a creative practice, pastime or as a political practice. ‘Craftivism’², the combination of the concepts crafts and activism, has grown large since its beginning with the group *Knitta Please* in the U.S. 2005 (Engström 2014:32); today few would be surprised or confused by crafted pieces being placed in public areas around the city, even though not everyone agrees on its beauty or value as a practice of political change.³

Another recurrent concept that is connected to the practice of crafts is art; both crafters and artists seem to be eager to make a clear division between the two concepts and practices, by placing them wide apart. The artistic practice is connected to the public sphere, while craft is located in the private sphere (Rosenqvist 2006:216). This division between crafts and art is an interesting topic for discussion, especially since sites like Etsy.com⁴, a space where crafters can promote themselves and make a business of their creativity, has grown large. This can be read as an attempt to increase the value of the crafting practice, and also as a way to

¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick *A Dialogue of Love* 1999:206

² The concept Craftivism is very interesting and deserves attention in an academic setting, although, it will not be the focus in this thesis. Rather it serves as a contextualisation of the field of crafting and a part in the story of how things came to matter to me in the beginning of the thinking process.

³ For further reading regarding Craftivism see Greer, Betsy (ed.) (2014): *Craftivism. The Art of Craft and Activism*. And Engström, Frida Arnqvist (2014): *Gerillaslördag. Garngraffiti, DIY och den handgjorda revolutionen*.
⁴ The concept (2014): *Gerillaslördag. Garngraffiti, DIY och den handgjorda revolutionen*.
³ For further reading regarding Craftivism see Greer, Betsy (ed.) (2014): *Craftivism. The Art of Craft and Activism*. And Engström, Frida Arnqvist (2014): *Gerillaslördag. Garngraffiti, DIY och den handgjorda revolutionen*.

⁴ ”Etsy is a marketplace where people around the world connect, both online and offline, to make, sell and buy unique goods” (<https://www.etsy.com/se-en/about/?ref=ifr>)

justify the amount of time put into crafting. This points out the interesting connections, as well as the differences between art and craft, and the demand to go public with your work in order to exist. This kind of administrations could be seen as a form of economization of the practice of crafts, as a possible way to keep on crafting in a society that demands efficiency and profit, but also a way to justify your own use of time, and argue that it is well spent, since it suddenly is a matter of possible economical income.⁵ Etsy.com can also be compared to ravelry.com⁶, which is a free community "for knitters, crocheters, designers, spinners, weavers and dyers to keep track of their yarn, tools, project and pattern information, and look to others for ideas and inspiration". Here the emphasis lies on sharing your work, uploading thoughts, projects, or commenting on others work, being a part of a world wide crafting community. Instead of an economical reward, the value lies in receiving feedback and being appreciated for your work; something that, in the same way as money, can function as justification regarding your time-use. In this sense, the practice also becomes public, which could be seen as a way to deal with the efficiency norms and the economical system that demands that every act should have its purpose.

A third example on strategies to deal with the economization of value regarding crafting is craftivism, which as I mentioned earlier, is a fusion of the concepts activism and crafting. Craftivism often have an element of publicity to it, both regarding the location of the objects (the public sphere), and the aim of the practice (pushing an issue, making a statement, a protest or reclaiming public spaces). This can be read as a way to make sense of the practice of crafting outside of today's understanding of time and value.

The associations that are connected to crafting are many and various; women's practice, a decorative and unproductive practice⁷, empowerment, politics, mindfulness, producing knowledge, passing down tradition and knowledge, being a therapeutic practice etcetera. And the understandings concerning craft vary throughout different cultures and contexts, which makes it even more interesting to start these discussions about how to relate to something charged with cultural heritages and connotations, but also full of potential for

⁵ As a reaction towards the business-oriented approach on Esty.com, where selling and buying is placed in focus, the American actor and comedian April Winchell started a website called Regretsy in 2009. Here she questioned the banality of the concept of making profit on everything handmade, and a number of interesting questions are being raised in this resistance; what could Etsy.com have been if it wasn't focused on selling and buying? What kind of emotions and processes are connected to handmade practices? (Engström 2014:59) These are all very interesting questions and thoughts, and although Regretsy was first and foremost an ironic and sarcastic response to the perceived pretentiousness regarding Etsy.com, I see clear connections to these questions in relation to the work I am doing with this thesis.

⁶ <http://www.ravelry.com/about>

⁷ Svensson & Waldén argues that the value in the unproductive embroidery lies in the uselessness and in immaterial values such as beauty and the need to express oneself, rather than in the usability of the object. These values are also connected to artistic objects, with the difference that a work of art never has to deal with the lack of usefulness to be understood as worthwhile (2005:13).

unexpected readings and outcomes. One often talks about ‘tacit knowledge’ in relation to practices such as crafting, this kind of knowledge can be described as practical and is hard or even impossible to explain in words and through theories, rather you have to practice it in order to learn it. This is a knowing that is separated from a theory-based knowledge, and thereby easily disregarded in a hierarchy of knowledge-forms, since a common opinion is that knowledge always is/should be possible to formulate through language is still dominating (Bohlin 2009:56). The reasons to stress the importance of tacit knowledge, Henrik Bohlin argues, is on one hand because of its importance in everyday life (if we did not possess all of the knowledge’s that one learns through practices, life would be impossible), but also in work life where this type of knowledge comes to hand every day, i.e. in health care. (Bohlin 2009:55-57). By keeping this in mind I will argue that the practice of crafting can be seen as an intellectual practice, a place where theory is being put into practice. Considering the metaphors that spring from the textile context that are often used in theory, such as: twin, clew, weave, sew, stitch, and knit, all with the emphasis on bringing separate thing together by combining them in unexpected ways, with the possible result of an new unforeseen wholeness, also places the practice of crafting in an interesting position in relation to the practice of theorizing and writing. The possibility to acquire knowledge through old artifacts, by following the threads and undoing the work in order to re-enact and reproduce is another interesting, and more practical aspect of the textile material. There lies a potential in the textile material, primarily in the perceived embodiment and texture of the material, but also in its political, historical and gendered contexts, weaved into the textile work. The touch of an old garment can make you travel in both time and space; it can waken your senses and give you a glimpse of past time, or to follow Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s reasoning’s:

To perceive texture is never only to ask or know What is it like? nor even just How does *it* impinge on *me*? Textural perception always explores two other questions as well: How did it get that way? and What could I do with it?

(2003:13)

1:1 | Disposition

This thesis is divided into three chapters: ‘*Introduction*’, ‘*Analysis*’ and ‘*Conclusion*’. In the first chapter I present my aim and research questions, this is followed by a short review of previous research concerning my field. After that I will present the different methodological and analytical approaches that I will use, but also reflect on difficulties I have encountered during this work, specially regarding the ethnographical methods that I have chosen to use (although,

reflexivity will pervade all of the sections of this work). This is followed by the theoretical approaches in which I will present the different theoretical frameworks that will follow me in the analysis. In the section 'Material' I will present the informants and how I came in contact with them, but also why I chose to expand my material further and widening the analysis. After that I will give a short introduction to the analysis chapter followed by four sections of analysis: 'Bodily Practices & Tacit Knowledge', 'Textile in Action', 'Time/Memory/History' and 'Crafting Conversation'. Finally I will present the conclusions and finishing reflections.

1:2 | Aim and Research Question

The aim in this thesis is to investigate the practice of crafting from several different perspectives such as time, embodiment, capitalism, material, writing, art, memory and history. I will do this by conversing with people who in one or another way are engaged in the practice of crafting, both in a professional and non-professional sense as crafters and artists. These conversations will lead my work forward and is a way for me to try out my own thoughts through discussions, conversations and by participating in the collective practice of crafting. I believe that it is hard to understand complicated thoughts within one single mind, and therefore; by engaging in discussions and conversations with the informants, as well as the theorists, I can begin to describe and explore the feelings, emotions and thoughts that stem from the textile material and the crafting process. This project is in many aspects an experiment and shall be seen as an attempt to put words on these thoughts and feelings that I find hard to get a hold of and pin down, it is an experiment that allows for trail and error, and aims toward a openness that allows vulnerability and emotions.

I will do this by posing several research questions that I will answer and develop below. Questions such as: How can/does the informants look at and perceive different uses of time when it comes to the practice of crafting? What kind of different values does the informants ascribe to the practice of crafting? Is it possible to read this practice as a form of resistance, and how does it in that case look like? How can one understand the crafting practice in a different way than just as an old fashioned practice connoted with feminine past time, and sometimes even waste of time, what alternatives are there?

Further I will discuss how/whether the informants perceive the body to be emotionally and/or temporally involved in the crafting practice, but also whether it is possible to challenge the dichotomy between body and mind by looking at crafting as an intellectual knowledge, usurped through the body. These different questions will not be equally important to all of the

informants, but rather play different roles in different times and places, which is something that I aim to reflect in the work, partly through my choice of using the concept of the archive to point out the importance of letting different and various materials, thoughts and aspects exist in the same place, and letting them react and touch one another.

Finally, what I am presenting in this work is only the beginning to investigate the intricate and intriguing aspects of crafting.

1:3 | Previous Research

There are different ways to go about when trying to sort out the previous research regarding the field of crafting. I have chosen to present theorists that have theorized around crafting and textile art in a feminist and/or political context since that serves my purpose with my own work best.

One of the first theorists to write about textile crafting connected to gender issues and theories is Rozsika Parker, who in *The Subversive Stitch. Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (1996) discuss the practice of embroidery and the preconceptions concerning it. Parker asks the question why embroidery has been seen as merely a skilled craft instead of an act of art, she answers the question by using gender theory and locating embroidery in the context of femininity. She traces the history of embroidery from the medieval times and forward and shows how the embroidery practice have shifted from being a practice involving both women and men, to something that is seen as naturally feminine and almost only available for women. Although, she argues, the practice of embroidery has always inhabited a subversive potential to negotiate the feminine role and make resistance. In the book *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (1981) Griselda Pollock and Rozsika Parker investigates the role of femininity in the writing of art history and why art made by women has been set apart from art made by men, and how come some practices are seen as art, while other (for example embroidery) is rather categorised as craft? Another person who is worth mentioning here is Linda Nochlin who wrote *Women Artist: 1550-1950* (1977) together with Ann Sutherland Harris. These four theorists have all been a part of a critical movement that have re-defined research in art history which in the end have been crucial for me in constructing this project.

There is a long tradition of textile crafting in Sweden, and the practice have been important in different context, i.e. creating and upholding a self-image of the nation, as a way to construct identity, but also a necessary knowledge and practice in the rustic society. Because of this, there is a lot research done in Sweden regarding crafting, but this research is usually

done in ethnology that has a tradition of having a nation-constructing function, and most of this research only deals with pure documentations and analysis regarding the textile. It was not until the 1990s that the analysis shifted focus to a more cultural and gender theoretical approach (Svensson & Waldén 2006:8). One of the most prominent theorists in Sweden doing research in the field of crafting is Louise Waldén who did her dissertation on the importance of technique for social changes within something she calls women's culture.⁸ In *Handen och Anden* (1994) Waldén continues her investigation by approaching another aspect of the crafting practice: the crafting group (syjuntor) and its significance as a meeting place but also as an in-between zone between the private and the public. She argues that crafting groups should be understood as playground where one is allowed to get absorbed into the creative practices that interests one (Waldén 1994:7). I take departure in Waldén's research and aim to include further approaches such as time, memory, capitalism and emotions, to name a few.

In the 1970s there were three very important exhibitions that took place in Gothenburg: *Serf – OWN LIFE (Livegen – EGET LIV)* in 1973, *Reality Leaves Its Mark (Verkligheten sätter spår)* in 1975 and *The Myth of Motherhood, Motherhood, Humanity (Modersmyt – moderskap – mänskenskap)* in 1979. These exhibitions were the starting point for the transformation of how to view artistic expressions, but also the discussion on what kind of materials could be used in the context of art. Ann-Charlotte Glasberg Blomqvist's text "Feministisk textil konst i Göteborg under 1970-talet" (2005), and Lena Boëthius' "Women's right, class struggle and collectivism" (2009) both deals with these exhibitions in their analysis of the textile material connected to feminism and art.

During the last couple of years textile has been resurrected in a feminist oriented field and is now being used in new and exciting ways when it comes to feminist, gender and queer studies. This is shown in Elizabeth Freeman and her use of the textile and textile art in *Time Binds. Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (2010). Here she examines a mode of campy in Allyson Mitchell's artwork, a mode "that turns feminist, sometimes fat, sometime dowdy, always unruly female bodies into irreverent living museums" (2010:xi). Freeman argues that the textile art can open "up a tactile relationship to a collective past, one not simply performative or citational but physical and even erotic" (Ibid.:93). This is a way, she claims, to actually feel the historical. I will come back to Freeman in the theory chapter, and also later on in the analysis where I will particularly use her understandings of time and chrononormativity in relation to crafting.

