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CONSTRUCTING SAFE SPACES

The potential of performing feminist critical utopia analyzed through zine-making

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ABSTRACT

Safe spaces are constructed to offer a space of acceptance to an otherwise marginalized or vulnerable group. This thesis explores the connections between safe spaces and feminist (critical) utopianism through their inherent paradoxality. While safe spaces attempt to make people feel included, they often function through the exclusion of others. Just like utopias, they contradict themselves. Here, I analyze these dynamics and explore how they can be a fruitful catalyst for social change as they may defy dominant performativity to enable instead glimpses of utopian performatives (Dolan, 2005). Through utopian performatives, we peek into visions of a different present, enabling us to live a different future. This is illustrated by cases in the field with environmental activists in their safe spaces and my own experimentation with building safe space through creative participatory research methods. Aesthetic praxes play an important role in these enactments and this is why I have used (collaborative) zine-making as a method of analysis that mirrors and acts out the dynamics that are the subject of this research. I conclude that, when constructed consciously, safe spaces may make us aware of other self-contradicting structures we have built around us such as inclusions and exclusions, identity politics and divides between nature and culture. Combining this with performative utopian creative practices may then allow us to realize our position within and as a part of a world consisting of intricate relations and give us opportunities to create our own.

Keywords: safe space, feminist utopia, performativity, zine-making, environmental activism

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2018, I attended Statement Festival, a music festival where cis men were not welcome. The festival was organized as a response to a wave of sexual assault at music festivals in- and outside of Sweden. This is how I actively began to think about safe spaces. Although I understood the 'statement' that was being made, I felt like something like this was untenable, and yet a powerful thing to do. I also believed there was a utopian element within the closed and temporary (festival) space, whether men are allowed or not, although I could not find the proper words to define it. It became an 'itch' that remained and perhaps will always remain within me, to find concepts and words, but also real-life practices to define my initial instinctive feeling about this specific yet broad phenomenon.

Indeed, the complicated subject of safe spaces turned out to not only be my personal concern. In the US and UK especially, safe spaces created on university campuses have been a hot topic of discussion, creating controversy and anxiety about inhibition of free speech and so-called oversensitive individuals who avoid opinions that might differ from their own at all costs. Ranging from news articles and opinion pieces (e.g. Downes, 2018; Mason, 2016; Rose, 2017; Salisbury, 2017), and even a dedicated episode of popular cartoon series *South Park* (Parker, 2015), safe spaces have surely been highly debated. In this research, I want to engage actively in the construction of safe space, but rather in activist and private settings and thereby study the safe space dynamics. Since my focus is not specifically on university safe spaces, I will not so directly address this current debate, although my work contributes to it, as I also question how and why safe spaces might help or hurt those inside and affect those outside.

Part of this is the question of generating change. Even the most fervent safe space builders do not aspire for safe spaces to become the new norm. Safe spaces are generated out of a discontent of society, as it only offers the privilege of safety to some and not others. Thus, inherently, safe spaces carry with them a wish for change. One may question how isolating oneself could ever create a difference outside of that isolation, and this is precisely what I am asking here. For the purpose of this research, I have formulated this question as follows:

How can the practice of constructing safe space aid to think and perform critical (feminist) utopia as a means for social change?

In order to find answers to this, I have worked with a community of activists from the environmental movement of Extinction Rebellion. Activists are also aiming for change, but one usually imagines them more 'out in the open' than in safe spaces. However, safe spaces actually

originated from activist circles, as a way to come together and strategize (Kenney, 2001). For this research, I positioned myself in both of these outward and inward environments to understand how safe spaces are created and what their purpose can be. The choice to work with activists who fight to avoid the climate catastrophe was consciously made to retain this connection to space, connecting the small bubbles of safe space to the immense space of a planet being destroyed (something one might consider 'unsafe') they exist in.

As this work is not only about activism, but rather about safe space-creating practices, I also took time to experiment with creating my own safe spaces in the form of workshops with friends and connections. There, I could focus on safe spaces that are not 'activist' per se, but still strive for glimmers of social change. Since I worked with creating my own phenomena as well, an integral part of answering my research question is the quest to incorporate creative practices into the 'safe academic writing space' that I have built for myself through years of studying in philosophical fields. Following that particular summer of the Statement Festival, I completed an internship within the design research field, where 'care' was a point of focus and participatory designerly methods were used, using speculation as a key part of addressing the troubles at hand (Lindström & Ståhl, 2019). This speculation entails that imaginative scenarios are materialized through designed objects or situations (Dunne & Raby, 2013). During this time, I was further inspired to connect creative practices to my usual 'classic' form of writing.

Within this project, I have therefore combined both, by not only writing this text, but also introducing the praxis of zine-making as a tool for analysis. On the one hand many theoretical doors are opened throughout the text. However, it has also been my ambition to step out of this and throw myself into field and practice and work collaboratively with others. Therefore, on the other hand, the project also attempts to find a middle ground of theory and artistic practice through a type of creative participatory action research. As bell hooks notes, "perhaps it is the existence of this most highly visible feminist theory that compels us to talk about the gap between theory and practice. For it is indeed the purpose of such theory to divide, separate, exclude, keep at distance" (1991, p.5). It is thus important to combine theorizing with lived experience for it to be fruitful, as it may then be connected to aspirations of collective liberation, dissolving the divide with practice that had been constructed before (hooks, 1991). Next to the text presented here, I have therefore chosen to include (not merely add!) a semi-collectively made zine to this work. This aided me in challenging the dominant tendency of reproducing a hierarchical binary between art/practice and academia, but also was part of my personal aspirations to develop my own research practice that works towards their synthesis.

Pictures of the zine can be found in appendix F, but I recommend having a paper version at hand, which may be requested by emailing me.[1]

The research question is answered through the different chapters of the research, which, in the order they are presented in, build paths towards an answer and showcase my personal journey of working and thinking through my materials in order to do so. In *Safe Spaces*, I present current literature on safe spaces and use it to reconceptualize the term, bringing it closer to the notion of a 'feminist/critical utopia'. Within the chapter *Critical Utopia* I delve further into this notion and bring into it concepts one might not associate directly with a classical view of a utopia, such as risk (Hunter, 2008) and transgression. The *Methodology* chapter presents the reasoning behind my doings in the field, which are elaborated upon in *Collected Material*, where I recount my participation in the activist group and the organizing of workshops. Here, I also introduce zine-making as a praxis, offering a way to bridge activist, personal and academic knowledges. I then use it to analyze and thematize my data in the chapter *Analyzing through 'Invisible Hand'* where I also explicate parts of the zine itself. Finally, in *Gathered Thoughts*, I present my conclusions and reflect on the journey of this project.

Throughout the text, the reader will find 'themes' that cut up some of the chapters. In the first instance, I added these sections in the writing process to be able to ground myself in theory, before (re)conceptualizing or application of certain concepts. In some of them, I thus make clear which theoretical knowledges have brought me here and continue driving me. This is the reason that there is no 'strictly theoretical' chapter, as I believe (and it will become clear) that theory is not simply a background layer to paste practices and their methods on. The final theme however, bridges a gap between practice and theory the other way around, by *showing* collaboration rather than theorizing on it. Therefore, the thematical cuts are not meant to separate, but rather reconfigure (Barad in Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012, p.54) the way an academic text ought to be structured.

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SAFE SPACES

The term safe space as we know it originates from activist discourse in Western, and primarily American urban areas during the late 1960s and 1970s (Kenney, 2001). While places such as for instance gay bars already existed and provided momentary escapes from a world of harassment, they were not necessarily physically safe as police raids were not uncommon. It was the women's movement who reconceptualized a type of safe space not only as a place to be oneself, but also as "a collective effort to create place" (Kenney, p.24) and thus a means to achieve something more than fleeting moments of 'freedom'. As I will demonstrate in later chapters, activism and safe spaces are still closely tied, whether for feminists and queers, anti-racist advocates, or in my case here: environmental activist affinity groups. Not only are they places to get away from (potential) violence, but also spaces to enjoy certain freedom of expression and combine forces to communally create new strategies for resistance. Due to this different aim, not only physical safety, but also a metaphorical sense of safety is required. This means that certain behaviours of discrimination and inequality are not tolerated during the time the safe space 'exists', or is being enacted (Hunter, 2008). In this sense, activist safe spaces such as the ones originally created by the women's movement essentially rely more on *who* is meeting than *where* they are located.

This distinction for activist safe spaces, designed to foster resistance and safety of marginalized groups, often results in the space being *separatist*. A separatist safe space entails that who is welcome is regulated through identity. Usually, the identities deemed to be connected to oppressive structures therefore get excluded. Such spaces are helpful to create a sense of community, belonging and shape identity (The Roestone Collective, 2014). However, the Collective notes that although they are often valued, these feeling remains partial and incomplete. Judith Butler offers an explanation when she states: "Given the complex vectors of power that constitute the constituency of any identity-based political group, a coalitional politics that requires one identification at the expense of another thereby inevitably produces a violent rift, a dissension that will come to tear apart the identity wrought through the violence of exclusion." (1993a, p.118). In simpler words, she argues that doing politics based on characteristics of identity will always lead to exclusion of another characteristic of identity, even within the same individual. In this sense, a part of them will always be excluded, because one identity characteristic is deemed more defining in that space than the others.

When analyzing LGBT safe spaces on university campuses, Fox and Ore (2010) discuss exactly this problem in terms of dichotomizing and universalizing. Dichotomizing entails that the identity inside the safe space becomes a binary with all identities that are considered outside

of it in an 'us' versus 'them' logic. This binary logic expands through the understanding of the environment with the notions of 'safety' and 'unsafety' (McConnell, Todd, Odahl-Ruan & Shattell, 2016). Through dichotomizing, separatist spaces construct a version of safety for a 'single identity' marginalized group, setting it against all other identities and thus easily forgetting the intersectional nature of oppression. This then leads to universalizing. Having a space for one type of person also assumes that there is no difference between the subjects in it. The specific and intersectional marginalization of for instance black LGBT students who also experience racialized oppression is not taken into account in the campus spaces. When it is acknowledged, Fox and Ore remark that an additive model is often in place, meaning that the students are seen to experience a 'double oppression', on the one hand based on their sexual identity, and on the other based on their race. In the LGBT spaces, the racial questions or other '-isms' are seen as the work for other groups. As Fox and Ore note, this "produces a particular kind of subject -one whose gender or race or ethnicity are not central to her/his experience of oppression and violence in society- and renders other subjects as marginalized in the discourse of safe space" (p.633). Additionally, the community which arises in the safe space comes to be built on a false universal, or as Fox and Ore term it, a "premature solidarity" (p.634). Not only are all outside of the safe space thought to be the same (they are oppressors), but all who find themselves in it must also become homogenous since they fight the same enemy.

This exclusionary nature of safe spaces has been demonstrated in many instances of separatism. An example of the problematic dichotomizing dynamic can be found within the statement of the Combahee River Collective, which recounts the struggles of forming a separatist black feminist organization (1977). They identify as black feminist lesbians fighting against the oppression of all women. However, during the group's evolution problems with differences regarding sexuality and class still arose and caused divisions. Another example is offered by the Roestone Collective (2014), who mention rural 'lesbian lands' in the United States during the 1970s and 1980s. These farming communities were created to escape the male-dominated city, but struggled with who to allow in, regarding sexualities of the women, but also genders of for instance children and animals. The same type of division discussions happened during Michfest, a separatist womyn's music festival where debates occurred on the inclusion of trans women (McConnell et al., 2016). Additionally, black women felt so excluded in both the festival event and the rural lands that they decided to create their own communities, either within or outside of these spaces.

Regarding universalizing, Rink (2008) offers an example when observing how the gay neighbourhood *De Waterkant* in Cape Town (South Africa), becomes a safe space where

heteronormativity can be disturbed, but only from a very specific identity. Through the coding of the space with clubs that show pictures of what can be interpreted as their ideal customers (white muscular gay men) and the heavy referencing of American gay culture, *De Waterkant* "denies the context of the city where it is located" (p.211) and instead creates a false sense of community around one interpretation of gayness now wrongly deemed universal. Perhaps not so coincidentally, the white gay man is the same identity that Fox and Ore find LGBT campus spaces to be built around. Leaving out the other experiences consequently leads to reproduction of dominant hierarchical structures of marginalization within the safe space, thus contradicting its original purpose.

A different but commonly implemented approach is the *inclusive* safe space. While separatist spaces are more usual in activism and based on identity and resistance, inclusive safe space is most often linked to pedagogical purposes. Safe space has become a widely used metaphor for the classroom setting (Barrett, 2010; The Roestone Collective, 2014). As Stengel (2010) argues, within an education environment, it is counterproductive to separate marginalized students from others more than just temporarily, as it might induce fears that were not present before. With an inclusive approach, the classroom does not prohibit anyone from entering, but it is the setting that is supposed to create a safe and comfortable experience for both students and teachers. The aim is to make everyone comfortable to express their views, even if these differ from the norm, and to explore their knowledge (Holley & Steiner, 2005; Barrett, 2010).

Again however, the problem arises of never being able to provide everyone with the same level of safety due to variously oppressed identities. Furthermore, as the goal is education, constructing the classroom as a safe space becomes a means to prove that learning is taking place, as students are compelled to express reflections on the material. Boostrom (1998) and Barrett (2010) both have voiced criticism on safe space classrooms, as students tend to feel censored in their potential for criticism and conflict is always avoided. This type of comfort (which is something different than safety) can actually be unfavorable in education as the potential for critical analysis is lost. Both Barrett (2010) and Stengel (2010) bring into question the assumption that a classroom must be psychologically safe. For Stengel, the antidote to fear is not safety. She argues that rather than rushing to create safe spaces against fear, this very feeling of fear should be unpacked. This is done by recognizing the political relations that construct it, which Stengel recognizes as affect. The discomfort that occurs doing this, both in educators and students does not necessarily impede learning, but instead offers opportunities to

seek more constructive solutions. Holley and Steiner (2005) advocate for similar exposing of biases in the class.

In practice, inclusive classroom safe spaces result in what Gayle, Cortez and Preiss term the "participation paradox" (2013, p.1). It is left to the instructor to find a balance between the safe space comfort and the ability for everyone to express themselves freely and critically. As Boostrom (1998) advocates, teachers must learn to "manage conflict, not prohibit it" (p.407). On the student side of the matter, Gayle, Cortez and Preiss found in their investigation that students taking their course on difficult dialogues were aware of the safe space tensions and conscious of their impact on others. Yet interestingly the researchers emphasize that "[students'] language choice was appreciative, but not joyful" and did not express pleasure or creativity. Previously, Holley and Steiner (2005) also asked students about their experiences and similarly found that students find safe classrooms challenging enough, provided that the instructors are comfortable with conflicts.

Spaces like schools or neighbourhoods are all quite public and must therefore create certain boundaries in order to maintain the 'safety' they aim for. However, sometimes there is no need to indicate that a space is 'safe', but rather an unspoken consensus over who is welcome and how they might behave. This is often the case in smaller or private circles. An example of this is what bell hooks terms the 'homeplace': the household spaces created by Black women to "restore to ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world" ([1990] 2015, p.78). These places of healing, safety from racism and affirmation become so thanks to their privacy and familiarity. Intimate circles such as homes or friendship groups where people voluntarily come together can therefore sometimes also be considered safe spaces. For instance, Goins (2011) sees Black female friendships as homeplaces in themselves that "provide a source of liberation" (p.531) as friends may reaffirm one another's identity. More generally, Greens (1998) conceptualizes women's friendships as safe spaces "from which to review the constraints of heterosexuality" while also having fun. The private sphere and small scale of these social structures means that they often become in some way separatist naturally, which might be exactly what shapes them into actual safe spaces. As I have laid out, what makes a space safe, whether separatist or exclusive, is thus very much related to how we behave and act in it, and how we constitute rules for this. However, we must keep in mind that a bunker, a classroom or a home might provoke very different feelings and thus we might create differing guidelines for behaviour depending on where we are. In this sense, space itself also has a role to play in the becoming of safety that should not be omitted.

//Theme - Space

Space has been theorized in different ways over the course of time. Previously, the notion of *absolute space* was dominant, relying on understanding space as an autonomous container for the world (Jones, 2009). That way, the relation between space and its events inside is unambiguous, as space is always fixed. However, this view is now considered dated and there is currently a broad acceptance in the social sciences and geography that space is socially constituted, and that the social is in turn constituted by the space around it (Massey, 1992).

However, the actual consequences of this way of thinking are not always taken up. Doreen Massey has voiced concerns that space is too often still considered as a static phenomenon, while time stands opposite and equals movement and dynamism. When thinking of change, we thus see an image of society moving through time linearly, where change only occurs through the movement of time. Space is considered solely as a static relation of the moment, but Massey urges us to understand space and time as inseparable as she states that "space is not static, nor time spaceless" (1992, p.80). Therefore, time not only pushes space, but space is also a source of time and this is why we could also think of *space-time* as a concept showing the inseparability of these categories. Although there are differences, both shape the social and are constructed by it in turn. Space is thus constituted of interrelations, just like time is: "it is not that the interrelations between objects occur *in* space and time; it is these relationships themselves which *create/define* space and time" (Massey, 1992, emphasis in original, p. 79).

On the other hand, there are *relative approaches* to space, where space "can be defined only in relation to the object(s) and/or processes being considered in space and time" (Jones, 2009, p.490). In this case however, there would be no structures to theorize around. What follows is that any theorization of space becomes a representation of how things of the real world relate to one another. Massey also argues against this approach as she notes that space is too often also used to think in representations (2005). Again, with a representation we miss movement, and can only think of space in society, history or the world as a static dot frozen on a point in time (Jones, 2009). Even when space is taken as something social and political, it is put into texts, concepts or (still) images[2], erasing its materiality. It then becomes something imposed on real life, instead

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[2] See Deleuze's *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* ([1983] 2013) and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* ([1985] 2013) for an elaborate analysis on why certain (cinematic) images can be considered more than mere representations of space as they interact with the plasticity of the world and our brain itself.

of something that is inherently part of it. Massey couples the constructed dichotomy of time and space to the dualism of male and female in gender. Space is considered the lesser category in the hierarchy just like women compared to men, and this is exactly why feminist geographers such as Massey have been undertaking the steps to 'defend' space and actual spatiality (Massey, 1992).

