On Collapse

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Konstfack: CRAFT! Textiles
Master 2, Spring 2021
Word count: 6905
ABSTRACT

This project is an active exploration of subjectivities through the medium of weaving. In a narrative illustrated with woven works, the emotional trajectory of this person of mixed cultural background through Swedish society is described. First, the work is contextualized in terms of the larger politico-cultural-discursive context, entitled the outside. It is then positioned in terms of the individual context, the inside, largely dramatized as the developments in the art of western tapestry in the past century. This culminates in the final works, three of which are presented in the final exhibition. They are entitled monads, the etymology of which, in Greek, relates to the words one, alone, or singularity. Each is a conceptual microcosm proposing a different light distribution scheme. They are imprints of alternative actualizing tendencies. There could only be one; at the end of the experiment, Schrodinger’s cat is either dead or alive. The collapse involves the very structure of the ground, and is therefore embedded directly into the weave structure. But remember, each act of observation is an irreversible disturbance to the system. In the interpretation of the primary emanation arises difference, but in which direction will the pendulum swing, and on what forces does its motion hinge? Do subjectivities follow the locality assumption? Do you produce subjectivities or do they produce you?

Keywords: weaving, feminism, quantum physics, post-colonialism, immigration, globalism, power structures, asymmetry, light, darkness, collapse, haptic
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INTRODUCTION

Intention and Research Questions

There are so many contemporary issues which could be discussed within the context of my work, but it would only be reflecting a limited facet of what was being traversed during the period spent here at Konstfack. The individual and the collective are so intimately interwoven that it becomes impossible to tease out which is the one, and which is the other. Perhaps making a distinction is not a fruitful exercise. Attempting to unravel the reasons for which one such as myself would materialize in a master’s of CRAFT! textile also becomes something of an entangled question. If you look at the whole of the cosmos as a mixture of elements, the local interplay of which produce certain outcomes, then this could be an inevitability. The individual, in the inevitability of the outcomes of its interactions, thereby becomes nothing more than a part of the whole, a necessary manifestation and the filling of a void.1 Within that context, the perceived individuality is nothing more than a construct of the particular mind.2 And yet this body is the product of a specific evolutionary branch, clearly differentiated from the other bodies surrounding it. It’s trajectory necessarily differs from that of other bodies and the knowledge accumulated is specific to the individual.3 With this in mind, the distinction between free will and determinism becomes unclear.4

My starting position when arriving here, having previously studied microbiology, is that of scientific realism5. It takes the world to represent a reality separate from yourself which could be studied and measured. It was an exploration of objectivities, as defined by the mechanical view of the enlightenment period. However, having first hand experienced the influence of desire and delusion in the production of knowledge, I felt it necessary to explore the subjective side of the question. If the movements of my subjectivities could be understood, then wouldn’t objectivities emerge more clearly? The answer, as I have come to understand during my time here, is much more subtle in texture.6 I am naming it the collapse, because it has to do with transcending artificial categories of thought. The collapse is occurring both materially, through the act of collapse weaving, and conceptually, down to questions relating to the ontology-epistemology duality. I often think of this collapse in terms of a work by Lygia Clark entitled “the inside is the outside”. It is against the backdrop of this title that I am structuring my thesis.

The reason I applied to Konstfack is two-fold. The first is of a material order: the institution had recently acquired a digital jacquard handloom called the thread controller 2 (TC2), which I needed to fine-tune a weaving technique I had been experimenting with, and the second, of a conceptual order: my personal development has lead me to feel the need to gain a deeper understanding for the contrast between conceptual and ontological grounds.

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1 Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution (Mineola, N.Y. :: Dover, 1998).
3 Bergson, Creative Evolution.
5 Graham Harman, Object-Oriented Ontology: A New Theory of Everything, Pelican Book ;
6 Karen Michelle Barad, Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.
under which I and individuals from the Swedish society operate, with the intention of finding a common ground.

**Main questions**

I started this master’s program with the question: *What are the possibilities of collapse weaving in generating organic self-structuring on cloth?* The technique involves using yarns in the weaving process that are overspun or twisted to an extent that they are unbalanced and behave something like an elastic. The cloth in the loom appears to be flat, but when the textile is washed, it spontaneously shrinks into a pleating pattern. This pleating pattern, when woven in plain weave, displays a characteristic random pattern (Picture 1).

![Picture 1](Image)

**Picture 1.** A textile displaying a characteristic random pleating pattern, plain weave with an overspun weft. Silk and linen. Woven by the author in a handloom at Handarbetets Vänner, 2016.

This journey began with the discovery that these random patterns can be given some order through manipulation of weave structure (Pictures 2-5). *What are the possibilities and limitations of this method in generating ordered pleating patterns on cloth?* Ultimately, the question posed is an existential question relating to the possibility for the thread to find its place in the larger scheme. *Could the thread irrespective of its idiosyncrasies interact with other threads and weave structures to form a more organic macro-pattern? Can the fabric be more balanced, and the elements structuring the pleating, more subtle?* The other important dimension of the project involved deepening my knowledge of color theory in order to achieve a more deliberate language; particularly relating to transposing an illumination effect onto a surface.
Picture 5. Partial control. A textile displaying a partially stirred pleating pattern in double weave. Wool and silk. Woven by the author in a damast handloom at Handarbetets Vänner, 2019
**Scope and limits**

The goal of this project was to fine-tune a haptically charged weaving aesthetic which could adequately support subjectivities of an existential nature relating to love and faith. The weaving technique is restricted to collapse weaving of double-woven cloth, and the colors used, restricted to either the initial color of the wool, or to the natural dyes indigo, madder, and woad. The woven textiles represent a hybrid between what a tapestry and a painting have historically represented, and the expression is intentionally vaguely reminiscent of Swedish folk textiles.