⁸ For further reading on Louise Waldén: 2004:"Syföreningen: kvinnorörelse utanför kvinnorörelsen?" in Dahlbäck, Cecilia (ed.) *På vidsträckt fält. Svenska kyrkans syföreningar 1844-2004*, Stockholm: Verbum. 2002: "Textilens Text" in Westergren, Christina (ed.) *Tyg överallt. Fattaburen 2002*, Stockholm: Nordiska museets Förlag. 1999: "Handarbetet – hatat och hyllat" in Lundahl, Gunilla (ed.) *Den vackra onyttan*, Hedemora: Gidlunds. 1994: *Handen och Anden. De textila Studiecirkelarnas hemlighet*, Stockholm: Carlssons. 1990: *Genom symaskinens nålsöga: Om teknik och social förändring i kvinnokultur och manskultur*, Stockholm: Carlssons,

Small signs of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's own practice as a crafter and a textile artist are visible in her last book *Touching Feeling* (2003), mainly through her discussions of the concept 'texture'. She argues that one should look at the practice of crafting as a way of inhabiting the world that requires not only practice, or as she describes it: a 'pedagogy of recognition', but also knowledge (Sedgwick 2003:153-81). I find this approach very useful for my own work and will come back to Sedgwick in the method chapter below and develop her theories, mainly regarding reparative reading and knowledge production.

Ann Cvetkovich, another feminist theorist, uses textile in her reasoning regarding depression. She uses the activist and artists Lisa Anne Auerbach, Sheila Pepe and Allyson Mitchell in her analysis and discussions regarding the resurgence of interest in craft in her book *Depression. A Public Feeling* (2012). She connects spiritual practices to creative practices by describing both of them as a form of embodied response to the fact of getting stuck or depressed in academia as well as in activism. She argues that crafting, the repetitive and meditative motions works as a relief and can be a way out of a depression or crisis. Cvetkovich's understanding of crafting as a method and an antidote towards psychic illness, feelings of pointlessness and dysphoria, have shown to be useful in my own analysis and understandings of the material that I have collected. She points to the importance in bodily practices, to *use* the body, letting it work in order to release the mind from stress, which is a reoccurring theme in the stories told below by the informants. I will come back to Cvetkovich and her theories in the chapter regarding theoretical approaches below.

1:4 | Methodology, analytical approaches and reflexivity

Turning to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in my method is a way to escape the paranoid and suspicious readings; moving "from the rather fixated question Is a particular piece of knowledge true, and how can we know? to the further question: What does knowledge *do* – the pursuit of it, the having and exposing of it, the receiving again of knowledge of what one already knows? *How*, in short, is knowledge performative, and how best does one move among its causes and effects?" (2003:124) In this way the possibilities of gathering and analysing material widens and there are no longer any demands on delivering absolute knowledge or solid results; it is simply not interesting anymore, instead other ways of working and thinking through the material occur. This is a reparative reading, done with good intentions and with the ability to connect seemingly separate objects and explore new outcomes. Sedgwick argues that the practice of paranoid readings, or what Paul Ricoeur calls 'the hermeneutics of

suspicion' has been a dominating method in the field of gender studies, with prominent writers such as Judith Butler leading the way. Sedgwick describes the current paranoid consensus within queer and gender studies as disavowing and a misrecognition of other ways of knowing or requiring knowledge that is not oriented around suspicion and the act of dismantling. Through this understanding the reparative readings "are inadmissible in paranoid theory both because they are about pleasure ('merely aesthetic') and because they are frankly ameliorative ('merely reformist')" (2003:144). This reasoning regarding a reparative reading opens for more allowable and vivid perspectives on critical readings, and it would be highly problematic if the paranoid and suspicious inquiries were the only ones to be taken seriously and given weight in their knowledge-producing activity (Ibid.:126). I agree with Sedgwick that this unidirectional future-oriented paranoia breeds a complexity towards temporality "because there must be no bad surprises, and because learning of the possibilities of a bad surprise would itself constitute a bad surprise, paranoia requires that bad news be always already known" (Ibid.:130). Instead I try to welcome the unknown, and embrace the uncertainty, allowing for unseen things to happen, and letting the material take over when it has to.

In addition to the reparative readings, I will also approach the material in a poetic matter, which is a way to let the poetic style be a tool for the theoretical thinking process. The poetic language creates movements and ambivalences that destabilize concepts that otherwise threaten to cement the strict boundaries between rational academic writing and the more vivid language that springs from the thought. I believe, alongside Mara Lee that "the radical potential in the poetical language lies in that it open up for possibilities regarding struggles that take place at different, and sometimes contrarious levels at the same time" [my translation] (2014:65). John Law points to some of the problems regarding the conventions of academic work when it comes to how to relate to different forms of methods and trying to break free from "reproducing versions of common-sense realism" (2003:9). Law suggests that the use of allegories, which is "the art of meaning something other than, or in addition to, what is being said, [but also] the art of crafting multiplicities, indefinitenesses, undecidabilities. Of holding them together" (2003:9-10) could be a way to dodge the presupposed understandings of material and method being clean and neat, fitting into a presupposed form, living up to ideas about how it should behave and what it should look like.

In order to do the reparative readings I use the concept of the archive, a physical as well as a mental place for storage and organization. An archive is, according to The New Oxford Dictionary of English (1998) "A collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people". Here I would like to add

‘practices’ as well as the understanding of an archive of feelings that for instance Cvetkovich (2012) discusses.⁹ An archive is kept to show the function of the person or the organization that collected the material put into the archive. In my case – an archive of texture functions as a gathering place and outburst of touchy-feely material.

Jacques Derrida gives a thorough etymological explanation of the word *archive* and our use of it in the past as well as the future in his book *Archive Fever* (1996). He reads the archive to be a sheltered place where objects can be filed into specific categorizations, preserving ideas, thoughts or events to a possible future. But the archive is also a desperate fear of forgetting, letting go, or loosing what was once yours. This thesis is my archive; it possesses different objects that you have to touch, or be touched by: a space for the movable material. This is the starting point from which it all begins, and most importantly the archive is a space conditioned by *besideness*, where different materials feel and touch each other, a space where they become what they are in the context they’re in, a space that creates them and makes them understandable for each other and for me (Sedgwick 2003:8).

Following this reparative reading is to resist having all the problems solved ahead of time (as if that at all could be possible), instead my archive might seem like a mess, consisting of a variety of objects and thoughts, which with a first glimpse don’t seem to belong together. And that might actually be the case, but had all of the parts of this work fit nicely together there would have been something wrong, either with my own contribution, or with the selection of material, theory and thought. Rather, I aim at finding ways to cope with the messiness, and get to know the confusion, but also realizing that my materials will never be still and solid, but rather a moving target, changing shape and position (Law 2003:4).

1:4:1 | Doing observations and interviews

Gösta Arvastson and Billy Ehn explain ethnographic observations as a method to discover new sides of everyday life, but there is a big difference between using your eyes to look, and to use them in order to gather material through systematic observations. When using this method one have to relate to reflexivity and question the presumed idea that observations could be an unproblematic source of knowledge. Instead one should look at it as a cultural analysis that is shaped by class, gender, sex, and ethnicity, to just name a few (2009:19-21).

⁹ For further discussions on the use and possibilities of archives, see among other; Ann Cvetkovich’s “archive of feelings” in *An Archive of Feelings*, Sara Ahmed’s “unhappy archives” in *The Promise of Happiness*, Laurel Berlant “I Hate Your Archive” in *The Queen Goes to Washington City*, and Jack/Judith Halberstam’s “silly archives” in *A Queer Art of Failure* for their use and discussion about the archive

To critically think about interviews, and what can happen in the interview-situation, I have found a great help from Pamela Cotterill and her article “Interviewing Women. Issues of Friendship, Vulnerability, and Power” (1992). Here she examines issues of friendship, vulnerability and power in the interview-situation between women. She points towards some important aspects that one has to keep in mind when working with interviews, for example the difficulties for the interviewer to come close enough and be trusted to be able to get answers from the informants that are not only conformed by general ideas of ‘right’ answers but also how to interact with strangers (Ibid.:595). When it comes to how to cope with power relations in these situations Cotterill argues that the aspect of age is important to consider, something that I fully agree with since the position I found myself in during my interviews was highly conditioned by the aspect of assumed age. All of the informants that I interviewed, except one, were at least 30 years older than me which puts me in a peculiar situation where I am trying to claim status through my education and knowledge in order to preform as a professional and ‘good’ researcher. Although, it proved quite quickly that most of the informants took me for a young, 20 years old girl doing a ‘project’ and not as a grown woman in her 30s doing her master thesis. Another aspect of the concerns regarding age is the fact that my research is dealing with questions about economization of time and efficiency, where I am located in the centre of the productive life-schedules, whereas they are being outside of this understanding due to their age. This created an interesting but also problematic relation between us where I partly felt like a novice, turning to an older generation to be enlightened with knowledge, but also being the researcher ‘just doing her work’ (Ibid.:599).

Another important aspect of the method of interviewing is that “the researcher is bound to be affected by what occurs during the interview, for even if she attempts to control her own feelings, she cannot do so for others” (Ibid.:598). During some of the interviews I noticed that my questions brought up emotions and memories, placing the informants in a vulnerable situation that had to be dealt with by me in order to not leave the informant in a fragile position with a feeling of exposure. It was very important for me that the interview-sessions would give the informants something in return, and I hoped to make them aware of the fact that their knowledge and thoughts are highly important and valuable for me and others. This especially since a reoccurring statement from the women in Flinka Fingrar was that their knowledge was ‘useless’, ‘unimportant’ and that they had nothing to contribute to the research that I conducted, something that I tried to refute over and over again by pointing out that my interest lied in *their* thoughts and ideas regarding their practices of crafting, and that *they* are the experts.

I made a list of questions concerning the crafting practice, preferable material, emotions, memories and feelings. It was a hard task for me to make understandable questions out of my very unclear thoughts of what I wanted to investigate, and by making the questions quite wide and general I opened up for discussions and further questions. But above all it was a true challenge to work with ethnographic methods since I have not done that before.

Some of the interviews went very easy, here the informants associated further and could talk about the topics that I provided without me intervening more than just to steer the conversation into the right direction. Other interviews were in greater need of structure and gave me a more visible role being the one posing the questions one after the other. It seemed to me that in these situations the informants could not disregard my role as a researcher, but rather assigned that role with a position of omniscient knowledge and 'rights' and 'wrongs', although I did my best to avoid this. The power relations between the informants and me as a researcher got enhanced in these situations, and this made it hard for me to make them believe that I was not after any 'right' answers, but rather their own ideas and thoughts. This happened in some of the interview situations, while in others the roles were almost reversed: I got the role of a novice, listening and learning, getting taught by the knowing master. I found these different roles very interesting, and among other a result of the individual perception of one's knowledge, and how one values this knowledge.

Since all of the interviews are done in Swedish, and the loss in translation is extensive, I will include all of the quotes in Swedish at the end of the page in footnotes, where they are discussed. This is an attempt to give the readers an ability to understand and analyse the translations on their own.

1:4:2 | Reflexivity

To create and name an archive is a dangerous matter; it might suggest that the things in the archive 'belong' together, and that the belonging is marked by one's own presence. What I offer is a model of the archive as a 'contact zone', a place where seemingly separate objects/thoughts/ideas/practices will be placed side by side. "An archive is an effect of multiple forms of contact, including institutional forms of contact (with libraries, books, web sites), as well as everyday forms of contact (with friends, families, others). Some forms of contact are presented and authorized through writing (and listed in the references), whilst other forms of contact will be missing, will be erased, even though they may leave their trace." (Ahmed 2004:14) The archive does not only provide a space for me to place my material side

by side, it also opens the possibility for me to show how the materials, theories and my own thoughts take shape through one another, and sometimes even shape each other.

By using the archive I hope to be able to present a more varied and complex picture of my subject of interest. I believe that artifacts, as well as texts can tell different, yet equally important stories and give interesting insights into the realm of the textile, which is why I find it interesting to go to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's book *Touchable Feeling* in order to describe the very sensation of feeling when working or thinking of textile. And in the same sense as the texture of textile – a material that is formable and flexible – the archive can store all sorts of material, without it getting too crowded.

The analytical approaches that I apply in this thesis are quite many. A reason for that is that I felt that only doing interviews would leave out too much interesting material that the observations and group discussions could give. Although, now I am finding myself in a situation where the informants might read what I have written, and I have to relate to the possibilities that they might talk back to, or even reject my analysis, a situation you never have to think about when using other types of material that are not alive and breathing in the same sense. This is a practice of dealing with a messy material that will not follow my instructions, even though I am aware of the impossibility of clean and neat methods. I will aim to embrace the messiness of my material since I agree with John Law that “in practice research needs to be messy and heterogeneous. It needs to be messy and heterogeneous, because that is the way it, in research, actually is” (2003:3).

1:5 | Theoretical approaches

I will present multiple theories of time and performativity, since I believe that the concept of time is a key to the thinking, as well as to the practice of crafting. In *Time Binds. Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (2010) Elizabeth Freeman argues that the body “is bound into socially meaningful embodiment through temporal regulation”, something that she is referring to as *chrononormative*; using time to “organize individual human bodies toward maximum productivity”. Further on, this process also binds people together, providing a feeling of collectivity through certain arrangements of time (2010:3). Chrononormativity is a way by which institutional forces come to seem like somatic facts. In this sense one can also talk about queer uses of time, to consciously use time in the ‘wrong’ way, which messes up the readability of the subject in matter. An example of this could be an adult playing with dolls when there is no child present, and an old person dressing ‘youngish’, or participating in practices that

are considered belonging to the younger crowd, or a child being precocious. But also grown ups that don't want to participate in the normative life-schedule that presents different obligatory contents to fill – such as getting married, participate in reproductive practices, having a full-time job etcetera.

