

GENDERED THREADS: A SPECULATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE
SPACETIMEMATTERING OF WOMEN'S FIBER CRAFTING

by

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(Under the Direction of Christina Hanawalt)

ABSTRACT

In this study, I conducted object interviews and used photos, videos, and multi-material investigations of the fiber crafts process with four women who engaged in fiber crafts. The purpose of this study was to investigate the intra-actions that occurred between human and more-than-human materials within the fiber craft assemblages through the lens of feminist new materialism. In addition to the recorded data, I investigated participants' virtual platforms (spaces) through YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. I approached data analysis through diagrammatical thinking and speculative vignettes in order to immerse myself in the fiber craft assemblages that continued to form and (re)form throughout the study. My goal for analyzing the human and more-than-human materials that constituted the assemblages was not to seek invariable structures and categorizations for the parts of the assemblages or to analyze overall meaning. Rather, I pursued an investigation into the process of how these assemblages came together. While there were many rich scenarios and eventful happenings that surfaced, I focused specifically on the aspects that called to me as I was investigating the data through the concept of spacetimemattering. Some of these findings include an attunement to gender, spaces, boundaries and time as produced within the entanglements that form women's fiber crafting assemblages. Overall, gender became an intertwining thread that helped to define space, time, and materials

through porous boundaries and intra-actions.

INDEX WORDS: feminist new materialism, spacetime mattering, assemblages, speculative analysis, women's fiber crafting, diagrammatical thinking

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DEDICATION

Remember our heritage is our power; we can know ourselves and our capacities
by seeing that other women have been strong.

– *Judy Chicago*

I dedicate this dissertation to my two daughters, Anna Camille and Greer. I hope that you realize that even though the road may be narrow and lonely at times, the destination is the sweet reward. I hope that you have learned that you too can achieve your goals, and it is never too late, and you are never too weak. I hope that I have made you proud.

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CHAPTER 1

GENDERED THREADS

The needle is an appropriate material representation of women who are balancing both their anger over oppression and pride in their gender. The needle stabs as it creates, forcing thread or yarn into the act of creation. From a violent action comes the birth of a new whole.

–Ricia A. Chansky

Within the work leading up to my dissertation focus and topic, I became captivated by what women had done and were doing in terms of fiber crafts. My research and literature review revealed so much about women from the past and how they used their needles and thread to subvert the social norm that fiber crafts were bottomless time fillers that were labeled as women's work. I was inspired by their efforts, but I also knew that I could not ignore the women who lived their lives consigned to a domestic sphere where their fiber crafts were often allocated for others or for their rites of passage as women. Their time was apportioned to running a household if they were elite women, or to mending, making, and sewing for their families if they were from the poor or working class. I wanted to know more about fiber crafts, and that was part of the reasoning behind my study. Likewise, I also wanted to know more about how fiber crafts became gendered, and the experiences that women have had with fiber crafts in both the past and present times.

Early on, when I would present or discuss my nascent ideas at conferences, I often received the same questions: "Why women? What about men? Whose narrative are you telling?"

At first, I attempted to awkwardly defend my choice to focus on women in my study and could only produce a weak rebuttal, such as “because I think the topic is interesting,” but as I began to write and research more, my choice to focus on women made perfect sense. The narrative that I wanted to tell was about women. This narrative was based on the experiences and complex relationships that women have had with fiber crafts over time. Fiber crafts have always been gendered due to a patriarchal mindset that regards fiber crafts to be delicate and feminine in nature. Nevertheless, this is not to say that men have never been a part of the fiber craft narrative, but through my study I aimed to allow the narratives of women to come to the forefront of fiber crafts discussions. Their stories were about subversion – subversion that has paved the way for change within our world. Changes were often instigated by women who orchestrated and led massive movements while using common tools such as a needle and thread. Bayer (2019) argued that *craft* is both a noun and a verb, and its “earliest meaning rests on four pillars: strength, power, force, and virtue” and she went on to state that fiber crafts have the power to “reinvent art and craft as democracy’s warp and weft—needling, in significant ways, relations of gender, race, class, and justice” (p. 1). What Bayer is referring to here is how women fiber crafters throughout time have embodied these four pillars and have used needle and thread to alter the fabric of our nation while calling for justice. For example, according to Parker (1984), in the early 20th century within the United Kingdom, banners and parasols embroidered with designs in the suffragist colors of green, purple, and white were carried in marches that supported suffragist protests. Additionally, when the women were thrown in prison or endured hunger strikes, they would often embroider small handkerchiefs with their signatures, “bringing together the traditional of political petition and protest with a female social tradition by which guests would embroider their signatures for their hostess to commemorate a visit” (Parker, 1984, p. 200).

There was and still is power within these tools, and I sought to explore the materials within these discourses and processes, and how they moved, changed, and offered new possibilities for the women and for the crafts.

Fiber Crafts and Gender

I was initially inspired by the words of renowned textile curator and community textile artist Clare Hunter. During her pilgrimage to study the Bayeux Tapestry in France, Hunter (2019) described the absence of information pertaining to the women that sewed the tapestry as she visited the museum where the tapestry was housed. In fact, she became furious as she argued that information about the women who sewed the tapestry was not acknowledged within the narrative presented at the museum, nor was it acknowledged throughout history. She maintained that “the embroiderers are banished from the story of the Bayeux Tapestry as if their part in its creation was marginal” (p. 12). Thus, she revealed a sobering reality that “for centuries, this was the fate of women embroiderers. They were robbed of their power. This was the history of needlework” (p. 12). To me, this was significant as I realized that gender was at the core of the history of textile crafts, as women were and often still are subjugated to a space where they are positioned as powerless, and where their voices are not heard. Furthermore, this ill-fated history of women embroiders suggests that women often remained (in)visible as men claimed their right to so many components of society. As Sultana (2012) argued, in order “to preserve the male supremacy, patriarchy created ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ characteristics, private-public realms by gendered socialization process” (p. 8). In other words, the domestic sphere was considered to be the private space that was relegated to women, and fiber crafts were often created within this sphere. As the patriarchal mindset gendered these spaces, all of the activities that happened within those spaces became gendered as well. Thus, the history of fiber crafts spills over into

more contemporary times as women still struggle to find their place in a world that seems to continue to be dominated by a patriarchal society.

Through many months of extensive research, I concluded that one of the most significant ways women gained their voices in the face of patriarchal forces throughout history was through their engagement in fiber crafts. Women have always participated in either silent or vocal facets of activism, and as we look back through history, the products that women have created not only told their stories and proclaimed their voice but gave them a space to do so. In fact, Hunter (2019) spoke of the significance of needlework as a visual language that does indeed have its own voice. She proclaimed that “as a shared language, needlework transmits—through techniques, coded symbols, fabrics and colour—the unedited stories not just of women, but often of those marginalized by oppression and prejudice” (p. 276). Hunter (2019) also spoke of how needlework has mainly progressed as a voice for women as they had limited access to literacy and sought to create a vehicle that would not only preserve their words, but would “assert their presence in the hope that it, at least, might persist, and in time, be heard” (p. 277). Conversely, fiber crafts and needlework have also been used by oppressors to disempower or devalue women. Examples of this tactic include German missionaries’ replacement of Namibian tribal dress with European textiles and fashion, the Soviet regime’s pursuits to diminish traditional Ukrainian embroidery, and Hitler’s subjugation of women (and men and children) to sewing German uniforms, corsets, luxury goods, and even doll dresses (Hunter, 2019, p. 277). These are only a few of the many acts of utilizing fiber crafts as an act of oppression. However, in order to comprehend these acts of oppression, one must understand the western and patriarchal views that perpetuated the gendering of fiber crafts.

Renowned fiber craft writer Rozsika Parker (1984) spoke of the divide between what has

been deemed fine art versus craft and the foundations of the stereotypical relegation of fiber craft as a gendered act of creation. Parker postulated that the gendering of fiber crafts emerged during the Renaissance as embroidery became a process relegated to women amateurs that worked from home with no monetary compensation (p. 5). Callen (1979) explained that, during the Middle Ages, English embroidery was “equal if not superior to painting and sculpture,” and was created by both men and women (p. 96). However, as the years passed, it began to be exclusively produced by women and acquired the stereotypical categorization of women’s work that was “mindless, decorative and delicate” (p. 96). Therefore, this mentality and shift in value saw embroidery being produced in a dual setting, where the workshop and home were the same entity. What is interesting about this shift is that boundaries between professional and domestic life were blurred, and all activities occurred underneath the same roof. This also allowed for the socialization of children to become less significant; once they were past infancy, they were absorbed into the household, and young girls were indoctrinated into the world of embroidery that served functional purposes within the home and beyond as it positioned them for adulthood (Callen, 1979).

Moreover, Mast (2019) asserted that this gendered divide came about due to the western canon of art which was based on the Greek/Latin word *kanna* (reed), which essentially equates to a measuring rod or standard. Locher (2012) indicated that this idealist western canon was first employed as an allegory for artistic excellence by Pliny the Elder to describe the *Doryphoros* from Greek sculpture as it became synonymous with the perfectly proportioned image of man.

Therefore, these standards and proportions were equated to what commendable works of art should adhere to within the art world, and these standards filtered into paradigms and teaching practices from the university level to other institutionalized spaces such as schools

throughout history (Mast, 2019). Parker (2010) argued that the “development of an ideology of femininity coincided historically with the emergence of a clearly defined separation of art and craft,” and this rift began to manifest as changes in art education “from craft-based workshops to academies at precisely the time—the eighteenth century—when an ideology of femininity as natural to women was evolving” (p. 5).

Therefore, according to Parker (1984), there is strong evidence that the art/craft divide disseminated the notion that art that was produced with a thread and needle was unequal to art that was created with paint or stone. This, in turn, caused fiber crafts to become associated with women as the weaker sex. Fiber crafting was often associated with the lower classes of society, given its association with the working class. However, fiber crafts were also reserved for higher class women as symbols of leisurely pursuits (Parker, 1984). Pristash et al. (2017) reminded that this gendering of fiber craft began when girls were young, and the creation of fiber crafts contributed to their education and rite of passage into womanhood as fiber crafts such as needlework encouraged obedience and patience during the long hours of creation.

Essentially, fiber crafting was seen as an act of submission. According to Goggin and Tobin (2009), “within the world of the needle as elsewhere, men were understood to create, women to mend and tidy up” (p. 41). As this gendering of fiber craft lingered throughout many centuries, Edwards (2006) maintained that it was the ideologies of the 18th century, predicated upon the male centered view that women contained a natural propensity for simple thought and could not carry out tasks that required a great deal of judgment, that led to the distinction between amateur craftswomen and professional men. Women were consigned to fiber crafts directed towards the domestic sphere with the purpose of beautifying these spaces and displaying “female virtues of diligence, patience, and perseverance” through the detailed work and

repetition of fiber crafts processes (Edwards, 2006, pp. 12–13).

In contrast to the submissive aspect of fiber craft, there were also many acts of subversion as women sought ways to re-establish the femininity of someone who was violating gendered norms. For example, Sojourner Truth composed deliberate photographs that showed her knitting tools set aside in a manner that would prevent actual knitting (Pristash et al., 2017). Rather, the use of this prop along with the way she dressed reestablished her femininity in a submissive way without tempering the potential of her feminist and abolitionist speeches. Her argument was one in which she proudly embraced being a woman with an activist stance while re-establishing her normative femininity (Pristash et al., 2017). Moreover, Pristash et al. (2017) argued that this powerful way of promoting femininity “was the basis of a related rhetorical use of craft, focused on the finished product: the visual creation of woman’s space” (p. 19). Another example involved Frances Willard, leader of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, who charged her members to decorate speaking stages with their needlework to claim a place that was not deemed appropriate for a woman into a space “that was visually coded as female” (Pristash et al., 2017, p. 19).

The creation of samplers was yet another example of a fiber craft practice that contained a dichotomy of both submission and subversion. Samplers were educational exercises in which women learned the basic skills of sewing (Newell, 2017). They initially functioned as conversational pieces that were displayed throughout the home to demonstrate taste, discernment, and most importantly neatness and skill with the use of a needle. However, these samplers were also utilized as an act of subversion as women found their voices by stitching their stories and calls for help within the samplers. For example, Elizabeth Parker created a text-only sampler in the 19th century that articulated a call for help from the abuse of her employer. The

sampler began with: “As I cannot write I put this down simply and freely as I might speak to a person whose intimacy and tenderness I can fully entrust myself and who I know will bear with all my weakness...” (McCracken, 2019).

By investigating these acts of subversion along with the acts of submission relating to fiber crafts, a historical and contemporary story of women’s fiber crafting began to unfold. I was not only intrigued by the history of fiber crafts, but inspired by the tenacity that many of these women exhibited. This, in turn, impacted the trajectory of my research in that I wanted to investigate if or how many of the gendered notions and stereotypical mindsets were still present within fiber crafting today. Moreover, I wanted to explore whether the subversive and submissive dichotomy retained relevancy in the present day, and if so, how contemporary women negotiate this dichotomy.

Purpose of the Study

I have always had a genuine interest in fiber crafting. In fact, my grandmother taught me to crochet as a young child during the many summers when I visited her. That experience became my connection to her, and the literal threads became symbolic extensions of my past that continued to impact my identity. Unfortunately, I no longer remember how to crochet, but after conducting a pilot study with local needle pointers in my community, I realized that I would like to research women who engage in fiber crafting. At the onset of my study, I fixated on the materials and processes of my participants. However, I began to understand that there was much more involved within the study than just the tools and processes. I initially set out to learn more about the various types of fiber crafting so that perhaps I could learn from the women, but I found myself entangled within the women’s lives, social media posts, and the intrigue that arose from all of the objects that entered into our conversations. This altered the trajectory and the

purpose of my study and caused me to become more attuned to all of the materials that I encountered, both human and more-than-human. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the intra-actions that occurred between human and more-than-human materials within the fiber craft assemblages of four women through the lens of feminist new materialism. Further, I was interested in if or how the gendered histories of women fiber crafters might come to bear within these assemblages. I will discuss feminist new materialism along with methodological techniques in Chapter 3.

April 17, 2022

Distractions. *I don't take this word lightly. In fact, it has reared its ugly head throughout the process of researching for and writing my dissertation. I know that these distractions were simply materials within my life that were moving in flux and changing, but they were difficult to ignore. I have become increasingly annoyed with others asking if I am still working on my dissertation, and why I haven't graduated. These questions pierce my inner being and cause me to question myself at times, often leaving me grasping for that light I know is at the end of the proverbial tunnel.*

As I sit down to write, sometimes the words and thoughts flow beautifully as my fingers peck on the keyboard of my Mac. However, other times I sit and someone or something distracts me and calls me away from my work, thus causing me to throw my ambitions to the wind as I attend to whatever the distraction may be. Most of the time, I work at home on my large kitchen table as it provides so much natural light from the windows that surround the table. However, this location has proved to be a problem at times because distractions often find me here the most. I can't hide from them as this space

is a central location in my house. However, this location does create a sort of panopticon, as I can monitor the comings and goings of my family, or even stop to quickly unload the dishwasher.