**Overview**

This paper seeks to contextualize the subjectivities of the author relative to the larger cultural-political context, the outside, and to the individual, the inside. The pictures of the weaves are illustrating the trajectory and are conceptually linking the two together to form a complete picture.

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THEORY AND CONTEXT

Background to the collapse

Although the collapse weave question is of a material order, what I originally termed a space-time enquiry, it has become increasingly apparent that the question itself is symptomatic of my situatedness, namely that of the north American crafter and scientist. It has therefore morphed from a material to a conceptual issue with a cultural-political dimension. From hither on, the word “I” represents not only myself, but the person with a muddled cultural-political background, existing in an awkward inter-cultural limbo, represented by the word “mellanförskap” in Swedish. It is easy to look to the outside and critically evaluate “the other”. Conversely, it is much more difficult to turn about, to look at oneself and examine the underlying assumptions used as a point of relation for this criticism. I feel it important to highlight that my intention is to reach a more subtle understanding based on finding a common ground, a finer texture in the fabric. Being at Konstfack has made me realize that the organization of my thinking was strongly underpinned by assumptions linked to the illumination ideals and its associated Newtonian framework, especially as it relates to the view that reality exists independently of an objective observer. Stating that my inquiry is one of space-time puts it into plain sight, because it implies myself existing in a vacuum, on the one hand, and space-time unfolding in front of this vacuum. A foray into the literature led me from Harman’s object oriented ontology, to Barad’s meeting the universe halfway. This then led into more in-depth reading about quantum physics and the different conceptual models arising from the findings in the field, most notably the philosophical writings of Bohr, a scientist who shaped the field at the turn of the 19th century, Bohm, especially his conversations with religious philosopher Krishnamurti in the 1970s and the 1980s, and Stapp, who is today working on the unification of the latest theories relating to consciousness with quantum physics. Reading some Bergson has helped putting the scientific angle into perspective from a philosophical standpoint. These readings, combined with practical experience, led to the understanding that one is not observing space-time unfolding, rather, one is dynamically participating in the unfolding of space-time. Further, the time dimension could be eliminated, because it is a conceptual model embedded in language that does not exist as a phenomenon. We only know that things around us seem to change, but we also know that even this is an after-construction of the mind, the collapse of a theoretical infinity of potentialities into one coherent whole for ease of interpretation.

In the midst of this massive deconstruction of the very fabric of reality, what is craft, and why am I weaving? Developments in thought relative to these questions are going to be narrated with the visual aid of textiles woven during the last wave spent on the digital loom at

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8 M.F. Douglas and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, The Craftsman as Yeoman: Myth and Cultural Identity in American Craft (Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, 1995).
10 Barad, Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.
11 Niels Bohr, The Philosophical Writings of Niels Bohr (Ox Bow Press, 1987).
12 David Bohm, "The Limits of Thought: Discussions between J. Krishnamurti and David Bohm."
14 Bergson, Creative Evolution; Henri Bergson, Keith Ansell-Pearson, and Melissa McMahon, Key Writings, Bloomsbury Revelations.
16 Barad, Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.
konstfack in the winter of 2021. The warp is in different shades of madder and indigo, and that color scheme, fire and ice, passion and rationality, are the backdrop against which this whole story takes place.

The outside
Throughout these two last years, I have been trying to tease out the factors which have resulted in that I have felt the need to come to Konstfack and lay siege to the noisiest, most expensive piece of equipment in the textile department for several months a year. It was because of an unspeakable injustice, I felt. Injustice results in an unbalanced cloth, which represents “a failure in the weave of the state”. Seen on another dimension, but intimately related, the warp and weft interlocking can also be a metaphor for the “pairing of the feminine and masculine”, which is “ontological, as their intercourse suggests the birth of new life”. What happens when the pairing results in an unbalanced weave? Following is a weave entitled in ashes.


Weaving
The approach taken when I design weave structures is not systematic, rather, it is highly subjective. If someone else were to go on this journey with the same question at the outset,

17 Danto, Arthur C. weaving as a metaphor and model for political thought in Jessica Hemmings, *The Textile Reader*.
the outcome would certainly be radically different. On the other hand, the veracity of the result could not be contested, because it is embodied materially, and could be experienced perceptually by others. Therefore, the woven cloth could be said to be subjectivities made objective.

Weaving could be said to be one of the oldest art forms, and it is present probably in most of the world’s cultures. Today, it is often written that this is a craft associated with women, but this is certainly not true of all periods and all cultures. Ghandi, for example, relatively recently revived the weaving traditions in India as a tool for empowerment amongst both men and women. My thinking about weaving follows the Bauhaus weaver Anni Alber’s, namely, that weaving is a universal form of art, and, for me, it therefore represents an opportunity for inter-cultural communication which cuts across cultural and language barriers. “The thing is an entity separate from language”. Its expression could be culturally determined, but that only allows for a richer exchange regarding discussions about values, because the result is symptomatic of the decision process, which, in turn, is the result of thought patterns, which are highly influenced by culture.