Jack/Judith Halberstam describes queer time as a term for the specific models of temporal frames that unfolds once one leaves the ideals and temporal norms of the bourgeois reproduction and family life, engaging in the production of queer counter-politics. Halberstam argues that queers uses time and space in ways that challenge the concepts of progress, maturity, adulthood and responsibility, opening up for other possible positions for the subject to inhabit (2005:6-13). When discussing the practices of creating things, either together or alone, one easily gets stuck in situations of valuing and ranking the results. Implementing the notion of failure discussed by Halberstam in *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011) might be a way to dodge that trap. Halberstam discusses failure as a possible queer act with an affective quality to it. Failing is breaking loose from norms of success and advancement; it is doing something that is seen as mis-spent time and useless, in relation to a capitalist neo-liberal market. In a context of harsh political climate, within the academia as well as society as a whole, it is important to remember and realise the value of failing, partly as a form of affective resistance, but also as a creative, zestful and productive practice. In the search after new ways of being and knowing that stands outside of conventional understanding of success, Halberstam argues that success in a heteronormative, capitalist society equates too easily to specific forms of reproductive maturity combined with wealth accumulation and argues that "under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, nor knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world"(2011:2-3). If success demands such big efforts, then maybe failure would be an easier and alternative way to do things, a way that would offers other kinds of rewards than success.

Sara Ahmed describes how emotions are placed in between or attached to certain bodies and what it means for these bodies to be seen as emotional, while other bodies can uphold their image of rationality without any struggle. To be rational is according to Ahmed easier for some bodies and out of reach for others, the bodies that can't reach rationality becomes viewed on as emotional, and: "To be emotional is to have one's judgement affected: it is to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather than autonomous". Emotions are culturally associated to femininity, as is the textile material and the practices that deal with textile. This leads to an image of crafting as something emotionally charged and soft, no matter how much physical strength or technicality that might lie in the act. This is a part of the

hierarchy within knowledge production, as well as between different emotions, were a positivist, sterile and rational knowledge is seen to be more 'true' and 'objective' than a knowledge based in the body with focus on emotions and feelings. There is also a hierarchy between emotions, which places certain emotions high up, signalling cultivation, where others will signal weakness and a primitive state. As long as the emotions at hand can contribute with tools that can come in handy in the aim of progression, or if seen as some kind of tool when it comes to enhancing intelligence (2004:3). Emotions also move, towards certain subjects more than others, and between other objects, "emotions shape the very surface of bodies, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time, as well as through orientations towards and away from others" (Ibid.:4). The way in which we consider an object, for example fabric, is dependent on the history of the object, what kind of connections have been made to the objects, and what stories are told about the object and the connections to it (Ibid.:8).

Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey present a way to think *about*, *through* and *with* the skin as a point of departure for a different way of thinking. "Such an approach engenders a way of thinking that attends to the forms and folds of living skin at the same time as it takes the shape of such skin, as it forms and re-forms, unfolds and refolds"(2004:1). This is a way of theorizing embodiment, and remembering that "the body is the site from which thinking takes place" since the practices of thinking can not be separated from the body, but are rather "implicated in the passion, emotions, materiality that are associated with lived embodiment" (2004:3). Their aim to take serious the task of continuing the feminist project of taking bodies seriously, both as subjects and objects of thinking, theorizing and acting. I believe that this approach towards the body and embodiment will make a good complement to the other theories that I have chosen to use, but it will also work as a reminder for me to not forget my own body, as well as the bodily aspects of my material during my work.

Ann Cvetkovich is, as I have mentioned above, discussing the practice of crafts as a way to handle depression, a psychic state that according to her is "a way to describe neoliberalism and globalization in affective terms" (Cvetkovich 2012:11-12). Her aim is to take the feelings of unhappiness and hopelessness seriously, looking at the productivity demanded in the academic sphere as a result of the corporate cultures demanding "deliverables and measurable outcomes" that proves that you are only as good as what you produce. She poses the question: "What would it mean to make thinking easier? Or to make its difficulties and impasses more acceptable? What is going on when you can't write?" (Ibid.:19). Cvetkovich argues the importance of creativity and point out that creativity embraces "different ways of being able to move: to solve problems, have ideas, be joyful about the present, make things.

Conceived of in this way, it is embedded in everyday life, not something that belongs only to artists or to transcendent forms of experience” (Ibid.:21).

This understanding of the bodily aspects of crafting have been important for my own understanding of this project, and it has also been one of the foundations in my attempt to develop new understandings of the importance of bodily movements, both regarding crafting and writing, and to always remember that the importance lies in the “attempt to make things, to be creative, to do something” (Ibid.:161)

In *När Andra skriver. Skrivande som motstånd, ansvar och tid* (2014) Mara Lee argues with Hélène Cixous¹⁰ that poetics can be useful when doing theory and claims that the body is absolutely central in the writing process: “There is an agency, a force and a possibility to formulate resistance, but it has to start from the body, because whether we want it or not: every time I open my mouth it is partly the body that speaks, I can’t get around that fact. I speak (with) my body. The body speaks (with) me.” [my translation] (2014:60). Lee shows how inevitable the body is since all of our practices and actions start from our bodies, and she argues that by using poetic when doing theory one might come closer to what one is aiming for since there is a kind of directness in the poetics that will not let things slip through or away.

This brings me to the theory of ‘tacit knowledge’ where I have chosen to use Hendrik Bohlins arguments regarding how one might view knowledge that is hard to pinpoint. He makes an example of a nurse who through experience learns to detect certain severe deceases, a knowledge that is impossible to teach or learn from lectures and book, rather you have to experience it and imprint the knowledge into your body (2009:55-56). I will use this understanding of the knowledge that often is understood as ‘silent’, in my own reasoning regarding the writing practice and the crafting practice, to point at the potential intellectuality in the practices, but also embodiment.

1:6 | Material

In the summer of 2014 I went to an exhibition in Angered, Gothenburg called *Staden i Skogen* (The City in the Forest) where Jennie McMillen¹¹ showed some of her pieces. I didn’t know who she was, but her work immediately struck me. There were 3D pieces of houses and trees, flat pieces hanging on the walls picturing landscapes, people and animals, airplanes and guns; everything made with textile and embroidery. I found it fascinating and intriguing how she

¹⁰ For further reading on Hélène Cixous see 1976: “The Laugh of the Medusa” in *Signs*, vol. 1 No. 4 and 1991: “*Coming to Writing*” *And Other Essays*

¹¹ For further information about Jennie McMillen and her work, see: <http://www.jenniemcmillen.com/bildindex.html>

used the material to build up these miniature landscapes, but also the detailed and enormous work put into such small pieces. Her art made me want to talk to her and discuss how the material came to be so important for her, where her stories in the pieces came from, but also try out my own thoughts and ideas. This is how I came to realise that I wanted to meet people in my masters' thesis, to talk and listen, discuss and think and with them. Below follows an introduction of the informants I met.

1:6:1 | Informants

In the search for informants my focus lied on groups of older women who do crafts together (syjuntor); partly because these groups often are connected to a certain notion of having a lot of spare time, but also since being retired often means to suddenly find yourself outside of the productive system, no longer useful in an economical sense. Freeman uses the concept *chrononormativity* to describe the mechanisms that places different bodies inside or outside of this system, she argues that “the naked flesh is bound into socially meaningful embodiment through temporal regulation” which means that time is used in a regulatory way to organize bodies toward maximum productivity (Freeman 2010:3). When you no longer belong in this system you have to make your time useful and valuable again, in order to make your days meaningful.

Since the practice of crafting together is often done in the private sphere, and not always open to the public, the search for informants turned out to be quite hard. After sending a couple of requests to groups and people I thought could be helpful, I got an e-mail from the advisor of crafts in Västra Götaland; it turned out she had met a group of older women who met once a week, doing textile projects together that she thought would be perfect for my project. This is how I came in contact with Flinka Fingrar (Nimble Fingers), a group of seniors in Backa, Hisingen Gothenburg.

To include more perspectives and thoughts into my work I look for additional informants, people who might relate to the practice of crafting and the materials in other ways than the group mentioned above. The informants that I found had one thing in common, and that is that they all are textile artists. I chose them because of my interest in weaving things together to try to see similarities and possibilities, but also to try to establish a communication and exchange between different views on a bodily practice.

To introduce all of the informants that I have had the privilege to meet and talk to, it will be necessary to observe the possible consequences of sorting things into different

categories, placing them in certain boxes and what that might do to the material. I will divide the informants into two groups to be able to present them in an accurate way. Although this division is very problematic; it threatens to reproduce a dichotomous view on art, craft and knowledge, I still find it important to be able to talk about these groups as in some sense separate from each other. Partly in order to understand the contexts they are from, but also I consider this division as an opening for thoughts and critical discussions regarding presumed and/or imagined values. After this introduction all of the informants will be anonymous, both regarding names and professions, since the focus for me have been the informants' knowledge, thoughts and reasoning's, not connected to whether their practices have been professional or non-professional. This is also an attempt to approach all of the material in a 'flat' way, not giving one group more credibility or space then the other. All of the knowledge, thoughts and wisdoms expressed by the informants are equally important for this thesis. It is also a way to promote the actual practices, answers and experiences, without trying to value their status of knowledge and placement. I am aiming at keeping the material in the centre, letting the textures and textiles take place, and through this centre draw my theoretical statements outwards and onward.

1:6:2 | Flinka Fingrar

My first meeting with Flinka Fingrar was very nervous. I went there to present my project and see whether anyone was interested in participating in the interviews. There were more or less ten women in the group, and when I entered the small room it felt like I was doing my first day at the new school, being studied and measured by all of the eyes pointing at my direction. One of the women approached me and said, "I hope you brought something to work with. You can't sit here with nothing to do with your hands, you know". When I showed the work I had brought she shone up, a bit surprised, but pleased, as though that was the ritual of initiation, and I passed. This made it clear that they wanted me to participate in their activities, to include me in the group, and very soon I noticed that I actually felt very relaxed being there.

Some of the women in the group approached me quite easily, wanting to tell their stories on what they though were interesting and important, but also showing their crafts or describing what they worked on at home. They also told me that they currently worked on a big blanket together, so they all had to learn this new technique on how to knit "domino squares". The finished blanket would then later be raffled in their lottery, and the money they earned would be donated to charity.

The knitting ran at different speeds around the table, some had eye on how to make these squares, while others were new to the task. It seemed to be essential that everyone had something to work with while chatting, this would ease the notion of wasting time since they kept occupied by produced things in the meantime, which made the time of socialization more useful and productive, and thereby more legitimate. But the collective practices also opens up for rest, silence, and conversation. I think about the symbolic act of collectively knitting squares and then putting them together into a warm blanket that an unknown person will take home and use. How all of these hands are working together, leaving bits and pieces of themselves, and what that work might mean to the stranger taking the blanket home with her.

I did three visits in this group; during the first visit I did a participant observation, a method that I use as an compliment to the interviews, partly because I find it important to remember the collectivity of the group, and not only the individual participants, but also because there was something more bodily in the observation that was hard to pinpoint in the interviews, but became very clear in the re-reading of the observations. During the second visit I did a focus group interview with the whole group, and the third and last visit was focused on one-on-one interviews with three persons. The women who participated where two of the oldest (93 and 84 years old) and the youngest one (68 years old) in the group. It would of course been interesting to interview all of the women, and I do not claim to present a quantitative form of truth, but rather a selection of life-stories, specific to these individuals, but at the same time guidance in my discussion and analysis. Their stories should not be seen as disconnected to the rest of the context, but are a vivid part of the discourse and context of today's society. The reason to why these three became my informants, and not any of the others, are nothing but a result of coincident and the lack of time. These were the first ones to say yes to being interviewed, and then time ran out for any more interviews.

1:6:3 | Textile Artists

When I started to look for textile artists who would be willing to be interviewed, it turned out that Gothenburg was actually a historically very good place to begin this search. In the beginning of the 1970s the struggle to claim the textile material and use it in an artistic context grew, and Gothenburg was a centre for these struggles with three different exhibitions, as I have mentioned earlier.¹²

¹² For further reading regarding these exhibitions see Lena Boëthius "Women's right, class struggle and collectivism" in Arvidsson, Kristoffer & Werner, Jeff (ed.) 2009, *Skiaskope 2. Open the shades! Art in Gothenburg during the 1960s and 1970s*. And

I contacted four different artists through Facebook (since I felt I didn't have that much time and thought that Facebook might be the media people checked most regularly) and I got replies from all of them. It turned out to become three interviews, one on e-mail and the other two face to face.

The first person that I interviewed was Jennie McMillen, who I mentioned in the introduction to the material. Since she lives in Umeå, a northern part of Sweden we agreed to make the interview via e-mail. I sent her the questions and quite quickly she answered. I found that this method was very different from regular interviews where you meet and have a dialogue with the informant. Here the informant had the opportunity to elaborate and think her answers through before sending them to me, but meanwhile, I did not have the chance to pose follow-up questions to investigate interesting trails. This method is also dependent on the informant being used to reflect on and be analytic in relation to her own thoughts and answers, something that might take a lot of will and practice to do. This position of confidence when it comes to your creative work, to claim your right to a certain practice, position or space, is also a privileged position that not everyone can hold.