Distractions. Everyone deals with them. My distractions form a long list ranging from washing a load of laundry, to answering emails or a phone call, to helping a child with homework, or to carting a child off by means of a carpool to swim practice. Above all, the largest distraction that has loomed overhead for almost three years now is the COVID-19 pandemic. This distraction has brought more distractions to the table. At the height of the pandemic, I worried about getting the “call” that my child was exposed and would have to quarantine for two weeks, or that my child was sick and could possibly have COVID. This was an exhausting distraction that often took me away from my dissertation more times than I can count. I often felt helpless and burdened by the many roles that I assumed such as mother, wife, professor, sister, friend, daughter, etc. Why did it seem that the pandemic was not affecting my husband nearly as much? It seemed that the pandemic was resting on the shoulders of women, and I was uncertain how to deal with this frustrating and unexpected distraction.

The pandemic has been a material within my life that has been a part of so many assemblages, has moved on to more assemblages, and has continued to change our way of life for good and bad. Although it has been a massive lingering distraction, it distracted me in a way that caused me to pay attention and become more attuned to the role of gender in my life. Some materials move and change, and others remain constant. COVID is a material that is unpredictable yet can pierce any boundary.

Methods

Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) played a deciding factor in terms of my methods. I was preparing to conduct my study right as COVID-19 swept through our world causing all of society to come to a screeching halt. The pandemic changed the trajectory and theoretical basis of my study as, for safety reasons, I could not meet with others in face-to-face settings, and I was forced to rely on virtual platforms such as Zoom to conduct my study. I invited women to participate in my study through an online call on the Crafts Forum Facebook site. Even though I heard from almost one hundred potential candidates through an online survey, I was able to narrow my pool of participants to a group of four women with diverse viewpoints. The women were required to be at least 18 years of age and often engaged in fiber crafting that included but was not limited to sewing, quilting, embroidery, knitting, crocheting, needlepoint, cross stitch, weaving, and other forms of surface treatment utilizing fibers. I reached out to seven potential participants through email, but only four women responded back to me and accepted the invitation to participate in the study. I conducted the Zoom interviews over the course of about three months, but I continued to follow their social media posts for well over a year.

Throughout the study, I used a variety of techniques to collect data. These techniques were based on the theoretical underpinnings of feminist new materialism. With this theory, I attempted to decenter the human experience, and utilize techniques that brought an attunement for materiality into the foreground of the study. For example, I conducted what I referred to as Object Interviews with the four women using the Zoom video conferencing platform. For these interviews, I asked the women to bring an object from the past and from the present that related to their fiber crafting. I asked questions relating to the objects that they showed me, and I learned a great deal about the objects as well as the significance they held for these women. Essentially, I

utilized these interviews as an entry point into the entanglements of the fiber crafters—their lives, histories, spaces, relationships, and more. Most importantly, I was able to investigate how gender was produced within these entanglements by considering not only the objects the women brought to the interviews, but how all of the human and more-than-human materials intra-acted to shape gendered spaces and experiences within the fiber craft assemblages. Moreover, similar to Nordstrom (2015), I began to think of the data as an assemblage, and I maintained an open-ended process that allowed for new becomings and shifts as the data was constantly arranged and (re)arranged.

Beyond these interviews, I asked the women to supply me with photographs of their workspaces, materials, and anything relating to their fiber craft. Lastly, I also asked that the women grant me access to their social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram. By engaging within these social media accounts, I was able to further entangle and (dis)entangle myself within these assemblages. I became a part of the fiber craft assemblages. I was able to enter into the world of my participants, and from an ethical stance, I began to question my own endeavors and feminist perceptions. I recognized myself as responsible to and for the work I was doing with these women. As Ahmed (2017) suggested, by posing ethical questions and conceiving ideas that allow augmented outcomes in an unjust world, it is possible to “find ways to support those who are not supported or are less supported by social systems...” (p.1). I followed these social media platforms for over a year as I garnered data for my analysis. I was surprised to find that virtual spaces were just as significant to the women in my study as the actual spaces where they engaged in fiber crafts. I enjoyed following the participants within their virtual spaces. Not only I could I engage with each initial post, but I saw how their followers reacted to their posts as well. The looming and uncertain pandemic forced me to change course

in terms of my methods, but in the end, I saw much more promise in intermingling within the virtual “spaces” of the women.

Theoretical Framework

My methods were not the only thing to shift throughout the process of developing and completing this study. Initially, I was readily opposed to utilizing any “post” theories such as speculative realism, new materialisms, feminist theory, or critical realism to guide my research. I found comfort in the safe and obvious route of viewing women’s craft groups in person as they convened within my own community, and I thought the most obvious choice for a theoretical lens would be Lave and Wenger’s (1991) communities of practice theory, given its emphasis on the benefits of people working together to achieve a goal or participate in a process or activity together. However, the looming presence and uncertainty of the pandemic caused me to alter the face-to-face traditional study that I had envisioned. I knew that I had to adjust my initial decisions if I wanted to continue on with research in the midst of a pandemic. I had to modify and adjust to a new possibility, and that was frightening and liberating all at the same time.

Additionally, this shift from a traditional qualitative study to what would become a post-qualitative study seemed incomprehensible. I wasn’t quite sure what it would look like to let go of a specific methodological approach and instead chart a new path of thinking with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). However, as I began to follow this unexpected trajectory of the study I soon found that many new possibilities that I had never considered began to emerge.

Beyond the logistical challenges presented by the pandemic, I began to recognize how the pandemic itself was a new “material” within our lives, and I felt compelled to consider a theoretical perspective that encompassed all materials as possibility within the folds of life. At this point, I began to consider the potential for feminist new materialism (FNM) to serve as a

theoretical lens for my study. Initially, I was willing to consider FNM as a theoretical lens due to its emphasis on decentering the human and the focus on the material components of the study. I was primarily interested in exploring the role of the fiber craft tools, processes, and final products and knew that FNM would allow me to focus on these materials. Furthermore, in my early exploration of FNM, I did not fully comprehend how the theory encompassed both human and more-than-human material. Alaimo and Hekman (2008) explained that “material feminists explore the interaction of culture, history, discourse, technology, biology, and the ‘environment’ without privileging any one of these elements” (p. 7). The theory also emphasizes the idea that “western thought has been structured by a series of gendered dichotomies,” and the solution is to disrupt the dichotomy itself (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008, p. 2). I was initially drawn to this theory because of my interest in the role of *materials* in fiber crafting, but as the dissertation evolved gender and an emphasis on feminism became crucial considerations for my study.

At first, I felt as though the tenets of feminist new materialism (FNM) were too difficult to grasp, and I found the theory to be very challenging to plug into my study. I tried many times to disregard the role of gender as I initially did not consider the significance that it would hold as I continued to work through the data analysis. However, like many aspects of the data, the notion of gender continuously called to me, and I knew that I could no longer ignore its relevance in relation to my study. I could not separate myself from the role of gender within fiber crafting no matter how much I attempted to disregard its presence. It turned out that, for me, thinking with FNM served to disrupt the boundaries of gender. I began to understand that gender was also a material that had agency in women’s experiences of fiber crafting, and I saw how it wove its way through the past and the present. As a researcher, I also noticed how my life and the lives of my participants merged in a surprising way. Through many twists and turns, I realized how women

still deal with attempting to rupture the boundaries and patriarchal mindsets that continue to linger in our society. It seemed that fiber crafting and gender were forever and complexly intertwined.

April 28, 2022

Superwoman Syndrome. *What I find to be similar between the women in my study and women crafters throughout history is that women have always had to share spaces with others and perform domestic duties within the same spaces in which they found their creative and entrepreneurial aspirations. Chansky (2010) spoke of the contemporary “superwoman syndrome” and how “balancing the two identities of professional employee and domestic goddess can be quite confusing and even overwhelming” (p. 691). I cannot help but observe similarities to my own life and the often-nonexistent boundaries that exist for women as personal/professional spaces are one in the same, and domestic expectations are in constant battle with the needed refuge and space from these expectations. I often find myself trapped in the superwoman syndrome as I struggle to be a good mother, wife, professor, artist, and more. Society places so many expectations on women. I feel connected to the women in my study as they also fell victim to the superwomen syndrome at times. One would think that society would not continue to place these multiple burdens on women, and we could learn to be more progressive and considerate in terms of the expectations we place on them. Why do women have to struggle to carve out spaces for their creative or personal endeavors? Why does our society still gender spaces for women and relegate them to domestic spaces while they battle with the tensions that arise from grasping for a sense of balance? What is the role of the past in the present? It seems things never change.*

Analysis

As I continued to immerse myself in feminist new materialism through a great deal of research and an array of books, I realized that not only was the theory applicable to my study, but the analytic possibilities it afforded were endless. I found a creative aspect to the theory that enhanced my own thinking and writing style. Although I based much of my analysis on the work of prominent FNM theorist Karen Barad, I applied the scholarly work of other leading theorists such as Deleuze and Guattari, Jackson and Mazzei, Coole and Frost, Ahmed, Bennett, and others. I knew that I was no quantum physicist like Barad and did not have a clear understanding of atoms and how they move and work within the universe, but I did know that her explanation of intra-actions would be crucial to my analysis.

Some of the other key concepts that became important for the study and my analysis included assemblages and spacetime-matterings. Nordstrom (2015) defined assemblages as something that “continually rearranges a loose grouping of things (e.g., words, ideas, people, objects)” (p. 167). Likewise, assemblages function as open-ended entities that open up as a continuous process where things are constantly made and unmade (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). In keeping with this emphasis on the processual, Barad (2003) defines spacetime-mattering as the making/marking of time in which “the past matters and so does the future, but the past is never left behind, never finished once and for all, and the future is not what will come to be in an unfolding of the present moment; rather the past and the future are enfolded participants in matter’s iterative becoming” (p. 181). Therefore, time is not final nor can it be categorized by a smooth succession of moments. Like time, space is also not conceived of as a preexisting entity. Rather, Barad (2007) explained that “intra-actions enact specific boundaries, marking the

domains of interiority and exteriority,” (p. 181) that continuously configure and reconfigure spaces (Barad, 2007). A more thorough explanation of these terms is provided in Chapter 4.

Speculative Vignettes

As I read the book, *Ordinary Affects*, by Kathleen Stewart (2007), I realized that data analysis was just a method of discovery, and it could be presented with an imaginative approach. Like Stewart (2007), I chose to construct small stories from the data in reference to photographs and social media posts of my participants. Even though I could not predict the future, I utilized speculation to think through the possibilities that all of the materials within the imagery might hold. I then added descriptive memos underneath each vignette to explore feminist new materialist theory in relation to the stories. In other words, the memos allowed me to explore how the assemblages (the trajectories of all of the materials) were forming/reforming and offered approaches to visualize these stories as intersections of possibility and wonder.

Through the process of writing the vignettes, I was able to not only disrupt the boundaries of traditional approaches to analysis, but to also consider other boundaries that exist within the world, such as those associated with gender. Boundaries of space, time, and matter became particularly relevant, and in the next sections I offer a brief glimpse at how these boundaries showed up in the study. In all, through the written vignettes I explored what was produced when all the human and more-than-human materials collided and were transformed by material entities. Ultimately, the vignettes presented a glimpse into the intra-actions among the various materials and how materials affect one another within the moving assemblages.

Space

Although it initially seemed like an unrelated component of the study, I found space to be a significant part of my findings. Interestingly, space took on many forms as material within the lives of my participants. Some of the women retained designated spaces, such as an empty room

that had been converted to a studio, while others simply had makeshift spaces on a comfortable sofa in the living room of their homes. Some of these spaces were shared with other members of their families. For example, while on Zoom with Melody, I was able to see the space where she was working alongside her husband. The pandemic had forced them both to work from home, so they both had a desk in a spare room for the purpose of their actual jobs. This space also doubled as a creative space for Melody as she attempted to find time to knit when she was not answering emails and conducting meetings for her job. Barad (2007) maintained that “space, time, and matter are mutually constituted through the dynamics of iterative intra-activity” (p. 181). Gender roles along with societal pressures to continue to work and be productive during a deadly and unpredictable pandemic were constantly being (re)produced within this shared space. Objects and bodies moved in and out of the space, and Melody’s roles as wife, mother, and employee collided and intra-acted with the husband’s gaze and presence as a new, dynamic force was created within the space.

May 1, 2022

Time is fleeting. *Time is one thing that everyone can honestly say they do not have enough of within their lives. You hear cliché sayings such as “time is fleeting,” or “time is on your side.” Time is a surprising element that arose from my study. While I always knew that materiality would provide an overarching theme, I never really considered how time played a role within women’s lives, or in my life. The essence of time also made me feel a connection to the women in my study, as I often struggle to find the time to work on this dissertation, paint, research, and just sweep and mop my floors. Barad (2017) explained that “the self is dispersed/diffracted through being and time” (p. 80). My participants also felt the tug of time and how it became an omnipresent material that had the power to change and be changed by*

so from them as they had ambitions of creating something for their newborn baby only to realize that the “baby” was now ten years old. I think most people can agree that we don’t really know where time “goes,” or why it does indeed pass so quickly. As I consider time, I begin to think back to women of the past who engaged in fiber crafts, and how time was likely a significant factor for them as well.

Time

Time was deeply intertwined within my study in many different ways. For example, the women described objects from the past and objects from the present. Additionally, they often discussed future projects and ideas they hoped would come to fruition. Time was also a factor in determining how long it would take to produce a final product. Interestingly, most of the women could provide an exact amount of time they spent engaging in their fiber craft each day. I also noted how many of the women disclosed that they did not have enough time to engage in fiber crafting, and often found themselves balancing their many roles such as being a mother, wife, employee, and fiber crafter. Significantly, given the extensive time I spent reviewing the literature on the historical beginnings of women’s fiber crafting, I realized that the tensions relating to time and gendered roles from the past were akin to what my participants were experiencing in the present. Yet, time according to Barad (2010) is much different than the chronological and clock-based time that most often guides day-to-day experiences and understandings of time. By thinking with Barad (2010), I came to understand how the past is (re)made within the present not in a synchronous way, but is produced in new ways through intra-actions that, in some cases, (re)create historic gender roles in new ways within a contemporary world. The past is not complete, but merges into the present and future.