Since Judith Butler's theory of performativity ([1990] 2006) had a major impact on how to understand the construction of gender, it might not be a strange turn to attempt to apply it to time and space as well as a feminist way of theorizing geography. Butler has written a lot on the idea that the subject is formed through performativity (see [1990] 2006; 1993a; 1993b). According to her, discursive conditions exist before the subject itself comes into being. These are for instance laws, language, institutions or histories which create performative categories such male or female, but also gay, lesbian or straight for instance. Even when we think we are free to put a certain label on ourselves, for this identity to be socially recognized, the category must have some kind of pre-existence in performative practices (1993b). In this sense, we never create our subjectivity, but always perform it, a process that relies on repetition of previous social relations.

Coming back to geography, Allen (1999) indeed notes that "a feminist reading of space is coupled with a performative approach, which sits alongside a more strident rejection of representational theory, which in turn sits alongside an account which foregrounds the ideas of both Lefebvre and Foucault, among others" (p.326). However, the difficulty arises in the lack of mention of space within Butler's performativity, as the concept revolves around the discursive construction, even of materialities such as the sexed body. Geographers like Nigel Thrift have voiced concern that Butler focuses so much on language as the main signifier of subjectification (2008). Thrift has himself formulated a theory against representationalism named 'nonrepresentational theory' (e.g. 1999; 2008). It relies on the idea that we cannot simply represent the world as we are in the middle of it (1999). However, in contrast to Butler, the theory focuses on the *performative practices* of everyday life, such as dancing, that contribute to the perpetual becoming of the human body in space (Thrift, 2008; Nash, 2000).

When performativity is not tweaked to include spatiality, it leaves a gap in its geographical applications. Nelson (1999) offers a critique of performativity in geography and its unquestioned use in the field. She argues that agency is problematically theorized in some major articles using the concept. In Butler's performativity, the subject is abstracted, meaning that is not situated, or located in space, while this is a crucial notion in geography. With classic

performativity, subjectification therefore remains a frozen moment (such as the stating of the sex of a newborn, often used as an example by Butler), even if it is constantly repeated. Instead, Nelson wants to see the subject as "constituted by discursive processes, but not reducible to them" (p.332), in order to be able to account for change, resistance and contexts such as history and geography within identity performance. Therefore, subjectification is not solely represented by still moments in time. Instead, moments of being in between, in space and moments where past and future are not separate from the present are allowed to happen and thus change can take place. Through these reconceptualizations, we can understand how both the human subject and space itself are connected to performativity.

Rose (1999) helps to understand space as just as much part of performativity as the subjects affected by it. Butler thinks of space with boundaries and surfaces. This is similarly a static notion with "bodily surfaces between the interior self and the exterior space" (Rose 1999, p.252). For Rose, however, not only is space relational (and thus dynamic), but the relationalities are what is performed, thus making space and whatever it relates to (e.g. the subject) constituted through each other. This means that space, like gender, does not pre-exist its naming and 'doing'. For Rose, space is not simply a location

in which we perform our identities, but specific spaces are also produced by specific performances.

The scholars I have presented in this section, essentially all urge for a better application of a *relational approach* to space. This means that the dualism between structure and agency is replaced with "a topological theory of space, place and politics as encountered, performed, and fluid" (Jones, 2009, p.492). Performativity thus must include space as space itself is performative and its relations repeated. This is exemplified with an architectural perspective:

> *Like the human body and its performed identities, identities that are socially produced but acquire the aura of the real through association with the body's undeniable facticity, architecture performs to bestow a similar realness upon social constructs. As mechanisms of difference that delineate and divide (e.g. the separation of metropole from colony, male from female, order from disorder); as the named materialization of a time, an epoch, a spirit, an ideal (the Gothic cathedral is the materialization of scholasticism, Cartesianism takes form in Versailles, postmodernity is the Bonaventure Hotel, the modern is a white cube, the primitive is a hut), architectural practices performatively produce the effects that they name.*
> Hooper, 2002, p. 56

Thus, we can understand when Jones further explains that "objects *are* space, space *is* objects, and moreover objects can be understood *only* in relation to other objects – with all this being a perpetual becoming of heterogenous networks and events that connect internal spatiotemporal relations" (p.491). The building might be the most fathomable example of an object that is space, and so it seems necessary to make a materialist turn to truly grasp the performativity of space and our position as a part of it.

Reconceptualizing safe space through the utopian performative

Both Boostrom (1998) and Barrett (2010) argue for a reconceptualization of the classroom, from a safe space towards respectively an agora/congress or a civil space. The Roestone Collective (2014) however write with the aim of reconceptualizing all safe space, separatist or inclusive. They follow Hunter's idea of safe space as "a space in which individuals in a collective environment can be empowered to encounter risk on their own terms" (2008, p.18-19). Hunter (2008) provides a helpful case study of an inclusive safe space in Brisbane, Australia, where teenagers with diverse backgrounds living in a difficult neighbourhood were engaged in peacemaking activities through hip-hop. Her analysis of safe space that strives for social change is particularly interesting, because instead opposing fear to safety, she focuses on risks. Contrary to fear, risk is something that can be calculated into our individual actions and can create positive outcomes, which is emphasized in Hunter's argument that "making a space 'safe' means making it risk-averse […] or risk-attractive" (p.9). She emphasizes that safe spaces do not only provide physical safety, metaphorical safety and comfort, but also paradoxically encourage taking risk and experimentation. Safe spaces thereby become processes of ongoing "messy negotiations" (p.16) where everyone can learn and is free to manage their own level of risk.

As the Roestone Collective (2014) underline, it is paradoxality that characterizes these spaces and this is not necessarily a limitation. Safe spaces are inclusive by being exclusive and therefore contradict themselves. Intrinsic to safe space then becomes "the work of […] continually facing, negotiating, and embracing paradoxical binaries: safety/danger, inclusivity/exclusivity, private/public, and so forth" (p.1355). Reconfiguring these constructions is exactly where safe space paradoxes can be helpful and can achieve a form of change that is not performed as outwardly as traditional activism. In an environment where people feel safe and freer to express themselves, they are also confronted with the problematics that the space brings up and forced to reflect on this, underlining again its processual and messy nature.

Hunter asserts that safe spaces through their messiness allow for 'utopian performatives' a term coined by Jill Dolan (2001; 2005; 2006). In a theater and performance context, these are defined as small acts that "make palpable an affective vision of how the world might be better" (Dolan, 2006, p.6) and in which "performance calls the attention of the audience in a way that lifts everyone slightly above the present, into a hopeful feeling of what the world might be like if every moment of our lives were as emotionally voluminous, generous, aesthetically striking, and intersubjectively intense" (2006, p.5). Performativity/performance thus becomes a crucial

concept when discussing safe spaces as means of picturing different (utopian) futures. In a similar way to Hunter, Ryberg (2012) links safe space to utopianism, although their topics seem far apart. In her dissertation, Ryberg discusses how the production of lesbian feminist porn relies on the concept of a safe space for sexual empowerment. This safe space is a "collective political fantasy" (Ryberg p.110) which does not necessarily aim to attain a goal, but rather attempts to picture it. She states:

> *Queer, feminist and lesbian pornography hence is characterized by an activism of striving toward a goal, despite risks, unsafety and failures. The politics of imagining, rather than realizing safe space evokes an ethics that is not either necessarily practiced or realized, but is called forth by the investment in shared struggles and fantasies in this interpretive community.*
> Ryberg, 2012, p.185

Following Muñoz, Ryberg then proceeds to conceptualize safe space and its performative and imaginative aspect as a queer utopia. In his book *Cruising Utopia*, José Esteban Muñoz argues that queerness is utopia in itself, as it is "essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world" (2009, p.1). Furthermore, he also terms queerness as a performative utterance, and not simply an identity. This means that it is collective becoming, or a "doing towards the future" (p.1). However, this future remains utopian as it is about envisioning possibilities rather than achieving freedom in the here and now.

Putting Dolan and Muñoz side by side, one realizes that their conceptions of utopian performatives are close. While Muñoz discusses them in the context of queer cultural aesthetic production, Dolan focuses on theatre performance. Muñoz also draws on Dolan in his book and acknowledges performance as queer utopian performativity (2009, p.4, 17). On the other hand, Dolan recognizes that Muñoz's earlier work comes close to describing her term of utopian performative, especially through the dimension of thinking the future in the present (2005). Indeed, Muñoz previously discussed the relation between performance and performativity saying:

> *Rather than pit performativity against performance or stack them next to each other in a less than interactive fashion, I have chosen to employ a methodology that stresses the performativity of or in performance. It is my contention that the doing matters most and the performance that seems most crucial are [sic] nothing short of the actual making of worlds.*
> Muñoz, 1999, p. 200, as quoted in Dolan, 2005, p. 174n6

Muñoz also draws on Butler's notion of performativity to discuss 'disidentificatory performance' as a form of counterperformativity. This links to the way Butler conceptualizes resistance. Regarding a term such as 'queer' which aims to be in oppositions to categories, Butler argues that it gets its power from repetitive discursive acts, hence it still operates within performativity. However, although it is part of the oppressive system, it can be effective in changing it as well. As Butler states, a different performative can have effect because it "*draws on and covers over* the constitutive conventions by which it is mobilized." (1993b, p.19). Although label of queer has it's pitfalls, since it remains a label and thus exclusionary and essentializing -or as Fox and Ore (2010) might say: dichotomizing and universalizing!- there is 'space' for resistance there as well, precisely because it must acknowledge its genealogical ties to the current dynamics of power.

For Muñoz, this friction can be used to create a counterperformativity (1999). Through theatrical and artistic performance, one can disidentify (a form of distancing while being within) from the performative categories regarding race, sexuality or gender (p.199). The performance is then not separated from daily performativity but acknowledges its part inside of it and through disidentification has the possibility of imagining a building of new worlds. Taking this back to safe spaces, existing in a similarly paradoxical way as queerness, as places of friction, they might become the spaces to cultivate utopian performatives, exactly because they are situated as a frail, questionable and temporary bubbles within. Performance is therefore not bound to the theatre and can happen in various contexts. The utopian performative can create a resistance within, a way of performing with performativity, and a safe place for planning queer futurity of now and later. It is as such that we can understand Muñoz's view of queerness as a utopian performative.

CRITICAL UTOPIA

I have mentioned utopia as the utopian performative in the previous section. It therefore feels appropriate to now take a deeper look into the concept and history of utopia itself in order to get closer to its connection to safe space. The word utopia was invented by Thomas More in 1516 in a satire criticizing science and religion (Kraftl, 2007). The word comes from Greek, combining *ou* (not) or *eu* (happy) and *topos* (place) (Nirta, 2017; Shapiro Sanders, 2011). It is thus simultaneously 'the good place' and 'no place', making it at best paradoxical, but more accurately: impossible. In his book *Utopia*, More describes how a society could work, giving a blueprint of politics, regulations, institutions and infrastructure ([1516] 1989). Although his account was not meant to be taken seriously, this type of fully mapped utopias has become what we consider the classic model.

Johns (2008) remarks however that not many people would actually enjoy living in societies like that. Especially women are not 'helped' by traditional utopias as the design usually stems from one man's vision of the good place and oppression thus easily gets reproduced. For this reason, feminist utopian authors have had to reconceptualize utopia, leaving the blueprint model behind in favour of 'process', 'reproductive' or 'critical' perspectives. Shapiro Sanders (2011) expresses for instance that utopia might be beyond any specific fixed location. She argues that to work as a tool for feminist thought, "utopia is only viable if it is left permanently open, contested, in contradiction with itself, if it is never put into practice as static, codified entity, but remains a shifting landscape of possibility" (p.4). Sargisson (1996) and Kraftl (2007) also admit to seeing more potential in utopianism when it remains open-ended and therefore both argue to expand what we have thus far considered as utopia.

Keinhorst (1987) defines critical utopias through their relation to the present: "the concrete historical situation fictitiously coexists with the chance to change or resist reality" (p.91). This means that critical utopia must be critical of something actual, but will always remain in some way imaginary, a mere possibility. This tension is also addressed by Burwell (1997) who concludes that as long as critical utopianism remains linked to culture, joining "the experiences of alienation and the construction of positive alternatives" will help to get a better understanding of ourselves as subjects (p.209). The changes that are being made when writers imagine feminist utopia (see Keinhorst, 1987 for many examples) do not only focus on changing gender relations. They also always show a different relation to the environment and often touch upon the human's impact on nature, which is one of the reasons why I chose to focus on environmental activism in my fieldwork. In this sense, nature is not represented as "a

passive recipient of human endeavour, but as a powerful, dynamic, potentially dying or potentially deadly force that must be respected and that affects human actions even as human actions have an impact on it" (Johns, 2008, p.191). There is a spatial element that, even though utopia is 'no place', brings us back to our very own space of the earth and our existence as a part of it. Feminist environmental utopias therefore have close ties to posthuman and new materialist thought, which questions the constructed dichotomies of nature/culture, just as feminism questions the constructions of male and female. This is exemplified by Haraway (2016) being heavily influenced by the utopian science fiction (SF) writing of Ursula K. Le Guin.

Kraftl (2007), in line with Sargisson (1996) remarks that critical utopias are not about reaching perfection as a materialized end-goal. The same is argued by Willemsen (1997) who finds that modern utopias refrain from grand narratives and creating *the* society for everyone and could even be limited to changing one aspect to study the effect. Through their fluidity, critical utopias remain a collective effort of "think[ing] the unthinkable" (Sargisson 1996, p.107), or as Kraftl terms it, they are "knowingly performative" (2007, p.125). We can here think back on the previously discussed (queer) utopian performatives of Dolan (2005) and Muñoz (2009) which are expressed through localized cultural productions such as Hunter's (2008) enactment of safe space for drama education. Understanding utopia in this way makes it into something that can be done poetically or artistically on a very local, personal and contextualized level, rather than needing to be a complete reinvention of society. To summarize, Johns (2008) offers 5 key features of process-oriented feminist utopias which will be good to keep in mind throughout this research. These are the valuation of educational development, a belief in the plasticity of human nature, a vision of gradual change with shared power, seeing the non-human world as dynamic and being practice-oriented or at least focused on action.

//Theme – Time

Traditional utopias are mostly planned out as (im)possibilities for the future. They will never exist because they are never remotely close to the present. Feminist utopia is however inextricably connected to the present (Keinhorst, 1987; Sargisson 1996; Kraftl, 2007), an aspect that is perhaps tied to the belief that the present must change for the future to be different. Critical utopias therefore move further than simply establishing a new social order since they will take greatly into account the present's influence on any possible imagined future.

We can conceptualize this as a type of feminist temporality which is always rooted in the *living present*. Loewen Walker (2014) explains this as "re-imagin[ing] our reliance on linear, chronological time, offering instead a dynamic engagement with temporality, one where the past is continually re-imagined in its present evocations" (p.47). In this sense, the past is not something that has happened and now statically remains in its category, but instead the past is something fluid, constantly enfolded and reinterpreted through the present. Thanks to this plasticity, the past does not determine the future, so it remains open-ended and full of possibilities. As Loewen Walker elaborates: "a future uncontained by the past is not a future *without a past*, but rather a thick time of the present that stretches to all past experiences in its very *engendering of a novel future*" (p.48).

Time is not a present moment sliding on a line from past to future, but it is a continuous series of changes, and thus a living present.

Loewen Walker (2014) relies on the new materialist thoughts of Barad and also Deleuze (with Bergson) to conceptualize this feminist temporality. Deleuze has extensively discussed the notion of *becoming* ([1968] 2004). Understanding the doing of being as a becoming implies a constant changing, without a succession of distinct moments. There are no clear-cut events of change, but rather a time that lives on through difference. Being thus becomes "being in process" (Loewen Walker, 2014, p.49).

Meanwhile, Barad has argued that matter and meaning constitute each other (2003;2007). Similar to the concept of feminist space, feminist temporality refutes representation. In the case of time, representations would refer to fixed and independent 'images' of the past and future. Only the present would be considered 'real' and in motion. However, such binaries between actual and virtual collapse when we accept the past and future as integral parts of the present and vice versa. This also means we cannot separate the materiality of objects and the immateriality of time. Matter, beings and all the phenomena around them are always becoming through their relations. Time and space are part of these intra-actions. Changed and shaped by each other, it is not only us as humans, but also "bodies of water,

insect bodies, and the systems of a city as it breathes its workers in and out" that grow together and thus 'make time' (Loewen Walker, 2014, p.47). Therefore, we are obligated to connect time to matter and space. One cannot be without the others, which is why Barad terms this amalgam "spacetimematter" (Barad, 2007, p.177).

I previously discussed the performativity of space. Importantly, Butler's performativity has an explicit temporal dimension through its reliance on repetition over time. Thus, when she discusses sex, she explains that "construction not only takes place in time but is itself a temporal process which operates through the reiteration of norms" (1993a, p10). We will call a baby with a penis a 'boy', because we have previously called so many babies with penises 'boys'. Identities are thus formed through their past interpellations (Butler, 1993b). Adhering to a feminist conception of temporality requires becoming aware that these (gender) identities are formed through representation, or "a kind of imitation for which there is no original" (Butler, 1991, p.722).

According to Butler, performative identity categories can be exposed through some forms of repetition that destabilize the usual ones. These can be identity parodies such as drag that cite, twist and turn the normative gender performative (1993b). I argue that utopia and the performance thereof is also such a repetition. As Kraftl (2007)

theorizes, utopias resist representation or prediction through their unsettling of linear temporal constructions. Performed utopias, also designated as utopian performatives (Dolan, 2005) or embodied utopias (Grosz, 2001; Bingaman, Sanders & Zorach, 2002) are not past, present nor future, but must be all at once. After all, everything that is performed *now* as a means to conceptualize a *future* will always rely on *past* iterations. However, this does not mean that we do not have the means to imagine a world different to the current one. Sargisson (2012) admits that we might not be able to come up with anything radically new in terms of imagining a better world, as we are rooted in the (performative) present. However, she argues that failing utopias, whether in imaginative power or in practice, do not mean that utopianism is useless (p.40). In fact, it is a form of engaging in contemporary debate, a way of expressing discontent with the now and thus disrupting norms of performativity.