The second interview was done with Bibi Lovell¹³, an artist who lives and works in Gothenburg. She was one of the artists along with Elsa Agélii, who participated in the exhibition 'Reality Leaves Its Mark' mentioned above. We met up at my studio at Konstpedemin, where I had prepared with coffee and cinnamon buns. She had had the opportunity to look at the questions in advance and had been able to prepare for the meeting.

The last interview was with Elsa Agélii¹⁴, who, as I mentioned above, was an active part of the politicization of textile artwork in the 1970s in Gothenburg. We also meet at my studio, having some coffee while discussing the questions that she had read in advance.

Blomqvist, Ann-Charlotte Glasberg "Feministisk textil konst i Göteborg under 1970-talet" in Anna Nyström Et al. (ed.) 2005, *Konstfeminism: Strategier och effekter I Sverige från 1970-talet till idag*. Atlas

¹³ For more information on Bibi Lovell and her artistic work, see: <http://www.bibilovell.com/>

¹⁴ For more information on Elsa Agélii and her artistic work, see: <http://www.agelii.net/elsa/>

CHAPTER 2 | *Analysis*

2 | Analysing Texture

There is obviously something with the textile material that seems to catch people's attention. Textile practices have been, and are still seen as feminine coded; it has been compelling and inhibitory, but also an opportunity for influence and power. Textile knowledge and tradition is still dependent on a female tradition and an interested younger generation to carry on these traditions. Ann Cvetkovich describes crafting as emerging "from the domestic spaces that are at the heart of women's culture to provide a model for ways of living that acknowledge forms of structural inequity while also practicing modes of bodily and sensory life that incorporate or weave them into the fabric of a daily life that literally includes texture, colour, and sensory pleasure" (2012:168). These feminine connotations give the material a low status in society, which might also be a reason to why so many women during the 1960s and 1970s took an active stand against the practices of textile craft as a result of the entrance into male dominated areas, and the strive towards equality between the sexes, but also because these practices were seen as oppressing for women, being an old and out-dated activity that no one needed to participate in anymore. But this low status has also contributed to free zones, places where women could rest, be alone, deal with problems or just get away from their otherwise hard-working lives. It made it possible to create closed rooms, where no male influence where welcomed, or even interested to enter. (Svensson & Waldén 2005:8-11) This is just one of the roads to travel on the journey of understanding the meaning of the material, what it might provide in relation to a feminist struggle but also how it can be seen to work regarding history, memory and practices.

Below I will do the analysis in four different sections: the first approach is called 'Bodily Practices, Norms & Tacit Knowledge' and in this chapter I will discuss how the body acts and relates to the practices of crafting. The second section is called 'Textile in Action' and deals with the material of the textile. The third section, 'Time/Memory/History', discusses the connections between these and the practice of crafting. The last and fourth section is called 'Crafting Conversation'; here I will argue that the practices of crafting and the practice of writing can be connected together through the bodily repetitive practices.

2:1 | Bodily Practices & Tacit Knowledge

This chapter is concerned with the investigation of bodily practices regarding crafting, and how these practices involve different feelings, memories, moods, norms and thoughts. I have placed all of the interviews into my archive, a place that lets them touch each other, move towards or

away from each other, but also enabling them to interact with one another, creating new understandings and outcomes. This is a key point of this project, not separating the different materials, but letting it interact with each other.

Investigating bodily practices is a hard task to carry out, but through the reflections from the informants about their experiences regarding the body and through observations, it becomes obvious that the body, and all of its mechanisms, is an important part of understanding and analysing the practice of crafting and the relations towards the textile material. By looking at how the informants experience how the body works/feels/remembers/thinks etcetera, it is possible to deduce tendencies and patterns of thoughts. One of these bodily experiences are expressed below, here the informant looks at her practice as a form of childlike play, escaping from a reality of graveness into a realm of her own, where stories flow:

When I work with my textile art I feel like when I was a child and played.

Different games; that I had a small village with plastic horses and small human figures that really didn't belong together but I put them together and made grass and beds out of fabric (I can see a clear connection between that game and what I do now; a town by embroidering and building three-dimensional, it's the same feelings that emerge in me). And then I often think about other games, like I had a plastic penholder in the shape of a hedgehog and I threw all of the pens on the kitchen table and played that I was rescuing them from drowning. I don't know if that's about rescuing the piece that I am working on, stitch by stitch and that it involves the same feeling. [...] In my memories of my childhood games my friend Lovisa often appears and wants to play with me but I don't want to play with her because she always wanted to be outdoors and I felt that I couldn't apply my games to that. And sometime memories around my friend Sara who wanted to play with me while I wanted to play alone.¹⁵

Nora

To regard your own practice in such a playful manner might be seen as a norm-breaking engagement, if viewed from a normative perspective and a rigid understanding of how to use time and space in relation to adulthood. Jack/Judith Halberstam argues that a queer approach

¹⁵ ”Jag känner mig som när jag var barn och lekte när jag arbetar nu med mitt textilkonstarbete. Olika lekar, att jag hade små samhällen med plasthästar och små människofigurer som egentligen inte hörde ihop men som jag sammanförde och gjorde gräs och bäddar med tyg (ser en tydlig koppling mellan den leken och att jag nu gör en stad genom att brodera och bygga tredimensionellt, samma känsla i det som väcks i mig). Sen tänker jag ofta på andra lekar som att jag hade ett pennställ i plast i form av en igelkott och jag slängde ner alla pennorna i den på köksbordet och lekte att jag räddade dem från att drunkna. Vet inte om det handlar om att rädda bilden jag arbetar med stygn för stygn och att det är den känslan [...] I de minnena kring hur jag lekte som barn kommer ofta min vän Lovisa upp som ofta ville leka med mig och jag inte med henne eftersom hon ville leka utomhuslekar och jag kände att jag inte kunde applicera mina lekar till det. Och ibland minnen kring min vän Sara som ville leka tillsammans med mig medan jag ville leka själv”

towards how we understand time also demands and produces new ways to think about space, as well as our use of space. Here, for instance, Nora travels both in time and space through her practices, and the concept of space becomes more opened for elaborations. It also challenges our assumptions of time as some kind of natural progression. We have different concepts like “‘industrial’ time and ‘family’ time, time of ‘progress’, ‘austerity’ versus ‘instant’ gratification, ‘postponement’ verses ‘immediacy’. And to all of these different kinds of temporality, we assign value and meaning” where the ‘work’ time, ‘progression’ and ‘family’ time is set higher up then ‘leisure’ time and ‘play’ time (Halberstam 2005:7). The organization of time is bound to the logics of capital accumulation, which also means that those who benefit from capitalism are the ones that also can afford to ignore the demands put on them by the unjust system. Although there might be some choices possible for the privileged subject, others are not up for discussion, such as for instance family time, quality time. Further more, Halberstam writes that we all like to imagine that “there is a time and a place for everything”; a thought that produces emotional and even physical responses to these different concepts of time; such as feeling “guilty about leisure, frustrated by waiting, satisfied by punctuality”, and a utterance that is clearly summing from a privileged position where these possibilities actually exist, or at least exist in another extension (Ibid.:7). All of these time concepts are organized in relation to the scheme of normativity, and valued according to the hierarchy of the same. Queer subjects choose, or are forced, to live outside of these normative schedules of time and space, which also places them outside of the capital accumulation, on the edge of labour and production, and “in the spaces (physical, metaphysical, and economic) that others have abandoned” (Ibid.:8-10).

In the quote above the timelines are being challenged. The informant uses her crafting practice as a tool to return to a space and time in her life that has been long gone. One could argue that she is consciously confronting the normative and common uses of time and space, letting the memories of childhood and the feelings of ease, playfulness, and unrestrained creativity pour out. In the act of constantly going backwards in time and space, she also challenges the normative understanding of the need of constant progression, maturity, adulthood, and responsibility; in her own world these values are not highly regarded, but rather a hinder in the process of creativity. It is as though she is not capable of (or does not wish to) staying inside of her own adulthood, and in many means she is to be understood as a queer subject (Ibid.:13). However, one have to keep in mind that the possibility to be able to *chose* to place oneself outside or inside of the normative understandings of time and space, is also a very privileged position, not everyone have the possibility to choose an unsecure lifestyle,

placing oneself outside of the productive system, which also shows in the descriptions above; to be able to express and describe one's practices in this way can be a sign of fearlessness and an ability to analyse one's own actions and thoughts, which point towards having the self-esteem in giving your own work and creativity weight, something that is absolutely not given for everyone to do.

Further more, Nora's travel in time and space is conditioned by her practices, the needle and thread marking the fabric and bringing forth a setting of narratives. The textile becomes her escape into another realm of texture, making hidden narratives visible and doable, and the textile work becomes a way to, in a play-like way, handle the harshness of life and the boredom of adulthood. Although, this place of childishness that she inhabits does not conform to the norms regarding how a child should play and relate to other children. Norms say that a child who chooses to play alone is a strange and dysfunctional child that has to learn about the social norms of playing and interaction. Nora becomes irritated and frustrated when people want to join her, she prefers her alone time. This is a failure of chrononormativity, a failure of performing in the right way at the right time and place, but also a failure in restraining the body to not do what it is not allowed to do. While the 'child body' is allowed to play, to try and fail (although this has to be done in a 'right' way to not cause disapproval), the older the body gets, the more stigmatized it will be to use the body in wrong ways, to be too much *in* your own body, or determined *of* your body. An adult body is only allowed to engage in practices connected to reliable achievements and goal oriented practice, it is expected to strive toward individualism and manage on their own, no matter what.

Putting the quote from Nora above, beside the observation below makes it clear that the creative practices working with textile material promote some kind of childishness, as if these spaces make it possible to experiment, try out your thoughts and ideas.

We're talking about getting old and how to keep your health (one of the women says that you should eat a teaspoon of coconut oil a day - I say it sounds disgusting), and whether you really want to get too old. Another tip on how to keep your youth, they discuss, is through using lace lingerie, everyone laughs properly and we talk about the article that was in the paper a few days before – where an old woman said that it was porridge and the absence of men that help her to become old. "So men, stay away from us!" It's a cheerful mood, and the cheekiness in these ladies surprises me. Someone mentions the underwear that they have started to produce; they all get excited and want to show them. It's men-underwear where they have embroidered Livslust and two hearts on. They are clever, these women! And fun! There is a distinct sense of humour and childishness in the group, and I think that maybe they have now become so old that they can start ignore conventions and seriousness, and start having fun instead.

This excerpt of the observation shows a cheerful and cheeky gathering of women. The closed room becomes a zone for laughter and crazy ideas. The limits seem to be expanded in this place, and new sets of rules about what to talk about, and how to do it, is set. These women do not act accordingly to the sets of norms that construct an older woman; instead they fill the space with cheeky comments, associative remarks and the total opposite to seriousness. And if Nora, in the quote above, is actively failing in her womanhood, but also in some senses in her childishness, these women are preforming an active resistance towards the strict and restraining ideas that say how one should act as an older woman, and rather they are *doing* childishness in the sense of the collective act of coming together and playing on associations. Being too bodily in your practices threatens to involve more than just the hands into the practices and extend yourself into the world. Smelling, touching the texture of words, feeling them in your mouth, reading them into your textile, as if every single part of the embodiment becomes a part of the practice, or to quote Cixous: "Writing to touch with letters, with lips, with breath, to caress with the tongue, to lick with the soul, to taste the blood of the beloved body, of life in its remoteness" (1991:4).

Some of the informants point to an understanding of time as divided into 'necessary' and 'pleasure', where the 'necessary' time can be explained as time spent in a good, effective, responsible, and productive way, which often results in a product such as for example wage, and where 'pleasure' time is time wasted on 'unimportant' things, pure leisure and activities that will not result in any type of valued product that you can present. This is of course a very problematic way of dividing, but it can also serve as a way to point to restraining norms and preconceptions of how one should use time, and for what time is meant to be used.

The concept 'tacit knowledge' is something that I talked to all of the informant about, and even though not all of them had any relation to the concept, they all knew what it meant to acquire knowledge through your body. Laura, for instance said: "Tacit knowledge? Nah, I don't really know what to say but I have always found it easy to learn what to do with my hands, both to bake, and tinker, and stuff, I have always found that easy. I have never been as awkward as many others are". This is also a good example of the difficulties of explaining and talking about such abstract concepts like for instance 'knowledge', but particularly 'tacit knowledge'. Henrik Bohlin uses Michael Polanyi's understanding of tacit knowledge and its importance within science, by arguing that science holds a lot of tacit knowledge, that can only be transmitted through practical training and by guidance by someone that is already fully learned. This is a kind of master-trainee relation, a sort of learning that cannot be mediated through books or lectures, but rather through the bodily sensations of *doing* the practices.

(Bohlin 2009:62). Following Bohlins arguments, one can never fully disconnect the tacit knowledge from intellectual or scientific knowledge, and in the same sense, I would argue, that one cannot disengage the practice of crafting from a more intellectual and scientific knowledge and practice. Looking at the quotes and observation above, which might seem like singularly focused on a bodily practice, disconnected from the mind and the intellect, it is to be seen as a conscious act, and in some cases, a well-worked strategy for coping with different difficulties; and intellectual way of living one's life. Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey discusses the meaning of the skin in relation to thinking and acting in *Thinking through the skin*, they see the skin as a point of departure of a different kind of thinking, where one does not only think *about* the skin, but also *with* it, and *through* it. Laid beside the concept of 'tacit knowledge', their understanding of thinking through the skin, and the importance of engaging the body in processes of knowledge productions, Ahmed and Stacey's contribution can be seen as a more practical aspect of the theory concerning tacit knowledge that I discuss above, and by applying the approach to think through, about, and with the skin the implementation of tacit knowledge can become more concrete and understandable.