Materials

As an artist and art educator, I have always recognized materials as an important part of the art process. For example, I know that Prang watercolors will give my students better color saturation than an inexpensive off-brand. Additionally, my studio and art classroom are overflowing with materials. Some of these are photographs and mementos and trinkets from the past, while other materials are jars of paintbrushes, easels, and stacks of blank canvases. The art room is composed of layers of so many materials. Yet, art educators must be cognizant of not only what materials can do, but their limitations as well. Perhaps because of my own experiences as an art educator, as I interviewed my participants, I felt a strong connection with and understanding of their attunement to their materials. For example, Sally seemed to know exactly what each type and size of crochet hook would do for her finished piece or work in progress. Rhonda spoke of how certain yarns “called to her,” and even though she did not have a specific project in mind, the colors and/or textures made her feel that she needed that yarn. She spoke quite fondly of how certain yarns were very soft and pliable while others had a rough texture and were more difficult to use within certain projects. With these materials, the women in my study envisioned possibilities, but knew the limitations as well. As I look back through time, I recognize how women have always had to be attuned to materials. However, while materials such as paint and canvas or yarn and needles are the obvious materials that one would consider when thinking of making and creating, I now see the threads of all materials and what potentials they may have. This study along with the theoretical framework of feminist new materialism provided me with a new perspective on what counts as material and what happens when materials transform one another across space and time.

Conclusion

Materials teach us things. Sometimes these materials are human, while others are more-than-human. Feminist new materialism showed me that everything, human and more-than-human, is considered material. I also realized that materials have potential to intra-act with materials, and their trajectories are not always predictable. In all, this study allowed me to combine my interest in the material culture of fiber crafts while intertwining a newfound interest in the women, past and present, who engage in fiber crafts. As I worked with my participants, I saw their lives from a contemporary lens, but was also able to interconnect the threads from the past as I felt that I was creating a space for women fiber crafters throughout time to have their voices heard within my dissertation and society in general. This dissertation honors the histories of those women who were omitted from the art world and from the history books, and it represents their struggles as they were relegated to a world dominated by men. My work aims to value the contemporary women fiber crafters in my study, but also all the women throughout time who have utilized their fiber craft to have a voice and a seat at the table. May the silent threads of the past be woven with a reverberating sound that will continue to echo until the end of time.

Overview of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I investigate the history of women's engagement with fiber crafts along with the dichotomy of subversiveness/submission. Additionally, the chapter gives a glimpse into a storied history that has hinged upon a patriarchal Western philosophy. In Chapter 3, I describe my approach to post-qualitative research, explain the theoretical framework, and offer an in-depth description of the techniques and methods that I utilized in the study. Chapter 4 is composed solely of the speculative vignettes, written in response

to visual imagery such as photographs and social media posts, that served as my primary mode of analysis. Lastly, in Chapter 5, I further examine the outcome of the study along with parallels between the study and art education. The final chapter also explores what I learned through the study and how it impacted me as a researcher, art educator, and as a woman. I investigate the puzzling complexities of time within the school building and art classroom to trouble the Western concept of time that presides over a school day. Additionally, I explore the vitality of all of the materials within the art classroom. These materials come in all shapes and forms and co-exist with bodies, histories, genders, and race, all of which intra-act and disrupt finite conceptualizations of time. Lastly, I leave the reader with questions to ponder and perhaps develop speculations of their own.

Glossary of Terms

Diagrammatical thinking: Freeman (2017) described this as a mode of thinking that “seeks to disrupt conventional ways of thinking about human and nonhuman interactive spaces or networks” (p. 9). This mode of thinking allowed me to approach women’s fiber crafting in a way that fractured preconceived notions of crafting by focusing on the multiplicity of materials that move into and out of entanglements of fiber crafting. As gender emerged as an overarching theme within the dissertation, my ways of thinking were challenged as I embraced a diagrammatical method that required me to “look beyond the familiar narrative construction of a story and transverse core aspects of its telling in a way that creates new assemblages of moving and rigid formations, junctures, and concepts” (Freeman, 2017, p. 9). Overall, this mode of thinking prompted me to look beyond the obvious fiber crafting tools and processes so that I could investigate more expansive fiber crafting assemblages that revealed unfamiliar ways of thinking about women’s fiber crafting.

Entanglements: Barad (2007) put forth a theory of agential realism that affords a “new materialist understanding of power and its effects on the production of bodies, identities, and subjectivities” (p. 224). Furthermore, Barad (2007) understood matter to be a “dynamic and shifting entanglement of relations, rather than a property of things” (p. 224). The concept of entanglements allowed me to investigate what was produced through on-going, shifting intra-actions rather than classifying the materials within my study as separate entities that never affect the other materials. In other words, an entanglement is not just an assortment of objects placed together; rather, it accounts for the various materials and forces that intra-act and produce new becomings for both the human and more-than-human entities involved. As I studied women’s fiber crafting throughout history and in relation to my study, I began to understand that the entanglements of my participant’s fiber crafting processes were more expansive than I had initially considered.

Folding/unfolding: Nordstrom (2015), explained that “the fold destabilizes a stable conception of being and knowing with innumerable pleats of objects, subjects, and countless others” (p. 168). The fold is a concept put forth by Deleuze (1987) and he stated that there is “always a fold within the fold, like a cavern within the cavern” (p. 231). This description emphasizes the infiniteness of folds/folding and how it is a continuous process. The concept of the fold hinges on “two or more entities moving and shifting and folding together such that those entities can no longer be thought apart” (Nordstrom, 2015, p. 168). This term allowed me to view gender and the fiber crafts assemblages together (instead of as separate unrelated entities) as the materials continued to shift and change. Likewise, just as many of the elements of fiber crafting merged, folded, and unfolded in relation to one another, I also found myself as the researcher and as a woman folding into the lives of the women (both past and present) and in relation to the

theoretical lens and a newfound feminist voice. I explore the concept of the fold more in depth in Chapter 3.

Speculative thinking: The concept of speculative thinking provided space for me to approach data analysis as a creative practice that lent itself to imagining the “what ifs.” Through this process, I was able to think with the theory in order to explore the possibilities of human and more-than-human entanglements. Asberg et al. (2015) argued for a “diverse form of scholarly accountability” that gives itself to speculation, and “in turn, becomes a very material process, a performative process of the world, a form worlding itself” (p. 152). One event or movement of forces could cause other forces to move through and against one another to establish new becomings and possibilities. Asberg et al. (2015) also argued that a “situated and materialising speculation implies both the envisioning of a different world and a challenge to taken-for-granted knowledges by way of situating them in specific historical, sociocultural, material and bodily contexts” (p. 153). For example, along with my research into the histories of women’s fiber crafting, I gleaned excerpts from my participants’ social media posts, transcripts from object interviews, and visual imagery from photos and/or social media posts, and wrote about all of the materials that were intra-acting; this process was, in itself, a form of speculative worlding that opened up space for thinking about past, present, and future entanglements and possibilities.

Matter and materiality: According to Coole and Frost (2010), materiality is always something more than “mere” matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality, or difference that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable” (p. 9). The theoretical framework that framed this study was feminist new materialism, which seeks to decenter the human in an effort to foster an attunement to materiality. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) describe how modern philosophies such as Marxism and critical theory emphasized the material, suggesting that the

“material precedes knowing” (p. 115). They go on to state that, according to these philosophies “the material is that which we experience in the world,” and the philosophical foundations of materialism “maintains that whatever exists is, or depends solely upon, matter” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 115). For feminist new materialists, the goal is not to discount the role of the discursive, but to “reclaim the material and to explore how we are constituted by both the material and the discursive without privileging one over the other” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 116). However, the question arises, what counts as material, or matter? According to Barad (2007), “in an agential realist account, matter does not refer to a fixed substance; rather, *matter is a substance in its intra-active becoming—not a thing but a doing, a congealing of agency*” (p. 151). Barad (2007) also asserted that matter is an “active agent” and “*matter comes to matter* through the iterative intra-activity of the world in its becoming” (p. 152). The entanglements of the material entities produce effects, and it is the relational aspect of these entanglements rather than the individual makeup of the materials within them that are of significance. Barad (2007) explained that “an assemblage of individual events, entities, and sets of practices” are the materials that produce these cause and effect relationships (p. 389).

Throughout the dissertation, I refer to a variety of different entities as *material* in order to suggest that these things are produced and (re)produced through relational intra-actions within the entanglements of the women fiber crafters. For example, I refer to female bodies, histories of women fiber crafters, fiber craft supplies, gender, finished products, spaces, time, and even patriarchy as agentic materials and forces within these entanglements, continuously materializing with and through one another.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

My research encompassed a historical and contemporary focus on women who engage in fibers crafts, which can include but are not limited to weaving, sewing, needlepoint, crochet, cross stitch, knitting, embroidery, and other contemporary surface treatment methods. To begin the literature review, I commenced with a look into women's craft groups and networks of the past and how they functioned within society. Early on, my aim was to look for concurrent themes within the literature that might present not only the favorable aspects of fiber crafting, but any unpleasant aspects as well. With this goal in mind, I explored opposing views from various scholars in terms of the gendered notions of certain time periods and the exploitative nature of fiber crafts for women.

Through my early research into the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain and the United States, for example, I soon discovered that burgeoning communities of women were rupturing boundaries in order to transport themselves beyond traditional domestic roles. In fact, Zipf (2007) emphasized that one of the main reasons the Arts and Crafts movement flourished was due in part to the personal connections among women of various backgrounds that shared in collective values and ideas. Likewise, many of these women "gained emotional support and guidance from the mentors, teachers, and friends they met through their local community (Zipf, 2007, p. 29). Additionally, craft associations provided opportunities for women to participate in capitalistic ventures. Zipf (2007) asserted that women of the American Arts and Crafts Movement (1895-1920) created in the name of artistic production as they "passed gender barriers

to found businesses, invent technology, and build economic markets, all at a time when women had few professional options” (p. 1). However, I will also present alternate views of the American Arts and Crafts movement in that it perpetuated the Victorian sexual division of labor and the patriarchal authority that was present during those time.

What was surprising to me was that many of the groups from the past function in similar ways to present day groups. For example, women of the past often sought their identities, a sense of community, and the creation of items that brought fulfillment within a utilitarian purpose, just as women today seek similar experiences through their involvement with fiber crafts. Of course, present day women fiber crafters also engage in capitalistic ventures through online platforms such as Etsy and Ravelry. As Luckman (2013) pointed out, these two sites “exemplify community building capacities of the internet,” but also provide “international marketing and distribution networks” (p. 259). As crafting has progressed throughout the years, it has allowed women to assume diverse identities and purposes and has also weathered the changing tides of technology.

While the literature suggests that fiber crafts have seen a resurgence, particularly within the past 15 years (Grace & Gandolfo, 2014; Myzelev, 2009), this literature review explored that resurgence along with how women fiber crafters, in particular, function within their own niche in society as well as the significance of gender within fiber crafts as a whole. Consequently, while there are certainly other factors that have played a significant role within craft groups both past and present, the role of gender remains a steady theme throughout this review. Women have often been linked to fiber craftwork throughout history, and therefore I explored how they have not only embraced fiber crafts, but have sought to pivot the gendered notions of these crafts as they continue to stitch the past with the present in a way that bridge women from every walk of

life.

As I engaged with the literature, I did so with the following questions in mind:

- 1) Does gender play a role in textile craft culture throughout time, and how has that narrative shifted to include acts of subversion?
- 2) How did and do women continue to destabilize the patriarchal forces that have seemingly always regulated fiber crafts?

Within the subsequent review, I frame the conversation around the gendered notion of fiber crafts that existed in the past and continues into present day times. It seems that there is a paradox that is present within the literature that exposes the gendered notion of fiber crafts that simultaneously relegated women to the domestic sphere while also serving as an act of subversion for so many women throughout time. Furthermore, the chapter also goes on to include other significant topics that arose within my vast review of the literature. I begin first with an exploration of the paradoxical nature of fiber crafts and then move on to review women's engagement with fiber crafts from a chronological perspective. The subsequent sections are focused on prominent themes that arose from my review of the literature, and they encompass a deep dive into the contemporary resurgence of fiber crafts as it relates to topics such as ageism, identity formation, craftivism, the digital age, and fiber craft spaces. It is my aim that, as a whole, the sections of the literature review postulate not only a historical orientation to the role of gender in fiber craft communities and movements, but also a more profound reconnaissance into the enigmatic components that are also interwoven into the past and present of women's fiber craftwork.

A Gendered Perspective within the Fiber Crafts Narrative

According to Grace and Gandolfo (2014), women's association with fiber crafts has held

a lengthy, yet controversial place in society as women have been linked to craft activities throughout time, and the objects that were created bore a certain significance within the realms of society, often functioning as an extension of the domestic life or women's work. Parker (1984) explored the paradoxical nature of women's fiber crafting through her book, *The Subversive Stitch*, in which she described how embroidery, for example, had "provided both a weapon of resistance for women and functioned as a source of constraint" (p. xix). Likewise, she emphasized that it "promoted submission to the norms of feminine obedience and offered both psychological and practical means to independence" (p. xix). Upon reviewing a great deal of historical and contemporary literature surrounding women's fiber crafts, I also encountered the existence of this paradox within much of the literature.

On one hand, Parker (1984) spoke of the male dominated art world and how the art/craft hierarchy insinuated that art made with thread was unequal and insignificant when compared to art made with paint. She expounded upon this theme in that she explained a narrative that has always prevailed throughout time that associated women with the needle, craft, and femininity, and that it "has meant that writers concerned with the status of women have often turned their attention towards this tangled, puzzling relationship" (p. 6). Goggin and Tobin (2009) further explained that as this narrative embedded itself within the gendering of material practices and spaces, fiber crafts and needlework became ideologically labeled as "women's work" (p. 40). Furthermore, they maintained that "within the world of the needle as elsewhere, men were understood to create, women to mend and tidy up," thus revealing the sexual politics of the life of fiber crafts and the discourses of power that have always existed (Goggin & Tobin, 2009, pp. 40-41).

In contrast, the subversive component of the paradox was also evident throughout my

review of the literature, and suggest that the tension between obedience and subversion have coexisted as women have found their voices through engagement with fiber crafts. For instance, Goggin and Tobin (2009) presented sampler making as an example of subversion that dates back thousands of years and can be found in various cultures and regions around the world. According to Goggin and Tobin (2009), sampler making “offered a place to learn, practice, and record the available means of creation via choices of stitches, threads, materials, colors, motifs, and patterns” (p. 33). Goggin (2012) explained that the origins of a sampler began as a way to simply practice stitching, and samples of stitching were created on long, narrow pieces of fabric that were up to 40 inches in length. These samplers were often stored on a rod, or rolled up and kept in a special box or a book so the needleworker would always have easy access to the materials.