Muñoz remarks that "utopian performativity suggests another modality of doing and being that is in process, unfinished" (2009, p.99). Importantly, these iterations, through performing a living and processual present, have the power to create different pasts and new futures. Although the 'moment' of performing is just as quickly submerged by different events, histories and possibilities that form this entangled time, their power lies in the ever so slight

reconfiguration. It becomes a small crack in the ongoing imitative repetition, as the 'different' performative, just like any other performative "draws on and covers over the constitutive conventions by which it is mobilized" (Butler, 1993b, p.19). Thus, through time, with constant becoming and repetitions that create difference, change can be achieved. In this sense, the future is as open as the past and the past is in turn as open as the future.

Although in feminist scholarly work the focus is often on creating a different future, Loewen Walker warns not to omit the past which shapes both present and future. Similarly, Nirta (2017) enters in a theoretical discussion with Muñoz's queer utopia as she fears that his focus on futurity forgets its immersion in the present. She argues that, from a transgender perspective, utopia must be "located in the present and framed as an impulse of the now" (p.182) and less, as Muñoz has argued, in the there and then of futurity (2009). Throughout this research I will similarly focus on utopias of the living present. As Sargisson puts it, feminist utopianism is a "shape-shifting, slippery and dynamic force that changes with times" (2012, p.75). It is a utopianism that is never out to freeze time or produce an actual future, but rather stay an everchanging process that stems from this instant, an instant constituted by and enfolded in past, future and present equally.

Risk, temporality and community in the utopian (safe) space

Much of the literature on utopia I have presented up to now has actually been analyses of literary critical utopias or primarily theoretical dwellings. However, as Johns (2008) remarks, utopia is such an extensive concept that it resists classification. Experimental communities, political programmes or certain dispositions can also be examples of utopias (p.176), although they might not always be given that name. I hope the reader will now be able to make the same connection as me when I say that safe spaces, separatist or inclusive, are forms of actualized/performed/embodied utopianism. Utopias carried out in the present can inherently never work, just like safe spaces cannot exist for very long before reproduction of oppression occurs. However, as previously stated, the failure of utopia is not the failure of utopianism, as long as a discussion can be sparked (Sargisson, 2012). In fact, this can be termed as their transgressive function, because "some utopias confront and challenge the frameworks inside which they operate. These can have politically transformative functions; they criticize, interpret and, at their best, they can provoke paradigm shifts in consciousness" (Sargisson, 2012, p. 77). In this sense, it is powerful to do something that is actually so paradoxical. However, an important component is also to reflect on precisely this impossibility. As Sargisson notes, critical utopias must likewise problematize themselves: "they focus both on the wider world and also the internal 'thought world' of their own ideological/intellectual position" (2012, p. 75). Sargisson thus uses a similar argument to the Roestone Collective (2014) who, as I have previously laid out, suggest that safe spaces have power to reconfigure through responding to their own paradoxality.

Nevertheless, transgression brings with it concepts of risk (Hunter, 2008), fear (Stengel, 2010) and unsettlement (Kraftl, 2007); concepts which might not fit the initial idea of utopia as purely 'good', but which the aforementioned authors urge us to accept as part of our utopian (safe) space. Kraftl (2007) especially links the notion of the unsettling to the transformative and processual nature of utopia. By bringing about difference the utopia will always engender discomfort from what was before. At the same time, once utopia is there, it must continue to question what is good and thus continue changing, continue unsettling. Utopia is thus "risk-laden, processual, and unplanned" (p.126). In this reasoning, Kraftl follows Grosz (2001) who argues that space is an event and cannot really represent the present. Instead, Grosz urges to make, invent, continuously ask and embody the contingency of utopia, instead of meticulously planning a perfect world. Once again, we find in this reasoning that utopia is performative, a process of the world becoming.

When taking safe spaces as forms of performed utopias, or places for utopian performatives to happen, we might here find a clue regarding their temporality. In the previous chapter, I mentioned American gay clubs of the 1960s being connected to the emergence of the term safe space. However, clubs generally might only offer an event that is a safe space once a week, as they are only open during certain hours in the middle of the night and often get shut down (Seymour, 2018, p. 242). Seymour argues that the pleasure from these places also comes from the fact that they are transitory and ephemeral. We find a concrete case of this in the work of Rivera-Servera (2004), who analyzed the utopian performative potential of queer dance clubs. These clubs are recognized by their visitors as safe spaces and here it is through improvised dancing that utopia is imagined. Through their dancing, and thanks to the safety the space provides the Latina/o queer dancers a chance to queer traditional Latin music which usually references heterosexuality.

An important aspect of this utopian performative is the possibility of community by sharing a certain experience together on the dancefloor. But this community is temporary. It is linked to the moment of the dance and is experienced only during one's presence in the club at that time. Furthermore, Rivera-Servera recognizes that community in a safe space is in fact a type of illusion. It might be felt as wholesome, but racism and other oppressions can be replicated anyway. Moreover, Rink (2008), who researched the previously mentioned neighbourhood *De Waterkant*, observes that the sense of community that delineates this district as a safe space is merely performed. This is because, similarly to a process utopia, it is continuously changing, based on the shifts in desire and its consumption (p.214). The utopia of *De Waterkant* is created by its community, a community that is exclusionary, but also based on a gay culture that may not even exist as such and remains everchanging. At the same time the actual place of this community is threatened by tourists, straight bodies and capitalist ways of handling land, making it necessary to change the location of the non-place to "remain a citizen of this utopia" (Rink, 2008, p. 219).

In an earlier work, I have argued that music festivals have potential to incite social change because they are among other things temporary events taking place during a set and limited amount of time (Mazet, 2018a). The exploratory nature of the festival event coupled with its short timespan incites a powerful feeling of intensity for the visitors. Music festivals can therefore be safe spaces (McConnell et al., 2016) and performed utopias of short-lived community, where one is connected for a knowingly limited time to another through music and arts. I would therefore like to conclude this section with the hypothesis that safe spaces as actualized utopias must always have a conscious temporary quality to them. Constantly

accessible safe spaces wishing to provide an escape of the oppressive world, classrooms that continuously offer comfort or utopias designed to function in the same way for years to come are impossible to enact. However, brief moments of becoming collectively, or coming back to Dolan's utopian performative, events that provide "a place where people come together, embodied and passionate, to share experiences of meaning making and imagination that can describe or capture fleeting intimations of a better world" (2001, p.2), these are possible. These are the utopias that happen every day. In what follows I show how this temporality of utopian space works in smaller-scale environmental activist circles and friend interactions in a similar way as in the theater, a music festival or a dancefloor. As I have now laid out here, certain dynamics surrounding safe space and utopia may remain the same across different situations. However, there are also specificities of different contexts to be taken into account. I delve into these specificities as I connect theory to my own fieldwork in the subsequent chapters.

METHODOLOGY

An important question that I and everything related to safe spaces must deal with is who to include and who to exclude. Who is involved? Who is invited? My goal here has been to create a safe space to find out through which practices we may perform utopia and this automatically involves selecting participants. Inspired by Tuck and Yang (2014), I refused to do research on the pain of a marginalized community, especially one that I am not a part of. In their writing, Tuck and Yang (2014) describe how social science research often digs for the painful stories of such groups. This results in a type of commodification of these narratives in the academic world and a reproduction of (settler colonial) power dynamics, even when the purpose is actually to decolonize and give voice. As I have laid out previously, using the concept of utopia to look at safe spaces does not mean to forget the pain of the 'outside world' and imagining futures does not mean to deny the past or the present. It does however enable to do something more than collect pain narratives. What I aim to do could be termed as a form of desire-based research which "does not deny the experience of tragedy, trauma, and pain, but positions the knowing derived from such experiences as wise" (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p.233). As Tuck and Yang note: "utilizing a desire-based framework is about working inside a more complex and dynamic understanding of what one, or a community, comes to know in (a) lived life" (2014, p.233).

Up to now, I have primarily written as a method of inquiry (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2008), a way of using the practice of writing itself to think through material, as a way of discovering and forming thoughts. This has helped me work through theories and find connections even before heading out into the field. However, within this research I intend to do more than explorative writing. Indeed, as mentioned in the introduction, my fieldwork is situated on the intersection of participatory action research, speculative design and artistic research. Eventually, I observed, participated and initiated safe space dynamics in communities close to me, as a way of following Tuck and Yang (2014), but also in order to keep the project close to me and enabling myself to be an active participant too. This happened in two project setups. On the one hand, I followed and became part of a group of activists (some of which I knew before) who belong to Extinction Rebellion, a movement taking action around the environmental crisis. On the other hand, I attempted to facilitate a safe space around me through two events (workshops) for people in my proximity that I named *Prototyping Utopia* as a way to experiment with speculations surrounding safe space and utopianism.

Throughout these happenings, I brought along the praxis of zine-making, in order to combine thought with action (Cowley, 2008). A zine is a homemade non-commercial publication, that can cover any topic (Honma, 2016). It is also often personal, meaning that "the

teller is as important as what's being told" (Duncombe, 2008, p.32) At the basis of my analysis is therefore an edition of *Invisible Hand*, a mixed media zine-series that I have been working with leisurely and academically for about a year. A friend and I came up with this title as I visited her in Glasgow and started documenting the trip with doodles in a mini-zine. It is an ironic reference to the capitalist concept by the same name, coined by Scottish free market economist Adam Smith, but can be subject to manifold interpretations. Within the current project, I have asked participants for contributions to this edition in the form of writing and drawing during events, bringing this praxis to the field. The zine-making was a way for me to sort out my material and process it visually, functioning as a method of analysis. I eventually also invited participants to create a zine collaboratively during one of the workshops and this mini-zine became a part of my final zine, contextualized by the pages around it that I put together myself. Creating this section in a participatory fashion was in itself an experimentation of zine-making as an actualized utopian practice.

In this sense, the research takes from Participatory Action Research (PAR), a method of working towards change by generating practical knowledge, together and within a community (MacDonald, 2012). Everyone taking part in the research was considered an active agent, with their own yearnings that should be listened to in the process. At the same time, what aimed to do was not a direct action per se, but rather an explorative step towards different possibilities, which was partly achieved through the participatory zine-making. I therefore am also inclined to take a step away from PAR and term this more as a participatory speculation (Gerber, 2018; Jones, 2017). This is a method where collaborative imagination is used to explore alternatives by designing speculative objects together to provoke change. However, since the research did not produce such a speculative design object, but rather the speculation occurred in workshops and zine-making, we must take one more step in the definition of my approach. Closely related to PAR and design is Lindström and Ståhl's living-*with*, as a type of speculative participation (forthcoming). This is also a combination of speculative and participatory methods that follows speculative design in "imagin[ing] how things could be differently" (Lindström & Ståhl, forthcoming, para. 9), but with a focus on the ongoing living rather than the design of objects. Linström and Ståhl therefore designed invitations and events to live-*with* certain messy conditions, inspired by Haraway's notion of staying with the trouble (2016). In line with critical utopianism this is something that is rooted in the present. As I have worked closely together with them previously, their work has been highly influential in developing my current approach.

Due to the creative aspirations of this research, I must also mention its ties to artistic research practices. As I am not an artist using a form of art to question something, which is one

of the approaches that might come to mind defining artistic research, I identify more with what Franz (2005) calls art-informed inquiry. This is an approach promoted among others by Barone (2001) where the inquiry and the representation thereof have "design elements that are aesthetic in character" and also leave space for a "heightened degree of ambiguity" (p.25). This is what I have enacted by having the zine as an integral part of the project, leaving also some interpretation of the work to its spectator. Franz further explains: "this is not to claim, however, that the images produced represent art in the 'pure' visual art sense. They may be considered to be art by some and may even have artistic merit but the intention is not to produce art" (2005, p.25). I conceptualize zine-making itself as a potential utopian performative praxis, as the filling of the blank page becomes a performative experience. In this sense, utopian performativity is not left to theatre or classic artistic performance but may include other modes of creativity. The modesty, often visible homemade-ness and essential role of the creator that is inherent to zine-making is actually one of the aspects that make it performatively and thereby politically resistant. Muñoz elaborates:

> *Performances that display and illuminate their 'means' are, like punk, a modality of performance that is aesthetically and politically linked to populism and amateurism. The performative work of 'means' [...] is to interrupt aesthetics and politics that aspire towards totality.*
> Muñoz, 2009, p. 100

In this sense, a blank page that is carefully being filled focuses on the doing itself rather than an artistic 'end' and may therefore be as utopian as a rehearsed performance on a stage. Similarly, regarding the workshop elements of this research, the focus is on actions rather than results. We did produce a zine in one of them, but even this product was fully focused on the means that had made it possible, thereby aligning them with processual utopian thought. As I am concerned with such performatives, my methods have ties with performance as research, which Arlander characterizes as an approach that "can involve the performance or execution of various types of actions for the purposes of research, 'research by doing', and is not necessarily concerned with art" (2017, p.150n1).

//Theme – Desire

Critical utopianism, with its insistence on processual becoming, is a matter of desire, more specifically a desire for continuing change. To Deleuze and Guattari, "*there is only desire and the social, and nothing else*" ([1972] 2012, p.31). What they point to is that desire does not stand on its own, but rather it is a force of wishing to persevere in the world. Therefore, it is an "orientation toward being/becoming" (Barad, 2012, p.13). It is not based on the hopes of an identifiable being, but in a much broader sense is actually what drives the creation of identities themselves (Roberts, 2007).

Importantly, this implies that desire is performative in Butler's sense (1993b). It is something we act upon, because we simply repeat what we have previously done. As Engel notes, "desire is productive in the social and of the social" (2006, p.13). In a heteronormative system for instance, we impose a connection between identified gender and who to desire sexually (man must desire woman and vice versa). This desire is accepted and subsequently performed. Its resistance, for instance queer desire, still functions *within* performativity, as it is always governed by its logic of repetition. This counterperformativity has a utopian element to it, as it stems from a "desire to reproduce nature with a difference, with a desire to entertain the impossibility of another world, of a different time and place, where

that natural represents a queer potentiality that is rendered unimaginable in the straight time and place of the performance principle" (Muñoz, 2009, p. 139). Repetition and resistance are thus both the social production of desire. Here, it is the utopian resistance element that I am researching and enacting, the one that contributes to attempting change.

However, as bell hooks notes, desire for political difference is imbued with the longings of daily life. She terms this *yearning*, pointing out that "desire for radical social change is intimately linked with the desire to experience pleasure, erotic fulfillment, and a host of other passions" (hooks, [1990] 2015, p. 13). Yearning is done by everyone, regardless of identities, and must thus be also be taken into account in the context of action and speculative research. hooks remarks on this as well when stating that "much postmodern engagement with culture emerges from the yearning to do intellectual work that connects with habits of being, forms of artistic expression, and aesthetics that inform the daily life of writers and scholars as well as a mass population" ([1990] 2015, p.63).

Desire is thus often at the heart of (cultural) research and this creates a tension between these personal longings and the hope for social change that is aimed towards in for instance PAR methodologies. According to Tuck (2009) desire disrupts the binary

between reproduction of and resistance to power structures, because although creates this binary, it is itself neither and both. Depending on time or place, we comply or resist, rage or enjoy and fight or give up. Desire is thus scattered and because it is "an assemblage of experiences ideas, and ideologies, both subversive and dominant" (Tuck, 2009, p.420), it complicates how we comprehend agency, resistance and togetherness.

As Barad states, "the fact that we make knowledge not from outside but as part of the world does not mean that knowledge is necessarily subjective" (Barad, 2007, p.91). Haraway (1988) discusses this as embodied objectivity (contrasting a disembodied outsider perspective), an objectivity that "accommodates paradoxical and critical feminist science projects" (p.581). This embodied objectivity acknowledges the situatedness of knowledge, the fact that different knowledge could be produced in different situations, such as varying researcher identities and desires. The irreproducibility of this is something Probyn, who has written on desire and belonging and who I will come back to in the next section, also addresses in her own research:

> *While I am well aware that I walk a thin line that at any time may disappear into narcissism or endless auto-reflexivity, I maintain that*
>
> *the body that writes is integral to the type of figuring I wish to do. It is a body that is fully part of the outside it experiments with. If the angles from which I look and which I seek to create are unrepresentative, they are nonetheless part of the world as I see it becoming.*
> Probyn, 1996, p.6

Situatedness thus does not only rely on identity or location, but also the researcher's desires that come with it.

Within participatory research however, other desires must be heard and worked with. Following new materialist and posthumanist approaches, as nikolić (2017), who is heavily influenced by Barad (2007), does, makes us realize that desire, yearning and performative agency are not only limited to human participants and are enacted by entities ranging from copper (nikolić, 2017) to electrons and lightning (Barad, 2015). As I have mentioned, even space-time itself is entangled in performative becoming together with all matter and beings, and not simply a container for it. It is thus not so strange to conceptualize it as itself desiring to be and become. In this sense, it is important to accept that imaginings of desires can arise from human as well as non-human actors as both their desires have material effects. Such imaginaries are essentially critical utopias, as they adhere to similar feminist temporality. They are "not imaginaries of some future

or elsewhere to arrive at or be achieved as a political goal but, rather, imaginaries with material existence in the thick now of the present - imaginaries that are attuned to the condensations of past and future condensed into each moment" (Barad, 2015, p.388).

This research is permeated by the power of imaginaries of desires and aims to not only bring the human ones to life, but through the practice of creating safe space and materializing zines, addresses how performing utopia is shaped by spacetimematterings (Barad, 2007). An aspiration worded by nikolić as follows:

> *Posthuman knowing implies situated work within power and knowledge apparatuses and a dispersal of force and desire. This dispersal may invoke the field into a 'shared conversation'. Situating and response-ability are entwined performances of knowing/meeting the inhuman.*
> nikolić, 2017, p. 153

Positionality and limitations: accounting for my desires

As I have stated, researching deals not only with the desires of participants, but also with my desires as a researcher and choices to act upon them or not. From the beginning of this project, my ambition has been to produce something and 'make a change' in a creative way. Although I worked with participation, I am aware that I was guided mostly by my own yearnings and feelings in choosing certain paths. I acted as the initiator, inviter, facilitator, requester, curator, and writer/researcher. My involvement in creating phenomena is part of the change I can achieve. In this sense, although I worked with communities, my subjectivity and its desires are still a central aspect, paralleling the subjectivity essential to performing safe space or utopia.