In remembering that the body is the site from which thinking takes place, it is not possible to separate the practices of thinking from the realm of the body, rather this must be reconsidered as implicated with lived embodiment, which makes the discussion regarding tacit knowledge, intellectual and practical knowledge a much more interesting one. (Ahmed & Stacey 2004:1-3) If we agree on these conditions, then bodily practices, such as crafting, suddenly becomes an object of intellectual practice; a view that contradicts the notion of feminine connoted practices as solely embodied but rather a form of knowledge production that definitely is to be seen as intellectual, or as Cvetkovich describes it; as a practice that perform thinking by doing, "crafting self-consciously questions what constitutes feminism and what constitutes the political" (2012:168).

Yes, I have noticed that what the hand has learned, the hand knows. [...] And that is 'tacit knowledge'. And also, I have thought a lot about the fact that there is so much time and thoughts stored in an embroidery, in contrast to a quick painting maybe, or a screen print of a more simple kind, and it is charged, [...] often exhibitions with textile art is a collection of many artists, seldom there are separate exhibitions, so the energy in the room was so thick that you barely manage to get inside, because all of these stitches, all of these thoughts, all of this that was stored. When you think of it, its very powerful.¹⁶

¹⁶ Ja, jag har märkt av att det som handen har lärt sig, det kan den. [...] Och det är ju tyst kunskap. Och också det, det har jag tänkt en hel del om faktiskt, detta att det finns ju så mycket tid och tankar lagrat i ett broderi, till skillnad från en snabb målning kanske, även till skillnad från ett tryck av nått lite enklare slag, och då finns det ju en laddning [...] ofta görs det ju utställningen med textil så är det ju många, sällan mera som det är separata, då blev det liksom så mycket energi i ett rum så

Within the practices of textile crafting lays not only a big amount of knowledge, but also a lot of time, emotions and thoughts. Camilla points to the thickness when many pieces of craft are gathered together. I understand her statement as a way to try to describe how much the bodily residue inhabits the material, and how we often don't take that into consideration, for example when doing an exhibition. To understand different knowledge productions is to be able to make the connections between the practices, the body, the mind, and the material. Tacit knowledge does not mean to disconnect your mind from the body, letting the body repeat until it knows the practices in a mechanic matter, rather it is the body leading the mind in the work of understanding how certain series of practices might connect to each other. Nora explains this in her elaboration of the act of bodily practice:

Sometimes, if I don't embroider but only think about an image and how to continue with it I get terrified to not be able to see the continuation. And then, when I sit down with the fabric and the threads I know exactly, it's in the interaction between the hands and the mind. It's absolutely impossible to exclude the hands.¹⁷

Here she points at the importance of both the body and the mind in the crafting practice, how you can never exclude them from each other, but have to see the connections between the two of them. When the mind stops being able to figure out, or imagine the continuation of the work, the hands can, with the touch of the skin, the sensations of the colours and textures, help the work further. Looking at the actual process of crafting, the practice of repetition is in centre; these repetitions become a creative act while relieving the mind and occupying the hands. In this sense, Cvetkovich argues that crafting is not only connected to creativity, art and politics, but also to spirituality and sacred rituals. The modes of attentions that it requires are similar to those of meditation and having something to do with your hands keeps the attention both focused and free, you can remain on task in the midst of other distractions (2012:189). Using crafts a way to deal with difficult things in your life, to distract your mind and letting the hands work, canalizing anger and anxiety. Maud describes the importance of these practices for

man orkar nästan inte gå in i det, för alla dessa stygn, alla dessa tankar, allt detta som fanns lagrat. När man tänker på det så är det ju väldigt starkt.

¹⁷ Det är också så att jag ibland om jag inte broderar utan tänker på en bild och hur den ska fortsätta blir helt skräckslagen över att jag inte ser fortsättningen. Sen när jag sitter med tyget och tråden vet jag precis, det sitter i samspelet mellan händerna och tanken. Helt omöjligt att utesluta händerna.

her daughter; it becomes a way for her to deal with the responsibilities and difficulties of being head of two care centres:

She [my daughter] who is quilting, she has gone to some weaving courses and made a lot of cloths of all sorts. And that is like therapy, because she is head of two care centres, and its very tough because there are no doctors because they all demand to much money, and she works in the municipality care centres, and in those staffing companies the doctors get so much paid that it is almost impossible to get a hold of a doctor.”

- So it's like therapy for her when she gets home?

Yes, that's right. Then she can forget all about the work. And I think that's good.¹⁸

Maud

Cvetkovich argues that the practice of knitting shares the same rootedness in ordinary daily life, as meditation: “the extension of ‘spiritual practice’ to encompass knitting or other textile-based crafts is possible because both can involve the repetitive and regular motion of the body and its use for activities that can also be time-consuming and boring. Craft is a way of making something creative out of the habitual nature of domestic life” (2012:189). The practices of crafting can be seen as way for Maud’s daughter to handle the frustration, stress and responsibility that her work puts on her, it can be read as “a form of daily activity (whether individual or collective) that can sooth the mind and even raise spirit” (Ibid.), and one of the appeals toward these practices, Cvetkovich argues, is “the return to more concrete forms of manual activity” (Ibid:190), activities that can help your body return to the present by engaging in repetitive and calming motions. Since one, as a grown-up in the capitalist market, is supposed to constantly produce and be able to present results, this becomes a space for Maud’s daughter to get away for demands regarding efficiency and economical profit, and instead engage with creative, meditative and play-like activities of pleasure.

2:2 | Textile in Action

The texture of textile interests me, the very touch of the material against my skin. I think of textile as a second skin, and wonder what is has to offer me in my productions of knowledge

¹⁸ Hon [min dotter] som kviltar då, hon har ju gått på vävkurser och vävt mycket dukar och alla sorter också. Och de är ju som terapi, för hon är chef för två vårdcentraler så att, och det är ju väldigt jobbigt för det finns ju ingen läkare att få, för dom ska ju ha så mycket betalt så det, hon är ju i kommunala vårdcentraler, och dom här bemanningsföretagen får dom ju mycket mer betalt så därför är det ju nästan omöjligt att få tag i läkare.

- Så det är terapi då när hon kommer hem?

Ja just det. Då kan hon glömma bort allt jobb. Det är nog väldigt bra.

and thought. How the creation of textile art and craft can be seen as an extension of your own skin, being fleshy and bodily involved with the making. How the touch of your body forms the work, and leaves small pieces on it. So in the end, can you really tell where your body starts and ends? Can you with certainty say that your body is only *yours* and do you really believe that you can control where and how your skin spreads into the world? Jackie Stacey and Sara Ahmed point to several interesting and profitable views on how to relate to this more emotional, and bodily sense of thinking; to always involve the sensation of texture and never diminish the feeling of objects. Further, Sara Ahmed explains in *Queer Phenomenology* (2006) how objects and emotions can be seen as ‘sticky’, and moving towards certain directions, or sticking to certain subjects. This understanding of orientation is valuable in my reading of the textile material and its relation to crafting practices and the subjects doing them, in order to understand how and why certain objects and/or subjects move in the way they do. Some things get easier stuck on some subjects than on others, this can be demonstrated through fabrics such as velvet and silk and how these materials get stuck with the notion and association of upper class, royalty, and luxury, but also the feelings of ease and smoothness, while fabric such as heavy woollen fabric get connected to working-class, poverty, and feelings such as itchiness and heaviness. So the different fabrics attract disparate feelings and connotations, no matter the actual usefulness of the fabric (e.g. though rougher fabric such as heavy woollen fabric lasts longer and will keep you warmer, the high status of velvet and silk might be high also just because of its delicacy and fragility. Rich people don’t need to have fabric that doesn’t break; they can just buy new things). By using Ahmed and her theories regarding orientations one might argue that the material inhabits some sense of agency; it provoke certain feelings in the subjects.

Down at the bottom was a working-shirt, a blue one that I traded from an electrician or something. It was used of course. And then when you open the shirt you could see the workers dream, about an open landscape and there was a light blue velvet sky, and then a big red flower on the sky. You know! The dream about the big change! So naïve!¹⁹

Camilla

In this quote, Camilla shows how she uses different textiles and their associations to mediate different narratives and emotions. There is a duplicity in the associations of the different fabrics, they are charged with emotions, history, thoughts and feelings. Putting the working-

¹⁹ ”Nere i grunden där så var det en arbetarskjorta, en blå, som jag fick byta till mig av nån elektriker eller vad det var, ja! Den var använd naturligtvis. Och så öppnade man den där skjorta så såg man arbetarnas drömmar där, om ett öppet landskap och så var det en ljusblå sammets Himmel, och så var det en stor, proportionerligt stor röd blomma där på den himlen. Förstå du! Drömmen om den stora förändringen! Naïvt som tusan!”

shirt in heavy wool beside the light blue velvet changes both of the materials and creates something potentially political, or poetic. The meaning of the velvet will differ depending on what is put beside it; it will never be just a soft and shiny fabric, rather that is only *one* of its qualities (2006:14). Camilla's discussion shows how important the selection of material is in the crafting practices, both since it signals different emotions, feelings, political views, or historical facts, but also because the material becomes a physical extension of your own body. It is through the material that your thoughts are being embodied, shaped by your hand and by the potentials that the material possesses:

The material decides very much how the results are going to be, you can't compromise with that. [...] I often think about how people in general don't have a conscious relationship to material. A big part of my own work is about some kind of control. Different effects by the material in relation to myself... I chose all of the materials surrounding me quite carefully.²⁰

Nora

There are no coincidences in the choice of material, or to use Sara Ahmed and her theories regarding orientation, one could argue that different fabrics orient more towards some subjects and readings than others do. The informant talks about the different effects of materials in relation to herself, that the material can never be compromised, but is the centre of the practice, and most importantly conditions the practice. It seems as though you can never *not* choose your material, rather it is the very core of the practice, and a huge part in the process of how your work will end up. The relationships to different materials are not only important in relation to the practice, but also deeply emotional, as another of the informants describes her choices:

Acryl is preferable, because it is sufficient (lagom); the yarn that I buy. I think the gauge is good and I think it is easy to work with. [...] I opt out wool. I guess its partly because I can't stand wool. It's fine like this; with the hands, but if I put on something with wool in it, it itches, and then I'm like uuuh! Panic!²¹

Angelica

²⁰ "Materialet bestämmer jättemycket hur allt blir, man kan inte kompromissa med det. [Jag tänker] ofta på hur människor inte har en medveten relation till materialet. En stor del av mitt arbete handlar nog om en slags kontroll. Olika effekter av material i relation till mig själv... jag väljer alla material omkring mig rätt noga."

²¹ "Akryl vill jag helst ha. För det är lagom, det jag köper. Jag tycker tjockleken är bra också, jag tycker det är lätt att jobba med [...] Ull väljer jag bort. Det är väl det att jag tål inte ull riktigt. Så går nog bra, med händer, men om jag tar på mig nått i ull så kliar det, då får jag uuuh! panik!"

Angelica has a very emotional and personal relationship to the yarn she prefers – using words such as sufficient, easy, and good. When we start to talk about wool as an alternative I quickly see the repulsion spreading in her body, as if I, by only pronouncing the word ‘wool’ made her itch and panic. It is the itchiness against her skin that makes her move away from the texture of wool, as an orientation *towards* something, and *away* from something else (Ahmed 2006:1), directions that makes her so uncomfortable that I chose to leave the subject quickly. It could be compared with the childlike complaining about itchy and warm clothes during the winter, a complaint that is too much *in* the body for someone else to really understand and relate to, but also a complaint that is not reasonable. The subject’s body is placed in the centre of the feeling, even though she as an adult is supposed to have left the body behind a long time ago, since the grown-up body is beyond embodiment (except for some exceptions such as having sex, or working out) and have moved into a more rational and mind-focused state. For instance, as an adult one is not supposed to give in on every feeling and desire, but rather the adult body is supposed to ‘behave’ and act rational and sober, which certainly do not include getting panic from a woollen material (Halberstam 2005:4-5).

Wool came to be discussed with Nora as well, and she also had very strong feelings regarding that material, but rather when it came to the signals that the material mediated, and how one can interpret these signals. For her it became a hinder in her vision of what she wanted to create:

I like cotton a lot. I like to dress in cotton and I always work with cotton, its neutral, just enough glossy/matt, quite anonymous in a very good way. Wool is good in some ways, embroidery on wool is very predictable, it’s a material that say to much about itself, I like cotton because it is more neutral. Wool is good for caps, mittens, scarves... blankets too, that have to be warm. I would never work with wool. Linen is also too much in itself, you think that ‘this is linen’ and that ruins it, that it is too much a material in itself. ²²

Nora

The material says *too much* in itself, it has too many connotations and moves in the wrong directions in order for the informant above to be able to use it ways she wants to. The possibilities for her to create what she is aiming for is not possible in the same extent when it comes to materials such as wool and linen – in her descriptions of these materials they almost

²² ”Jag tycker mycket om bomull. Jag tycker om att klä mig i bomull och arbetar alltid med bomull, det är neutralt, lagom matt/blankt, rätt anonymt på ett mycket bra sätt. Ull är ju bra på vissa sätt, broderi på ull är väldigt förutsägbart, det är ett material som säger för mycket om sig själv, jag tycker om bomull för att det är mer neutralt. Ull är bra för mössor, vantar och halsdukar...filtar också som ska vara varma. Jag skulle aldrig arbeta med ull. Lin är också för mycket i sig själv, man tänker det här är lin och det förstör att det är så mycket material i sig själv.”

seem alive, being stubborn and having too much personality to conform to her own ideas and wishes. It is as though she has to shut down the loud voice of the material in order to be able to present her own vision and voice. In both quotes there is a big reluctance toward the woollen material and I read it as almost a frustration and irritation, as if the material did these things (itched, related to certain historical practices and events) on purpose – like an annoying sibling that will not leave you alone.