However, by the 17th century, the purpose of a sampler shifted from the domestic sphere to the schoolroom as young girls created the sampler as an educational exercise to practice the alphabet, numbers, verses, other subjects, and motifs. Essentially, Goggin (2012) argued that implementing sampler making into a girl’s educational curriculum was intended for the lower classes in order to acquire skills that could serve as a sort of portfolio that demonstrated exceptional stitching skills. However, there is indication that many of these samplers extended beyond the boundaries of class as many women utilized the needle and thread in a manner to tell their stories and transformed these stitched words and motifs into a plea for help (Goggin & Tobin, 2009). Thus, Goggin and Tobin (209) contended that “stitching transformed a material surface into multiple levels of meaning, engaged conflicting purposes and audiences, and wove multiple discourses of a particular historical moment in place” (p. 37). They offer the example of Elizabeth Parker, who began her sampler text by stitching ‘as I cannot write,’ and used the fragile silken text to narrate the sexual violation and physical abuse that she had suffered at the

hands of her employer (Goggin & Tobin, 2009). Anthea Callen was another woman who was considered to be a trailblazer in terms of seeking subversion through embroidery techniques, as she rejected the obedience of embroidery and “viewed embroidery in a new light, not as something springing spontaneously from an embroiderer’s natural femininity, but as art with a history which determines but need not limit its practice” (Parker, 1984, p. 186).

Subversion has also been observed within more contemporary forms of fiber crafts, such those connected with Third-Wave feminism and acts of craftivism that have risen in popularity among many women as they seek to raise awareness about social and political issues (Campbell & Dalton, 2019). Moreover, some forms of fiber crafts, such as yarn bombing, have taken on large scale projects. Vachhani (2013) explained that “yarn bombing has been used to describe urban social practices of knitted objects placed, or tagged, in public spaces” (p. 95). Myzelev (2015) stated that participation in yarn bombing links communities of knitters “that have existed mainly in domestic spaces throughout the last three hundred years,” and “creates dialogue with feminist art emerging from the first and second waves of the feminist movement” (p. 63). Ultimately, within the creation of these contemporary forms of fiber crafts, women are able to find their voice in a subversive and creative way to tell their stories.

The paradoxical nature of fiber crafts is a thread that will be woven throughout the following sections to illustrate how women use fiber crafts for various reasons, and often, those reasons are within direct tension of one another. The following portion of my literature review will first highlight some of the oppressive ideology that women fiber crafters faced and provide evidence of the male centric narrative that often excluded the voice of women and their contributions to the history of fiber crafts. Then, the following section will address the more subversive aspects of women’s craftwork that help to elucidate the contradictory nature of this

work.

Historical Beginnings

Robertson and Vinebaum (2016) asserted that “textiles have long standing histories of collective making: there is evidence of collectively produced cloth extending as far back as the Neolithic and early Bronze Ages” (p. 7). Since what seems like the beginning of time, women have had to balance the domestic sphere with fiber crafts even though most fiber crafts were created simply for functional purposes. In Paleolithic times, there was a certain convenience implied as women combined child rearing with fiber crafts that not only provided for the family but posed no risk to children (Barber, 1994). This was also portrayed within Greek mythology as female deities were known to bring forth life simply by “spinning a thread,” (p. 3) and it is thought that this mode of thinking was derived from midwives who would await the birth of a child by passing the time spinning while in the birthing room (Barber, 1994).

During the Italian Renaissance, lacemaking became a popular pastime for the Venetian noblewomen, and the craft was rather isolated within the domestic sphere. However, Jones (2014) illustrated an important shift when needle lace began to become a paid craft that was carried out within protective shelters for women, such as for reformed prostitutes, homeless women, and unmarried girls. Much of the money that the women earned was extracted for room and board within the convents. In addition, there were at least five hundred women or more who worked on the Venetian lace within each convent (Jones, 2014). Thus, unlike contemporary fiber craft groups who generally choose to craft together, these communal fiber crafting groups were forced to craft together, and the money earned was not all solely given to the women for their work. As Allertston (2011) asserted, “lacemaking was a useful occupation for the poor vulnerable women grouped together in such charitable institutions—it kept them busy, it

reminded them of their rightful social place, and it also kept them in an ideal religious state: in discipline and fear” (p. 65).

Unfortunately, as the industrial age took hold, the subordination of women continued, with factories often employing entire families, though men were often the only ones compensated for the work (Bratich & Brush, 2011). Moreover, Bratich and Brush (2011) also contended that these types of exploitative practices of lower-class women, along with the rise of capitalism, were the epitome of “deauthorization, and expropriation of women’s skills and knowledges” (p. 235). This evidence of a patriarchal dominance and division of labor continued as Victorian women also navigated the newly changing commercial world.

During the Victorian era, an upper to middle class woman’s role was to create a “haven of calm serenity” (Callen, 1979, p. 20), and engagement with fiber crafts often provided them with a leisure activity as well as a means to embellish the home (Edwards, 2006, p. 12). Thus, gender distinctions were established based on her husband’s societal standing, and the more successful her husband was, the more leisure time she had to pursue fiber crafts and other craft related ventures inside the home. In this sexual division of labor, it was considered safe and proper for a woman to pursue fiber crafts (and other arts and crafts) because it could be viewed as “an extension of female accomplishments, which would enhance rather than erode the role designated as natural for Victorian womanhood” (Callen, 1980, p. 23). Additionally, engagement with fiber crafts was considered to be a safe field of employment inside the home that did not encroach upon the patriarchal family unit, and still allowed for men to maintain authority and dominance (Callen, 1980). Furthermore, the production of fiber crafts was not always seen in a positive light as Logan (1995) argued that the creation of these crafts exemplified the sentiments of women feeling trapped within their domestic spaces and an indication of anger, boredom, and

depression. While the creation of these fiber crafts and other craft objects help to incite the Arts and Crafts movement, this division of labor was still perpetuated as the items created were seen as an extension of Victorian accomplishments and pastimes.

The progression of the Arts and Crafts movement during 1860 for Britain and around 1890 for the United States seemingly provided women with an opportunity to engage in crafts within various spaces for economic and leisure pursuits while also enhancing their skills for the production of carefully crafted objects that began to outweigh the need and desire for capitalistic aspirations. However, renowned lecturer in 19th and 20th century art, Callen (1980) did make mention of the isolation that often occurred when women created their crafts in the domestic sphere. In fact, Callen (1979) argued that most women of the time functioned best when they were in collaborative group settings that were accommodating arts and crafts organizations such as the Bromsgrove Guild and the Home Arts and Industries Association.

Unfortunately, Callen (1979) also contended that there was a sexual division of labor within the arts and crafts movement that often resulted in the sense of “otherness experienced by craftswomen in the face of this fundamentally divisive aspect of its structure” (p. 27). This was revealed as many of the underpinnings of these Arts and Crafts societies and guilds were still based on the medieval and Victorian notions that caused them to be male dominated and male organized as they cultivated a brotherhood with male bonding (Callen, 1979, p. 218). Therefore, Callen (1979) maintained that the male dominance and social structure within many of these guilds “restricted the forms of social intercourse between the sexes to a rigid formula” (p. 218), thus hindering intellectual equality for women. Moreover, Callen (1979) affirmed that these social and ideological norms were reinforced through women acting as the executants of men’s designs and goals rather than being the designers themselves (p. 219). Women were relegated to

‘dabbling’ and their artistic creativity restricted (p. 219). Next, I will explain that this was just one perspective found in the literature review.

An Arts and Crafts Paradox

There was an opposing viewpoint that also maintained that the Arts and Crafts Movement was not only beneficial for women, but that they were the pioneers that oversaw the progress and success of the movement (Marcketti, 2010; Zipf, 2007). Scholars such as Zipf (2007) presented a more favorable outcome for women’s association with the Arts and Crafts Movement, and stated that women were not only a significant part of the movement, but they “were the movement” (p. 12). Her argument stemmed from evidence that women were the first to organize these societies, create Arts and Crafts objects, and, while working for major businesses and organizations, even pioneer new techniques and technologies that benefitted the handcrafting of objects (Zipf, 2007, p. 12). Additionally, many women discovered that their creative training and work within the Arts and Crafts movement had prepared them with skills such as business management and fundraising. The Arts and Crafts movement attracted women from both middle and upper classes to fight for a common cause, and the skills they developed helped to propel the fight for political rights (Zipf, 2007, p. 16). In all, Zipf (2007) rationalized an affirmative outcome from the Arts and Crafts movement that “removed gender barriers, created economic opportunities, and, ultimately, improved the lives of future generations of women” (p. 18).

After exploring the scholarship on women’s roles and experiences during the Arts and Crafts movement, I found myself aligning with facets of both of these scholarly perspectives. Recognizing how both positive and negative effects were produced within the societal norms and ideologies that influenced women’s fiber crafts of the past led me to delve deeper within my own study into the potentially positive and negative effects of women’s fiber crafts as produced

within contemporary societal norms and ideologies. I will discuss my findings and analyses later in chapters 4 and 5 as they related to some of these ideologies and the barriers that women still face today.

After the Arts and Crafts Movement

As I continued to review the literature of the past, I found that, as American society moved through the Arts and Crafts Movement (1895-1920) and women's suffragist movement (1848-1917), it was the Great Depression (1929-1939) that spawned a shift from handcrafted objects to factory produced objects as well as a shift in women's roles within the workforce and a sexual division of labor. For instance, President Roosevelt's New Deal program (1933-1939) the Works Progress Administration (WPA) (1939-1943) employed far more men than women, and it created a sexual division of labor that was present even in factory work as "women were assigned traditionally gendered work such as sewing or cooking" (Olszowka et al., 2014, p. 170). This resulted in wage discrimination as women often earned considerably less than men and were not protected by labor regulations or unions in the same way that men were (Olszowka et al., 2014).

In 1935, the women's sewing-room project was established, and it employed both skilled and unskilled women with the tasks of repairing old garments, dress making, the knitting and spinning of yarn, rug making, and quilting (Marcketti, 2010). Interestingly, a woman was deemed as skilled if she had been a seamstress in industry, and unskilled women were mainly untrained women whose experience with the needle centered around domestic work and small projects (Marcketti, 2010). However, although WPA did create sewing jobs for women, there was an implication that unskilled women were relegated to the needle and household duties, which reinforced stereotypical notions of gender (Green, 2009). Green (2009) expounded on this

as she explained that WPA perpetuated this stereotypical notion by establishing “the household service demonstration project, to train women for domestic employment” (p. 1022). The WPA did not offer more challenging jobs or training for women who wanted to venture outside of these typical occupations. In fact, Green (2009) argued that, with the New Deal, women “saw a steady erosion of their place in the work force, experiencing a de-skilling and gender stereotyping that consigned them to low-paid jobs in both the present and the future” (p. 1022). There are thousands of more examples and instances of the gendering of fiber crafts. These historical examples provide only a snippet of the magnitude and complexity of this issue.

Feminist Movements and the Resurgence of Fiber Crafts

In the 21st century, there has been a resurgence of textile crafts, particularly ones that involve a needle, such as knitting, crocheting, and sewing, among others (Grace & Gandolfo, 2014; Harrison & Ogden, 2019; Robertson & Vinebaum, 2016). Many of these craft groups or networks operate under names such as *Stitch 'n Bitch*, *Craftsters*, *Knitsters*, *Pub Knitters*, and *Knitivists* (Myzelev, 2009; Orton-Johnson, 2014). Chansky (2010) also explained that the domestic arts are being embraced once again with a renewed outlook that allows for women to utilize strength and innovation over the archaic notion that the purpose of the crafts is centered around domestic subjugation. In fact, Chansky (2010) stated that this resurgence embedded itself within the Third Wave feminist movement in which domestic arts gained popularity and shed the once designated oppressive stigma that consigned needlework into a craft realm that was “downplayed and undervalued by mainstream society” (p. 685). Third - Wave feminists gained inspiration and momentum from Second-Wave feminists such as Judy Chicago, Miriam Schapiro, and Faith Ringgold who created a space for women’s art in the 1960s and 1970s (Chansky, 2010). The rise of textile crafts with Third Wave feminism began in the 1980s and

“seems to include any approach, as long as it pays attention to gender issues and favors social justice” (Snyder, 2008, p. 181). According to Snyder (2008), Third-wave feminists “rightly rejected the universalist claim that all women share a set of common experiences, but they do not discard the concept of experience altogether” (p. 184). Snyder goes on to describe how “many third-wave stories strive to demonstrate the gaps between dominant discourses and the reality of women’s lives” (p. 184). One of the aims of the Third-Wave movement was to “reclaim so many aspects of traditional femininity in powerful new ways” (Snyder, 2008, p. 682), and this new wave afforded women with an outlet for feminist expression. Along with seeking an identity as craftswomen, many Third-Wave feminists desired to reclaim needle crafts that were once cast aside as oppressive domestic labor and devalued by other aspects of masculine society. This outlook on feminism addressed the voices of Third-wavers as they “want[ed] their own version of feminism that addresse[d] their different societal contexts and the particular set of challenges they fac[ed]” (Snyder, 2008, p. 178).

It must be noted that many scholars have argued that we are currently in a fourth-wave of feminism that began around 2010 (Baumgardner, 2011). Lange and Pérez-Moreno (2020) described this current movement as:

...utilizing new tools and strategies for communication, this ‘fourth wave’ of feminist thinking and activism is characterized by its commitment to a ‘diversity of purpose’ that recognizes intersectionality as a key issue of our time and questions established sex/gender systems and gender as a binary category. (p. 1)

Baumgardner (2011) stated that much of the fourth wave is due in part to current media advances and trends along with globalization. Cochrane (2013) reemphasized this statement in that she argued that one of the main differences in fourth wave as opposed to the other waves was the

shift towards an online presence and the focus on technology. She acknowledged “it’s defined by technology: tools that are allowing women to build a strong, popular, reactive movement online” (Cochrane, 2013).

There are many women, younger women in particular, whose efforts have served as a catalyst in terms of feminist approaches to reclaiming craftwork (Chansky, 2010). There is much irony embedded in this movement as women seek to utilize traditional domestic crafts to express new and progressive ideas. Chansky (2010) explained that the needle itself becomes the ideal material and tool for women to balance both anger due to oppression and gratification in their gender. Needlecrafts such as knitting, crocheting, sewing, quilting, latch hook, embroidery, and cross stitch have become the vehicles in which the needle creates the birth of a new form because it “stabs as it creates, forcing thread or yarn into the act of creation” (Chansky, 2010, p. 682).

Therefore, this metaphoric description gives life to the matter in order to delineate the significance that it has within the lives of women crafters as they form identities within the dichotomy of professionalism and fiber crafts. It seems that the frustration and anger from oppression and being forced to choose an identity has led to stronger forms of activism where women begin to gather and create in order to vocalize their statements through the medium of textiles and fibers.