**Craft and its connected terminology**

My view regarding handicraft used to be that it was a tool for empowering the individual in the face of global neoliberal capitalism. Influenced by Ghandi’s autobiographical writings regarding his revival of the textile industry in India, I was poised to re-discover possibilities for weaving within the framework of pre-existing local materials. After all, the world as we perceive it is a limited version of what is. The space in between the thing-in-itself, and the thing as it is perceived, is ripe with potentiality, and finding new uses for local materials addresses many issues at once, from both an environmental and a sustainability perspective. However, “handicraft and hand-made are historical or social terms, not technical ones”.

Much of what is called handicraft today is produced by tools and machine. For this reason, I prefer not to use this confusing term relative to my work. Boudrillard further argues that the “artisan as ‘master of his labour and of his production’ “ is an illusion fraught with nostalgia and that labour outside of capitalism is in-existent, as the capitalistic system itself is what constitutes the term labor. The artisan, according to him, is “the slave who has become his own master”. Having attempted to live off the fruits of handcrafted labor for several years, and having come to the point of making those back-of-the-envelope calculations about what revenues were necessary to cover the costs of living in society, it unfortunately emerges that these points ring true. Clients that could sustainably afford such work, in the instance they are willing to pay for it, are either rich, or the government, rich with collective funding. It has been discussed that the artisan, in fact, could be seen as nothing more than a form of small bourgeois (the most despicable type) discussed in the communist manifesto. These realizations have led to the release of the idea of producing textiles for a living. Following is a weave entitled: implosion.

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27 Marx, C., Engels, The communist manifesto.
This became something of a liberation, as I now saw my situation at Konstfack as a performative opportunity for communicating subjectivities, whereby the textiles is a currency to cluster around and discuss. Indeed, the etymology of the word “thing” is “to gather around”, and so I am extruding a thing from the loom, and through sharing this segment of human experience, I intend to communicate with others.\(^{28}\) It is interesting to regard the role of emerging technology in creating the conditions of possibility for generating things which might cause others to gather around.

**Technology and post-colonialism**

Counter to traditional forms of weaving, my current practice is reliant on the TC2 loom, and therefore entirely dependent on the institution. I see the computer and the loom as tools to extend the possibility space of weaving. Up until now, the loom for the handweaver was an apparatus which could be afforded by all households. In contrast, the TC2 loom is a prohibitively expensive piece of technology that is not accessible to the average household. In a performative sense,\(^{29}\) the use of the TC2 loom is a conscious acknowledgement of this dependence on the system. But this acknowledgement, in turn, requires an examination of its true cost. The shapers of the civilization which has made the materialization of this apparatus possible has and continues to commit atrocities at its extremities. As such, the term “post-colonial” could easily be brought into question regarding whether it indeed holds any meaning. We are entering a period of broader awareness but does that mean that we are in a

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\(^{29}\) Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 
post-phase? The fact is, we are all benefitting, whether we want to consciously acknowledge it or not, of the fruits of these atrocities. A quick look at the objects which surround you are irrefutable proof of this. This is the reason for which the cloth that I am weaving is not my cloth, but it is a cloth which belongs to the collective, as it is collectively funded. The cloth is a cloth of love. It is love for someone, everyone, and no one all at once. It is not woven for my personal pleasure, rather, it is an offering back to the collective. Most of us are born within this framework. We are not directly guilty of the deeds lifted within the postcolonial literature. Moreover, this phenomenon is not unique to western civilization; it is perhaps a biproduct of civilization itself. The following weave is entitled red comet.

![Picture 8. Red comet. A textile displaying a partially stirred pleating pattern in double weave. Wool and silk. Woven by the author in the TC2 loom at Konstfack, 2021](image)

Since power structures are dynamic and we all embody components of both the oppressed and the oppressor in our different interactions within our common realm of existence, the only possible course of action is to be aware of when power asymmetries occur, and to do our best to be fair. However, what set of criteria determine when to give, and when to take? The past two years have changed my view, in the sense that I used to think that values are fixities and action is to be in line with them. In other words, a weave would be planned rationally beforehand, and then it would be woven, in contrast to being open to developing new possibilities dynamically. I now feel that it is good to have a general framework in mind, with the idea that each situation has its own particularities that need to be addressed separately. You enter an interaction with a general idea in mind, but it is perhaps important not to allow the idea to be fixed, and to be aware of alternatives as they arise during the exchange. Indeed, our minds work as such: we project an expectation of what the world is like based on our past experience, and suppress the perception of deviations from this expectation only.

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when the deviation becomes strong enough. It becomes especially important to be aware of this in situations where interactions with people from other cultures are becoming more common. A signal that means something in one culture often means something else entirely in another. The way in which this has impacted my last weaving session is that I planned one weave at a time. The result of the first determined the course of action in drawing the draft for the next. Each piece was drafted and woven in one day, and the weft colors were chosen according to the mood of the day.

This shift in perspective has also resulted in that the woven cloth has a less regular pleating patterns, and that the structure of the cloth is finer and more balanced. It also used to be decadently soft to the touch and quite loose, but now it is firmer, rougher, and tighter. The warp and the weft yarns are of a similar size. It is not unpleasant to the touch, but it is not either over-indulging the senses, and it is more durable. The cloth is the same on both sides. It is not hiding a different face towards the wall.