One thing that has been important is, it's not regarding the material but has to do with that embroidery and textile is quite fiddly. You can't compare it with painting, for example with acryl or oil paint where you can try and paint over and work like that. Because, it takes a long time. And I want to be direct, I want to capture some kind of intuitive feeling, and that is hard! You have to have ways to lure yourself.²³

Camilla

Here the material acts on its own and the only way for the informant to be able to achieve what she aims for is to lure herself into the directness of intuition, trying to surprise herself by working quick. It can be compared to the quotes above, discussing material in relation to emptiness and meaning; here, the material has to be surprised, just as surprised as the informant herself, in order to be able to be intuitive. Her move toward the material shapes both her and the material in ways that makes it hard for them to cooperate. The objects are constantly moving, as well as the subject herself. This, thus, makes it harder to keep a focused mind; the craft is being crafted, evolving, changing form and expression. But so are also the words and thoughts; not being still, but sticking to different bodies, changing meaning. She makes the comparison between textile and paint, pointing towards the difficulties of making the textile move in the direction you want it to, where for instance oil and acryl paint is easier to work with since you don't have to get it right the first time. This also connects to how different materials are connected to different practices, and with the quote from Angelica below it becomes quite clear that some readings are possible while others are impossible or just too far away when it comes to looking at different types of materials in relation to practices such as craft and art. We had a long discussion about what divides the practices of art and craft, and I asked what craft and art was for her:

Crafts are more like handicrafts and such, while art... you do a painting and that's art, its more expensive, like a painting can be very valuable, I don't think that crafts can be as valuable as a painting.

²³ "En sak som har varit viktig det är, det har inte riktigt med materialet att gör men det har att göra med att broderiet och det textila är ju ganska omständligt. Och det går inte att jämför det med att måla, till exempel akryl eller olja eller så där man kan prova och måla över och hålla på så. För man måste ju, det tar ganska lång tid att pröva. Och jag vill vara direkt, jag vill fånga någon intuitiv känsla, det är ganska svårt! Man måste ha något sätt att lura sig på."

- So then it's more about the material? That textile can't be art in the same way?

Unfortunately yes. And it's just like those who used to crochet these thin cloths, they get nothing for it, and such a big work put into it, with thin threads. [...] It's a shame that it's not valued, and then a painting where someone just smeared some paint... but of course, the name is a big part in that.

- Do you think that crafts should be defined as art?

Yes, I think so, some things are like big art pieces, like these cloths, such big work, and not valued at all.

- Then one can also talk about time, that time is important.

Yes time! Of course! The longer time it takes, and the more finical it is, one knows how much times lies behind these pieces. It's a bit unfair I think, with paintings, they smear on some paint and write their name - they made themselves a name - and then someone has been sitting and worked with these enormous cloths, and it is not worth anything.²⁴

Angelica

Angelica points to several interesting things in this quote, for example how important the material is, and how it is to be seen to play a big role in regulating who will be able to produce art/craft, the value connected to different materials, but also how time and knowledge seems to be an important factor in what will be considered art. Parker explains how the division between art and craft is due to several categorisations and norm structures; "The fine art – painting and sculpture – are considered the proper sphere for the privileged classes while craft or the applied arts [...] are associated with the working class" (Parker 1984:5). Further she argues that; "the development of an ideology of femininity coincided historically with the emergence of a clearly defined separation between art and craft" (Ibid). This also implies that art made with textile as opposed to art made with paint are intrinsically different; the latter is seen as the 'true' artistic, and the former as artistically less significant. This combined with the placement of 'arts' in the public sphere of masculinity, and 'craft' in a feminine and private sphere put the quote above in a historical context and provides a wider understanding.

²⁴ Hantverk är ju handarbete mer och så konst; man målar tavlor och så konstverk, det är lite dyrare, som en tavla kan vara väldigt värdefull, jag tror inte det kan bli så värdefullt med ett handarbete som med en tavla.

- Men då sitter det mer i materialet? Att textilt inte kan bli konst på samma sätt

Nej, tyvärr. Och lika så som förut dom virkade dom här tunna dukarna, dom får ju inget för det, och sånt arbete som dom har lagt ner, många, med tunn spetsaktiga trådar. Men jag tror ju att det kommer, men det tar nog tio år.

Det är ju synd att det inte värdesätts detta, och så då en tavla som man har kladdat på bara, men de är ju klart att namnet gör ju mycket där.

- Borde man definiera om hantverk till konst mer? Borde man höja upp hantverk?

Ja det tycker jag, vissa tycker jag ju det att det är rena konstverk som dom här dukarna, som jätte jobb, det värdesätts inte.

- Då kan man också prata om tid, att den är viktig

Ja tid! Ja visst! Ju längre tid det tar, och pilligt, man vet hur mycket tid det ligger bakom. Det är ju lite orättvist tycker man många gånger med tavlor, dom har kladdat till och så skriver dom sitt namn - dom har gjort sig ett namn då - och så har en suttit och knäpat med en sån här jätte duk, och så inte värd nånting.

Waldén explains the hierarchy between crafts and art as following: “To make the invisible creating woman-hand visible becomes a clear sign of the historical stigma that remains around doing crafts to and in the home, in relation to doing Art in the public” (Waldén 2005:211). Ahmed describes how objects orient towards certain objects or subjects, and how these orientations are conditioned by the possible ways to turn. By inhabiting a certain space, or using a certain material, it becomes easier for you to move in certain direction. Ahmed gives the example of how you orient towards being a writer by inhabiting the space behind a table. When movements are being repeated over and over again the body gets shaped by the direction movements takes (2006:11-16). Certain textures and material, such as for example stone, oil-paint and clay, have for a long time been oriented towards artistic expressions with the ability to create art in forms of paintings, sculptures, ceramics and more, while the textile material have not. This constant orientation towards determined sorts of material have shaped the act of artistic practice, but also determined what is possible to use when doing art, and what lies beyond the possibility of being perceived as art. These limitations is shown by Angelica in the quote above; she elaborates on the ability to use different forms of textile material as artistic material, with the conclusions that it is not possible, no matter how unfair it might seem.

The values attached to art and craft is partly connected to the notions and understandings of knowledge, what it is and how you acquire it. One way to read these different perspectives on knowledge is with Henrik Bohlin who argues that the Cartesian philosophers have never seen tacit knowledge as a form of knowledge in itself, but rather as a special case of knowledge-to-do (2009:77). This places tacit knowledge below a more theoretical knowing, i.e. the things you can explain through language and scientific data. So, when looking at the practice of crafting for instance, the asset or ability to acquire a language regarding ones practice might look very different depending on context, origin and education, although the practice in itself is the same – knitting is done in the same way, no matter what theoretical knowledge lies behind your practical knowledge of knitting. The dichotomy between art and craft is also important to raise here; the connotations connected to these different areas of practices are quite different; where art is seen as high up in the hierarchy, handicraft comes second and crafts lies in the bottom. This is also very much connected to the perspective of economy; whether you are interested and able to support yourself as an artist, or if you see your crafting as a hobby, doing it on your spare time.

2:3 | Time/Memory/History

- How do you experience emotions and thoughts when you craft?

I think it is so peaceful and wonderful and relaxing in all ways possible. I enjoy it so much. And I think it is wonderful now when I can sit down and take all the time that I want, and nothing else needs to be done; you can just sit there and have a nice time. ²⁵

Laura

Institutions such as the liberal capitalist market focused on labour and constantly growing profits seeks to regulate the pace of living by “quicken up and/or synchronize some elements of everyday existence”, which results in some spaces and practices being read as “leisurely, slow, sacred, cyclical, and so on”, eliminating and repressing other alternative ways of organizing time (Freeman 2010:xii). Being ‘normatively modern’, Freeman points out, concerns being able to live life in a coordinated and syncopated tempo, moving between a quick time that is compelling, and a slow time that is chosen and free. This free time can not, within the normative system of upholding chrononormativity, exist without its opposite – enforced time, but rather they presuppose each other and bring each other into existence. So, what happens when you retire? When you are no longer needed in the productive sphere, or maybe not even allowed to stay. Time and age is an important approach in the discussion about the practices of crafting, since this practice is often seen as being a part of free time, even though it has been, and still is a very important knowledge in socio-economic contexts where one does not have the economy to buy new fabric or clothes, but has to make everything oneself.

The quote above gives an idea about how a use of time can change during different parts of life. Laura expresses her joy over the ability to choose how to spend her time, and not having anyone depending on her. But at the same time as being put outside of the productive scene serves her more freedom and possibilities, it also threatens to make her time and practices viewed as ‘useless’. Being retired involves not being a part of the schedule of chrononormative time, time flows in a new and strange way, with no possibility to dissociate the different elements of time into understandable and reasonable forms of existence. Since time becomes placed in-between leisure and enforced time, the activities done and the results of these activities will not be easily placed into a category of understandance. Laura continues to reflect on how time and craft connect:

²⁵ - Hur upplever du känslor och tankebanor när du handarbetar?

Jag tycker det är så lugnt och fridfullt och avkopplande på alla sätt och vis. Jag njuter så. Och jag tycker det är så underbart nu när jag sitta och ta tid på mig som jag vill och inget som kör på, man sitter där har så mysigt så.

You get the time to think a lot. And the time runs very fast, so you never need to be bored when you craft. And then, when you use the things when it's finished, its nice, and there are so many memories to a lot of the crafts that you have made, like; "I did this then, and this then."

- So, it is like you are going back in time, to that specific moment?

Yes, you actually do!²⁶

Laura moves between time and space through the crafted artifact, the very sight of them moves her back in time to a place where she can re-live moments and feelings. As if she had pinned down the memories with the stitches, sewed them onto the fabric, with a result of producing a visible narrative for anyone to read. But it also secures her existence, makes her marks in time and place visible and even touchable; it's a proof of her journey, experiences, and history. By making these marks in time and space, she writes herself into the history.

To talk to the informant about time and tradition, wanting to investigate different thoughts and the feelings regarding time spent and 'misspent' proved to be difficult. Time is something we almost always relate to unconsciously, but also something that we can never really get a hold of. I wanted to know whether they thought that time, and specific use of time, could be political, and if so, when did it become political? One way to talk about this is through memories and history, discussing the importance of traditions and how one thinks about passing on knowledge. But when talking about past time, I am at the same time asking the informants to go back to memories and moments of touch and feelings that can sometimes be hurtful. This makes it obvious that crafted artifacts inhabit a lot of emotional and affective value. It is as though the object you hold in your hand has been carved out of the givers flesh, and maybe this is actually the case with the object you are holding – microscopic pieces of skin and cells have been weaved into the object, leaving you with a piece of your loved one in your hands, even though this person might be long gone. The story below is a heart-breaking story, a family tragedy, but it can also serve as an example on how effective crafted artifacts can be in the act of revisiting old moments and memories and how objects can leave traces behind.

Yes, I think it's very nice with the things my mom sewed; my Christmas cloth and likewise my mother in law, it's amazing. I think it's great. And then I have a sister who died from cancer when she was only 51 years old and I have these fine needlework's from her, and her sheets with white embroidery I inherited,

²⁶ "Man hinner ju tänka väldigt mycket. Och tiden går ju så fort, så man behöver ju aldrig ha långsamt när man sitter där med sitt handarbete. Och sedan då när man använder det när det är färdigt och så, det är ju roligt och så, och många handarbete som man tar fram som man har minnen av att den gjorde jag då och då.

- Är det som att man går tillbaka till den tiden då?