Fabriculture

Part of the reclamation of fiber crafts can be seen in fabriculture, which embodies not only the tangible markings of fiber crafting, but also considers the meaning making manifestations that encourage activism while giving women a voice and place of discourse through acts of creation. Bratich and Brush (2011) explored “fabriculture” in their work and culture,” referring to the “domestic arts” as well as the resurgence of younger women’s pursuit of

craft forms that were once thought of as being antiquated (p. 234). Fabriculture comprises any practices that have been deemed as the ‘domestic arts’ such as knitting, crocheting, scrapbooking, quilting, embroidery, sewing, and doll-making (p. 234). Essentially, “fabriculture” is what Bratich and Brush (2011) referred to as “broader practices (meaning-making, communicative, community-building) intertwined with this (im)material labor” (p. 234). This (im)material labor is unique in that it does not focus on the act of creating. Rather, the intangible entities that are produced such as communication, symbols, relationships, and activism become the driving forces within fabriculture methods. Lazzarato (1996) described that immaterial labor as notable in that it “produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity.” Therefore, it is comprised of activities that are not only computer and digitally intertwined, but inclusive of cultural symbols and linguistics as well, and fiber “crafters often embedded meanings into their final products” (Lazzarato, 1996, p. 133). In essence, this new resurgence that is driven by feminist motivations functions through the underpinnings of contemporary technologies coupled with cultural entities, codes, and intangible meanings. It seems that fabric and the making of fabric affords a communal quality and embodies a dichotomy of novel versus traditional techniques. The concept of time is a significant factor in fabriculture as it is not a resurgence of the past or traditional methods of engaging in fiber crafts in domesticated settings. Rather, it encompasses what Bratich and Brush (2011) described as a “way of rethinking the capitalistic industrialized moment itself and the patriarchal division of space/labor” (p. 250). This resurgence of fabriculture within popular culture relates to yet another movement known as craftivism, which I will discuss next.

Craftivism

Craftivism, or activism through crafts in order to advocate for social change, also appears

a great deal within the literature. Craftivism maintains an emphasis on the activist components of craft culture while promoting inclusivity and community within its ranks. Women utilize this method as a vehicle for change and awareness. Oftentimes, craftivist groups are grass-roots efforts as they “position individuals and groups of people as reflective contributors who occupy a participatory democracy” (Garber, 2013, p. 52). In fact, because women crafters have been engaged in craft since the beginning of time, Garber (2013) asserts that fiber craft carries a more democratic notion than other art forms such as painting. Garber (2013) explains that this is because many people are engaged within the making and it is often more accessible to most given that it does not require extensive training and serves a more functional purpose for society. Because crafts can be learned informally, they serve to construct the basis of communities as they intertwine themselves among like-minded people who are united through the materials and causes (Garber, 2013). Another interesting facet of craftivism lies within the materials. As many craftivists are noted for being a part of the do-it-yourself culture, the resources that are used are typically locally sourced and upcycled materials. This also ties into the craftivists’ mindset as they seek to preserve the environment while promoting the consumption of regional products and renouncing corporate manufacturing (Garber, 2013). Garber (2013) further explains that women who participate within craftivist networks see their work as a way to voice their beliefs, but that it also provides “education through doing” (p. 60). This is often described as a type of “culture jamming” as it “resists hyper consumption and commercialism in favor of using intermediary spaces to build relationships between our inner selves and the people, objects, and places that surround us” (Garber, 2013, p. 60). Chansky (2010) also mentions that women crafters are frequently involved in craftivism on a more direct level as they are linked to many nonprofit organizations such as Rwanda Knits and the Warm Up America! Foundation that makes blankets

for victims of natural disasters, homeless, and abused women in women's shelters. Therefore, instead of inserting a heavy political statement through the use of public art projects, these craftivist groups embrace the direct action of their craft work and seek to help those that can benefit from their work.

Continuing Tensions around Fiber Craft and Gender

Overall, many women crafters are still searching for respect for their craft as they form their identities within craft networks. Grace and Gandolfo (2014) examined the identities of women crafters and found that even though there is a great deal of resurgence in craft, the traditional domestic views still remain given that fiber crafts are deemed as 'time fillers' by many people (p. 56). Hosegood (2006) confirmed this stance as she states that, "over and over again women who knit wrestle with their positions in society as either feminists or homemakers" (p. 157). Several studies explore the tensions that women fiber crafters face in relation to gender roles and identity, and women are very much aware of the labels and stigma that arise from their identities as craftswomen. For example, Grace's and Gandolfo (2014) study revealed that many of the women crafters combined their craft along with their other roles, such as being a mother, wife, and/or professional within their field, and in doing so, they were able to challenge other facets of their identities. And, according to Grace and Gandolfo's (2014) study, women are cognizant that stereotypes still exist that devalue crafting identities and label women crafters as "freaks" since crafts are thought to have the potential to "dumb down women" (p. 58). Grace and Gandolfo (2014) described how the stereotypical nature of fiber crafts generates significant discourses that "situate craft as something done by older women, nannas, and people who need therapy, [and] 'craft freaks' whose homes are covered in patchwork and cross-stitch" (p. 59). The women in their study recognized these statements as contradictions to their own identities as

they realized that their fiber craft was indeed an integral part of their identities and offered positive benefits such as expression, communication, and a feeling of belonging. Likewise, according to Grace and Gandolfo (2014), many of these derogatory statements concerning women's crafting identities were derived from feminist thought, popular culture, and various forms of media that create and disseminate these discourses. Additionally, it calls attention to what Hosegood (2009) saw as a binary that almost forced women to choose between the identity of feminist or homemaker. It is evident that many contemporary women see their participation with fiber crafts and networks to be one of self-expression, joy, creativity, and a form of rebellion as they rid themselves of the craftswoman identity that conforms to societal norms and stereotypes that have been embedded within women craft groups throughout time (Grace & Gandolfo, 2014).

Women's Crafting Communities

As I conducted research pertaining to women and fiber crafts, the role of women's crafting communities emerged as significant in the literature. In particular, subcategories such as well-being, space, and age-related tensions became evident. The following sections will reveal how women sought identities through their engagement with fiber crafts such as participating in craft networks and being able to share their knowledge and skills with other women.

Additionally, I present studies that encapsulate how forms of spiritual and emotional well-being have been acknowledged as positive effects of women's participation with fiber craft networks.

Next, I focus on the shift from the domestic sphere into the public sphere. From this literature, I highlight how fiber crafts transitioned from the archaic notion of the domestic sphere into more creative and innovative spaces that fostered subversion and activism as well. This literature provided much insight into the digital spaces that many women have utilized as their abilities

and social networks have flourished through these virtual interactions.

Another facet of the literature on women's crafting communities focused on age related tensions. Many women continue to engage in fiber crafts as a component of healthy aging, but the literature is careful to explain that many older women do not identify with the activist forms of crafting that rely on pop culture and contemporary methods. Overall, the literature I investigated in relation to women's crafting communities delved into not only the positive aspects of fiber craft communities, but adverse viewpoints as well. The literature also acknowledged the shifts that fiber crafts have undergone through the many historical and social events that have occurred over the course of time. Lastly, it must also be mentioned that, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, most of the craft groups around the world had to stop their gatherings abruptly due to safety concerns. Yet, within the context of the pandemic, positive aspects of online fiber crafts communities began to gain momentum as people desired comradery as an alternative to the isolation that has ensued over the past three years.

Craft Groups and Well-being

Many women's craft networks and groups have found positive benefits to being engaged with and seeking their identities among such groups. In Kenning's study (2015), she found that "teaching, mentoring, and sharing knowledge, skills, techniques, equipment, and information were important to how makers self-identified, identified as part of a community, and contributed to it" (p. 61). Furthermore, women's craft networks also help to form the identities of women who may feel marginalized, displaced, or uncertain. Buchczyk (2020) conducted a study with women refugees inside a refugee center in the United States, and one of her main goals was to foster connections and mobilize skills among the women as they created textile crafts. The women were of diverse ages and were mainly from Pakistani and Indian origin. The conception

of the refugee women's textile group arose from the need to provide safe and comfortable spaces where the women could come together to socialize and sew, knit, or participate in other textile-based crafts (Buchczyk, 2020). However, within this network, it seems that the women were able to seek new identities through a group identity that centered around crafting with others. In fact, some of the women used the group interactions to practice their English-speaking skills or even to offer support in terms of mental health. Because textile-based crafts played a significant role in the cultures of many of the women, this group was a way for them to transport their previous knowledge and skills as they formed new identities as craftswomen within the United States.

Another study was conducted by Longman (2018), whose ethnographic study on women's circles also provides insight into how a space can become a place of empowerment, reconnection to sisterhood, well-being, and spirituality. She went on to say that "women's circles are indicative of women's heightened participation in the realm of subjective well-being culture, including both elements of spirituality and more secular personal growth" (Longman, 2018, p. 1). Chansky (2010) found that participation in craft groups and networks can offer an escape from the monotony of life for many career-minded and active women who are able to produce something tangible, thereby providing immediate satisfaction while juggling the dichotomy of being a professional woman and a "domestic goddess" (p. 691). Myzelev goes on to say that "knitting affords a link between the past and the present postmodern condition, and this can be seen as a positive and empowering phenomenon" (2009, p. 152). Renehan et al. (2012) also further this notion of well-being with evidence from their study that illustrates that participation in social craft activities such as craft groups provides interaction with others as well as promoting creative stimulation and personal fulfillment, and it contributes to overall general

health and positive well-being. In terms of defining what well-being truly is, Kenning (2015) describes it as “positive well-being relates to a general non-clinical, non-pharmacological concept of good health and draws from a range of sources” (p. 53).

While the positive benefits were quite prominent in terms of women’s engagement with fiber crafts, the notion of space also became an interesting component within the findings as well. Although many contemporary women still engage with fiber crafts in private settings, much of the literature revealed a shift into the public sphere as well. The following section will focus on space and how it was represented within the literature in terms of the merging of private and domestic spaces into more public and vulnerable spaces.

Private Space Merges into Public Space

Space forms a vital component of the literature because, whether virtual or in person, all women craft groups function within some type of space. In fact, Robertson and Vinebaum (2016) argue that “one of the most profound recent developments in the field of contemporary fiber is a substantial shift in site from private space, away from the domestic sphere and into public sites,” and in doing so, has “dissolved the traditional notion that craft is only an individual endeavor as they transform the public space into ‘shared, dynamic, and communal social space’” (p. 5). Historically speaking, the private space has long been associated with domestic space, feminism, and mothering. According to Bratich and Brush (2011), these women-only spaces have long been eroticized throughout history, often eliminating the fiber craft labor and production within a space and instead focused on the voluptuous female body and the male gaze. In fact, Bratich and Brush (2011) argued that “crafting does not belong to the home any more than it does the factory” (p. 240). Robertson and Vinebaum (2016) emphasized that the history of fiber and fiber crafts “reveals that textiles have often been mobilized as a part of feminist activist organizing”

(p. 8). Therefore, this exodus from the private/domestic spaces must be examined for the way it has led into more public and mobile extensions of fiber craft.

Several research studies have explored these more public and mobile spaces of fiber craft. For example, Lindström and Ståhl (2016) created a mobile sewing circle traveling exhibition titled *Threads* that merges the two disciplines of interaction design and media and communication studies. As the community project moved from place to place, participants had the opportunity to embroider a text message by hand using a specially designed embroidery machine that was attached to a mobile device (Lindström & Ståhl, 2016). This traveling group project centered around promoting caring towards craft and people as well as emerging issues relating to a growing dependence on technology. The study of this project revealed that women's craft groups can be mobile and ever changing in terms of participants. The study also raised questions such as: do groups need to remain stable in terms of space and participants, and how does life with technologies seek to change the social landscape of craft? Furthermore, women have also embraced digital platforms as another space in which to connect with other fiber crafters, sell their products, and locate significant information about their particular fiber craft such as YouTube videos. The following section will delve further into the theme of space, and how a digital space also provides women fiber crafters with another avenue to promote and embrace their craft.

Digital Spaces

Given our society's fixation and dependency on virtual and digital platforms, it is no surprise that many women fiber crafters have begun to utilize online communities through avenues such as blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Etsy, and various other websites (Bratich & Brush, 2011; Robertson & Vinebaum, 2016). Research suggests that the World Wide Web (WWW) has

become a catalyst for the creation of these virtual fiber crafts communities and has allowed these groups to flourish as “the new domesticity is thoroughly an online affair” (Bratich & Brush, 2011, p. 241). As much of the literature suggests, it seems that women have been eager to alter the spaces of their communal fiber pursuits. Therefore, what this implies is that many women have embraced a new outlook on textile crafts as the spaces of creation shift from more domestic and traditional spaces to virtual communities. In fact, Orton-Johnson (2014) shares her stance on digital craft communities and digital mediations within this new experience of leisure within her study as she explores how technology has the potential to merge the social and digital realms of crafting. She argued that “social media has given knitters new ways to think about and engage with their craft that, in turn, have become an embedded part of their construction and enjoyment of knitting as a leisure pursuit” (Orton-Johnson, 2014, p. 306).

Interestingly, Orton-Johnson (2014) focused on a particular social craft network called Ravelry, and this site basically provides its members with a “forum for the professionalism of leisure practices and provides a platform for independent designers and yarn producers to sell and share their work” (p. 313). Therefore, as women participate in virtual groups such as Ravelry, there are multiple entry points that range from beginning textile crafters to professional crafters. There are often online tutorials as well as a range of digital practices to provide options for the diverse group. However, Luckman (2013) saw the resurgence in women’s fiber crafts as related to amateur labor through creative markets such as Etsy and Indie (Independent) crafts, where small business models thrive among the young population within this re-articulation of the domestic sphere. She suggested that this ‘digital revolution’ serves to address the problems and anxieties that arise from the rapid acceleration of modern life in the western world and has counterparts similar to reactions of the Industrial Revolution in that the handmade and authentic

object is sought after over mass-produced objects (Luckman, 2013). In fact, Gauntlett (2018) is a strong proponent for these digital, online communities such as Etsy and Ravelry as he asserts that they epitomize community engagement along with a means for renewed visibility for their products and international associations among these female crafters. Orton-Johnson (2014) also advocates for the new web culture surrounding textile craft communities as they assert that these virtual craft communities are fundamental in providing benefits such as associations with others “sharing skills, exhibiting projects, facilitating events, and the performativity of publicly displaying a traditionally private activity” (as cited in Harrison & Ogden, 2019, p. 456).