Post-colonialism and the infamous åsiktskorridor

After living in Sweden for several years, I became aware that my daily interactions with members of this society often turned into receiving generic mantras about how one needed to think, act and speak. These speeches are highly tinged of the socialistic and often center around the concept of selflessness. The Swedish word for this is “åsiktskorridor”. What was interesting about these mantras was that the loudest speakers most often did not practice as

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they preached when a financial opportunity came into the picture. In other words, there was a rather large cleft between ontology and epistemology, between action and speech, which was making navigating the landscape difficult. In addition, a rhetorical breakdown of the assumptions behind these mantras often led to suspicious glares, to pointed question about political allegiances as well as social castigation. Coming into financial opportunities locally is often bound up with social acceptance, and it was proving difficult to pierce into this environment because of its hidden codes and its requirement for uniformity. It has often felt that a successful integration into this reality is impossible. As a foreigner, this experience was heavily emotionally taxing and had ramifications that reached deep into the family dynamic (see picture 6 and 7). For this reason, I began the practice of hanging the cloth at a slight distance from the wall. Having come as far as speaking the local language and having taken an education at Handarbetet’s vänner, with no future prospects in sight, I applied to Konstfack. I thought I might gain a deeper understanding for what is occurring if I could discuss with shapers of the culture.

**Language and power structures**

Perhaps the difficulty lay in that I did not thoroughly understand the inner workings of this society. After all, within language are embedded “non-described parts of intended ideas” 32. What is implicit in a formulation of words for a native speaker is often misunderstood by someone who is speaking the language from translated words. Indeed, Walter Benjamin discusses the issue of translation in a similar manner in “The task of the translator” and invokes the notion of the poet being necessary to translate ideas from one language to another. Given that I have three children growing up in this society, I felt it worthy of my time to take a closer look and attempt to weave a more subtle and balanced cloth. How can I advise them in beneficial ways if I can’t navigate the waters myself? I have come to understand that much of the feeling of exclusion perhaps stems from misunderstanding, and yet the conjunction of all the factors still result in that there is something which is keeping me feeling like an outsider. I am perhaps not always the only one that needs to do more listening. Following is a work entitled: it’s not that black and white.

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32 Baert, Time in Contemporary Intellectual Thought.
Conversely, using language as a sanitizing gloss to conceal power structures is a known device in politics.\textsuperscript{33} The extent to which this artifice permeates Swedish society at large could be questioned. In the art of craftsmanship, Pye brings up a rather appropriate quote by Confucius that we perhaps could all learn from with regards to this issue:

“If language is incorrect, then what is said does not concord with what was meant; and if what is said does not concord with what was meant, what is to be done cannot be effected…”\textsuperscript{34}

There is an additional complication layer which seems to be that discretion is seen as a form of respect, and messages are often communicated in highly indirect manners in order to avoid offending the receiver. The issue for a foreigner in relation to this, is that it takes years to begin to understand this system of indirect communication, which is strongly culturally determined. Sometimes, in the interest of avoiding confusion and saving time, it is simpler to communicate in a direct manner.


\textsuperscript{34} Pye, The Nature and Art of Workmanship.
The inside

*Inter-weaving matter and meaning*

For which reason is it interesting to pursue a weaving method which brings some order into an otherwise chaotic form of expression? I do not have a cultural identity to call my own. I am a child of globalization, the internet and cheap flights. Indeed, some argue that the internet has ushered the era of the global citizen. For better or for worse, the merging of peoples from different realities is ushering the destabilization of previously perceived fixities. This could be visualized, in weaving language, as the random pleating pattern. However, we can perhaps begin to see how we can grapple with this new situation to think in terms of “connection not through identity but despite difference”35. Indeed, this becomes possible when we realize that “the connection through a local identity is as imaginary as the connection through humanity.”36 Relative to these ideas, patterns begin to emerge amongst the apparent chaos.

What I am doing is related to trying to exist in the present37. I have begun to understand all my daily meetings as significant in shaping my reality, and I try to be attentive to what is being communicated. There will often be some friction, which happens to come my way

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36 Ibid.
37 Rose, Reports from a Wild Country : Ethics for Decolonisation.
because some sort of compromise must be made, and I try to see how I could resolve the conflict with most parties feeling satisfied. If one employs the model that one’s existence is entangled and inter-dependent with all those who surround them, then it is only natural to try to satisfy the needs not only of yourself, but of those who surround you as well, if such is within your reach. However, where does this stop? Is my body a threshold beyond which these laws do not apply? Marx positions the breakdown of the family structure as a felicitous event, which is going to liberate wombs for every man. What I wonder is, has this liberation of wombs resulted in progeny for everyone, and is the womb here referred to as a production unit (see picture 10)? The following textile is entitled grey monad.

![Grey monad](image12.jpg)


The feminist literature today often speaks of keeping things permanently suspended, in a state of indeterminacy. Do people deal well with constant indeterminacy or are there at least some periods in our lives where we need stability? The specific example I am thinking about is in the event of the generation of a child. Because of the time separation between copulation and birth of the child, the implication is that many mothers end up raising children alone if everything is “kept in suspension” all the time. Whereas this could be the strategy of choice for some, it certainly is not for all. Could this indeterminacy principle be a fallacious transposition of the logics of quantum physics? If one is to hold to quantum physics, more recent theories speak of two general states that actuality could find itself in. The first is a

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38 Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 
stable, more common state which follows classical mechanical rules, and the second is the collapse or reduction state, where discreet, indeterminate jumps happen.\textsuperscript{39} All this to say that logic by transposition may be useful for seeing things in a new light, but it could also lead into error\textsuperscript{40}. Anything could be constructed or deconstructed with logic. For this reason, some argue that logic should withstand the test of reality in an iterative process.\textsuperscript{41} In addition, the test of time is why connection to previous generations is beneficial to keep into close contact with.\textsuperscript{42} Let us look at the question in terms of the performativity of the western developments in tapestry, and how this could be contextualized relative to the emancipation of woman from the shackles of the family structure.