It is thus important to point out the privileges that I possess as a white cis-person living and being educated in a Nordic country and that the people in the communities around me mostly have the same attributes. Researching in such communities runs the risk of duplicating privilege, but at the same time has helped me to avoid reproducing other inequalities that might occur when working with marginalized others from a privileged position (Tuck & Yang, 2009). By stepping away from pain narratives and fearing the pitfalls of researching communities purely as an outsider, I have created something that aims to research a *practice* (creating safe space and performing utopia) on a local and contextualized level, more so than a community in itself. Yet ultimately the project revolves very much around me and is also part of my broader personal journey. This may sound self-entitled and it certainly is a privileged way of working, but this method, including its flaws, is mirroring the dynamics of safe space, where only certain (partial) identities are catered to. It has therefore been crucial for me to explore the paradoxes of binaries within this (such as personal/collective or inclusive/exclusive) that safe spaces entail. Consequently, my own yearnings and personal affects have become a tool for gathering information and processing it.

The role of my desires does not mean that the knowledge produced here is too particular to be of any value. Probyn, the philosopher mentioned earlier has also researched with her desires (1996). She sees desire as a movement that washes over things and transcends categories. It creates different connections between discourse, matter and bodies. Due to this processual and scattered nature, we can use desire to materially challenge boundaries such as private and public or academic and artistic "for if we live within a grid or a network of different points, we live through the desire to make them connect differently" (Probyn, 1996, p.13). By thinking like this, Probyn is able to make desire into an embodied method that combines yearning with analyzing, and a way to render virtual imaginaries actual. This commitment to the material world is what makes desire a political force that is more than simply tied to an

individual, but "expresses a yearning to make skin stretch beyond individual needs and wants" (1996, p.6).

Thus, one can see desire as a spread-out force, but there still is a personal responsibility for one's actions, especially when addressing one's position within the world. As a researcher using desire, I have an effect on anyone I come into contact with, as it is me who produces a certain knowledge through it. Haraway twists this responsibility into *response-ability*, meaning to cultivate the capacity to respond (2016, p.78). To me, this concept is at the core of the speculative practices I mentioned earlier that do not offer direct solutions, but rather aim to act in answer of the troubles at hand. I must therefore be aware that my personal desires are entangled with others' and my becoming is therefore a becoming-*with* others, a phenomenon that reaches further than only human subjects (Haraway, 2016). This awareness is one of the reasons that I chose to work with environmental activists, as I believe they could be more attuned to the desire of the earth as a material force to persevere, sparking an interesting dialogue between human and non-human. It is also the reason that the work is invested in explicating performativity of space, time and matters, rather than solely focusing on the human aspects of it. And it is connected to my choice of including friends and personal connections in the research, as I have been entangled with them in a conscious way for a while and have during that time become-*with* them into who we are today. For these reasons, I was curious to play with the relationships and situate them in different scenarios.

My ambition to do something creative for this project, rather than adhering to a more traditional social science methodology for example, also stems from the knowledge that I am personally very involved in the project and it driven by desire. To me, it is a part of "attempting to imagine a convergence between artistic production and critical praxis [which] is, in and of itself, a utopian act in relation to the alienation that often separates theory from practice" (Muñoz, 2009, p.101). It therefore was a logical step for me to somewhat distance myself from classic academic traditions, which have for so long relied on masculine ideals of objectivity and exteriority of the researcher and closer to feminist and artistic research practices where it is common that a maker would consciously put themselves in the work. It is an attempt to cultivate my own response-ability (Haraway, 2016) and the possibility to do this is another privilege I must acknowledge and am thankful for. To include the zine as a material contribution has aided me to process my empirical data on a personal, collective, as well as performative level. The zine materializes my aim of constructing of phenomena rather than attempting to merely observe them (Arlander, 2017). My deliberately engaged research practice mirrors its subject, a subject that is sometimes paradoxical, but has the potential to make utopia performative.

COLLECTED MATERIAL

In this chapter, I delve into my doings in the field. As Arlander (2017) describes regarding artistic research, the object, method and outcome are often mixed. (p.134). It is thus hard to write about them separately. I have therefore chosen to structure this chapter as an explication of my empirical material, organized through the specific events and happenings in the field that I used for data gathering. These are recounted with the help of the notes I took down while being there. When this was not appropriate or I felt it would disrupt the course of events, I wrote right afterwards using a free writing flow. All people mentioned have been anonymized and pseudonyms are used throughout the text. The next chapter delves deeper into the outcomes of my personal and collective actions within the research. As a way to bridge both, the theme-section deals with my method of data analysis: zine-making.

Being invited: Snöflingorna

While I was in the preparation phase of this project, I spoke to my friend Sara, who is part of XR Gothenburg. This is the Gothenburg branch of Extinction Rebellion (XR), an environmental activist movement that started in the UK in 2018 and has since spread over more than 50 countries (Knight, 2019). The movement relies on non-violent civil disobedience actions of its members to get attention for their demands. They aim to communicate an urgency to act in the face of the climate crisis and targets politicians for being too passive. Their three demands are for them to "speak clear language", "act now" and create a citizen council to "strengthen democracy" (see appendix D for full text). I expressed to Sara that I would be interested to work with activists like her, also as a way for me to get acquainted with activism and understand this urgency to act. To me activism was a way to get an important, but often simplified, message across, as complexities of certain situations might be glossed over in favour of a catchy slogan. Additionally, it is also a form of action that relies on exposure, a very outward performance contrasting, but perhaps also necessitating, the nuanced dynamics of safe space I have been discussing. I wanted to make my mind up about it.

I was conscious here of the choice of researching with friends and friends of friends, in order to have a more advanced 'insider' position (Browne, 2003), an approach I also chose for the workshop discussed in the next section. Seeing as this research investigates safe spaces, I hoped that working within my network would help in being invited or inviting for such a space. Driven by my interest in the power of paradoxalities, both in safe space and feminist utopia, linking this research to activists was a way for me to connect the clear-cut and goal-oriented

methods and messages of activism to the complications and nuances of safe space. It was also a way to go back to the roots of traditional safe space, which itself originated in activist circles.

It so happened that Sara had just formed a new affinity group, based around a certain discontent with aspects of the XR's structuring. Affinity groups are common in contemporary global social movements, that follow a more anarchic structural logic (Day, 2004). As Extinction Rebellion states themselves on their website: "We organise in small groups. These groups are connected in a complex web that is constantly evolving as we grow and learn. We are working to build a movement that is participatory, decentralised, and inclusive" (Extinction Rebellion, 2019). Such groups can be working groups that collaborate, but also more casual and closed off social affinity groups that function as safe spaces. In Swedish they are referred to as *vängrupp*, translating literally to friend group. These are groups of people who have the same goals, orientation or interest within the movement and may be separatist or inclusive. They are formed based on a shared closeness and agreement and create a community for direct action. In this sense, affinity groups can be conceptualized as safe spaces within the larger movement, a group where one might dare to take more risks than as an individual within a crowd and information can be shared in a personal setting before reaching the larger organizational assembly. Therefore, someone who might not feel immediately connected to some voices in the movement can find affinity within a smaller specialized group, like Sara did when bringing together people who shared her stance and who she felt comfortable to discuss it with. In this way, members of the movement have the freedom to find what and who they match with and organize on a small scale as well as participating in bigger actions.

The group I joined call themselves *Snöflingorna* (the Snowflakes), a reference to the insult given to people who advocate for safe spaces and for instance trigger warnings (Kyrölä, 2018). The name is also inspired by a similarly named group in the British branch of XR. The group is not separatist per se, but its members currently happen to be all women. Importantly, amongst one of Sara's concerns had been the space that men take up within XR. Although I already knew three of the eleven members to different degrees, it turned out to be harder than I had thought for me to be invited into this relatively closed group, in part also due to my (new) identity as a researcher. I wrote a message to be transferred in the group's chat, which I saw as an offer that would allow me to in turn be invited in their space (see appendix A). Lindström and Ståhl (2017), who work with participatory design, point out how an invitation always frames an issue, delineates who can participate and points to ways of approaching the matter. As I found, this can become an obstacle when two-way communication is not yet fully established and possible participants prioritize their time differently than expected. My message

was discussed in the very first meeting of the group and resulted in a lot of questions that I was not there to answer to, as it took place without me so not to put any expectations on the members. However, as Lindström and Ståhl (2017) point out, participation is a malleable process and initial aims might change. I therefore wrote a second message to clarify some parts, emphasizing my wish to be an active participant rather than an observer or experimenter, which seemed to be more in line with what the group felt was important (see appendix A). One of the conditions for my entering was that the group would continue speaking Swedish, a language I had been learning about two years, making communication somewhat more difficult for me.

Through this process I understood that this safe space was not going to adapt to me, but rather that I would have to make sure to 'fit in' to feel like it could also be my space. My participation was required. The group had one meet-up that I attended in the time of my research, which happened before the actions of Rebellion Week on the 4th of April 2019. It was a dinner hosted by Elin, one of the members who had kindly prepared food for us all. I discuss this specific event in further detail in the next chapter.

Inviting: Prototyping Utopia

During the period of trying to access the group of activists, I understood that, although we had shared (safe) spaces like a conference or several dinners before, their affinity group was not necessarily my safe space. This in part through the fact that I feel quite uncomfortable about public demonstrations, when the aim of the group is organizing public civil disobedience actions. Even though I had promised participation rather than purely observation, I also began feeling that I would not be as free in trying out certain ideas in this group as both sides would have expectations of what the group could be. Furthermore, I felt the need to get out of the theoretical habitat I had built for myself in the process of writing. I thus decided not to lay my whole thesis on the activist community and parallel to this create my own 'safe research space' as a way to prototype methods and gain more practice. In a sense, this part of the project could come forth more so from my own desires and starting there take different shapes.

For this purpose, I created an event titled *Prototyping Utopia* on Facebook and planned a first meeting (April 3 2019). The invitation set up around an area of curiosity, rather than a problem (Lindström & Ståhl, 2017), see appendix B1 for the text and visual. The aim of this gathering was to experiment with creating a safe space together, visiting different suitable locations. As the facilitator of the meetings it was me who primarily planned what the content of the workshop was, although planning collectively and contributing was encouraged, and enacted in the choice of location. I invited people who I know in Gothenburg and would feel

comfortable enough organizing this for. These included classmates, friends and academic acquaintances, leaving out *Snöflingorna* for now. The event excluded cis men. This was done in part as a way of establishing the space as 'safe' in the classic separatist sense, but also to incite discussion around taking this decision. Another reason was that if I were to invite cismen, they would be strongly in minority, which could incite discomfort. The sampling strictly within my network is of course a questionable approach but creating a place with people one deems 'safe', such as friends, is also the first step constructing safe space, although it may lead to reproduction of privileges. On the level of doing research, Browne (2003) notes how participating in a friend's research might be seen as 'doing a favour' and how expectations both of what the participant thinks they must deliver and of what they expect to get out of it are at play. Then again, working with friends offers the researcher a level of trust and easy accessibility as an insider and instantly achieves a certain intimacy that may facilitate the creation of a safe space.

The first meeting revolved mostly around location and thus space. The aim was to test out different spaces and reflect on them, attempt to build a community through discussions and a walk. In this way, we would decide together how to be in or be-with the space we were creating. The workshop setup is available in appendix C. There were three participants at the workshop, who I knew to different degrees, and were or had been in the same academic field as me. During the event, we moved from one location to another. We began at Frilagret, a cultural center in Gothenburg with a café that acts as a living room in the city. The location had been suggested by someone in the Facebook event, as they do not push visitors to buy anything, making it a type of indoor public space. We then walked through a central part of the city to arrive at one of the university libraries where I had booked a group study room. I had created booklets for the workshop, for the participants to collect thoughts or objects, and as a collection of material for me (everyone voluntarily gave their booklet to me afterwards). By having participants write down how they existed in different spaces, and how they existed together in these, I aimed to cultivate *arts of noticing*, a concept by Ana Tsing (2015) that encourages us to become more attuned to the specificities of phenomena around us. "We might look around to notice this strange new world, and we might stretch our imaginations to grasp its contours" (Tsing, 2015, p.3). By situating ourselves with/in certain spaces and consciously thinking of how we relate to them, I hoped to achieve such a stretching of imagination.

Acting: Roadblock & Sorgetåg

Sometime after the affinity group meeting, it was time for XR's Rebellion Week. During this week, that took place from April 15-21, in 80 cities spread in 33 countries (Taylor & Gayle, 2019), the movement would rise up with acts of civil disobedience demanding attention for XR's main messages and demands aimed at politicians to do something against the climate crisis (see appendix D). The week also took place in Gothenburg where I attended the two actions that had been planned here. I take these events as material for this project, not to study public space generally, but rather the dynamics of safe spaces (i.e. affinity groups) when doing something transgressive, and thus putting oneself in an openly at-risk position.

On the 17th of April 2019, the first action was planned in Gothenburg as part of the Rebellion Week. This was a roadblock, meaning that a large group of people would stand still on a crossing thereby stopping car traffic and create a disruption. The event had been announced on Facebook with a meeting place, but the exact crossing to be blocked was kept secret until the last moment. There was an interesting tension between wanting to generate attention, but not wanting the action to be stopped immediately by the police. The 'dialogpolis' (dialogue police) was at the initial meeting point from the start, indicating that they were in the know that something would happen (possibly through Facebook), and from there on, some the activists and police would be in constant negotiation of how to continue. Before blocking the road, we divided ourselves into groups, which were as follows: hard blockade (block the road and stay even when the police asks them to leave), soft blockade (block the road and leave when the police says so), stand on the side (do not block the road, but watch from the side), talking to the onlookers (go around to talk to the people in their cars and the ones walking by to explain what is going on and why).

This division was one of several measures to make everyone feel safe during the action. Once assembled in these groups, we were asked to form new affinity groups of about 6 to 8 people and within this group find a 'buddy', a person with whom you stick together and take decisions together regarding levels of risk during the action. Elin, who I already knew from *Snöflingorna*, was taking the lead in getting people to make groups within soft blockade. She invited me to be a part of her group, together with two of her friends who were also relatively inexperienced in activism and a few older people. Another way to make the activists at ease was that we were informed that there were two people to talk to if we needed or to take us in if we left the blockade and felt shaken. They also had fruit and water and cake ready for us.

Two days later (19 April 2019), there was another Rebellion Week action in Gothenburg. This was a *Sorgetåg* (funeral procession) for the mass extinction of species due to

humanly caused environmental harm. The event on Facebook prescribed for everyone who wished to join to wear black. Although this was also civil disobedience, and the procession would walk on the road, the action was less rebelliously spirited in the sense that it would be slow and theatrical, and it was not expected that anyone would get arrested. Therefore, no affinity of buddy groups were formed beforehand. The march went from one city square to another, moving over one of the main avenues of Gothenburg. A musical group accompanied the procession, providing mourning music, some activists held up banners and signs with XR's logo, most notably in the front of the procession, a large grid showcasing a sort of obituary of species now lost, accompanied by two people carrying torches.

//Theme - Zine-making

During the process of gathering data by attending and organizing the events discussed in the previous sections, the question started to arise how I would process them. Due to the closeness of this project to my personal feelings of comfort and discomfort in and out of spaces, it seemed illogical to me to start scrutinizing the material for themes and simply analyze based on these. As I am bringing seemingly distinct topics together here, I sensed that an extra step would be necessary for me to process the material before being able to bring an 'academic' analysis into it. One activity that has been helpful for me in the past to connect personal and collective (multispecies) narratives to academic thought has been zine-making (Mazet, 2018b).

As mentioned previously, zines are do-it-yourself publications, often personal in nature and usually not made for profit (Honma, 2016; Duncombe, 2008). The use of zines to connect academic material to lived experience and vice versa is backed up by scholars who include making zines as a part of their teaching practice (e.g. Creasap, 2014; Honma, 2016; Capous Desyllas & Sinclair, 2014). As Honma puts it, zines are "forms of creative self-expression that are unencumbered by the need for technological skill or pressures to conform to particular aesthetics or abilities" and using them in a pedagogical setting creates "a space in which students enact a praxis

(theory and practice) of participatory action and empowerment in communities" (2016, both p. 34). The idea of zines as part of a (performative) praxis is important here. The term praxis has origins in for instance Marxist and Hegelian thought. It is the combination of theory and practice (Cowley, 2008) that acts against the status quo, as it transcends this dualism. In pedagogical contexts, we can turn to Freire ([1970] 2000) who sees praxis as a form of liberation in education. He states that

> *revolution is achieved with neither verbalism nor activism, but rather with praxis, that is, with reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed. The revolutionary effort to transform these structures radically cannot designate its leaders as thinkers and the oppressed as mere doers.*
> Freire, [1970] 2000, p.125-126

To understand zines as an expression of praxis is to grant them the potential to combine activist, personal and academic knowledge production and create change. Capous Desyllas and Sinclair (2014) acknowledge this too, noticing that zines are developed alongside values that attend to "the need to challenge the status quo, acknowledge structures and institutions of power and privilege, bridge

communities of voices and critical ideas of those who experience oppression, and advocate for social change" (p.299).

Besides this, zines can also become a type of safe space, in the sense that the format is so unrestricted and without pressure that one might dare to take (creative) risks. This is something I have frequently experienced when being blocked artistically and turning to zine-making. As Capous Desyllas and Sinclair put it, "zines are a medium where people can share ideas without the censorship of the dominant culture" (2014, p.298). The zine makes no demands of its contents being meaningful or qualitatively 'good', although it surely can become this. Creasap calls zines a 'middle space' (2014, p.155), due to their vague definition and their place in between traditional research texts and online websites or blogs. Naturally, not all zines need to have a connection to academia, but in these educational contexts and the situation of zine-making as part of this research, they do. Creasap gives advice on using zines as part of a feminist pedagogical practices. An important part of this is participatory learning, which makes collective workshops crucial to the praxis (2014, p.160). Two other aspects are the development of critical thinking, as one makes sense of certain experiences, and the validation of such personal experiences, which zines offer through their possibly "intensely personal process" (Creasap, 2014, p.156). Because of the personal

involvement in each and every aesthetic choice, the zine-making process is arguably more personal than for instance a blog that would often be created from a predesigned template (Piepmeier, 2014).