What this signifies is that the gendered notion of craft is challenging the long-standing assumption that women’s fiber craft work is amateur and nothing more than a hobby. For example, Luckman (2013) argued that many women rely upon these digital communities for creative entrepreneurship as they are “no longer relegated to a corner of shared family space or the dining table in between family meals” (p. 262). Thus, a sense of empowerment and satisfaction through financial means occurs within this domain of digital femininity. In addition, these online sites and platforms encourage alliances and relationships among women. As these women engage in virtual crafting, they exchange knowledge, skills, and products as these online techniques and spaces embed themselves into normal life in what Bratich and Brush (2011) referred to as “social *meshworks*” (p. 242). Therefore, these *meshworks* can be local, global, and open-ended so that women crafters entangle the old assumptions of craft with the new aspects of the craft or fabriculture within a virtual realm (Bratich & Brush, 2011). Conversely, Myzelev (2015) states that textile crafts, along with the Do-It-Yourself culture online, are strongly linked to Third Wave feminism and have not received adequate consideration from a scholarly

perspective. She goes on to say that the main function of these online craft communities of women is to bring awareness to vital issues within society through the use of fiber-based materials to “empower women and negotiate femininity as an acceptable social standard” (p. 58).

This negotiation of femininity also exposed another topic within the literature that will be examined further in the subsequent section. This topic centers around age-related tensions that are present even today that includes marginalized women who claim no aspect of feminism within their work. Rather, a focus on well-being and healthy aging through the engagement with fiber crafts not only provides a catalyst for many of these women, but also a means to remain steadfast to memory and tradition.

Age-Related Tensions in Fiber Crafting

Even though younger generations have established a presence within fiber craft communities, the health and well-being that fiber crafts produce play a significant role within various communities of aging women as well. Many women have remained active within their craft groups well into old age, spanning through retirement and many other life changes (Kenning, 2015). Research that focuses on older women who have been engaging in textile crafts either individually or as part of craft groups for most of their lives suggests that the benefits are distinctive for them in terms of healthy aging. For instance, Kenning (2015) argued that fiber-based crafts “suggest a model for ways in which individuals, caregivers, families, and social and health professionals can engage with and support existing informal networks, communities and practices to foster self-managed well-being and healthy aging” (p. 53).

Kenning’s (2015) qualitative study took place in Australia, and its purpose was to “investigate the importance and role of craft-based textile activities for individual makers and to

explore the potential for everyday craft activities and craft -related networks and social practices that contribute to health and well-being” (p. 55). Her research showed that the significance of participating in craft groups or networks extends far beyond each individual as there are implications for the “care and well-being of the aging population” as well (Kenning, 2015, p. 55). In addition, according to much of the literature that I reviewed, textile-based crafts are slowly gaining recognition as they have the potential to provide the members with a means to explore identity and improve self-esteem (Schofield-Tomschin & Littrell, 2001) while also providing a place of belonging (Johnson & Wilson, 2005), an avenue to continue traditions (Turney, 2004), an arena for creativity and subversion (Minahan & Wolfram Cox, 2007), and opportunities for healthy aging (Kenning, 2015).

Sznajder and Kosmala’s (2018) study of a lace making craft group in Krakow, Poland revealed that the community craft group provided a space in which women experienced creativity and shared skills through oral narratives and memories. According to the researchers, these spaces provided a means to share oral narratives that “established connections between people’s past and present lives” (p.2). Consequently, the oral narratives and personal memories shared within these craft groups were significant in that the participants were able to delve into the value and reasoning behind their creative endeavors as well as to provide a sort of rehabilitation due to a difficult past. Moreover, Sznajder and Kosmala’s (2018) study revealed that the narratives and memories served to link the women to their city’s lace-making heritage along with contributing to “ageing-related resilience through a process of meaning-making for individuals and the group” (p. 2). Therefore, it is evident that the community and history also plays a significant role in providing women with historical knowledge as well as facilitating in

the resurfacing of memories and personal narratives. Moreover, this type of meaning-making allows the women to gain a sense of wellbeing as a space is created where the discourses of craft merge with discourses of aging.

Thus, while there has been a resurgence within younger populations of women in terms of fiber crafts, there are still many women who are not classified within the younger population of twenty something's that engage with and enjoy fiber crafts. In fact, the majority of knitters in Britain are believed to be women in their late thirties and older (Harrison & Ogden, 2019).

Equally illuminating is that Harrison and Ogden's 'knit "n" natter' focus groups study comprised of three locations in Britain unveiled that there are older women who do not identify with the edgy, hipster pop culture of fiber crafts and feel marginalized as their capabilities are disregarded. The data from Harrison and Ogden's (2019) study suggested that some women knitters may feel taken aback by the stereotypical "grandma" assumption about knitting, and some women may feel marginalized due to age factors as well as the assumption that knitting is indicative of non-liberated femininity (Harrison & Ogden, 2019). These findings revealed that "the discursive opposition between hipster-knitters and nana-knitters reconfirms patriarchal, capitalist value systems founded on the binaries of public/private, masculine/feminine and youth/age" (Harrison & Ogden, 2019, p. 464).

The revelations from their study might explain why Harrison and Ogden (2019) asserted that scholarly focus on textile crafts has typically been cast aside as too domestic and has privileged young hipster, stitch and bitch knitters and craftivism as they sought to reinvent knitting and other textile crafts through the aid of feminist movements. Nonetheless, the research conducted by Harrison and Ogden (2019) also revealed that the women who did not identify with the young and hip knitters had no desire for their handiwork to be tied to political pursuits, and

even preferred to knit in private settings as opposed to group settings. Thus, this also exposes the new radical notions of knitting and fiber crafts as a site of struggle within new formations of gender and age (Harrison & Ogden, 2019). Therefore, Harrison and Ogden (2019) sought to give a voice to older, more conservative knitters as new craft practices intersect traditional methods to expose knitting discourses that have the potential to polarize the two groups. However, in all, it is not to say that these new hip discourses are disadvantageous for women. Overall, the research is still clear that knitting and other fiber crafts remain beneficial for all ages (Harrison & Ogden, 2019). Lastly, one of the most significant components of the research that Harrison and Ogden (2019) conducted deduced that “knitting is a fruitful object of inquiry for interpreting shifting notions of gender and domesticity in the twenty-first century and provides a useful source of critique of hipster capitalist post-feminist culture” (p. 465).

Conclusion

It is evident that women still seek solace, identity formation, activism, traditions, and sisterhood even in the present-day groups that I researched. However, technology seemed to be the main factor that has altered the way in which craft groups are established and upheld today. While the narrative has shifted a bit as women have claimed their positions within craft communities, women still encounter negativity surrounding fiber crafts being likened to archaic pastimes and time fillers. However, despite numerous longstanding gendered stereotypes, many women have embraced the growing popularity of fiber crafts for not only the physical and emotional benefits, but for economic and activist reasons as well. Further, fiber crafting seems to have offered some women an avenue in which to challenge traditional gender norms.

Based on this literature review, I began to wonder about the role of fiber crafts in the lives of my participants. While I had already presumed that there would be positive benefits to

engaging with fiber crafts, I had not considered how patriarchal views of craft might influence how present-day women engage with fiber crafts. The literature that I reviewed revealed a very storied history of women and their engagement with fiber crafts, but the narrative that relegated them to the gendered notion of fiber crafts began to resound within my mind, and I started to see that perhaps many of these notions were still existing with present day fiber crafters. Lastly, I was also impacted by the subversive nature that fiber crafts assumed for many of the women throughout time. The fact that, throughout history, women had been using fiber crafts as a form of subversion caused me to question if contemporary women still utilize simple tools such as a needle and thread to challenge multifaceted issues and views that have the potential to impact who they are and how they negotiate their various roles and identities.

CHAPTER 3

CASTING ON

Put basically, casting on is a series of techniques used in knitting to initiate the beginnings of a knitting project. Similarly, casting on is a good way to describe the process that I utilized within my study as I employed a series of techniques to conduct the research and represent the data that I discovered. Overall, I decided to forgo traditional research methods and conduct my study in a way that allowed the seemingly insignificant material to glow (MacLure, 2013) to the surface to see the study from a new perspective. This chapter will discuss my process and my journey. I must admit that this chapter is not about methods and methodology. Rather, this is a chapter about the process of discovery and speculation that I experienced. It describes an experimental approach of thinking with the data in a new way. Additionally, there are moments of growth I experienced as a researcher that will surface throughout the chapter. Overall, I had to shift my mindset and become vulnerable to possibilities. Those possibilities were often uncomfortable for me, and I was reluctant to let go of a more traditional mindset of coding, lengthy interviews, separating data into categories, and viewing the world and its materials through a humanist lens in a manner that has been deemed as good conduct in research.

In the ensuing sections, I will describe the journey that I made with my participants. Surprisingly, I realized that my initial focus, which centered specifically on the fiber craft materials and processes, didn't really "matter" as much as I had thought. I returned to the human and more-than-human materials that were a part of the study in a distinctive way by considering aspects of the data that initially seemed unrelated to my study—aspects such as time, space, and bodies. In turn, the materials were much more than I had ever considered them to be. I

experienced a transformation as I learned to let go and find myself in a different space that allowed me to see material in a new and inspiring way.

June 25, 2022

As I gleaned through the data, I became overwhelmed. I became paralyzed with fear and I wondered if I could ever make sense of the data or devise some sort of approach that could influence the field of art education. But, the materials—aren't they the most important part of a fiber crafts study? The more I viewed the data, the more I realized that there were far more interesting aspects that rose to the surface than just fiber crafts tools and processes. I investigated the gendered notion of fiber craft, time, and space. What surprised me was that they were all inextricably linked. Certain phrases from object interviews or captions from social media posts seemed to provoke gender, space, and time as sites of exploration. Meanwhile, as I become transfixed on these sites of exploration, I found myself entangled with the women and all of the materials within their assemblages. While they experienced their own forms of balance as women with various roles, I too felt tension as I balanced motherhood, wifedom, my career, and being a PhD student. I realized that the materials within my life were being co-produced alongside the materials in their lives. It was happening before I even realized it, but it gave me a segue way into a deeper understanding of how things come to matter, what matters, and to whom it matters. The women wanted to create beautiful, yet finished products, but even they knew that their products might not be complete, as they could be altered or ripped apart only to start anew. I wondered if this was really what happened in life—perhaps we too are never complete, but through intra-active processes, we are torn apart only to become something new.

(Re)knitting Possibilities

Ultimately, I chose to utilize what might be considered an uncommon approach for research and data analysis, and this approach prompted me to deviate from traditional methods of qualitative research. In my study, I relied on a feminist new materialist approach that allowed for more flexibility and ambiguity throughout the research design. According to St. Pierre (2021), post qualitative research is not considered to be a methodology, but rather an approach to inquiry. In fact, she argued that “it doesn’t even have preexisting research *designs* like case study and ethnography,” and she went on to assert that it also doesn’t contain a “preexisting, formalized, systematic research *process* that one can follow” (St. Pierre, 2021, p. 5). These words resonated with me because I found that I was not interested in a traditional methodological approach for my study, and St. Pierre (2021) aided in leading me in a direction that validated exactly what I was trying to achieve. I was not looking for a neat and orderly methodology that would limit me to spending many hours coding and searching for themes. Rather, I wanted something more stimulating and creative. Furthermore, I desired an approach that would give rise to different ways of thinking about fiber crafts and gender. I sensed that a traditional qualitative study would likely only scratch the surface. Therefore, I wanted to explore the life of all of the materials and witness the agency that matter possessed. This called for my methods to become open systems that allowed for traditional techniques to be disrupted and reconfigured in new ways.

I was inspired, in particular, by Jackson and Mazzei’s (2012) book, *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research* for the way it afforded multiple avenues for viewing data from diverse perspectives. According to the authors, the intention of the book was to “read the same data across multiple theorists by plugging the theory and data into one another” (Jackson & Mazzei,

2012, p. vii). The authors contended that coding and reducing data to themes did not allow for a true engagement with qualitative data interpretation and analysis. Rather, Jackson and Mazzei (2013) rationalized that instead of “seeking stability within and among the data, we were drawn to the data that seemed to be about difference rather than sameness” (p. 263). Although I was not fixated on themes and coding, I did visualize how concepts such as material, time, and space were emerging and how I could use these concepts to think with the data. Thinking with theory and emergent concepts would become the foundational process that would guide my decisions throughout my study, and the theory that would propel and then direct my study would be feminist new materialism.

Jackson and Mazzei (2012) explored feminist new materialism through the work of one of its key theorists, Karen Barad, and maintained that to approach data from this lens would require researchers to embody acts of turning from interpretivism and humanism toward ways of producing knowledge differently. Feminist new materialism requires decentering the human in that the focus is not on the lived experience of the human but all the collective encounters and materials that are entangled with the human. From this perspective, the potentiality of what *may* happen becomes more essential than what *has* happened. According to Coole and Frost (2010), materiality is always something more than “mere” matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality, or difference that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable” (p. 9).

Feminist New Materialism: An Intertwining Thread

As I was attempting to design the study, I had a difficult time grasping that the human needed to be decentered within the research techniques. Initially, I was drawn to Bell and Vachhani’s (2020) theoretical stance in that “raw materials are transformed into objects through relational encounters with bodies and tools that affect what matter can do” (p. 688). I began to

consider what this meant, and how it related to women who engaged in fiber craft. It caused me to question what bodies and materials could do, and what happened at these intersections. I realized that it wasn't just the fiber craft tools that created the fiber craft or guided the process, but it was all the human and more-than-human materials that affected one another within and beyond these encounters. Therefore, I decided to move toward the theoretical underpinnings of feminist new materialism, what I will often refer to as FNM, to help me visualize my study from this unique perspective.

Historically, a shift to new materialism, or feminist new materialism, was influenced by advances in the natural sciences during the 20th century. Coole and Frost (2010) clarified that one reason for turning to materialism was “the emergence of pressing ethical and political concerns that accompany the scientific and technological advances predicated on new scientific models of matter and, in particular, of living matter” (p. 50). There was also a pivot from the linguistic turn, and as Barad (2003) noted, “language has been granted too much power,” and they argued that “the representationalist belief in the power of words to mirror preexisting phenomena is the metaphysical substrate that supports social constructivist, as well as traditional realist, beliefs” (p. 802). Therefore, Coole and Frost (2010) maintained that dominant discourses such as these do not offer considerations of how to think about matter, materiality, politics, and the natural environment. In fact, feminist new materialism is “an orientation that is posthumanist in the sense that it conceives of matter itself as lively or as exhibiting agency” (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 7).