### The tapestry as a feminist narrative

The Lausanne tapestry biennials held place between 1962-1995, and represented a major forum for the incubation of ideas related to possible future directions of weaving as an art form. In the 1970s, within this context, an interview with the then prominent textile artist Jagoda Buic reveals that the issues of the day discussed related to the textile had to do with that the textile was subservient to paintings. She argued that the textile should liberate itself from the painting, and conceptualized “that form must spontaneously gush forth from the hands of the artist, the materials, and the internal structure of the weaving”\textsuperscript{43}. Whereas the release from the painter could be traced back to Gunta Stölzl from the Bauhaus movement in the 1920s,\textsuperscript{44} the 1970s were the formative years where the tapestry format was completely deconstructed by weavers around the world. The shapers of this movement were, amongst others, Jagoda Buic, Magdalena Abakanowicz and Elsi Giauque (picture 5,6,7).\textsuperscript{45} This represented a departure point from Stölzl’s words in the functionalist vein that “a woven piece is always a serviceable object, which is equally determined by its function as well as its means of production.\textsuperscript{46} It is interesting to unpick what it means to be a serviceable object. Is it serviceable if it makes you think?

\textsuperscript{39} Stapp, \textit{Mind, Matter, and Quantum Mechanics}.  
\textsuperscript{40} Nassim Nicholas Taleb, \textit{The Black Swan : The Impact of the Highly Improbable}.  
\textsuperscript{41} Epperson, “Relational Realism: The Evolution of Ontology to Praxiology in the Philosophy of Nature.”  
\textsuperscript{42} Taleb, \textit{The Black Swan : The Impact of the Highly Improbable}.  
\textsuperscript{43} André Kuenzi, \textit{La Nouvelle Tapisserie} (Genève :: Bonvent, 1973).  
\textsuperscript{44} T’ai Smith, \textit{Bauhaus Weaving Theory : From Feminine Craft to Mode of Design} (Minneapolis :: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).  
\textsuperscript{45} Kuenzi, \textit{La Nouvelle Tapisserie}.  
\textsuperscript{46} P XVI. Smith, \textit{Bauhaus Weaving Theory : From Feminine Craft to Mode of Design}. 
Picture 13. Jagoda Buic, title unknown

Picture 15. Elsi Giauque, spatial element.
**Undressing the deconstruction of the tapestry**

Of interest is to consider the developments of the tapestry format during these years in the performative sense. Can the emancipation of the tapestry weaver, often female, from the painter, often male, be symptomatic of the context that the western woman was experiencing at the time? Does the deconstruction of the tapestry to the extent that it becomes a three-dimensional thread sculpture be seen as a yearning for this emancipation from the constraints of the body and the family to be complete? Following is a gold-grey monad.

![Picture 16. Gold-grey monad, closeup. A textile displaying a partially stirred pleating pattern in double weave. Wool and silk. Woven by the author in the TC2 loom at Konstfack, 2021](image)

Or can it be conceptualized more politically, as the elevation of the worker-craftsperson to the same level as the artist-intellectual? Indeed, this idea resonates with postcolonial concepts relating to the colonial logic that the worker must be subservient to the intellectual, usually represented by someone in the western world. From this perspective, that the tapestry would completely become deconstructed by the craftsperson would implicate a rejection of this dichotomizing principle.

However, the produced works were rarely received into the fine arts realm with open arms, being deemed engaging rather than demanding, as put by Louise Bourgeois in a review produced for the important 1969 Wall Hangings exhibition at the MOMA. What exactly does it mean for a work to be demanding, and for what reason does Bourgeois not think these fulfill the criterion? According to an article by Joan Key, a work “displayed in the gallery creates comparisons: a thing made to satisfy “specific demand” is being brought into relation with painting or sculpture, intended for the uncertain concerns of looking and its contingent

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48 Fiber art and the hierarchy of art and craft by Elissa Aurhter, in Hemmings, *The Textile Reader.*
activities. To make the convention explicit according to which works of art are shown in order to be judged as such. For this reason, I have decided to contextualize my work relative to the idea of the Swedish folk textile, most often woven by women in the household. In the countryside, for courting rituals, women used to weave their finest cloth. The potential husband it was given to could then evaluate how good the woman would be in the household based on the qualities in the weave. The textiles here presented belong to this category, but they are perhaps not the courting textiles themselves, more like a memory of them. The loom they are woven in is completely reliant on the institution, and they are to be shown to the collectivity. In a way, instead of wooing a person, the textiles, as a means of intercultural communication, is wooing the people. A successful integration into society, more specifically a sustainable entry into the emotional economy and its resulting economic opportunities, is the result of a successful courting ritual.

Re-constructing the tapestry

My work generally rests within the confines of the conventional tapestry format. Perhaps it seeks to understand how new configurations could be conceptualized within the constraints of the traditional framework. In this instance, then, the emancipatory potential of the weave structures are considered within the constraints of the sexed body and the family (picture 8, 9). An important source of inspiration is the Swedish weaver Eva ek Schaeffer. She “was one of them (women weavers of the 1960s) that chose family, having children, man, woman and child, love, motherhood and fatherhood as themes for her work”(picture 10).

Picture 17. Eva Ek Schaeffer, flykten.