Ja, det gör man faktiskt!"

they're so wonderful to touch, its a certain feeling, as if they were here with me, you think they're with you. She had her birthday on March 20th and March 19th my mother called her because she was going there to congratulate her, she used to do that when she worked from home, and my mother died, went down to the basement; she was washing and went down to the cellar to fetch laundry, got brain haemorrhage, was sitting with her back against the... so ten minutes after she talked to her (the sister) on the phone the neighbour called my sister and told her that my mother was dead. She was only 61 years old. So that's why it's so nice with my sister's stuff too then, she had no children so we got to share it.²⁷

Laura

Laura argues that the textile can be a way to come closer to her loved and lost ones. It is a way for her to feel a connection to them and it works as a constant reminder but also an assurance to never forget. Freeman describes how the photography was an important instrument for representation, but also a way to keep the memories and structures of the family alive in the bourgeois family in the nineteenth century. In the end of the nineteenth century the image of the child had become a way to visualize the future, the bourgeois future. Putting this understanding of the photography as a way to deal with history, memory and future beside the textile artifact, widens the perspectives on how to identify and reproduce the understanding and image of yourself (2010:22). Since the photography was only available to a higher class, and crafting was a practice that was available for everyone, partly since it was absolutely necessary for so many, I think it is absolutely essential to look at crafted artifacts as a way to create meaning and do history. A lot of the crafting practices were done out of necessity and with the aim to create utility articles, but there is always an element of creativity and a personal print that marks the person who did the very object, and places her in a specific context. And while a photo or a written letter would possibly hold a lot of emotional memories to it, it would also be partly flat, in both the physical and the emotional understanding of the word, in its remembrance. So, crafted artifacts; fine needlework's, white embroidery, or the Christmas cloth mentioned above, becomes an embodiment of the person behind the object. In this sense I will argue that crafters keep on living within the practice, the stiches and the thread. In the same sense the object might also work therapeutically as it brings remembrance of something actively *living* connected to the person who did the craft and now is gone. This

²⁷ ”Ja, jag tycker det är väldigt roligt med det som mamma har sytt, min jul duk och likadant min svärmor då, det är ju fantastiskt. Det tycker jag är härligt. Och sen har jag även då en syster som dog i cancer när hon var bara 51 år och jag har även fina handarbeten efter henne och hennes lakan med vitbroderier jag har ärvt och sånt, det är nått underbart att känna, en viss känsla, att dom är med, man tycker att dom är med. Hon skulle fyllt år den 20 mars och den 19 mars ringde min mamma till henne för hon skulle åka dit och gratulera henne, hon brukade göra det när hon arbetar hemifrån, och min mamma dog, gick ner i källaren, hon höll på att tvätta gick ner i källaren skulle hämta tvätt, fick hjärnblödning, blev sittande med ryggen mot... så tio minuter efter att hon pratat med henne i telefon så ringde grannfrun upp min syster och talade om att mamma var död. Hon va bara 61 år. Så det är därför det är så roligt med min systers grejer också då, för hon hade inga barn så det blev så att vi fick dela på det.”

object is not just a remembrance of what the person looked like in order to prevent you from forgetting, this is a proof that the person actually once lived and accomplished things during her time, and these things, artifacts will keep on existing, being touchable. An object you can smell, follow the threads through the fabric, wear, or use. Old objects and artifacts leave traces behind, and the fact is that the present exists along side the absent. Past time gain new meaning in the present context, since old objects lose their original meaning when being moved in time and space. This enables more than one possible reading. Time leaves marks and these marks are our memories, the memory of a loved one can keep on living within these artifacts, as a way of documenting time and life-processes, but also as a way of identifying yourself as being a part of a group or a family (Freeman 2010:22).

I think that I have a hard time to relate to sewing circles since I have always been working alone and like the loneliness in my work. But the womanly power in textile work, and that it has been inferior, I relate to that. It feels like I relate to it a lot, mostly as a kind of game since I know that it's such a big thing with the textile tradition and that it's a reason to why it is like a secret that women to a big extent have been alone doing it. I've stopped being provoked by men who say 'tat' when they mean 'embroider', that happens all the time. I feel like it's their problem if they make themselves more stupid than they are. And it inspires me, for the most of it. The secret room that men have not entered do not enter, because they don't have the comprehension and the courage. While women have the courage to enter men's rooms. It feels like such a big thing to embroider, and such a clever way to make a picture, or leave marks.²⁸

Nora

Drawing on Waldén's historical exposé about the crafting groups (syjuntor) the history of crafting in Sweden is a history of making the nation conscious about their history and culture. But the complexity of this practice is that it on one hand is focused around occupation, production and sales and on the other hand to preserve knowledge, educated in good taste, creating domestic comfort and stimulating the personality, but what combines the different aspects of crafting is the focus on utility (nyttå). (1994:21-24). In fostering women into their role of femininity and passivity according to bourgeois ideals, crafting played a significant role; it kept women occupied with what was considered useful activities, preventing them from 'misusing' time and kept them in the home being fostered into good citizens with good taste

²⁸ Tror att jag har svårt att förhålla mig till syjuntor eftersom jag arbetar själv och tycker om ensamheten i mitt arbete. Men en kvinnlig kraft i textilt arbete, och att det varit i underläge förhåller jag mig till. Känns som om jag förhåller mig till det mycket, en hel del som en slags lek eftersom jag vet att det är så stort med den textila traditionen och att det därför är som en hemlighet att kvinnor varit ensamma om det så mycket. Jag har slutat bli provocerad av män som säger knyppla om att brodera och sådant, det händer hela tiden. Känner att det är deras problem att de gör sig dumma. Och att jag mer blir inspirerad av det. Det hemliga rum som män inte trätt in i, träder in i för att de inte har förståelsen och modet. Medan kvinnan har modet att tråda in i männens rum. Det känns så stort att brodera, och så smart sätt att göra en bild på, eller göra märken på.

and the ability to distinguish 'good' from 'bad' and 'ugly' from 'graceful'. The focus was, and is still in many senses, to combine purpose and pleasure, doing something that will profit family and the needs of the household and at the same time filling ones own need for creativity and beauty (Ibid.:24-25).

Crafting is a way to leave a print and write one's own history, as I have discussed above. It is a way to mark time in a very physical sense and leaving traces behind (Ibid.:26-27). Svensson & Waldén discuss how textile practices have worked as an oppressive practice for women in history, but it have also provided a room of one's own for the women crafting (2005:8-28). Historically women had little or no way to show their presence in history and time other then through crafting, and no other material than the textile to express feelings, ideas, creativity, and resistance. The textile has been, and is still in many senses, feminine connoted, but also a way to keep your history alive (Waldén 1994:27). Time in itself seems to act in a very peculiar way, sliding, running, standing still, moving you back and forth both in time and space. The essence in the practice of crafting is that there are no shortcuts, the practice involves doing things very slowly, and doing things in a way that are in many senses the total opposite of today's understanding of how to use time, and how time always seems to be missing. Pinning down the time and thoughts with the needle and thread. Using it to concretize the thoughts and making them more understandable and thinkable. A way to cope with everyday-life, a way to store your memories, but also a way to pin down your time in order to leave traces of time, in time.

- What does crafting mean to you?

Everything! It is such a good therapy! My partner passed away a year ago in January, and when you become alone you forget everything you usually do. I have always been knitting and crafting. When I used to work, I worked in a store; I went up early in the mornings and knitted before I went to work. So, I have always been crafting. So it's an important thing.²⁹

Maud

Maud describes crafting as therapeutic, a way to cope with the sudden amount of time on her hand, time that runs in a much more slow and sluggish way than before. After loosing her partner she find herself in a situation were her time is not filled with a giving understanding of meaning anymore; with no institutions, nor heterosexual relationship that can confirm her use

²⁹ - Vad betyder handarbete för dig?

Allt! Det är sån bra terapi! Min särbo gick bort för ett år sen i januari, när en blir ensam glömmmer en ju bort allt en håller på med. Jag har ju alltid hållit på och sticka och sådär. När jag jobbade förut, jag jobbade i affär, va uppe tidigt på morgonen och stickade innan jag gick till jobbet. Så att, det har jag alltid hållit på med. Så det är en viktig grej.

of time and the results from these uses, she is left in-between different understandings of time and place. Ahmed claims that the compulsory heterosexuality determines what is possible for a body to do and be (Ahmed 2004:145-6). Drawing on this understanding of the importance of heteronormativity in order to understand and produce oneself, I would like to argue that the compulsory heterosexuality is deeply connected to what Freeman describes as chrononormativity, a set of norms that regulates the use of time, presenting certain uses as normatively 'good', and other as normatively 'bad'. The 'good' time-use is related to the things that is necessary to do to make the household, work, family etcetera run smoothly, while the 'bad' time-use is connected to leisure time, the things you do out of desire but with no visible useful outcome. In other words, one could sketch down the connections like this: 'good' time – necessary – boring – slow time, and 'bad' time – useless – fun – fast time. Halberstam characterize people who live in rapid burst as immature, although Halberstam is mainly talking about drug addicts, sexworkers and subcultures, the mechanisms of viewing people as immature, acting the wrong age and so on are equal to the contexts I have discussed above (Halberstam 2005:4-5). A way to deal with this is by looking at this failure as a way to “escape punishing norms that discipline behaviour and manages human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to orderly and predictable adulthood” (Halberstam 2011:3). The act of the queer failure opens up for a disturbance between the neat boundaries between adults and children.

2:4 | Crafting Conversations

In this last section of the analysis I will combine the practice of crafting with the practice of writing in order to investigate the mechanisms they both are dependent on, namely repetitiveness. I will focus on the connections between communication and textile crafting, and how these can be seen to merge into new understandings of intellectual practices. To point out my argument that crafting and writing can be seen as two quite similar ways of communication, I will let the two concepts crafting/writing be written together to emphasis their connections, and because I believe that the mechanisms, the motions and the purpose of the practices, whether it is writing or crafting, is quite often the same. Opening up the archive and looking inside emphasis that the two practices influences and affects each other deeply, and in the end they will look the same, but also radically different from before.

The first step in the investigation of writing/crafting is the body, since the body has been read as mere and brute matter by traditional philosophy, and remains to be thought. The

body is the site from which thinking takes place, so the practice of thinking cannot be separated from the realm of the body, rather it is implicated in the passion, emotions and materiality that are associated with lived embodiment. The task of *thinking through the skin* is, at one level, to continue the feminist project of taking bodies seriously, as both the subject and the object of thought (Ahmed & Stacey 2004:2).

Cvetkovich argues that the practice of crafting “fosters ways of being in the world in which the body moves the mind rather than the other way around, or in which [...] body and mind are deeply enmeshed or holistically connected” (2012:168). This way of being requires not only knowledge, but also bodily practice and can be described as a form of ‘slow living’, which is also often associated with pre-capitalist ways of living. However, since this retrospect threatens to overflow us with nostalgia of the past, leaving all criticism behind, it is important to acknowledge the new and inventive ways of being *in the body*, and not only in the head, as I mentioned above. Cvetkovich develops this further: “as a practice, and not just an ephemeral feeling, crafting is not the homology or first step or raw material for some form of political change beyond it. It is already a form of self-transformation” (ibid. 168). Using this as a point of departure for the theorizing of crafting connected to the practice of writing and the importance of conversation, places the practices of crafting in a political context, with a resistance toward capitalist and liberal market values, but also in an embodied context.

I am trying to investigate how this material can describe things that I want to tell. And it always can. I can find ways to use the stitches, in order to express this or that: a rage, or some kind of calmness, or something else. I find that fascinating. It is like a drawing on a base of some sort [...] during several years I was very interested in different textures [...] for instance how shiny silk or a light-eating velvet or something, how they provide different atmospheres. They tell different things. And it was when I started to realise that I wanted to tell something that was important to me that it started... that I started to dare to make images.³⁰

Camilla

It is clear, looking at the quote above, that some material express certain things in better ways than other materials. By picking out the right fabric, your piece can express and combine things that might seem like they are wide apart. The practice of crafting has a profound sense

³⁰ Jag försöker undersöka hur det här materialet kan skildra sånt som jag vill berätta. Och det kan det hela tiden. Jag kan hitta sätt att använda stygnen, för att uttrycka det ena eller det andra. Ett raseri, eller nån slags lugn eller nått så. Det tycker jag är fascinerande. Det är som en teckning på en botten av nått slag. [...] i flera år var jag hemskt intresserad av alla olika texturer, all kanske som finns till exempel i ett blankt siden eller en ljusätande sammet eller nånting, det ger olika stämningar och så. Berättar olika saker. Och så att det var ju när jag började begripa att jag ville berätta någonting som var viktigt för mig som det började bli... då vågade jag göra bilder.

of repetition to it, something that is very similar to the practice of writing and following Cvetkovich, crafting can as a reparative practice be a way to come back after a depression or a crisis, a way to organize the everyday routines and make the time and space meaningful again. Just as a journal can function as an outlet of feelings and thoughts, writing down your worries or emotions or maybe just tracking activities as a way to trace time, secure your sanity, relief you from anxiety or remember what is important. The needle and thread serves as a similar function, and just like the pen can be used to transform the letters into drawing, in an attempt to illustrate the un-speakable, needle can do the opposite – turning art into sentences. The difference lies in the texture, the ability to feel your way through the work, to touch and taste. Besides stitching down private matters, concretizing emotions and feelings that is hard or impossible to put words on, it can also be seen as a way to mark your own print in time, leaving a trace behind and making sure that some part of you will remain in the future. The practice of crafting/writing can never be totally separated from the body, rather, I am arguing, crafting could be seen as a form of *écriture féminine* – a female and bodily form of writing with the aim to textualize the female body in order to be able to deconstruct gender in a linguistic matter (Lykke 2009:78-82). Writing/crafting carries with it traces of other contexts, and by paying attention to what has already been written/crafted, one can open up for what is yet to come (Ahmed & Stacey 2004:15). As mentioned above, the history of the textile is the history of femininity and women, and looking by looking at crafting as a form of writing taking place in this context of femininity and womanhood, the connection to *écriture féminine* is very close. Writing with threads on fabric, making your mark in time and place is a deeply embodied form of writing down your story, your feeling, or just a documentation of the practice. This is something that Camilla comes back to in the quote below, where she explains:

I have written a small piece on that, it's called "When I embroider", and it's about how I capture intuitions and hints and stich these reflexions down to get a hold of them in that way. It ends with, because it is about this, the anxiety over the state of things that constantly progresses, and I need to process this in some way, and it ends with "I don't believe that my stiches will change the world, but to some extend they ease the anxiety of the mind." And that is good enough.³¹

Camilla

³¹ "Jag har skrivit en liten text om det där, "När jag broderar" heter den, den handlar just om hur jag fångar in intuitioner och aningar och stygnar ner dom reflexioner och på det viset får fast det på något sätt. Och så slutar den med att, för det är det här att, oron som hela tiden pågår över sakernas tillstånd, jag behöver bearbeta det på något vis, och så slutar den "inte tror jag att mina stygn förändrar världen, men något stillar dom sinnets oro" och det är gott nog då tycker jag".