While these elements might be considered more on the 'reflection' than 'action' side of the praxis, we must not forget that zines synthesize this reflection with action. In this sense, zines are not only safe spaces, but also enactments of processual utopias that have effect out of their initial 'creation zone'. Indeed, once the zine is made, it is not a finished product to put in a box, but usually continues its life through the printing, copying and spreading of this material thing (if not an e-zine). The zine therefore does its own work of performativity. Capous Desyllas and Sinclair explain that "zines are not made to be works of perfection, but rather 'work(s) in progress' and invite critical thinking and criticism not just within the maker but within the communities as well" (2014, p.299). They open discussions that take place between different bodies through the 'gift culture' they bring about between readers and creators (Piepmeier, 2008). They might even inspire readers to start creating (and thus acting) as well. For Piepmeier, the distribution of the material zine is therefore not only a way of spreading but creates meaning in itself as the materiality of the "physical imagery and interface of the zine help to shape the reader's experience and understanding" (2008, p.216).

The zine I have put together as a part of this research sets out to explicate connections that previously were only expressed as feeling I had. It thus became my method of analysis, a way to make sense of the material I have collected. Therefore, I want to emphasize that the zine is not an addition or appendix to the research, but an essential part of it. I believe its materiality and artistic content must be read and experienced in order to completely understand the work I did. If the reader does not yet possess a printed copy, I advise to email me so I can send a copy by post.[3] I have included photos of the full zine in appendix F, but since they may not be fully legible, I encourage the reader to obtain a material copy.

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[3] Email: mazetlou@gmail.com

Inviting again: Prototyping Utopia 2.0

Knowing I wanted to integrate zine-making into this project, I also knew that this zine (the most material product of the research) could then not be solely created by me. After spending time with members of *Snöflingorna* and the first workshop with friends, I felt that it was necessary to bring all the experiences together in order to reach a form of coherence. I therefore organized a second workshop on May 26th 2019, inviting roughly the same people as for the first one, but this time also including the activists. Having learnt from the first workshop and the Snowflake dinner, I took deliberate decisions to achieve the type of safe space I had in mind. This meant providing the comfort of a private space by inviting into my own home, but also keeping the workshop activities and my facilitator role as modest at possible, by participating in them actively myself and not taking any notes during the event. Regarding the invitation (see appendix B2), it was kept short and with a clear goal of the meeting: making a zine. Through this activity, the aim was to achieve an aspect of the project where "rather than relying wholly on the written form to illustrate where reflexivity has occurred, ideas have been reflexively performed" (Patterson, 2017, p.64). Two people participated in the workshop, Natalie from the activist group and Sasha, a friend I met in Gothenburg about two years ago. Both had been to my home before, but they did not know each other beforehand. In order to achieve some form of reflexivity, I planned to have the workshop be first and foremost reflective on itself as a starting point, rather than any grander narrative (see appendix E for the simple workshop setup I used). It was therefore important to do something before starting on the zine, not only as a method to break the ice, but also as a way to have some form of shared experiences together and subsequently using this as reflection material.

For this purpose, we first each picked a postcard from a stack and explained why this specific image resonated with us. We then proceeded to play the boardgame 'The Game of Life', a game where one goes through different stages of life (studies, career, marriage, children, buying real estate and retirement) by moving a small pawn in a miniature car over the board. I personally find the game humorous, as it offers very constrained and somewhat problematic options for life. Marriage is for instance compulsory, the pawns that symbolize the player, their spouse and children (added in the car along the way) are available in the symbolic array of pink and blue, and the way to win the game is to have made the most money by the end of it. In order to achieve this however, the players only have limited agency, as many of the events that influence one's finances are based on chance through spinning the 'wheel of life' or picking a card that prescribes and action. The game thus provides a playful opposition to many of the ideas advocating for processes, uncertainties and paradoxes that I have been writing about.

Through its absurdity and fictionality, the game enabled (or forced) us to find a story and live a life together through this parody, enacting a form of counterperformativity (Butler, 1992). The fictitious narrative aided in positioning ourselves as individuals and as a group in this reality through an ironic, and thus inherently paradoxical means. This then provided ample opportunity for reflection. As Patterson notes about her own ensemble, "We were telling a story together and, as such, we engaged with the interplay between individual and group, the personal and the collective" (2017, p.69).

ANALYZING THROUGH 'INVISIBLE HAND'

In this chapter, I offer my analysis based on the material I collected. One part of this is the thematical section based on the zine that the participants and I created collaboratively during *Prototyping Utopia 2.0*. This could be considered just another piece of material to some. To me however, it was a result, as it aided in analyzing the workshop in an immediate way, its contents reflecting on the moment itself. In this sense, where the first *Prototyping Utopia* workshop had been a prototype event, *Prototyping Utopia 2.0* was the event that created a product based on what I had learned in my previous experiences. The zine that we created is now integrated in the zine I present here. The rest of the pages were put together by me, although some elements were contributed by participants during various occasions. The zine-making was a method of analysis, although it is also a part of the result (a result that is itself embedded in a multitude of processes). This means that creating the zine guided me in writing this analysis, as I realized which aspects I needed to elaborate upon, but it was also a way to go inwards and further understand my own position within the research. The pages of the zine therefore reflect on my feelings and personal questionings and do so to a higher degree than the written analysis does, where the focus is more outwards again.

In the coming sections I refer occasionally to pages and themes of the zine, elaborating on them in a more classical scholarly fashion. Throughout the text, I offer short descriptions of some zine pages to point the reader to my intentions when creating them. However, I also aim to let the zine as a piece speak for itself and leave room for ambiguities of arts-informed research (Franz, 2005). I therefore advise to first have a look at the zine in order to be able to take it in and interpret it in one's own fashion, before reading my final analysis. All the photos of the zine are available in appendix F.

Affect-ing: towards a safe operating space for humanity

The decision to work with climate activism is not explicitly mentioned in my research question, as it is oriented more towards a practice than a community. However, I feel like I have not yet explained enough why, to me, environmentalism was the theme that could connect new materialist theories (e.g. Barad, 2007), to concepts of safe space, utopia and community that have become integral to this project.

By organizing anarchically, disobediently and with climate change as one of the main causes, the environmental activists of Extinction Rebellion defy certain norms that our capitalism-oriented society enforces. Nevertheless, one might not consider them as an exceptionally marginalized group. All of the activists I met were white and most of them

seemed to have (upper) middle class backgrounds. They also were able to make time to organize and participate in environmental protests. This is one of the privileges that functions as a mechanism of exclusion and for instance keeps racially marginalized groups out of environmental movements (Gibson-Wood & Wakefield, 2013). However, in the intensity of their desires and affects towards nature and the sustaining of the earth, XR members are clearly a minority, although perhaps a growing one. Seymour also notices this and is therefore able to discuss environmental affect (feelings linked to the environmental crisis) through elements of queer theory (2018b). One of the most important aspects of this is that, although queer theory usually does not explicitly discuss environmental questions, it focuses on relationships that overpass boundaries. Such relationships are crucial to environmental activism, as they demand that we step over the boundaries of human relationships to form a (different) relationship with the earth we live on. In this sense, queerness can be broadened to encompass more than questions of sexuality. Seymour explains:

> *Queer theorists allow us to see how affective attachments to nature or the ecological might be considered inherently queer, insofar as they vastly expand the scope of the social and the relational—just as they might see that one's 'sustaining attachments,' 'subalterns,' and the 'larger social sphere' include nonhuman ecosystems and animals.*
> (Seymour, 2018b, p.240)

This queer environmentalism view is supported by Butler in a short comment relating to our constructed systems being essentially ways of planning earthly cohabitation: "every inhabitant who belongs to a community belongs also to the earth […] and this implies a commitment not only to every other inhabitant of the earth but, we can surely add, to sustaining the earth itself." (Butler, 2015, p.113). For environmental activists, this commitment is more apparent, and perhaps more explicitly emotional than to others.

This heightened commitment to the earth appeared in my fieldwork, especially during the *Sorgetåg* (funeral march) action. This action was symbolic in many ways and performed in a theatrical manner through 'props' such as obituary-like signs for the lost species, a real (but empty) casket and a group of musicians. We were told beforehand to dress in black, and right before the procession started, instructed to look sorrowful, keep our heads down, walk slowly and keep distance to make the train look longer. All these elements had been planned as a way to get a message across to the onlookers on the gravity of the situation regarding biodiversity loss. In this sense, it was technically not required to really feel the emotions associated with a

funeral, but rather to perform them as a statement. The aim was to offer a critique of politicians' and citizens' current indifference to the risks of their behaviours regarding the consequences of the species loss catastrophe. However, the comprehension of these risks, in which the activists are arguably a step further than some others in society, often comes with an emotional response (Böhm, 2003). Indeed, after the silent procession, when we all stood gathered around the casket symbolizing the lost species, many of the Snowflakes, some of which had been key in organizing the event, seemed to feel true sorrow and a few even shed tears. Some of the activist contributions on page 5 and 6 of *Invisible Hand*, collected before and after the *Sorgetåg*, also illustrate this. As Snowflake Natalie remarked later, the walk had not been meant in that way initially, but became "a thing done for us", a way of processing the emotions of fear, sorrow and worry sparked by the environmental crisis, just like a real funeral would. Therefore, it was less important to her if the message had gotten through exactly as intended, or that the media had not reported on the action.

This is one of the reasons why I am able to consider the *Sorgetåg* as a safe space and analyze it as such. Although the action took place in public space and knowingly claimed this space as a form of disobedience (there was no permit for the march), the way it was performed created a safe space circle. I mean circle here in the literal sense of the word, as, while the moving procession was a line, we assembled twice (middle and end) to form a large circle on different squares. The circle has been linked to safe spaces previously, being one of the most equally distributed formations, and known to symbolize infinity, unity, relation and fellowship (Lepp & Zorn, 2002). The Safe Space Emblem, a registered trademark logo designed to designate workplaces as safe spaces for LGBTQ+ minorities, is an example. It consists of "a pink triangle, an internationally recognized symbol of positive gay identity, surrounded by a green circle, an international symbol of acceptance" (EQUAL!, n.d.). Within our *Sorgetåg* circle formation, we appeared as a uniform group wearing black, faced inwards and (temporarily) asserting the space in the middle as one of acceptance of our shared sadness. We were simultaneously closed off from and exposed to the outside world, turning our backs to onlookers. With this power, we reconfigured it as a space of mourning, rather than inner city gallivanting. Forming a circle around the casket that represented the species thus held more meaning than simply shutting ourselves away from the outside. It also symbolized a call for creating a safe space and allowing space for non-humans, such as the currently endangered animals. However, a closed circle also excludes what is outside of it, just like a safe space does. This is why some activists worried about closing XR off to potentially new members, seeing as the dark procession might not have felt directly welcoming to everyone.

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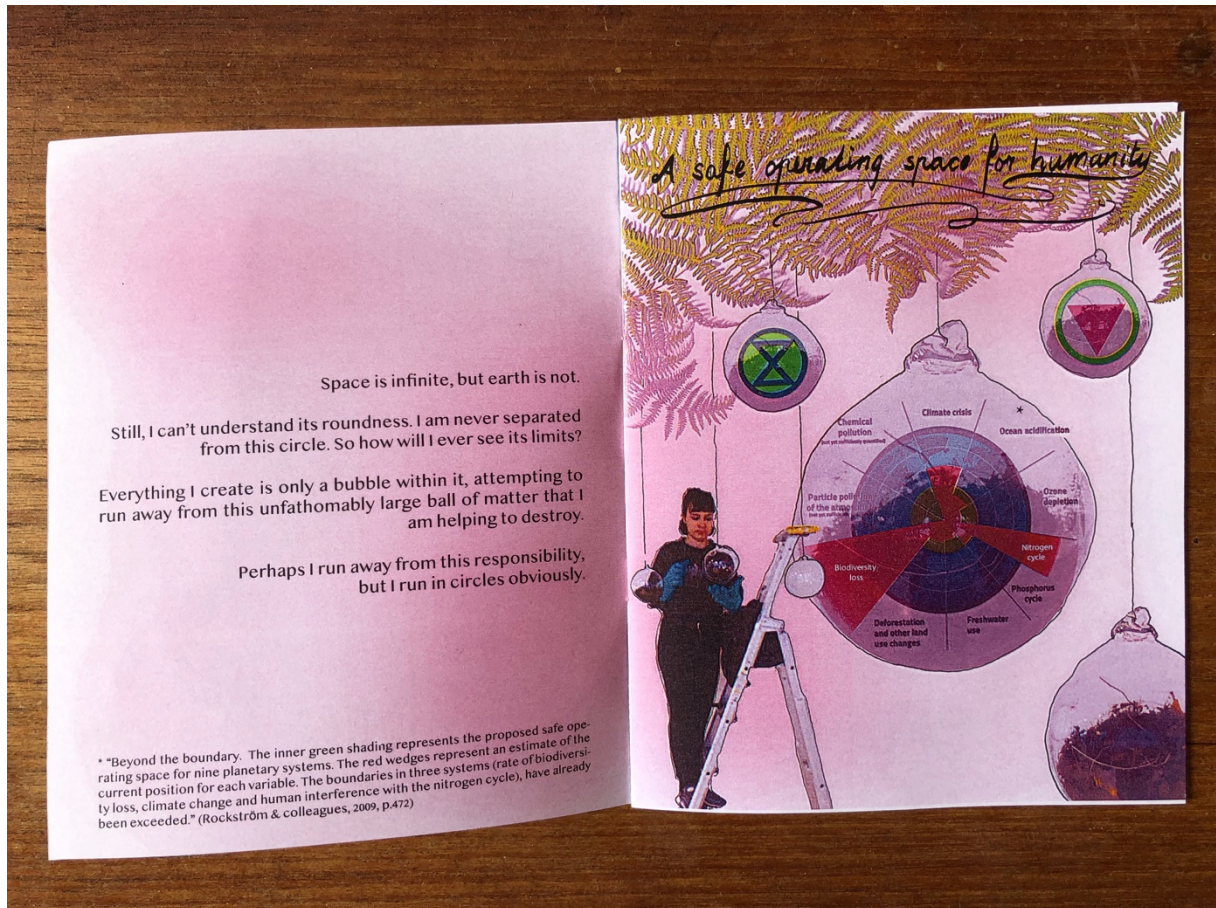
Zine pages 1-2 *On the page are different spheres, hanging together, reminiscent of a model solar system. As I also created my own spaces for this research, I am also represented as filling a sphere myself. Next to growing plants, the bubbles also contain the Extinction Rebellion logo and the Safe Space Emblem. In the middle is a diagram taken from an article in Nature (Rockström et al., 2009) showing the boundaries of our planet and to which extent we have already surpassed them. All the spheres are separate 'bubbles', a term I have often used when describing safe space. The circle is heavily referred to, often understood as a closed unity, but here playfully referring to its inseparable connection to the 'outside'. All bubbles are thus also inevitably part of the planet and the ecological crises we have called upon it.*

Coming back to the emotions of the march, we can conceptualize the Snowflakes' feelings that emerged as not exactly grief, but rather a form of ecological melancholia: "a state of suspended mourning in which the object of loss is very real but psychically 'ungrievable' within the confines of a society that cannot acknowledge nonhuman beings, natural environments, and ecological processes as appropriate objects for genuine grief" (Sandilands, 2010, p.333). Melancholia is an affect often theorized in relation to queerness, and which can be followed by a performance, or "acting out" (Butler, 1993b, p.25). These are performances that break rules or norms (in Butler's example drag performance) and can thus assuredly be connected to XR's actions of civil disobedience. Perhaps most notably, among the ones I attended, the roadblock, where we purposefully carried out misconduct, thereby going against set norms of behaviour. Interestingly however, several of the Snowflakes, when telling me during the dinner at Elin's apartment why they had joined XR, expressed that they had been feeling down before becoming active. Lilly for instance mentioned how she had been feeling a bit depressed, especially after the very hot summer of 2018, which she experienced as a direct effect of climate change. After finding Extinction Rebellion, she had found purpose again. In this sense, joining XR and participating in the actions is a way of acting out ecological melancholia, which can have a more healing effect than 'doing nothing'. It is also more empowering in a way, as Sandilands remarks that expressing melancholia is highly political, since it aims to preserve something amidst a culture that does not see it as important (2010).

It is important to note that melancholia is not the only affective dimension to queer environmentalism. As Seymour (2018a, 2018b) points out, humour, irony and camp are important aspects that play out alongside melancholia, although they might not directly be associated with the dominant image of doomsday-proclaiming climate activists. Within Extinction Rebellion specifically, the actions in Gothenburg such as the funeral march, the roadblock, but also for example a previously performed award ceremony for the most polluting companies in Sweden (Andersson, 2019), all have theatrical, ironic and slightly absurd elements to them. As Barbara, one of the Snowflakes, mentioned during the dinner, the fun and theatrical actions of XR were a major reason for choosing this movement over others. Seymour writes that this is a form of environmentalism that identifies and reacts to the absurdities and ironies of the ecological situation itself by using "absurdity and irony, as well as related affects and sensibilities such as irreverence, ambivalence, camp, frivolity, indecorum, awkwardness, sardonicism, perversity, playfulness, and glee" (Seymour, 2018a, p.4) in response. Performing these affects is not only a richer response to the crisis at hand, but also to the current idea of what environmentalism represents.