49 Key, Joan. Readymade or Handmade, in Harrod, Craft.
50 Ibid.
51 Eva Ek-Schaeffer and Stockholm Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, Livstrådar Knyts : Bildvävar, Katalog / Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde ; (Stockholm :: Prins Eugens Waldemarsudde, 2001).
Her work, in turn, is probably the closest to Hannah Ryggen’s legacy, which more often explored political themes, but did occasionally touch on the family and love.

![Picture 18. Hannah Ryggen, Vi lever på en sterjne](image)

The key word, here, is to have the possibility to choose without social castigation. In the feminist literature, Federici denounces other women of “seeking the good life” for trying to provide the best living conditions possible for her children, and not struggling for the “greater good”. This same author admits to being thankful for that her own mother was present in the household when she was young, and that it was instrumental in “develop(ing) in us a sense of our own value” that “give me strength to face difficult situations”.

While I do not wish to devalue Federici’s contribution to the greater good, I question whether total freedom from family structure truly represents an emancipation, or whether in effect it simply serves to further enrich corporations through increased labor and consumer power. Indeed, in the wake of the era of neoliberal capitalism, are we not witnessing an increased de-regulation of the working market which is making the stability, wealth and time necessary for raising a family more difficult to access?

Could this be dissuading female sexed individuals from reproducing, and are these demands placed on our time not in effect representing tighter enslavement? Whereas one can experience greater immediate freedom of choice in their own life by opting out of family, at what cost are we emancipating ourselves from the constraints of our bodies? But wherein lies the most pressing problem? Judith Butler has done a great job at discursively deconstructing gender, which has only further convinced me of this: we are all people. As a person which, living in this time, has reasonable access to power in the form of education and money, so that I no longer need to be materially dependent on my mating counterpart if I do not chose so, I also have a tendency to require that whatever I am expected

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52 Silvia Federici, *Re-Enchanting the World: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons*.
55 Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 

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to provide, I receive in some equivalent form in return. Are these conditions typically fulfilled in today’s deregulated context? Following is a black and white monad.


**The haptic**

I mean for my work to produce a visually nuanced experience. Color has its own inherent effect, but the combination of color with a richly textured surface is creating the possibility of a much richer variety of tones, as the direction, wavelength combination and intensity of lighting is going to afford a wealth of possible variations, both deliberate and unexpected. One artist that explored the textural possibilities of painting is Jay de Feo. In her most known work, the rose, she pasted layer upon layer of paint over a period of several years to obtain the desired texture. During the process, she began by calling the work the white rose, followed by the black rose, and finally, the rose.

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56 Jay DeFeo et al., *Jay DeFeo: A Retrospective*. 
Given the evolution of the title and the appearance of the work itself, I argue that my work is exploring similar themes. The black and white monad was intended to be woven entirely in black, however, I felt compelled to switch to a luminous-white yarn when I wove the second half. I was not able to let the whole work sink into darkness, as this felt like death. One main difference between her work and mine, is that I want the image not to be pasted onto a canvas, but to be integral to the weave of the fabric.

Picture 20. Jay DeFeo, The Rose
I could not help but draw parallels to philosophical and religious narratives which mention the relationship of light to darkness. For example, yin and yang, heaven and hell, life and death. What I question is if darkness as a counterpart to light is inherent to the very fabric of our existence. Current research in quantum physics are discovering that there is no such thing as absolute emptiness. Instead, a void can be seen as an endless supply of potentialities. In a corresponding argument, Krishnamurti and Bohm discuss the concept that where there is light, there inherently is no darkness. Where is the darkness, they ask, when the light is on?

Barad argues for collapsing ontology and epistemology into one, a proposition which many philosophers believe is inherently impossible. It is argued that the logical and causal orders are incompatible because the logical order is by nature a simplification of the causal order. It is instead proposed that current models be used, but with the understanding that new ones will always arise. Given that reality as we understand it is constituted in the mind, more recent theories are proposing that this unification is now taking place within the sciences, at the interface of neuroscience and quantum physics. I wonder if it depends on

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57 Barad, Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.
58 Ibid.
59 Epperson, “Relational Realism: The Evolution of Ontology to Praxiology in the Philosophy of Nature.”
60 Harman, Object-Oriented Ontology : A New Theory of Everything.
61 Epperson, “Relational Realism: The Evolution of Ontology to Praxiology in the Philosophy of Nature.”
62 Stapp, Mind, Matter, and Quantum Mechanics.
what you are considering when you speak of light and darkness. Can there arise situations where subjectivities do not follow the locality assumption? And further, in this hypothetical situation of shared subjectivities, that there is nothing kept in the darkness? What if the only darkness lies in that the subjectivities are not objective?

CONCLUSION

This master’s project, from a dualistic perspective, had a two-fold goal, although if one accepts that matter and meaning are entangled, there is no actual separation between the two. The first was access to technology; I had previously been experimenting with weave structures that enabled a partially stirred wave pattern to arise on the surface of the textile. The TC2 digital jacquard loom at Konstfack was necessary to be able to quickly experiment with weave structures and achieve a more subtle and detail-rich weaving language for expressing subjectivities. The second had to do with exposing myself to peers for personal growth and to learn more about the Swedish conception of craft.

I began by generally describing the trajectory of this subjective body through the Swedish cultural landscape, which I called the outside. I then proceeded to describe the inside developments, staged through the narrative of the developments in the western tapestry format from a feminist, post-colonial perspective. The whole was unified through pictures from the last weaving session on the TC2 loom from January 2021.