The following sections will provide a brief synopsis of how scholars define feminist new materialism and how I applied some of the theoretical concepts to my study. Truman (2019) suggested that feminist new materialism (FNM) is a “porous field,” and is often associated with

dialogue relating to the “posthuman, object-oriented ontology, and the ontological or vital materialist turn” (p. 2). However, to understand this material turn, one might ask, what *is* material? Essentially, material is anything we experience in the world, and Coole and Frost (2010) clarified that from a FNM standpoint, “materiality is always something more than ‘mere’ matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality, or difference that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable” (p. 9). In other words, FNM seeks to (re)claim and place more emphasis on the material (human and more-than-human) and explore how everything is comprised of the material and discursive realms without privileging one over the other. A guiding question for many FNM researchers is *how does matter come to matter?*

One way that this occurs is through the agency of materials. Likewise, Alaimo and Hekman (2008) argued that one of the main concepts of this theoretical perspective centered on the “question of agency, particularly the agency of bodies and natures” (p. 7). Many of the theorists of FNM maintain various perspectives and utilize diverse concepts within their theoretical context. In particular, Barad’s (2007) “entangled state of agencies” is what allowed me to consider how things were produced differently (pp. 22-23). An entanglement of agencies is what occurs when humans and more-than-humans intra-act, and this constitutes a mutual materialization of these entities (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). Undeniably, an entangled agency is a transformation and shift that has the potential to produce different relations. Often, these different relations are boundaries that become porous as the entanglements go on to produce *becomings*, or what Barad (2007) defined as “ongoing reconfigurings of the world” (p. 141).

Therefore, an emphasis on shifts and changes in addition to materials merging and moving apart have the potential to create unexpected encounters that also pierce pre-existing boundaries as well. Thus, I found that in terms of boundaries, the material of gender was

constantly in flux and moved in and through as new understandings and becomings were formed throughout my study and analysis.

The main concepts I employed within my analysis were informed by the underpinnings of feminist new materialism as theorized by Barad (2007). Some of these key concepts included, but were not limited to: spacetime-mattering, the intra-activity of becoming, and the entanglements that constitute assemblages. Nonetheless, there were other scholars that provided unique interpretations of assemblages as well. The following sections will briefly present a few of these theorists such as Deleuze and Guattari, DeLanda, and Bennett. Although there is scholarly debate (e.g. Hein, 2016) about whether the philosophies of Barad and Deleuze are compatible, Murriss and Bozalek (2019) argued that while “Barad does not draw on, or refer to Deleuze’s work,” they contend that “the connections and relations between the work of Barad and Deleuze, and the ways in which their work affects and is affected by each other can lead to creative provocations” (p. 874). It is with an interest for creative provocations that I therefore position the work of these theorists in relation to one another. These theorists offered theoretical interpretations that served as a starting point for my investigation into the intra-actions that become a part of moving assemblages as well as the agency of the materials as they move and become entangled with one another, which is further theorized in FNM. The following sections will explore assemblages, intra-actions, and spacetime-matterings as theorized by these scholars.

Assemblages

Although several feminist new materialists utilize the concept of assemblage within their work, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) constituted the groundwork for the concept, and often presented various definitions of assemblage as they related to facets of their philosophical bent. One definition stated that “an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of

expression,” (p. 88). However, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) provided two definitions based on a horizontal axis. One facet consisted of “a *machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, and intermingling of bodies reacting to one another” and the other facet of these assemblages embodied “a *collective assemblage enunciation* of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies” (p. 88). Additionally, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) included assemblages from the vertical axis, and these consisted of *territorial sides* which stabilize it, and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*, which carry it away” (p. 88). Furthermore, DeLanda (2016) provided a definition of an assemblage when he affirmed, “it is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogenous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns—different natures” (p.1). In fact, he went on to say that there are two aspects to this concept, and he posited that “the parts that are fitted together are not uniform either in nature or in origin, and that the assemblage actively links these parts together by establishing relations between them” (p. 2).

Likewise, Bennett (2010) offered her take on assemblages as well, and argued that they “are not governed by any central head: no one materiality or type of material has sufficient competence to determine consistently the trajectory or impact of the group” (p. 24). In addition, she noted that the affects that are created by these assemblages are “emergent properties,” because they are groupings that are “living, throbbing confederations that can function despite persistent presence of energies that confound them from within” (Bennett, 2010, p. 23). Hence, her interpretation of assemblages brought attention to the life of the materials that are involved and how they emerge and function together. Additionally, what is interesting about her view of assemblages is that no one material has the authority to dictate what the other materials do, where they move, and how they impact one another.

In addition, Nail (2017) summarized a conceivable definition of assemblages and what occurs within the entanglements when he stated that “if we want to know what something is, we cannot presume that what we see is the final product nor that this product is somehow independent of the network of social and historical processes to which it is connected” (p. 24). What I realized about this explanation was that nothing is truly in its final stages, and what I needed to consider was all of the other material (history, social, gender, race, etc.) that had been and would continue to be linked to all of the assemblages in my study. The concept of an assemblage, therefore, caused me to consider how materials must continue on a journey to move, change, and form new links and possibilities with other materials. Assemblages aren’t just “things” coming together for one big curtain “reveal.” Rather, all the materials that move in and out of assemblages are always in constant motion, never stationary like a display. Moreover, Bodén (2019) echoed this sentiment with their take on assemblages as “a process of arranging or fitting together, and these arrangements create new ways of functioning” (p. 19). In all, assemblages are not static, and what is produced is new and linked through processual means.

As I thought about my own study, I carefully noted the relations among and between many of the materials that moved in and out of the assemblages, and considered how no singular material had the authority to determine where these materials would travel. It was a co-creative process that merged into different intra-actions within new assemblages that were always already forming. Further, I was intrigued by DeLanda’s (2016) explanation that none of the parts of an assemblage were uniform, but were linked inexplicably as relations were established, yet moved away to form new links to other materials. In my study, I saw that many of the materials were different across the contexts of the participants and the links that were produced as they assembled and reassembled were unanticipated and remarkable. Most importantly, by thinking

with the concept of assemblage and feminist new materialism, I came to understand that it was the *intra-actions* that occurred within and among the assemblages. I realized that it was not just that the fiber craft tools and processes were agentic integral parts of the assemblages, but that the intra-actions generated within the assemblages could produce material, discursive, affective relations of gender. In the next section, I examine intra-action from a FNM standpoint and explain how I used this theory to think through my investigations.

Intra-actions

In terms of intra-action, Barad (2003) maintained that “the dynamics of intra-activity entails matter as an *active* ‘agent’ in its ongoing materialization” (p. 822). Moreover, Barad (2007) also conveyed their thoughts on matter and how it is not a static structure. Rather, “matter is substance in its intra-active becoming—not a thing but a doing, a congealing of agency” (p. 183). Essentially, it is a reclaiming of the materials and an understanding of the linkages between human and more-than-human bodies. Equally, it must also be mentioned that *inter*-actions are quite different than *intra*-actions. For example, Barad describes that inter-actions focus on inter-personal relationships and the preestablished bodies that partake in action with one another. In terms of intra-action, the action emerges from within the relationship, and is not pre-existing.

Intra-action maintains that the ability to act, the agency, is not derived from a human origin. Rather, it is the merging of many distinctive, yet vibrant forces. Barad (2007) also placed emphasis on the agential realism of materials and how they come to matter as she argued that “all bodies, not merely ‘human’ bodies, come to matter through the world’s iterative intra-activity—its performativity” (p. 141). Therefore, it is through these intra-actions that all things come to matter as one should consider what is being produced as these actions occur.

As I began to visualize how I would think with these concepts, I sought the theoretical

perspective of Jackson and Mazzei (2012). They explained that thinking with this notion of intra-action “helps us fashion an approach that re-inserts the material into the process of analysis,” and they went on to say that it is a process of “reclaiming of the material absent in its modernist limitations” (p. 135). As these intra-actions occur and materials become entangled it is important to note that “bodies and objects do not stand in externality to each other but rather as part of each other in mutual relationality” (Barad, 2007, p. 140). Therefore, it is the materials within the intra-actions that are always being co-produced. They never become stagnant, and instead come together and apart in interesting ways. No trajectory is set, and the possibilities occur as the materials move into and beyond one another. Essentially, what is being produced are these agentic forces of physical materials and spaces that cannot be disentangled from the emergence of actions and experiences.

Furthermore, my investigations also aligned with Hickey-Moody (2020) in that intra-actions between participants and the materials played a significant role as they “mobilize the forces of matter in ways that can require people to relinquish agency” (p. 2). Thus, in my study, intra-actions provided opportunities for me to observe the possibilities that were created within the in-between spaces and connectivity of materials as I attempted to disentangle the agency of the human participants from my approach to investigating women’s fiber crafting. I felt as though the participants’ materials and craft processes offered a rich opportunity to investigate how materials transpire and move in flux as the women found the time, space, and creative energy to create. In addition, I noticed how entangled entities were reconfigured in terms of place and time, which led me to the related concept of spacetime mattering.

Spacetime mattering

Spacetime mattering is another concept theorized by FNM theorist, Karen Barad, whose

views primarily rest within the field of quantum physics. They explained that it “is a dynamic ongoing reconfiguring of a field of relationalities among ‘moments’, ‘places,’ and ‘things’ (in their inseparability) where scale is iteratively re(made) in intra-action” (Barad, 2017, p. 111). Fundamentally, this concept deals with the rethinking of time and the “undoing of time, of universal time, of the notion that moments exist one at a time, everywhere the same, and replace one another in succession” (Barad, 2017, p.70). This may seem a bit perplexing, but Bodén (2019) simply described spacetimemattering as a concept in which “time, presence, and absence are always entangled with places and spaces” (p. 83). What this means is that space, place, and time are not pre-existing and invariable as they continue to matter within our ethical relations. Rather, it is the intra-actions among the materials and relations that continue the processes of making and remaking space and time. Barad (2017) posited that “while the past is never finished and the future is not what will unfold, the world holds the memories of its iterative reconfigurings” (p. 73). Additionally, this concept brings to the forefront that entanglements can reach across various times and spaces and the fact that materials are not solely located *in* space and time. Therefore, space and time are intra-actively produced, and “neither the past nor the future is ever closed” (Barad, 2007, p. 383).

As I progressed through my study, I noticed that time and space rose in significance as I realized that they were a vital part of the entanglements that ensued. The women mentioned time and space quite often either in the object interviews or in social media postings.

Spacetimemattering provided a significant vehicle for attempting to visualize and understand what was happening within these entanglements. Thus, I came to understand how “entanglements are not a name for the interconnectedness of all being as one, but rather specific material relations of the ongoing differentiating of the world” (Barad, 2010, p. 265). Ultimately,

I explored the link between what was happening as assemblages were forming and reforming space and time through these entanglements. I considered the agency of materials and how they were always becoming something different as forces that were not predetermined collide.

In order to really delve into spacetime-mattering of these entanglements, I had to first consider the physical nuances of time that occurred during fiber craft processes. Consequently, this concept caused me to consider the physical raveling and unraveling of fibers and the repetitive nature of what was produced from the intra-active moments of fiber crafting. Essentially, I noticed a duality of a philosophical unraveling of time, but also noted the physical repetitive work of fiber crafting along with how the work was also paired with the passing of time as the creations unfolded. What I learned was that much of fiber crafting was based on repetition—repetition of stitches and patterns, yet repetition of time as well. Esquivel (2019) argued that feminist fiber artists and crafters “have long been aware of the power of repetition in fiber art and craft to recalibrate one’s senses to a greater awareness of the unfolding of time” (p. 121). Therefore, it was the act of repetition that became a vital factor in terms of the unfolding of time as the repetitive stitches formed connections from the past to the present and in between (Esquivel, 2019, p.121). However, it was not only the physical connections of time with each stitch, but the notion of gender that also arose due in part to its link to fiber crafting of the past, present, and future.

Interestingly, spacetime-mattering also allowed me to think about time and the historicity of women and fiber crafts in addition to the material of gender that has always formed and reformed over time. In fact, Barad (2007) postulated that “the past matters and so does the future, but the past is never left behind, never finished once and for all, and the future is not what will come to be in an unfolding of the present moment” (p. 181). I began to explore how gender is

reformed as the intra-actions remake space and time, and how women have carved out their own spaces in a world that was not always accepting of them throughout time. Therefore, I saw the historic importance of the gendered notion of fiber crafts, but I knew that it was not left behind as it continued to unfold into the future. Surprisingly, I found gender to be inseparable from all the entanglements and possibilities that I investigated. Moreover, I began to consider the various materials within the lives of the women such as mothering, the gendered space of the home, work outside of the home, leisure, care, and time. I realized that all these materials had always aided in the remaking of space and time for women fiber crafters. Consequently, I found that all these materials were also inseparable as they intra-acted and flowed in and out of porous boundaries as well. Spacetime mattering offered an investigation into how matter situates itself, and Barad (2007) emphasized that “intra-actions themselves matter to the making/marking of space and time” (p. 180).

It is within intra-actions that boundaries are made and remade, and according to Barad (2007), “the boundaries that are enacted are not abstract delineations but specific material demarcations not *in* space but *of* space” (p. 181). Fullagar and Pavlidis (2021) described spacetime mattering with regard to the making and remaking of boundaries in relation to home, suggesting that these processes have the tendency to “alter how we experience home through material and discursive forces, condensing memories, sensory moments and future desires” (p. 156). Disruptions and distractions such as COVID and mothering have the power to shift everyday life into new ways of becoming as other material continues to fold and refold into the assemblages as they appear and reappear. For example, COVID caused many women to share workspaces with their spouses, and as many of them were in lockdown during the beginning phases of the pandemic, the balance of motherhood, leisure pursuits, and the fear of the unknown

were in a constant push and pull of coming together then apart (Heggeness, 2020; O'Reilly, 2020). Similarly, the tensions that many of these materials created within the lives of the women in my study produced unexpected yet shifting boundaries as the women tried to remain safe from the virus while longing to pursue their fiber craft and simultaneously juggling motherhood and other domestic duties. In their spaces, there was comfort and fear coexisting within these assemblages. On the other hand, the assemblage of fiber crafts/tension/gendered spaces continued to form other moving assemblages as well. Often, space and time were altered and reformed through these intra-actions as new possibilities were created.

Overall, I allowed the theory to guide my investigations, and in turn, I also allowed the investigations to guide the theory. In doing so, space was extended for unique and surprising possibilities. In other words, being able to liberate my investigations from an unyielding structure allowed for interesting speculations and creative energies to emerge. As I considered the human and more-than-human materials within the study, I realized that space, time, and gender were prominent materials that were inseparable from not only the physical materials of fiber crafting, but the theoretical framework as well. In effect, Barad (2007) embodied this stance when they maintained that “time and space, like matter and meaning, come into existence, are iteratively reconfigured through each intra-action, thereby making it impossible to differentiate in any absolute sense between creation and renewal, beginning and returning, continuity and discontinuity, here and there, past and future” (p. ix). In all, the goal was not to understand why things come into existence, but *how* things come to matter and how they are reconfigured and intricately entangled with one another. In the next sections, I will describe the first phases of my pilot study in addition to the techniques that I employed throughout the process of data collection.