Looking at the affects (both the negative and out-of-place ones) of environmental activists is important within the context of my research question, because it profoundly influences what utopias they might enact. Tensions between despair, (the need for) hope and the role of optimism in ecological doom and gloom narratives are existing topics of discussion within activist and academic circles (e.g. Kelsey, 2016; Tokar, 2010; Kretz, 2013; Fiala, 2010). From a feminist (genealogical) viewpoint, hope helps to create utopia and see alternative futures by looking at the past and thereby understanding the present, but also is something that "sticks to some bodies […] and not others" (Martinsson & Mulinari, 2018, p.10). Including humour into the actions is a way to question the binary between hope and hopelessness (Seymour, 2018a). This questioning is necessary to be able to combine utopian ideas with the melancholia of queer environmentalism. As Sandilands notes: "melancholia is a form of preservation of life […] that is already gone, but whose ghost propels a *changed* understanding of the present" (Sandilands, 2010, p.333). This changed understanding of the present, together with the humour that breaks up the hope/despair dichotomy brings the XR phenomenon closer to something that brings "a paradigm shift in consciousness", one of the definitions given by Sargisson (1996) of a feminist utopia. She writes:

> *The new kind of utopianism that I have identified is critical and creative. It is critical of the political present, and in this it remains constant to the standard (content-based) conception of utopianism. It is imaginative and sometimes takes a fictional form; it fully exploits the ambivalous status of fiction and produces estranged commentary.*
> Sargisson, 1996, p.98

Thereby one might add that XR's actions are explicitly performative and thus have heightened potential for utopian perfomatives (Muñoz, 2009; Dolan, 2005). However, I see the need to clarify why holding a funeral march or blocking a road might be considered utopian. As Muñoz notes, "queerness is not yet here" (2009, p.1), meaning that queerness is about devising multiple possibilities for the future, rather than the one predicted by a status-quo abiding present. In this sense, the *Sorgetåg* is performing a fiction (or future) of a queer world in which it might be usual to hold ceremonies for species that go extinct. The roadblock, by being openly defiant of set rules of conduct performs a similarly queer fiction where the urgency of the environmental crisis is prioritized over the day to day course of events. As Muñoz explains, some forms of queer performance, such as assembling crowds and "defiantly public" performances actually become anticipatory settlements of a possible queer world (2009, p.49). The roadblock and

other disobedient activist action can be considered such settlements, as they perform the hope of a world where systems and rules can be challenged collectively.

Still, the usual environmental discourse is not one of hopes and dreams of utopia, although many (feminist) utopias actually do touch upon better relations between humans and nature. As many activists and scientists point out, climate change is already here and a lot of harm such as biodiversity loss cannot be turned back. In science fiction literature, ecological harm and climate change always results in an apocalypse or dystopia and utopias may only be created after destruction. Stableford (2010) remarks: "insofar as twenty-first-century futuristic fiction set on Earth retains a eutopian component, its eutopias are necessarily postponed until the aftermath of an environmental collapse" (p.279). A striking example of this was a party organized by Sara and her flat mates. Although I did not use it as research material, the theme of 'Rainbow Post-Apocalypse' has stuck with me, expressing the inevitability of an apocalyptic future but the hope to possibly still have some fun and colourfulness afterwards. The rainbow is also a meaning-laden symbol of acceptance of diversity and marginalized identities, so perhaps it is after the apocalypse that we may finally make earth into a truly safe planet for all. This is also an aspect of Kraftl's vision of uncanny utopianism, which also accepts the potentiality of ruins to restructure and rebuild upon (2007). When realizing that we already live in this downfall, amidst the ruins, what remains is not faithful hope, but an urgency to "act out" (Butler, 1993a) and perform bits of an impossible world. This is illustrated in a quote by the young emblematic environmental activist Greta Thunberg who says: "I don't care if what I'm doing – what we're doing – is hopeful. We need to do it anyway. Even if there's no hope left and everything is hopeless, we must do what we can" (Watts, 2019).

Community: Stronger together?

Extinction Rebellion is an interesting case to connect with utopianism as a global movement, but also, and especially in the context of this research, on a very small scale. Johns (2010) writes that "instead of building identical cities simultaneously, feminist utopians fill one house or community and then settle another." (p.187). Thus, the dinner I had with the Snowflakes is an important event in the utopian enactment and can be considered some type of node in this entanglement.

To explain this, I find it interesting to compare the dinner to the first workshop I held with my friends. Through the *Prototyping Utopia* workshop in the beginning of April 2019, my aim was not only to experiment with (safe) space, but also investigate what could create a community or the feeling of it as this is a part of all forms of utopianism. However, the

community of feminist utopias is enacted on a deeper and more intense degree "where not only comradeship but love, intimacy and spiritual connection characterize the ties between members" (Johns, 2010, p.184). In the workshop, I brought people together on the premise that they knew me to a certain degree and were interested to take part in my project, which would then be the basis for affinity. We stayed in public spaces as well, some of them lacking a degree of coziness required for intimacy. It is perhaps not surprising that although the gathering was pleasant, the level of closeness and spirituality remained limited. Indeed, it turned out to be more difficult than expected to find out together what we wanted this to be, or as Patterson phrases it, what story we would tell together (2017, p.69). Without a purpose for coming together beyond 'helping me with my research', my friends' participation was at risk of becoming more of a favour to me that something they would also reap benefits of (Browne, 2003). In this sense, I believe the workshop might have been too structured, the locations too open to feel 'safe' and my role as researcher/facilitator too pronounced, as it was me who decided on all activities.

It was only one day later that I attended the dinner with the Snowflakes. This time, I had little say in what happened, and of the people who were there that day, I had only met Natalie before. While my first workshop was held in (semi-)public space, the dinner with *Snöflingorna* took place in Elin's cozy apartment, mostly in the kitchen, which was barely big enough for us all, creating an instant homely feeling. Although she was the host and had prepared the dinner, she was not the leader of the gathering or the person who would decide on the discussion topics like I had done in the workshop. This created a more anarchic group-setting. Having learnt that the apparent presence of a researcher could potentially disturb this, I did not take notes during the dinner and participated without thinking too consciously about my research.

All participants agreed with me that this dinner formed a type of safe space. An important feature that really aimed to produce the space as safe (although not necessarily utopian) were a few measures of security that were taken when someone asked about the upcoming actions. It was then that Lilly told me "we usually turn off our phones when discussing this" and the kitchen door was closed although no one else was home. For the civil disobedience activists, it is important to maintain a degree of secrecy, and thus extra careful steps can be taken, especially as penalties might be higher if there is evidence of the actions having been planned. This same logic applies during the actions, where people in the hardcore group delete all Extinction Rebellion communication from their phones. The communication of both the Snowflakes and XR more generally takes place in encrypted messaging apps, meaning that the messages cannot be read by any third parties. There is thus a 'digital safe

space' as well that creates an even more exclusive community, where one needs to be invited in to participate. At that moment however, it was not fully evident yet what the purpose of *Snöflingorna* would be, as they it had only been formed about a month prior. Traditionally, affinity groups are meant as a type of safe space during actions, knowing that surrounded by these people you will not have to cross your own boundaries. During the dinner, there was also talk of organizing smaller actions as a group. But several times, Sara and Natalie told me that the members were enthusiastic to see the group as a social gathering as well. In this sense, it was not totally focused on action, but an event like a dinner together could also be enjoyed in itself. Although the purpose was not yet fully defined, there was a clear consensus among the members on environmental issues and the best (or most fun) way to act – civil disobedience. The fact that this passion was known to all and was actually one of the premises on which the meeting was based, created an instant feeling of comfort and belonging to a community.

The concept of community is a tricky one, however. Joseph (2002) has dedicated a book to explaining how closing ourselves off into communities based on idealizations of this notion results in exclusion and the illusion of resistance. This is the same mechanism I discussed in the chapter *Safe Spaces*, as safe spaces tend to create secluded and sometimes false imaginations of community. But as Grosz notes, spaces are also products of community (2001, p.8). The question then remains how "safe space remains meaningful beyond its immediate community of participants" (Hunter, 2008, p.5). In the case of the activist dinner, the community that was felt most belonging to was perhaps rather the larger movement of Extinction Rebellion, than a commitment to this small group specifically. This was demonstrated for instance in the fact that XR's upcoming actions were a topic discussed through a large portion of the evening. In this sense, the dinner was not so much reflective on itself as an event and phenomenon but became rather a direct result of the larger phenomenon of XR. A discontent with the movement that had been one of the reasons for Sara to form the group could have been a way to critically assess the role of the group, and thus the values that its safe space might be based on. However, this discontent was actually not touched upon during the evening, part of the reason perhaps being that Sara herself could not be present that day. Furthermore, the idea to have the group organize its own actions was pushed into the future, seeing as the internal structure of XR Gothenburg was not yet fully ready for this. In this sense, I perhaps missed the reflexivity of the safe space participants regarding "what and who they seek safety *from* and *for*" that the Roestone Collective advise for (2014, p.1361) in order to fully be able to conceptualize the meeting as a performed utopian safe space.

Usually when environmentalism involves itself in concepts such as community and utopia, rather than the other way around, the first evocations that occur are static situations functioning outside of society (Tokar, 2010). These are for instance traditional ecological utopias that aim to operate either in isolation, or when they have achieved a large-scale system change. One might think of solar-powered societies (Tokar, 2010), self-sufficient houses, or green intentional communities (Sargisson, 2014). In the case of Extinction Rebellion, the goals are also fixed, mapped out and distinct (see appendix D). Sub-communities such as working groups will be oriented towards achieving these demands. These forms of community are important, but also relatively fixed, in the sense that they work towards sustaining, and achieving a predetermined goal that lies in the future rather than focussing on malleable processes. Due to this focus on the future, the present moment and its ephemeral spaces (that we are not fighting to maintain) may be left at the sideline. This also may prevent the breaks in performativity (Butler, 1993) that I have been writing about, as it keeps relying on the same repetitions. Using Muñoz, who himself puts more emphasis on means of futurity than future ends (2009, p.100), Seymour helps us grasp why it is important to understand that there is a different potentiality to be achieved from liminal spaces such as a casual dinner:

> *Muñoz's work helps us think about the joys of* transitory *and* ephemeral *spaces—say, a bar you only go to on Latin Night, or a dance floor scene that only exists in the wee hours—spaces that ecocriticism, with its implicit focus on preservation, sustainability, and the material, has largely ignored.*
> Seymour, 2018b, p.241

The dinner, as well as the workshops can be considered such a transitory space. The dinner was of course a temporary event, and at that time, it was only the second meeting of the activist group. Besides possibly being a group during actions, the purpose of the group had not yet been fully defined, yet the members already felt a connection through their broader common goals, such as those outlined by XR. However, as Seymour (2018) is noting, the potential of these ephemeral spaces has the tendency to be overlooked when the urgency of preserving the environment is high and thus the compulsion to 'act' becomes the first priority. Possibly because of this, a lingering on the transformative potential of the newly created Snowflake space itself remained absent, although I must mention again that I was not present at the first meeting, where such reflection might have taken up more space.

Zine page 5-6 *The page shows scribbles, drawings and thoughts collected among participants during the first Prototyping Utopia workshop and the Sorgetåg action. One of them is written by me and expresses an uneasiness I felt. It is the only personal note I wrote after the Sorgetåg that did not describe events or other people but focused on my own feelings within the XR activities. The fragments taken from the workshop also seem to come from a more individual standpoint than the way the activists wrote, emphasizing the importance of fighting together and finding each other as a community.*

//Theme – Collaboration
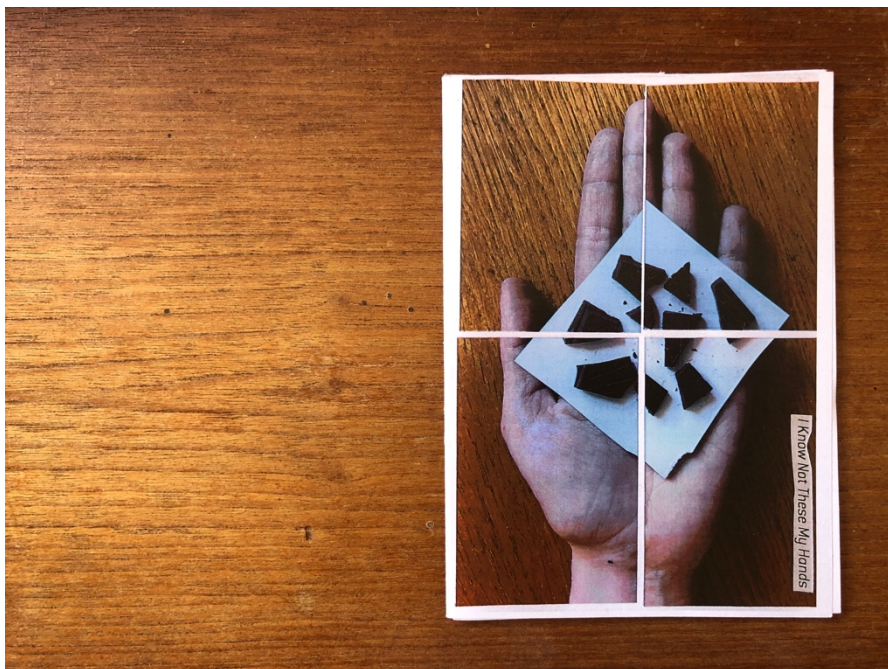
After all material was collected, I organized *Prototyping Utopia 2.0* on May 26th 2019, inviting friends as well as the Snowflakes. This workshop revolved around collectively making a zine. First, I showed the participants, Natalie and Sasha, the zines I had made previously and gifted them copies, as is customary in zine-culture. We then began by folding and cutting the paper in order to achieve an 8-page booklet. We documented the moment of cutting the slit and printed this picture with a small mobile printer I had at my disposition for the workshop.

While the image was being printed, we took a picture of this process and printed it too. Documenting these actions enabled a process that was self-referential (meta) from the start. The zine also refers in several ways to the game played and ended up being loosely based on the theme of 'life'. To this end, Natalie drew her own interpretation of the wheel of life from the game, filling in different events that could happen by chance to someone, one of them being a climate catastrophe. I proceeded to 'embroider' a crisscross of different paths symbolizing a rejection of the linearity of the game.

It was clear that we were operating on our personal desires here, while constantly discussing these with the group. Natalie came up with the idea to make a collaborative association word tree and had Sasha and me intuitively associate words to each other. This activity brought playfulness, thereby abiding to the advice of the postcard Natalie had picked which said 'stay playful' and was also used in the zine. Referring to the game, I wanted to draw a fence we could 'vandalize' with our own graffiti tags. This fence had appeared in the game

regarding a lawsuit about a fence that would cost the perpetrator (picked at random by the accuser holding the card) 80.000 of the game's currency that we called 'K'. While Sasha made up a wordplay on her name, which she had discussed during the card exercise, Natalie used her pseudonym that I had previously picked for her in this research and I referred to the pink flowers on my postcard, spelling out LOL. Sasha for her part had brought washi-tapes from Taiwan to the meeting that seemed to represent daily life in a park, which we used on the playful page.

Inspired by some of the snacks I had made available for the event, the idea came to use the barcode form a chocolate packaging on a page and also copy the nutrition label. This page, which we then proceeded to smudge it with chocolate and strawberries became the back cover of the zine, making it into a 'real' or commercial-looking product stained by the 'invisible hands' that had created it. The front page became a fragmented work on many layers. We see Natalie's hand (not invisible) holding broken chunks of chocolate that were used for the previously mentioned smearing. The fragmentation of the chocolate was mirrored in the puzzle effect of the four pictures (due to the printer only printing a fixed small format). All in all, the zine portrays the ambiguities around our own narratives, in contrast to the narratives offered in the game. It also reflects on our time together, presenting not only its own meta-narrative (birth process, making, expiration and photo evidence) but also helping us find our collective narrative for this moment.

Once again, the line between material and result are blurred. To me, this workshop and the product that ensued encapsulate this research and truly enabled me to analyze what I had collected and experienced previously as a part of it. The pages I added later (appendix F) are merely my own contextualization of it, situating it more explicitly within this research and highlighting my own desires.

Exploring safe space collectively

Safe spaces are productive and transformative because they offer a place where one might take different risks than usual. In the case of the zine-making workshop, I believe we can consider producing the zine and thus experimenting with creative expression a risk in itself. As Hunter explains, performative practices like this invite for taking 'aesthetic risks', where "the 'known' is risked or tested through the altering or workshopping of various aesthetic elements" (2008, p.9). Choices must be made in order to fill the blank pages and in this choosing there is the risk. Especially when working in collaboration, it may be risky to express an idea that can be disagreed with, like Natalie did when suggesting to make an association tree or Sasha when bringing her own washi tapes to the *Prototyping Utopia 2.0* workshop. In a safe space, these risks are encouraged and negotiated, and we may realize how we want to (re-)present ourselves. Hunter, who also researched a creative safe space workshop setting writes:

> *Safe space is not something produced solely by conscientious preparations of the workshop*
> *convenor, although it is a major part of their role. It is not the container in which risky business can*
> *occur without public consequence, although it is encouraged. [...] I suggest that safe space is better*
> *described as a euphemism for the processual act of ever-becoming, of messy negotiations.*
> Hunter, 2008, p.16

Keeping this in mind, one can think of the workshop as a space where the participants take a chance to respond to current troubles, giving them the opportunity to construct a narrative around it.

In the case of *Prototyping Utopia 2.0*, we experimented with this construction of narrative through the zine. Although we did not mean to respond to a specific problem, we did establish a praxis during short and limited time that was different from our usual life. As we created this bubble of space, we essentially performed a glimmer what we would want the world to be like. This does not mean that in our ideal world everyone should be making zines all day. Rather, we found our message to lie in playfulness. This is not only visible in the zine's literal recommendation to 'stay playful', but also in how this playfulness was enacted when creating the zine, with unconventional techniques such as foodsmearing and embroidery. At the same time, we also 'played' our social interactions, as we got to know each other through the postcards we had picked, the boardgame and the play with words in making the association tree. Through the playfulness of our gathering, we were able to express and enact a certain feeling of the space and reflect on it, an enjoyment combined with a bit of tension, a

collaboration without the pressure of delivering, and an engaged relation between the material and our thoughts. We used elements of our present, such as the strawberries and chocolate, and twisted them into our own visions. And though the photographing of our actions that we got to frame the process in our own way.