It is quite impossible to describe the impact that meeting all these wonderful open-minded people has had on my life. Whereas I was previously walking mostly alone, I now feel deeply connected to the life force in ways I was only capable of occasionally catching a glimpse of when I started. I went around questioning and testing my surroundings like a belligerent child, and I was mostly met with patience and understanding. I have even seen that my concerns were often met if they touched on a weak point. I realized that much of how one is received has to do with the way in which the surroundings is addressed. Meeting the world on the defensive begets the same response back. In this sense, we do condition our own reality. So relating to my initial question as to whether the thread could, despite its idiosyncracies, find its place in the larger scheme of things, I believe that the answer is yes. I don’t see how much more could be expect from others, and this has all greatly strengthened my faith in the worlds to come, despite the enormous challenges we are bracing ourselves to face collectively.

With regards to weaving, my intention was originally a weave structure mining project. However, it became more of a fine-tuning from a Swedish values standpoint. In other words, I have spent my time learning about what weaving, or handicraft is, from a Swedish values perspective through discursive exchanges, and this has changed not the fundamentals of the original concept so much as the details of the expression. What was previously very soft to the touch, now replaced by Scandinavian wool, was more rough and sturdy. Where the weave structure underpinning the pleating effect was once quite obvious, it is now much more subtle. Access to the digital loom enabled a more dynamic and immediate patterning possibilities. The warp and the weft have become more balanced relative to one another and are almost the same size. The weft material also makes a much broader range of textures possible.

The question is what all these changes imply at an ontological level for this individual. If the inside is the outside, and the inside has underwent profound changes, then what happens
to the outside? What is the difference between what you want, and what you need? Should they be the same, and where do you draw the line? In my final weaving session, I worked with different light distribution schemes. Each work was designed digitally and woven in one day, and the weft colors were chosen intuitively.

I lay out this question in terms of light distribution schemes on collapse woven textiles in the exam exhibition in the hopes that they will be a reason to gather and discuss.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The two people who were the most elemental in shaping my current worldview is Bella Rune and Simon Westling. In addition, the metal part (connecting the wood to the wall) of my wall mounts were the result of a collaboration with Simon – thank you for putting some of yourself into my work. It has really been a rich learning experience for me. Technical assistance for the wooden parts of the mounts were provided by Jan Andersson and Daniel Franzén, and Elisabeth Isaksson from Handarbetets vänner generously donated some of her time and experience discussing possibilities for the wooden wall mount construction conceptually. Last, I thank Åsa Pärson, mostly for your refreshing honesty.

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Picture 2. By Lea Constan
Picture 3. By Lea Constan
Picture 4. By Lea Constan
Picture 5. By Lea Constan
Picture 6. By Lea Constan
Picture 7. By Lea Constan
Picture 8. By Lea Constan
Picture 9. By Lea Constan
Picture 10. By Lea Constan
Picture 11. By Lea Constan
Picture 12. By Lea Constan
Picture 13. [https://alchetron.com/Jagoda-Bui%C4%87#jagoda-bui-677e5a0f-a74a-4c12-9fb0-52e3ce4ec5-resize-750.jpeg](https://alchetron.com/Jagoda-Bui%C4%87#jagoda-bui-677e5a0f-a74a-4c12-9fb0-52e3ce4ec5-resize-750.jpeg)
Picture 15. [http://handeyemagazine.com/content/fiber-sculpture-1960-present](http://handeyemagazine.com/content/fiber-sculpture-1960-present)
Picture 16. By Lea Constan
Picture 19. By Lea Constan

Picture 21. By Lea Constan
APPENDIX 1. Final comments following the exam and spring exhibitions.

The feedback I received from the exam exhibition from some of the professors is that mounting all the exposed textiles in the same manner on a visible wooden stick could be improved upon for several reasons.

Picture 1. Exposition format of the monads for the exam exhibition
The first was that although the sticks were thin, they took much space emotionally. In other words, when one thought about the textiles, the wooden sticks were a large part of understanding the works in the exhibition. Second, that all the textiles were mounted in the same manner, which made the presentation somewhat monotonous. Third, given that the wood chosen was assorted to the textiles, it gave a design feel to the expression. I also received the feedback that the fact that the textiles were showed fully was leaving nothing to the imagination, or that there was no possibility for the viewer to develop further than what was presented. In other words, the work and its presentation conveyed a closed mindset and a static impression.

Previous to the exam exhibition, I had experimented with draping the textiles into sculptural forms. My rationale for exposing the textiles in a straightforward manner for the exam exhibition was that the textiles were themselves patterned, in the way that a painted canvas has an image on it, and I was not sure that folding the textiles would add anything meaningful to the expression. In addition, although each textile had the same amount of weft threads, the crimping pattern made it such that they had shapes which slightly differed from each other. Using picture 1. As a reference, the first weave to the left is the only one of the three with an asymmetrical pattern, and its general shape to me was indicative of a general leaning tendency towards the middle textile, as though curious to see what it was all about. The central and right-sided textiles were balanced in their demeanor towards the exterior. The central textile, with its waves, was giving me the impression of waves radiating inwards, as though it was listening to what the two textiles to the side were saying. Its color was also more muted than the others, and not conveying an impression of luminosity, emphasizing that it is absorbing rather than emitting. The third textile with the black and white sides was more like a glowing fire. It was perhaps not emitting so much energy, but it was luminous. It has two layers, one which is symmetrical from the center, from red to white, and the other, which is opposites, white and black.
My examination discussion was with the artist Jens Fänge and my classmate Hannah Blitz Heyman. The discussion was pleasant, and the memory I retain from it is that when we discussed the exhibition text, Fänge mentioned that a question I posed was a closed question, in the sense that the answer was implicit in the question. My work was positioned to the far left of the room, and I had asked that if matter and meaning were indeed different aspects of the same thing, then what support is there for love in the absence of material co-dependence? The basis of my question draws its roots from the socialistic era of Sweden, where it was decreed that no one should have to rely materially on anyone else. I did not perceive my question to be closed, rather, I was curious to hear it answered by different people. In addition, when coming from the outside, there are often subtelties in social dynamics which are poorly understood by newcomers. I was hoping that someone would approach me, and provide me with new ways of seeing the matter. Maybe there is support for love, rather, I do not understand it given my situatedness. I do not see questioning something and formulating a judgement as being the same thing. Sometimes, I just want to hear another perspective in order to broaden my horizons. It is the only way that we can learn from each other.