The crafting/writing practice occupies the body. When you sit down to write, that is an act of stitching down the thoughts with a pen, or when you craft; that is the act to write with a needle. The presumed idea that all kind of intellectual work is done in the head is being challenged here: one could rather argue that intellectual work require bodily repetitive movements in order to find peace in the mind. That could be a series of repetitions moving your hands over the dashboard, stitches working round after round, or maybe a pen running over the paper. These kinds of repetitions serve as a meditative form of focus, relieving your mind, lets it wander off and leaving space for new thoughts to appear in between the repetitions (Waldén 1994:160). Stitching down feelings, thoughts, and intuitions in order to get an overview of the narrated landscape. As the informant above mentions, the stitches help her to clarify the overwhelming feelings and thoughts concerning the conditions of the world. This is a reparative practice: twining things together, making sense of the bits and pieces by connecting them with stitches, sewing them together. But it is also concerned with everyday routines; being forced to sit down and do the actual work, doing your hours at the library, keeping on going even though you don't feel like it. You have to *do* it, you can't just *think* it. It's the very *practice* that in the end is important. These are the daily routines of crafting/writing, keeping the hands busy, meditating over one's thoughts.

But, it's always there in some sense, [...] there is a deep meaning of what I do that is important to me. Like a very old, ancient image that I think is important not only to me. And that is what I want to communicate.³²

Christine

All of the informants are trying to mediate something through their crafted pieces, things like comfort, frustration or a political standpoint, and they have one thing in common; the feeling of importance, whether it is importance in relation to the self and what the practice of crafting means for the self, or whether it is in relation to an imagined audience. In other words, what they all try to mediate is the importance of conversations with an emphasis on the questions rather than the answers. Mara Lee argues the importance to *do* theory, poetically, something that I read as *crafting* theory, poetically, as well as bodily (2014:30). I am crafting my text, and writing my crafts. I am stitching down my thoughts and tracking my time with knits and purls. Most importantly, this involves the practice of trying and failing, exploring and trying again. By

³² ”men det finns ju med på nått sätt, [...] alltså det ligger ju en djup innebörd i det som jag gör nu, som är viktigt för mig. Som är en sån här väldigt gammal ursprunglig bild som jag tänker är viktigt för fler än mig också. Eller som jag vill förmedla då.”

allowing the hands to work on their own, one might in the same sense open up for unexpected things to happen, emotions, thoughts, and ideas. The next time you look down you might not even recognize your writing/crafts. This is a good example on how crucial the body is in the process of creating meaning. The body produces knowledge, and our bodies are not only constituted by difference, but it also creates difference, in writing as well as in other practices, for example crafting (Ibid.:12).

By placing crafting side by side with writing, the concept and practice of crafting moves from one place dominated by the understanding of normative feminine codes and knowledge productions as a clear and simple form that can be described through language and theories. It moves towards an understanding of the practice as an intellectual one, and by this it recreates itself as a new, meaningful practice. Placing material and theory in new contexts makes them change understandings (Lee 2014:56). Placing the practice of crafting outside of the crafting-room transform its meanings. In the quote below, Christine is pointing to the importance of conversation, which I think in many senses sums up the thoughts and ideas that started this work in the beginning: what happens when we starts to listen; to each other, to the things we do, to the materials. What can happen if we engage in a dialogue with the emphasis on the questions and curiosities rather than the answers?

I am thinking about when I went to listen to Gudrun Schyman, [and] she says, she has to have paper and a pen, and the ones listening have to have it as well, and that is something that existed in a huge amount before like the social democrats and union, they were all about educating people, and that is almost disappeared today, and it is a very nice way to assort and to take part of new ideas and things. It's not only sitting and turning on your phone and the Internet about everything you wonder about, but the conversation can still exist, I think that is very important. And then I read about [...] that there is something called "test-talk", I thought that was really wonderful, because today it is so very... I had just come from a discussion where everything became so very harsh, we couldn't meet, people just got upset. And to "test-talk", to get the chance to ventilate ones opinions without being judged in some ways, you know. I think that is really exciting, I will start using that word. Let's "test-talk" a little! Isn't that nice!³³

Christine

³³ ”Jag tänker på det nu när jag var och lyssnade på Gudrun Schyman [och] hon säger, hon ska ha blädderblock och penna, dom som kommer och lyssnar ska också ha anteckningsbok och skriva, och det är ju sånt som fanns väldigt mycket förut som socialdemokraterna och facket hade väldigt mycket med att man skulle bildas, och det har nästan försvunnit idag och det är ju ett väldigt fint sett att umgås och ta del av nya saker och så. Det är inte bara att sitta och slå på mobilen och nätet om allting som man undrar, men just att samtalet kan få finnas kvar, det tycker jag är jätte viktigt. Och då läser jag också [en text om] att det fanns nånting som heter 'provprata', och det var så himla fint tycker jag, för idag är det så väldigt, jag hade just kommit från en diskussion som blev sådär stenhård liksom, man kunde inte mötas, folk blev bara arga. Och att 'provprata', att man får lov att ventilera sina åsikter utan att dömas på något sätt va. Och det är ju jätte spännande tycker jag va, jag ska börja införa det ordet. Nu 'provpratar' vi lite! Men visst är det fint!”

Using crafts as a way to communicate is a more open, but also more embodied way of engaging in a conversation. Letting your body guide your communication and illustrating it through fabric, daring to argue the importance in seemingly small and quiet practices. Christine points to the importance of something she calls “test-talking”, a form of communication that is allowed to take place without taking precaution. It is a well-intentioned form of conversation, where one is not trying to prove right or wrong, but putting the emphasis on experimenting, without being banned from the conversation. Put beside the practice of crafting, one can see the similarities between the two of them; how the focus is put on the actual *doing* with the possibility to re-do if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

Nora tells me about a memory of when she went to Belfast, a place that is for her filled with identity, belonging and history, to do an art project. The aim was to map out the area where her father comes from, and during the gathering of information about the project and herself she took a train to her aunt, “and during the whole train ride I embroidered mountains, which was one of the things that I could touch, get a hold of when I was in this Belfast-Project”.³⁴ Since mountains surrounds Belfast Nora came to start with embroidering that, something that a couple of years later got stitched together to a three-dimensional mountain area. When doing her first solo exhibition Nora realised that the gallery owner expected her to put prices on all of her work, something that upset her a lot; “I had worked so hard and intensively with all of the pieces. It wasn’t until I was finished with the hanging of the exhibition that I understood that it was important for them [the gallery owner] that I had prices on everything. I felt quite chocked, I had four more exhibitions planned and the work that I showed had taken me several years to finish, and I had so many memories and situations connected to them, they were a part of me and my history. I started to cry. And then I put prices on everything except the three-dimensional mountains [...] Whatever happens, I will never sell the mountains”.³⁵

³⁴ ”på tåget och hela tiden broderade jag berg, som var en av de saker som jag kunde ta på när jag var i detta Belfast projekt som skulle mynna ut i något textilt kring Shankhill Road”

³⁵ ”jag hade arbetat väldigt hårt och intensivt med alla arbeten. Först när jag hängde utställningen förstod jag att det var viktigt för utställningshallen att jag hade priser på allt. Och jag kände mig rätt chockad, jag hade fyra till utställningar inbokade och arbetet jag visade hade jag gjort under många många år, och hade många minnen och sammanhang till dem, de var liksom ett med mig och en del av min historia. Jag började gråta. Och satte sedan priser på allt utom på de tredimensionella bergen. [...] Vad som än händer kommer jag inte att sälja bergen”

CHAPTER 3 | *Conclusions*

3 | Conclusions & Further Discussions

I have investigated some of the different attributes the informants ascribe to the practice of crafting; being therapeutic, a practice of art, wakening memory, killing time, and filled with emotions. I have discussed the possibilities of doing non-normative, reparative readings regarding the crafting practice, and have done this by doing interviews, observation and group discussions with a group of elderly women, and three independent textile artists. We have talked about these issues and meditated on the importance of bodily practices to let your mind rest. Many of the informants pointed to the therapeutic effects of crafting, making your loved and lost ones reappears, but also making time go by, making sense of the long days in a seniors life, or the irrational capitalist views on how time should be spent in an ‘effective’ way, always resulting in a profitable product.

Through this capitalist understanding of time and legitimate uses of time, women’s socializing is to be seen as wasted time since this socialization produces no material product that will benefit the market. Crafting becomes, in this context, a strategy to legitimize the socialization; since the crafting practice produces products that can be argued as of high importance (for example, Flinka Fingrar donates all of the money they earn from the raffle, where their crafted products are the awards. In this sense it makes sense to spend time crafting since it results in substantial aid to indigent people and countries). But then again, since the economic order does not demand that we are self-sufficient and create things with our hands anymore but rather the opposite; a liberal capitalist market is dependent on constant consumption and a total dependence towards the market, to spend ones time practicing crafting, when not necessary (which it never is) can be seen as a resistance towards the economic order, and in that sense being a queer use of time.

I have used the concept of the archive as a way to collect all of my material in one place and letting it spread out, as it wants to. The archive enables the material to touch, interact and intervene with each other, creating new and unforeseen outcomes.

A key-concept in this thesis has been ‘time’ – how time feels like and how it works in different ways depending on what you are doing. But also how different uses of time are being valued differently according to the capitalist liberal market. Here I draw the conclusion that there seems to be a connection between ‘good’ time as necessary work practice, boring and slow time, and ‘bad’ time as useless leisure practice, fun and fast time, which is to be seen with an understanding of Freemans *chrononormativity* and Halberstams discussions about *queer time* and the queer art of failure.

When discussing the textile material, what kind of material the informants preferred and dismissed, it showed that different materials have different connotations in relation to class. And by playing with these preconceptions, placing different materials side by side with one another, new understandings and readings becomes available. It also showed that the selection of material is an important part of the practice, where some material were perceived as having *too much* identity in itself, not being neutral enough for the informants to be able to express something through it.

Another side of time and crafting that I have discussed deals with the aspect of remembrance and memories. Through quotes from the informants I have discussed how crafted artifacts can be used as a portal to lost time and loved ones who have passed away. All of the informants had very specific memories and emotions to some specific objects, all it took for them was a touch, or just to talk about these, and they would travel back in time to re-live moments and revisit loved ones. This works as a comforter, but it is also a way to not forget people, times and places that have been important.

I have also discussed the division between art and crafts; several of the informants pointed out the impossibility for the textile material to work in an artistic context, which follows in line of the historical discussions about artistic practices in the 1970s in Gothenburg that I have presented above. Although the textile artists that I have interviewed has to be seen as proof of change in the attitudes and the view of the textile, it is also obvious that the idea of the textile material is still very strictly connected to the idea of a women's practice, done at home in the private, and with the main purpose of utilisation.

By using the concept 'tacit knowledge' I have discussed the possibilities to read crafting as an intellectual practice. This has been a way for me to re-think the practice in a new way, giving it weight and importance, not separate it from its history of femininity and women's history but rather to widen the understanding of the practice. By placing writing and crafting side by side I have shown how these two can be read as practicing *écriture féminine*, actively using the body in the writing process, stitching down thoughts and ideas. These practices are conditioned by meditative and repetitive movements that enables the acts 'to remember' and 'to realise' as Waldén (1994) points out. In other words, these practices are essential for the intellectual work to take place. I am arguing that crafts should be seen as a print in time and space, leaving marks and telling us something about the context from where it origins. It negotiate the relationship between past and present, and might be compared to Freemans example of the photographic image; "[it] consists of the trace of an object and presents that object in a moment other than the moment of recording", placing "a different *when* from that

of the spectator”. In this sense, artifacts create a historically specific shared temporality, just as Freeman argues that film and photography does, but compared to a photograph, the crafted artifacts provide other possibilities to do history; through touch, smell, and texture (Freeman 2010:xvii-xviii.)

It has been a true challenge to use the ethnographic method and many time have I wonder, “what on earth [...] was it that [I was] actually studying? Why couldn’t [I] hold it still? Why did it keep on going out of focus?” (Law 2003:5). Engaging with people, and not only with texts or artifacts, have been a new experience for me where I have had to practice the act of listening, but it has also reminded me of the importance of meetings. Doing things together is in some aspects a way to (re)write the narrative of feminist struggle, but it is also a way to remember and emphasize the importance of collective work, collaborations, and that stories never will be absolute or settled, rather they keep on evolving, conversing within the repetitive and reparative practices of culture.

As much as I love to start up projects, I hate to finish them. I love putting colours together, sorting things into various combinations, feeling different textures against my skin. The repetitive and meditative motions of knitting, to put my hands into a bowl of buttons, being caressed, feeling my way through the landscape of textile. I use all of my senses when I craft; I smell, feel, look, sense. For me, crafting is largely that: a practice of feeling. But also a practice of conversation, being in conversation with the material, the history, the people around, and being able to listen.

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