This is how I understand the utopian performative that Dolan (2005) and Muñoz (2009) write about. As Dolan says, "Utopian performatives persuade us that beyond this 'now' of material oppression and unequal power relations lives a future that might be different, one whose potential we can feel as we're seared by the promise of a present that gestures toward a better later" (2005, p.7). We enacted this by playing around with rules and conventions, symbolized by the forbidden signs or the fine for the fence. Natalie's satirical wheel of life next to the title 'det vackra livet' (the beautiful life), also challenges this present and, through its absurdity and playfulness, makes us question who gets to turn this wheel. At the same time, the stitches around it demand a different way of working, one where we go into the future not by driving on fixed roads like in the Game of Life, but by becoming through the entanglement of crisscross stiching. These elements of the zine represent, but also enact the way we evolved throughout the workshop.

Indeed, importantly, our space together was only ephemeral, as a workshop is necessarily is a temporary event that has an end. For Muñoz and Dolan, this is part of the performative: "the utopian performative's fleetingness leaves us melancholy yet cheered, because for however brief a moment, we felt something of what redemption might be like, of what humanism could really mean, of how powerful might be a world in which our commonalities would hail us over our differences" (Dolan, 2005, p.8). I had planned 2,5 hours for the activities, but the space ended up lasting about an hour or so longer. While creating the zine, all of us lost track of time, being fully immersed in our present narrative of creating the zine. Both participants were surprised at how fast the time had passed upon completion of our product and expressed that they would like to do something like this more often as they had greatly enjoyed our activities. As Seymour, inspired by Muñoz, notes, the melancholy and longing that ensue a utopian moment are actually part of the pleasure and make the enjoyment of it in the moment all the more passionate (2018b). However, this 'bit of time' spent together, although structured as an event with a start and finish, was part of the living present: "an enactment of the processes of growth, change, movement, and touch" that goes beyond the human, extending to material entities and non-human beings (Loewen Walker, 2014, p. 47). In the context of the workshop, this enactment might not have been directly connected to nature, but there certainly was a connection to material as its restrictions and allowances guided us in

the creation of the zine. As Loewen Walker notes, "each of these processes is temporal not in its adherence to an externally imposed timeline, but to its own making of time as the becoming of materiality" (2014, p.47), a materiality that we fabricated through the zine as well as through the shaping of the space itself with our bodies and actions.

A question remains regarding the 'effects' of the workshop and the utopian performative when conceptualized as I have done. For Dolan, the utopian performative is inextricably connected to theatre performance and means that the performer as well as the audience experience a flicker of hope (2005). The workshop did not have an audience outside of us three acting as both performers and audience towards each other. Still, this might be what we are looking for after all, due to the open but private nature of the safe space. The event was not organized around a certain identity like separatist safe spaces are, but the 'safety' rather came from the ties of friendship I shared with the participants and the intimate domestic setting of it. It is through these (emerging) friendships that we were able to understand ourselves as similar and different at the same time and thereby affirm our own identities and ideas. Hunter notes that her workshop participants "glimpse their alternatives […] in creating and experiencing representations of themselves and their relations with 'the other' in their devising work" (2008, p.17). Although the workshop she writes about did end with a live performance to an outside audience, it is the process towards this that she focuses on. In this sense, I believe she points more to the relations within the group of participants, including the building of friendship. Lugones and Rosezell (1995), who have written about friend relations tells us that friendship may help us in understanding our world as complex and plural. Such pluralist friendship "must carry with it a commitment to an understanding of the realities of the friend" (p.142-143) and by coming together in a safe space of intimate nature and creating together, this is what we worked towards. The final product, whether a zine or an end show, may play an important role in spreading the message and show a certain achievement, but the true performance happens between the participants themselves and towards each other as a moment of realization. Again, it is the process that matters, and the result serves mostly as a representation of this process, and not so much as its active component.

I cannot help but think back of a talk by Roy Scranton I went to with Sara once and had a discussion about. Scranton (2015) uses his experiences of military service to comprehend climate change and the inevitable death we all face. Although he used to be an activist and has a similar doom and gloom vision as some other activists, educating people on the damages being done to our planet, this is where their resemblance ends. Indeed, rather than advocating to 'act', Scranton promotes the idea that we must stand still as there is no hope for action to

change anything. We must therefore 'learn to die' first, as individuals and as a planet and create space to mourn and fathom what is happening, in the same way as a soldier does when at war. While Sara strongly disagreed on this part, something in it resonated with me. I believe it was the idea that action is not the (only) option and there is something to be gained in assessing what we have and living-*with* a situation as a way to remain rooted in the present (Lindström & Ståhl, forthcoming). The *Sorgetåg* was meant as an outward statement, but became such an inward reflection, a moment of silence to confront a new reality. With *Prototyping Utopia 2.0* I offered such a moment as well to my (activist) friends. We did not ponder death, but we pondered life in the present. Importantly that moment of reflection itself is something productive too in its utopian performative, although I do not believe it is completely opposed to action as Scranton does. To me, action must be enriched by safe space moments of collective awareness of the safe space as well as the world around it. It means that safe spaces we create around us, feminist utopian private gatherings or more open performative events we attend may be places where we "can confront our situation and […] get down to the difficult task of adapting, with mortal humility, to our new reality" (Scranton, 2015, p. 23).

Natalie, Sasha and I will retain the zine as a product of our collective coming of conscience of that present time we spent together. As an object, it may be shared with others when we print copies or as Natalie suggested "build a zine collection at home for people to read when using the bathroom". In this way, although the actualization of utopia was only momentary and reserved to us as performing and auditing each other in our collective safe space, we may still communicate it with the world and as such extend that moment. As Piepmeier writes, the methods of distribution of a zine are just as well part of it as its materiality and content (2014). Sharing our work might incite giggles, wonder and discussion, all with the potential to echo and help itinerate our performance of the world we wished for.

GATHERED THOUGHTS

When writing about the zine that is a part of this research, I have provided explanations of the meaning or thought that was put into it. However, considering it an artistic object also involves leaving some ambiguity to the observer. As Franz (2005) writes, this means that it "operates at a symbolic, metaphoric level the ambiguity of which invites multiple potential readings". Essentially, this has been the approach throughout the whole research. I have written here specifically on feminist utopia performed through safe space dynamics regarding environmentalism and my own personal relations with others. However, the mechanism of utopian safe space reaches much further than this, whether it be on global scales of solidarity, in digital worlds, or in everyday micro relations.

Recently, the following passage was brought to my attention:

> *I want to engage in a carrier-bag practice of storytelling, in which stories do not reveal secrets acquired by heroes pursuing luminous objects across and through the plot matrix of the world. Bag-lady storytelling would instead proceed by putting unexpected partners and irreducible details into a frayed, porous carrier bag. Encouraging halting conversations, the encounter transmutes and reconstitutes all the partners and all the details. The stories do not have beginnings or ends; they have continuations, interruptions and reformulations – just the kind of survivable stories we could use these days. And, perhaps, [...] the bag-lady practice of storytelling can remind us that the lurking dilemma in all of these tales is comprehensive homelessness, the lack of a common place, and the devastation of public culture.*
> Haraway, 1992, p.68

To me, Haraway's writing is in itself artistic enough to be interpreted and applied to many different occasions and I therefore find that this excerpt nicely illustrates the surprising, paradoxical and speculative connections I have aimed to make throughout this project. The porous, frayed bags as the self-contradicting safe space, halting the conversation through a necessary reflexivity upon itself and the ensuing stories as feminist utopias, always in process but rooted in a living present. All of this due to the current lack of a common place, as the world as we have built it does not allow everyone to be included in its space. This is more than an analogy, as the dynamic stretches further than just the subject of my writing. The same apparatus informed my actions in the field, my writing process, the products that came from the project and imbued my personal journey throughout. I acted out the carrier bag practice on many different layers, and it was the decision to keep the project as close to me as where it had begun, which made the story I have told here coherent.

Regarding my original question '*how can the practice of constructing safe space aid to think and perform critical (feminist) utopia as a means for social change?*' I hope to have shown what mechanisms lie behind the potential of safe spaces to enact feminist utopian practices such as zine-making, games or performance. This happens through their paradoxical nature that forces us to question what we have constructed. In my cases, whether it was a workshop gathering, a shared dinner or a zine-making collective, we always had to define why we were together in this space (a common purpose) and how we could all feel good in it. This delimitation of the space as 'safe' is artificial, as a true safe space can never exist, just like a utopia cannot. Still, there are benefits in consciously performing them anyway. In their twisted way, constructed safe spaces bring us closer to utopia when they in some form also reflect upon their own problematics. This remains an extremely contextual, delicate and continuous process where making mistakes is a necessary part that only enriches the reflection. There are no fixed guidelines, although my work here and the articles such as those by The Roestone Collective (2014) and Hunter (2008) may be good places to start. As examples and glimmerings of different possibilities, safe spaces show us the visions of a present that will not be, but at the same time, already *is* through our rendering of it. This forms not only a path or destination to social change, but also is in itself a micro-enactment of it. In this sense, critical safe spaces can be burgeoning places for utopian potentiality that can function even in intimate gatherings within daily life, as these may be the forms of social change we need to fuel and run parallel to more direct activism.

I have also made clear that the creative praxes taking place in such constructed spaces play a crucial part in the enactment of said utopianism, whether it be dancing (Rivera-Servera, 2004), theatre performance (Dolan, 2005), making music (Hunter, 2008), or as I have concentrated on here: zine-making. All of these aesthetic practices are tools that enable performances beyond the dominant performativity. We may let our minds wander, our pencils glide or our bodies move in ways that make us feel unrestricted in a sense: exciting but safe at the same time. Safe spaces, although not always explicitly defined as such, are important incubators for these imaginative actions. Even if they require a higher level or sense of security than 'regular spaces', this enables subjects inside to assess situations in a different way than usual and helps in daring to take risks to create a moment or artifact of utopian counterperformativity (Muñoz, 1999). The risks may be purely creative at first (taking a chance to express oneself artistically), but eventually also lead to taking risks in confronting and staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) as we become conscious of our place within the world and as

a part of it (Barad, 2007). Through this, we gain the ability to remain grounded in the present. Again, I would like to quote Haraway as she writes:

> *In urgent times, many of us are tempted to address trouble in terms of making an imagined future safe, of stopping something from happening that looms in the future, of clearing away the present and past in order to make futures for coming generations. Staying with the trouble does not require such a relationship to times called the future. In fact, staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as vanishing pivot between awful or Edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings.*
>
> Haraway, 2016, p.1

For a work that had the starting point of space, the concept of time turned out to be extremely important, demonstrating the inextricability of spacetime. Working with environmental activists and sensing this fear of a dystopian future, while also being concerned about our relationship with nature and earth in general helped me to contrast and compare the spaces I had in mind to what was already in place on the activist front.

The 'social change' I inquired about might at first have seemed like imposing a too grand or vague notion onto this small-scale project. But the general argument I have tried to make through these specific cases is that change does not happen suddenly, just like there are no blueprints for better societies. With Muñoz (2009) and Dolan (2005), I theorized on actualized utopia, where both past and future are reconfigured by the present moment, which allows us to see possibility and therefore perform slightly differently than we otherwise would have done. It is important to look into these small and specific reconfigurations in the dominant performativity, as they may contribute to ever so slight ephemeral differences in what we build as the norm (Butler, 1993b). They function as cracks, glimmers, or flickers of the world we try to achieve. The more of these we achieve, the closer we come to structural change allowing for open pasts and futures and that is why it is essential to conceptualize these bits of spacetime directly in the field as well. Safe spaces, such as the intimate or activist spaces being discussed here, are a part of this broad and slow ripple in their own small ways. The point of the collaborative zine is not be sent around the world to send a message, but as I maintain, the change lies in the (participatory) performance of creating it, and of constructing the space around it, making it safe to take certain risks. For the part of the *Sorgetåg*, the utopian performative was enacted not only outwards, but also set in motion a shared internal reflection. It is this inwardness and process-orientation that safe spaces can cater to when set up in a

consciously reflective way. This process-orientation as a form of Haraway's 'staying with the trouble' (2016) is something I believe can be gained from in activism where the focus often remains on outward visibility and achieving set goals. The dialogue that may ensue is subsequently its own part of a (counter)performative repetition. It is exactly this constant reconfiguring, re-writing and questioning of itself that constitutes the flow of feminist utopianism.

In its attempt to combine research and creative practices and to mix in theory throughout methods and analysis, the research itself also contributes to this open-ended, processual form of creating difference, rather than causing an immediate or clear-cut change. In this sense, it is hard to draw any more definite conclusions from the work than the reflections I have offered here. In this sense, the work has underlying ties to new materialist thinking, not only in conceptions of space, time and matterings as a combined phenomenon (Barad, 2007), but also in the realization that "at the end of the day 'conclusions' are a dualism of before and after" (van der Tuin, 2018, p.277) whereas life is a continuous development. This last part becomes especially clear when situating the project within my own trajectory. I had questions before I started and as I am in the stage of 'concluding', I am now left with different questions. In between, I got to substantiate and critically assess my desires and dreams, finally finding my own words and learning about new concepts for the instincts (or hunches) I had begun with. But this is certainly not a rounded-up project. Taking the words I read and wrote and actually putting them to action by doing the collaborative work of zine-making was a decisive step in the process of defining a praxis of difference that I believe in, but certainly not the last one.

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APPENDIX A – Crafting invitations / Activists

Message 1 in activist group

12 March 2019

Hi! My name is Louise and I'm currently writing my thesis for my MA in Gendering Practices at the University of Gothenburg. I'm researching on the power and problems of safe spaces. For me, this is about how small bubbles can make a change within a system, and how imagining and performing utopias can bring us into different ways of thinking about struggles and how we live with them now. How do we sustain a safe space? What empowers us within it? Can we think of utopia when climate change and other environmental harm are happening already? How do we relate different possible futures to this troublesome present?

I have spoken with Sara quite a bit about this and since you have now created a safe space for yourselves through this affinity group, I would really love to work with you and take part in it. My goal is not to do research on a group of people, but rather work with people in creative ways, and it so happens I have recently become intrigued with environmental activism. ☺ As it will be participatory action research, the steps to take for my research are not planned out yet and would also depend on where the collaboration takes us. For now, I have the idea to maybe set up some kind of creative workshop around certain hopes or concerns that we are dealing with and we could all work further from there on.

If you would be in for this, I would be interested in simply participating in some of your meetings. It would be great if I could perhaps (at least partly) join you on Friday so we could discuss my participation and I can answer questions on my project. Lastly, in the thesis everyone will be anonymized and if anything should not be mentioned it won't be.

Message 2 in activist group

18 March

Hello everyone,

This is Louise again! Sara has updated me a bit and so I wanted to clarify some things about my project. ☺

My research would not take any time from people who cannot or do not want to give it. Being able to participate in chats, meeting or actions (!) and write about these experiences would already be of great value for me. I have no expectations of anyone to do something 'for me' and mostly just want to be involved and bring to the table whatever I can to help. I had the idea of creating a workshop or event as part of my research. This could be just me organizing, it could be in collaboration with (some of) you, it could be held only for the group,

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opened up to other members of XR, or to anyone. It could also not happen at all if there is not so much interest and that would be very fine too. Again, my main aim is to simply participate. I understand that there can be a lot of questions regarding this project as parts of it are still pretty vague, but I think what will come out really depends on me meeting you and working together with you. The past weeks, I have been reading a lot on safe spaces and utopias. Since an affinity group seems related to a safe space, I would like to see, engage with and support the group through my theoretical knowledge. Then, I would write about that in my thesis. Although I am not directly part of XR, I am genuinely interested in environmental activism at the moment and also want to use this project as a way to have a peek inside this world that is so new for me. If you want, I could be added to your chat so I can answer any questions, or you can contact me at [phone number] by text, whatsapp or phone, or mazetlou@gmail.com. I would also very much like to be part of your next meeting, if you will have me!

APPENDIX B – Crafting invitations / Workshops

B1
Prototyping Utopia (1)
3 April 2019
Description in the Facebook event:
PROTOTYPING UTOPIA
How do we define, create and sustain a safe space? What empowers us within it? Can we think of utopia when we already face urgent problems here and now? How do we relate possibly different futures to this troublesome present?
I'm organizing some informal creative gatherings on safe space and utopia. Welcome!

As a part of my thesis, I would like to bring some people together throughout several meetings to experiment with creating a safe space. This is a space where we feel secure, but also dare to experiment and take some risks. It's something I would have liked to do even if it was not for the thesis, so please see it as a casual workshop on utopia organized by a friend, rather than a researcher's strange experiment. Importantly though, I will take notes, possibly record and write about this, but everyone will remain anonymous.

In this workshop type of space, I'd like to test out some creative methods surrounding (feminist) utopias. We will formulate personal desires and speculations, while also listening to what we collectively want and feel. We will reflect on how we experience situations and see if gathering like this can empower us for change. You can come to one meeting, a few or all of them.

I will be facilitating the events, but the project is participatory, so any idea or suggestion will be taken into account. This is all really trial and error for me and very much a process. I have for instance now only invited people who I know do not identify as cishet men and this is an aspect we should discuss.

In the first gathering we will explore how to give shape to the space, what the ground rules might be and if it is possible to make a space safe for everyone. I will share a bit of what I have been researching and then we will do an activity of drawing and writing around that.