As a result of the criticism received during the exam exhibition, I decided to approach the spring exhibition with the attitude that I would experiment with the presentation, but that if it did not feel right, I would hang the textiles as they were during the exam exhibition. My work was planned to hang to the right side of the white sea, in between the work of Hannah Blitz-Hejman and Åsa Johansson. Two days before the exhibition, the curator Anne Klontz approached me, and she told me that she thought that the exhibition on the whole would work better if I moved it to the left side of the room. Although this created some momentary insecurity, the result definitely made me see that the decision was motivated. In addition to placing my work in a space which was more open, providing more breathing room to the weaves, it gave me the possibility to show all five works at once. I was, however, forced to rely very little on planning and didn’t think very much during the process, which was exciting for me, as it was something I have been tending towards anyways. The following series of pictures is in the order in which the textiles were viewed in the exhibition.
In the spring exhibition, the first and the last textiles were added to the three others, which were shown in the same order as the exam exhibition. The first contains the image of a burning flame, which, for me, is a symbol of life and goodwill. The second textile, which was the first in the exam exhibition, was not removed from its full wooden support, and instead was presented in a hanging configuration on three wooden poles extruding from the wall. There was no visible metal involved, and the textiles was precariously knotted onto these poles, as though hugging them at these attachment points, or hanging on. I wondered in the thesis if there is such a thing as no darkness, as this textile indicates. That the textile is curled up onto itself indicates a regression. At the moment, I see this as an impossible dream, although it could be that the path there is slippery, and I have myself not reached the destination. It does not, however, mean that it does not exist. The third middle textile was exhibited exactly as in the exam exhibition, but it was not lit, to emphasize the impression that it is sitting there, absorbing from its surroundings. If the textiles were to be a linear series, then something happened at this stage which removed the light from the weave. The fourth textile, this time, was exhibited on its original support, but it had loosened, and had a gaping hole in the middle. It was coming apart, and yet each side was still firmly holding onto the other in this new, much looser configuration. As a time series, following the light-removing event of the third textile, there is a polarization of the light to one side and a corresponding removal of light from the other. The fifth and last was a dull ash grey color, and exposed in a way which made it look like something reminiscent of a shirt with American flag colors. The textile is attached precariously directly to a metal rod which is tensioned and distorted. That the supports to the wall are made of wood, and the part holding the textile made of metal, is indicative that the institution has infiltrated the household. The two halves of the whole are held together loosely by two thin threads, and the colors of the two halves are no longer facing each other.
The most valuable discussion I had about the work was in an Instagram artist talk with Rasmus Nossbring (archived on the Konstfack Instagram IGTV), a classmate glassblower. I always appreciated his open-mindedness, and to have a dialogue with him about the work really gave me some valuable new insights. The most interesting aspect of the discussion for me was that he gravitated towards the textiles that were folded. I do not know if it was because he knew it to be a development from the exam exhibition, or if the folding itself was a point of interest. Whereas in the exam exhibition, the comment I often received about the second textile was that it was radiant, in its folded into itself form without the continuous top mounting stick, it roused suspicion. I began to wonder if this wasn’t because the parts of the fringe which gave the eye the impression that the textile contained the full color spectrum (purples and blues) were concealed into the folds. This is what I always find fascinating: the work is not finished when I stop working on it. It continues to reveal layers of meaning, both through my own and other people’s eyes. My perspective is that it is subjectivity formed into an object. When it is objective, an entity separate from myself, it could be evaluated based on how it manifests in the material world. Whether the character of the thing expressed is entirely individual or represents something of a more general status must be evaluated by the outside world. I do not consider it my role to decide that, and I could not know whether it will engender a reaction in another which will bring them to reconsider their position regarding some aspect of their reality.

I also enjoyed the performativity of the discussion, because I think my personal position qualifies me to express subjectivities relating to the female experience, especially regarding motherhood, and the Swedish immigrant. My work is therefore best directed to the Swedish patriarchy. Although my position is definitely not as strong as some of today’s feminist work, in the sense that I am not seeking to overthrow the patriarchal authority, I am demanding to be treated with respect and dignity. This may seem simple, but perhaps the most simple of demands are the most difficult to successfully carry out in practice. If we eliminate the gender question and level the playing field by calling everyone people instead, what I mean more specifically is, when I, a student, enter a learning environment, do I receive knowledge and opportunities on the same basis as (1) a local and/or (2) a person of the opposite sex? Am I treated with equality and fairness? Whereas I expressed mostly positive impressions in my conclusion from several months ago, I cannot say that I am feeling as certain of the answer today.