I hope I have made you curious enough to join! If you know anyone who would also be interested let me know and I can invite them.
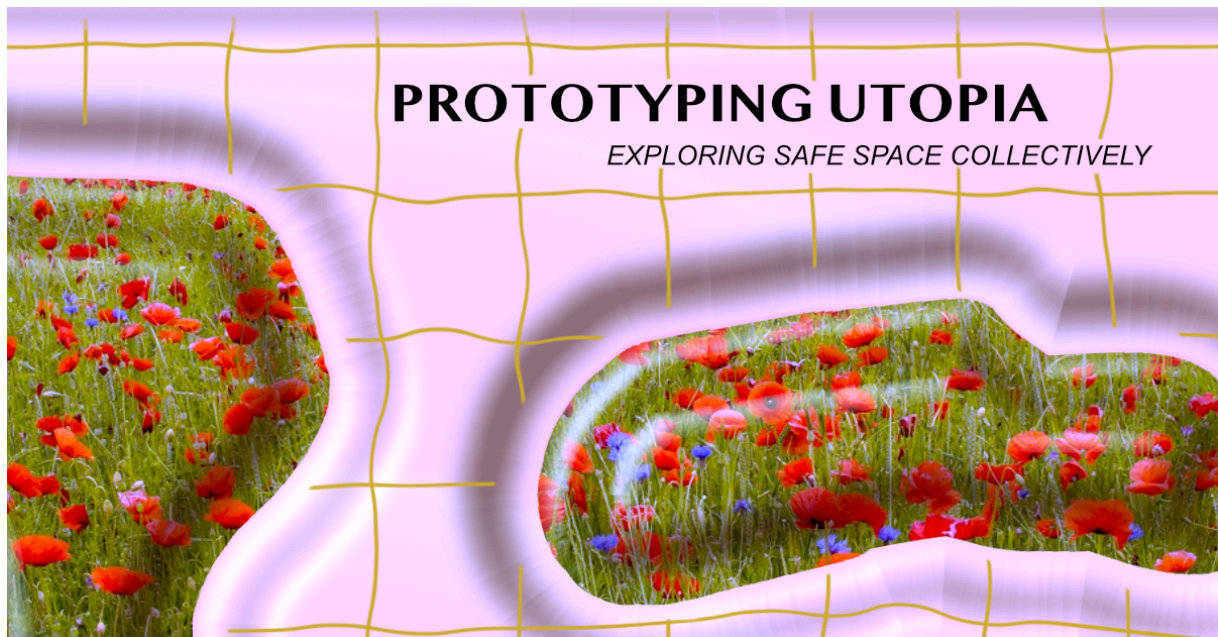
The cover photo of the event. *A work inspired partly by digital alternative/experimental aesthetics that I personally enjoy. The poppy field symbolizes my own mental safe space, a place I went to when I was afraid as a child and still visit sometimes during meditations.*

B2
Prototyping Utopia 2.0
26 May 2019
Description in the Facebook event:
Hello friends,
Let's hang out, and it's for my thesis! Here is the second and last gathering I'm organizing as part of my research on safe spaces.

We will get to know each other, play little games and make a zine about it together. A zine is like a homemade magazine and it's fun to make!

Again, picking a space for this is difficult. For now it's set to where I live, but depending on how many people want to join I might have to find another location. Will keep posted!

If you have any suggestions regarding anything (place, time activity, materials, whatever) I'm all ears! You are as much a part of this as I am.

Xx

The cover photo of the event. *A continuation of the cover photo of the first event, but showing an evolution. While the flowers have diversified, symbolizing my changed insights, the background has become calmer, offering a more blank canvas to the participants.*

APPENDIX C – Prototyping Utopia workshop set up

3 April 2019

Thank you for coming to my workshop! Today we will be exploring how we perform and connect in different spaces. We will be moving around a bit and it will be a series of small exercises. I have prepared note/workbooks to write and draw in.

Frilagret

3 Minutes be in the space together // find something we all have in common (make a list)

Free write/ draw 4 minutes on the space

1 page 'How are you with the space?'

What you notice in the space, how you feel in it, how do you act here and why, what are positive and negative aspects

Outside

1st half // discuss: Have you been here before? Why/why not? What did you do the same/differently? Why? (How might this influence the space?)

[Stop to explain next]

Taking notes, art of noticing the space write/draw in your own time

1 page 'How are you with the space'

Take note of how you are in the space. Sensations, rhythm, place, embodiment.

Touch or collect something from the space and make a note.

University

3 minutes in the space together // find something we all differ in, what makes us different? (make a list)

Free write/draw 4 minutes on the space

1 page 'How are you with the space?'

What you notice in the space, how you feel in it, how do you act here and why, what are positive and negative aspects

Discuss

What do we take from this? What have you written about/drawn?

Our community? What is it based on?

What did you touch/collect outside? How did it make you connect/disconnect?

What could be different rules to have in a gathering like this?

Present

Something strange about safe spaces. Inclusion by exclusion. Safety vs. danger. But it shows hope to tell a different story. Can we ask 'what if?' and use our experiences to think of a different present.

Making a Speculative Fabulation (SF)

Throw story dice. If some are a place, throw again.

We will now use the dice to create a story together. The story must take place in the spaces we have visited. Can the collected object be a character in it? Try to weave in your experiences through fiction.

Write or just talk? Illustrate?

Should we the rules be adjusted after this?

Location suggestions for next time?

APPENDIX D – XR's messages and demands

I have included a text that was posted by the XR Gothenburg page in the Facebook event of the roadblock action in Gothenburg that communicates the demands.[4]

Tomorrow!

Hopefully many want to participate tomorrow when XR Gothenburg calls to declare a climate emergency. Saying the truth about the ecological crisis is one of XR's demands.

EXTINCTION REBELLION'S 3 MAIN MESSAGES

We are in an ecological crisis. There is an ongoing mass eradication of life on earth and the climate is near collapse.

We need to act now. Time is running out. A major effort is required, but many of the necessary changes will make our lives better.

The passivity of politicians is a crime against the people. They have put us all in danger because of their inability to take brave decisions. Therefore, it is our right and duty to stand up for what we love and rebel through peaceful civil disobedience.

EXTINCTION REBELLION'S 3 DEMANDS

Speak clear language. The government must announce the emergency for the climate and the earth's species and, together with other actors, communicate how urgent it is to change.

---

[4] Post in FB Event for action 17th of April 2019. Own translation. The demands are also listed on the international (but UK based) website of XR. I have chosen here to include the ones that were posted for this specific event to highlight the locality of my own project and because I believe there are some slight nuances in their translation.
https://www.facebook.com/events/647410732349987/permalink/653412691749791/
Original (English) demands: https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/demands/

Act now. The government must take action immediately to slow down the loss of species and reduce Sweden's climate emissions to netto zero in 2025.

Strengthen democracy. The government must set up and be guided by a citizen council for climate justice and ecological sustainability.

APPENDIX E – Prototyping Utopia 2.0 workshop set up

26 May 2019

ZINE-MAKING WORKSHOP SET-UP

Icebreaker

Pick one postcard and say why you picked it

Introduce zine idea – about this moment and how we can reflect and act outside of it
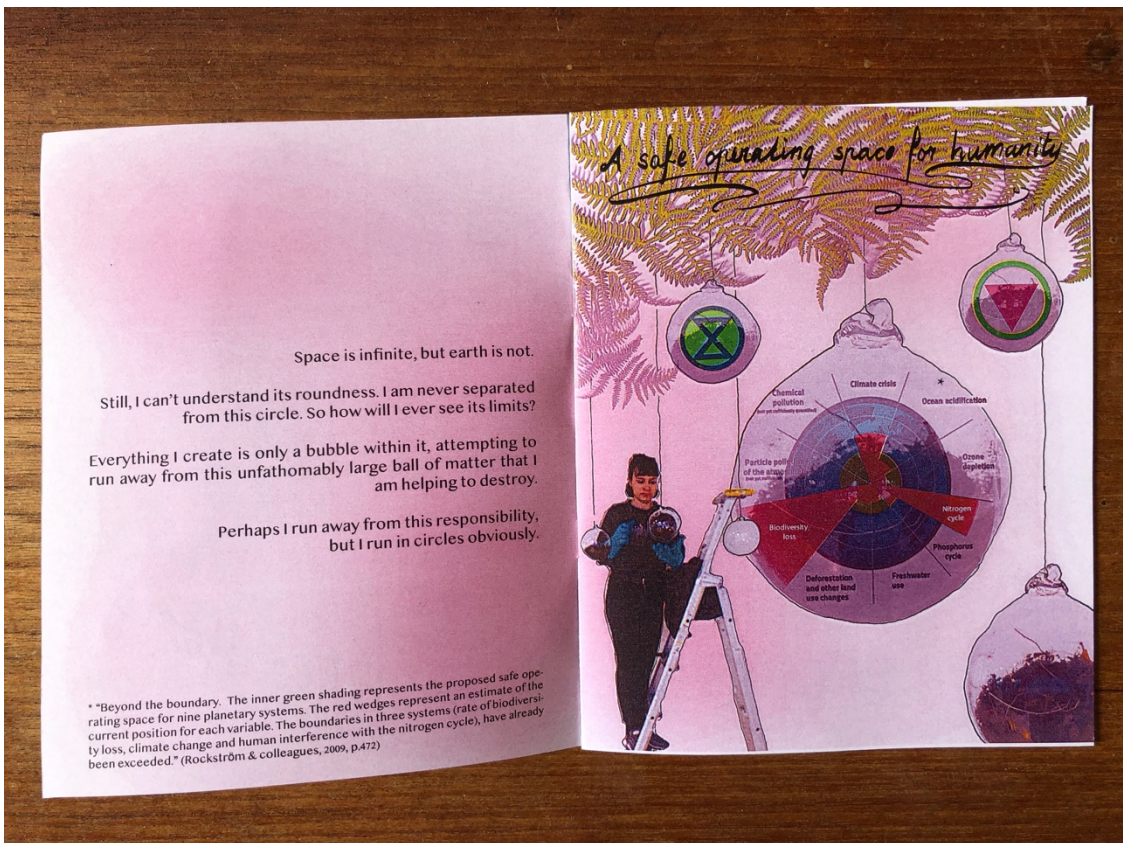
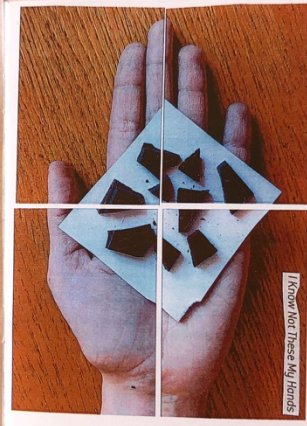Topic? Each two pages or together

Live a different life: game of life

Suggestions for zine:

- Print an image/draw something to represent something
- Quote something (song, movie, recipe…)
- Write a 'slam poetry' (words flowing from mind abstractly)
- Write a haiku (5-7-5 syllables, reference weather)
- Make a how to
- Collage

APPENDIX F – Invisible Hand, edition 4.5

edition 4.5 july 2019
1 poundent

Invisible Hand

A safe operating space for humanity

Space is infinite, but earth is not.

Still, I can't understand its roundness. I am never separated from this circle. So how will I ever see its limits?

Everything I create is only a bubble within it, attempting to run away from this unfathomably large ball of matter that I am helping to destroy.

Perhaps I run away from this responsibility, but I run in circles obviously.

* "Beyond the boundary. The inner green shading represents the proposed safe operating space for nine planetary systems. The red wedges represent an estimate of the current position for each variable. The boundaries in three systems (rate of biodiversity loss, climate change and human interference with the nitrogen cycle), have already been exceeded." (Rockström & colleagues, 2009, p.472)

The blank page teeming with the desires of would be traces of every symbol, equation, word, book, library, punctuation mark, vowel, diagram,. scribble, inscription...

I Know Not These My Hands

... graphic, letter, inkblot, as they yearn toward expression. A jubilation of emptiness. Don't for a minute think that there are no material effects of yearning and imagining. - Barad, 2012, p.13
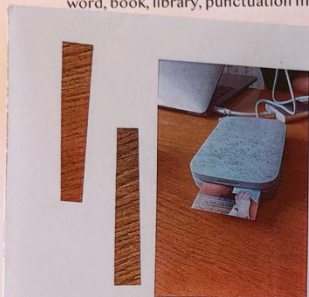
DET VACKRA LIVET

The blank page teeming with the desires of would be traces of every symbol, equation,
word, book, library, punctuation mark, vowel, diagram,. scribble, inscription...

feeling s

STAY
PLAYFUL

graphic, letter, inkblot, as they yearn toward expression. A jubilation of emptiness.
Don't for a minute think that there are no material effects of yearning and imagining. -
Barad, 2012, p.13

The blank page teeming with the desires of would be traces of every symbol, equation,
word, book, library, punctuation mark, vowel, diagram,. scribble, inscription...

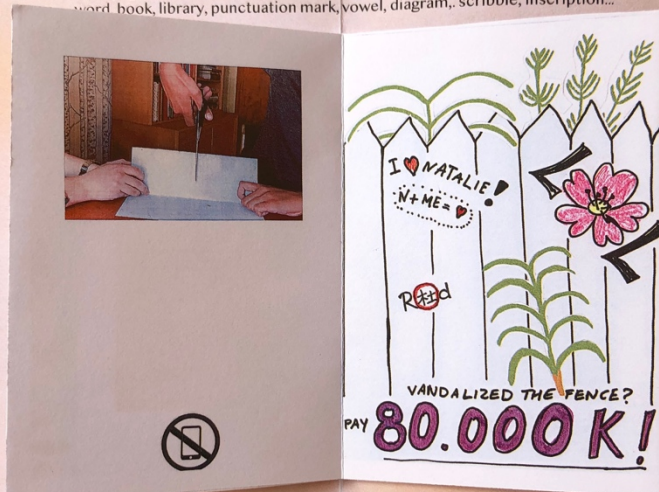I ♥ NATALIE !
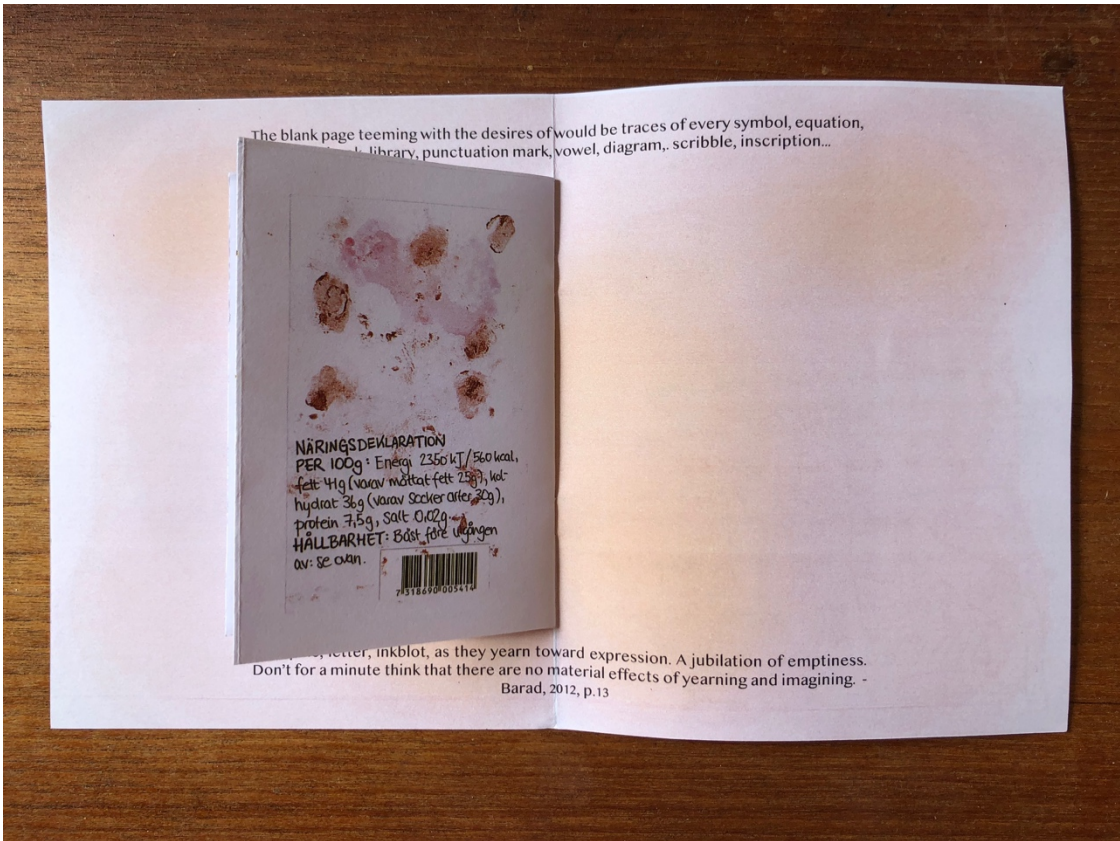N + ME ♥

 R♥d

VANDALIZED THE FENCE?
PAY 80.000 K !

graphic, letter, inkblot, as they yearn toward expression. A jubilation of emptiness.
Don't for a minute think that there are no material effects of yearning and imagining. -
Barad, 2012, p.13

The blank page teeming with the desires of would be traces of every symbol, equation,
... library, punctuation mark, vowel, diagram,. scribble, inscription...

NÄRINGSDEKLARATION
PER 100g: Energi 2350 kJ/560 kcal,
fett 41g (varav mättat fett 25g), kol-
hydrat 36g (varav socker arter 30g),
protein 7,5g, salt 0,02g.
HÅLLBARHET: Bäst före utgången
av: se ovan.

... letter, inkblot, as they yearn toward expression. A jubilation of emptiness.
Don't for a minute think that there are no material effects of yearning and imagining. -
Barad, 2012, p.13

I feel with the space?

Jag sörjer,
accepterar och
kämpar.

Jag är modig, stark och svag.
Jag älskar alla oss
för vi kan göra det här
bara tillsammans.

Jag kämpar för
oss, för planeten,
för en ljusare
framtid.

fler och starkare
♡
Rädda Planeten! ♡ ☺

When walking many people
take pictures or film. I feel
seen/exposed, but as if it is my duty to
do that for XR now. Expose myself.

Jag känner en konstig mix av
sorg och pepp - att det händer
något över huvud taget är så
sjukt häftigt   People power ♥

Quiet - feels like you have to whisper.

Images and references

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Extinction Rebellion, green placard
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Extinction_Rebellion,_green_placard_(cropped).jpg

Fern Leaf Oliv
https://nds-nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestaand:Fern-leaf-oliv.jpg

Straight Ally
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Straightally.svg

Lindström, K., Ståhl, Å. as 'unmakingstudio' (2019, 22 January).[Yey! Filled with soil, seeds planted, story of uprootedness and taking root en route. #multispeciesstorytelling #växjökonsthall.] Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Bs8aj-QhkjO/

Planetary Boundaries
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Planetary_Boundaries.png

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Big thanks to all participants!

❀