The First Stitches

The Gathering

Initially, I conducted a traditional pilot study with a group of women who engaged in needlepoint at a local church at the start of the pandemic. Although, I began my conversations with them in person, as the looming pandemic forced us into our homes, I had to shift my research methodology somewhat because I could not meet with my participants in person or have access to their materials and observe their processes in person. Therefore, I was forced to complete my pilot study in a more remote way, so I conducted phone and Zoom interviews at my home using my cell phone and MacBook. Since there were so many unknowns with the COVID virus, I found that many people were no longer working in craft groups and in open settings, but rather were still engaging in their fiber crafts from the comfort of their homes, backyards, and other safe locations. Due to the insights I gained from the pilot study, the ongoing pandemic, and my adherence to safety, I decided to move forward with my dissertation study relating to women who engage in fiber crafts while utilizing my own home as the site of research. A benefit to this approach was that I was able to connect with individuals that resided across the United States and engage in rich conversations both via virtual interviews and email correspondences.

To recruit participants for my study, I placed a call for participants online (See Appendix A) through the Critical Crafts Forum and The Dissertation Coach sites on Facebook. I specifically stated that the participants must identify as a woman, be at least 18 years or older, engage in fiber crafts, and maintain a social media presence such as Facebook or Instagram. Basically, I defined fiber crafts as, but not limited to, knitting, cross stitch, sewing, crochet, needlepoint, embroidery, quilting, weaving, and other fiber craft surface treatments. Next, the potential candidates completed a brief Qualtrics survey (See Appendix B) that I created to collect

information regarding race, ethnicity, level of experience with fiber crafts, the time and place in which they engaged in the craft, and if they were an art educator. I was surprised to find that I had over 100 women apply for my study, so it took me a while to glean through the survey data to find participants that aligned with my research requirements. Once I gathered a substantial number of women (seven total) who aligned with my research goals and pre-established sample selection, I emailed them with an invitation to participate in my study, and I gave them the details as to how the study would progress. I also included a consent form within the email so that they knew their identities along with any other significant information would be protected.

As I selected the participants, my goal was to have representation of women whose identities regarding race, ethnicity, religion, and/or sexual orientation were often marginalized in the United States. This allowed me to diversify my sampling so that I could engage with a range of women from various backgrounds and ethnicities. Originally, seven women accepted my invitation to participate in the study, but unfortunately, three of them never responded back to me with the additional information, pictures, and videos that I requested. Therefore, I ended up with four participants, one of whom was recommended to me through a friend who had taught art with the participant a few years prior.

Overall, the demographics of the final group of participants included one woman who identified as Black, two who identified as White, and one who identified as Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The first participant, Sally, was a Black woman who was also a retired kindergarten teacher from Georgia. Her primary fiber crafting technique consisted of crochet. She maintained a very active Facebook page where she posted personal pictures, but a great deal of finished products and works in progress. Her favorite place to crochet was in her car. The second participant, Jane, was a White woman who resided in Ohio, and worked in a breast cancer

research lab. She primarily worked with embroidery and cross-stitch techniques. She would often sit in the hallways and breakroom when she had a break and work on her fiber craft. Her work was very decorative, and she often used sparkle threads and tiny glass seed beads as embellishments for her work. The third participant, Melody, was a White woman who lived in Pennsylvania and was an art educator. Her work consisted of artful surface treatments that incorporated embroidery and sometimes paintings. The final participant, Rhonda, lived in the Midwest and was a graphic designer. She had a very bubbly personality, and was highly engaged on both Instagram and Facebook. She was primarily a knitter. She also sold her wares such as knitted hats and rainbow keychains in her Etsy store. She identified as a Pacific Islander and often shared her family heritage and recipes on her social media posts.

The Eye of the Needle

The purpose of this study was to investigate the intra-actions that occurred between the human and more-than-human materials within the fiber craft assemblages through the lens of feminist new materialism. I also recognized that there seemed to be many positive benefits from engaging with fiber crafts processes. Yet, I felt that my knowledge of fiber crafts was limited, and I desired to learn more about the processes so that I could eventually employ the methods in my own classroom and aid future teachers in establishing fiber crafting in their classrooms. Likewise, I eventually learned from my literature review that there was a resurgence in fiber crafts within our society, and I wanted to see how or if that resurgence was evident in or relevant to the field of art education. Therefore, the *first stitch* of this journey really began with an interest in fiber crafts, and a curiosity for the inclusion of fiber crafts within the art education curriculum.

Why Fiber Crafts?

My review of the literature revealed that fiber crafts offer possibilities because, within

the creation of these physical objects, the maker gains more insight into the “techniques of experience that can shape our dealings with others” (Sennett, 2008, p. 289). It must also be noted that the slowness of fiber crafts offers a sense of pride, elevated work ethic, attention to detail and technique along with “reflection and imagination—which the push for quick results cannot” (Sennett, 2008, p. 2950). Moreover, fiber crafts can be taken up in the form of craftivism as the “element of care present in this form of craft and activism connects threads of grassroots action with creativity” (Kim, 2014, p. 86). In essence, Mason (2019) argued that working with this type of craft along with others facilitates a “trained practice that necessitates practical understanding of materials and tools....as well as declarative and procedural knowledge” (p. 216). There are many more benefits of fiber crafts, but according to Goggin and Tobin (2009), they remain as the “most significant of embodied acts in material culture” (p. 1). Although these positive and impactful benefits of fiber crafts provided a solid case as to why fiber crafts matter and are significant, my study was not aimed at researching such benefits. Rather, my continued engagement with the theoretical lens of feminist new materialism led me to wonder about *all* of the materials—human and more than human—that were involved within fiber craft processes and experiences. Barad (2007) describes this unique way of viewing materials in that “a lively new ontology emerges: the world’s radical aliveness comes to light in an entirely nontraditional way that reworks the nature of both the relationality and aliveness (vitality, dynamism, agency)” (p. 33). Therefore, I viewed the fiber crafts assemblages as sites of possibility that contained a “radical aliveness” that offered a nontraditional way of viewing what is material, and what serves to transform materials as they move and shift within and beyond these assemblages. It is the dynamic agency of the materials and the forces that moved and changed the materials that piqued my interest and caused me to consider what was beyond the traditional fiber craft tools and

processes.

Why Women?

Through my engagement with the theory, participants, and eventually the data, my interest and work gradually assumed a more feminist turn. I began to consider how the various materials that were both human and more than human could contribute to my understanding of the gendered notion of fiber crafts. Interestingly, the material of gender rose to the forefront in an unexpected way. I also assumed a more feminist stance in my work that led me to investigate how materials have been a part of the subjugation of women throughout time. I began to see the patriarchal forces that were not only a part of fiber crafts in the past, but the present-day time as well. Buchli (2002) suggested that incorporating a focus on materiality within a study can incite an “exploration of the subjugated and the silenced” (as cited in Woodward, 2020, p. 44). I found this to be the case in my own study of women and their contemporary and historical connection to fiber crafts.

Existing literature points out that, while the teaching of art history has made great strides in recent years to become more inclusive of work by women and artists of color, “it still centers on Western ideals and the Enlightenment values of the modern European nation state” (Mast, 2019, p. 46). Goggin and Tobin (2009) contended that many of the Western systems of art are dominated by European White males that relegate art and its value within society to use the eye as the “knowledge maker” instead of relying on bodily knowledge that privileges the tactile and material qualities of fiber craft. Thus, even though art history texts and recent scholarship have expanded the inclusivity of women and fiber craft, “scholarship on needlework and textiles nevertheless tend to privilege the eye over the ways of knowing” (Mast, 2019, p. 4). In fact, Parker (1984) suggested that many of the stereotypes concerning the feminine concept of fiber

crafts arose as part of these foundational views of how art was originally defined. The definition of art has been constructed through masculine values, and women's bodies were at the forefront of a particular genre that had no other purpose but "the deployment of the [male] gaze and the brush—pure acts of looking, forming, touching, painting, whose aim was to display as much while meaning as little as possible" (Armstrong, 1986, p. 223). Additionally, Mast (2019) explained the White male European dominated characterization of art in that it was "coded registered, classified, and displayed according to rational thought in accordance with Enlightenment ideology" (p. 46) while women's art was viewed as weak and insignificant.

According to McLean (2017) the patriarchal mindset of 18th century perpetuated the stereotype that women were not deemed as artistic and creative due to the acclaiming of men as the creative geniuses that could produce paintings, writing, and other intellectual pursuits. In turn, this argument was also backed by what some viewed as "scientific" evidence that women were not biologically predisposed to be creative or perform tasks that were deemed intellectual activities. Thus, dressmaking, sewing, and needlework became the normative associations for women as these fiber crafts utilized an initial pattern that didn't require individual creative thought processes. The Art/Craft debate is one that has roots within a sexual and economical division of labor in that objects made with a needle have been less valuable than those created with paint due to who was the creator and where it was created (Parker, 1984). For example, Parker (1984) expounded upon this as she argued that fiber crafts were made in the domestic sphere while paintings by men were produced in the public sphere for profit.

Even though there is historical and contemporary evidence of men engaging in fiber crafts (Ilmakunnas, 2016; Parker, 1984), Vartanian (2020) asserted that, "for too long, we haven't listened...the fact that craft has often been feminized and racialized in different ways is a

travesty” (p. 7). Goggin and Tobin (2009) argued that fiber crafts have been categorized as an act of femininity, and the gendering of fiber crafts began with young girls as a part of their education and a way to transition into adult life. Fiber crafts were a part of the domestic sphere and co-existed with feminine duties within the space (Parker, 1984). In addition, fiber crafts such as needlework taught young women obedience and served as a “display of submission” according to Goggin and Tobin (2009). Fiber crafts have often been viewed as a “time-filler” for women of status (Grace & Gandolfo, 2014), and they have been synonymous with femininity and relegated to be “craft” as opposed to an actual higher and more valuable art form (Parker, 1984). Women often gained their identities through fiber crafts so that they could “stitch” their narratives to be able to break the barriers of silence that were often placed around their being (Grace & Gandolfo, 2014).

During my research, I began to think of how fiber crafts have historically always been a part of the domestic sphere as the spaces and the process became gendered. Fiber crafts have been entangled with questions of identity and place, specifically with the processes of homemaking and gender. Remarkably, I began to see how my participants also created their fiber crafts within gendered spaces as the participants were able to engage in fiber crafts once their “feminine duties” were complete. They also shared their spaces with other family members as their desire to create was often suppressed by the push and pull of motherhood and making certain the space was one of compromise.

Therefore, my reasoning for only utilizing women within my study was twofold. I wanted to provide the space for women to have a voice within the fiber crafts field as they represent so many women from the past who paved the way to initiate dialogue and understanding for fiber crafts today. Moreover, I wanted to hear my participants’ stories and utilize the historical

references as a starting point to allow the materials to speak, potentially piercing any preconceived boundaries.

Research Questions

According to Goggin and Tobin (2009), much of the current literature on fiber crafts can be described as part of a material turn, which is best defined as “a turn of attention to material objects and practices conducted by scholars who have traditionally focused solely on texts” (p. 5). As I became more familiar with the material turn as well as the gendered historicity of fiber crafts, I knew that I had to return to the theoretical lens of feminist new materialism in order to recenter myself. At the intersections of the theory, history, and experiential engagement with fiber crafters that would guide my study, I developed the following research questions:

- How is gender (in)visible in the spacetime-mattering of women’s fiber crafting?
- How are boundaries (re)produced through material intra-actions within fiber craft assemblages?

Due to my ongoing, unanticipated encounters with the deep and complex entanglements of fiber crafts and gender, I realized that the techniques and approaches I had originally had in mind for my study would need to shift. The following sections will explain the techniques that I utilized throughout my study. Along the way, the descriptions will also reveal some surprising decisions that I made to create different avenues for unexpected possibilities to surface.

The Techniques

The techniques I used to guide the study included object interviews as well as photos and multi-material investigations of the fiber crafts process with four women who engaged in fiber crafts. For this study, I explored the intra-actions that occurred between human and more-than-human materials within the fiber craft assemblages. In addition to the interviews, participants

sent me close-up photographs and videos of themselves working (including works in process and finished products) and videos and photographs of the spaces where they engaged in fiber crafts. I also investigated their virtual platform (spaces) through YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc. This allowed me to view the virtual and actual spaces of the materials. Additionally, I utilized transcripts from the object interviews as well as field notes and doodles that I created throughout the analysis process.

Overall, in terms of the data collected, I relied on transcripts from each of the hour-long object interviews, and the participants each sent five to eight photos of their spaces and materials as well as one video that recorded their fiber crafting process. The participants' social media posts became a significant source of data. Because the participants posted on social media in varying amounts, I acquired more social media posts as data from some participants than others. For example, Rhonda posted on Instagram at least once a day while Melody posted every couple of weeks on average. Below is a chart of the data related to each participant.

Table 1

Data Related to Each Participant

Participant	Object interview	Photographs	Video	Social media posts utilized as data/total posts per year
Sally	1	8	2	10 posts/40 (Facebook)
Jane	1	7	1	5 posts/15 (Instagram)
Melody	1	8	1	12 posts/20 (Instagram)
Rhonda	1	8	3	20 posts/50

				(Instagram and Facebook)
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Object Interviews

Within this study, I started out with a focus on the material aspects of fiber crafts, and sought to allow those materials to act as the “interviewees” with Zoom object interviews. Nordstrom (2013) developed the object-interview as “an entangled conversational interview of objects and subjects” that led her to mediate “folds of objects, subjects, events, and a *life*” (p. 12). Within an object-centered interview, the object(s) or materials are the foundation and starting point for the entire interview (Woodward, 2020). Nordstrom (2013) also utilized a post-human approach within her object interviews and described this method as “a Deleuzian space in which the supposed distinctions between subjects and objects, as well as other binary divisions, become indistinct, or entangled, as both subjects and objects produce knowledge” (p. 237). I felt that by allowing the women to center the conversation around objects such as their knitting needles, the chair and space in which they sit every night to needlepoint, or even a knitted scarf that was one of their first projects, I could gain a rich understanding of how the materials affected and intermingled within the lives of the women, and in turn, what was co-produced within these entanglements.

I asked each participant to bring to the Zoom object interview one object from the present and one object from the past that directly related to their fiber craft or the process. I then proceeded to ask each participant a pre-constructed list of questions (Figure 1). Due to safety concerns brought on by COVID-19 and the distance between myself and the participants, it made more sense to allow the women to bring their materials and spaces to me virtually instead of me traveling to their spaces. While this shift to a virtual space was prompted by the pandemic,

Hallett and Barber (2014) have in fact argued for researchers to employ more digital research methods over traditional face to face methods due to the fact that “online spaces no longer rest at the periphery of life but are central to and have fundamentally transformed the ways people around the world go about their daily business” (p. 2). What these object interviews revealed was not the *life* of the women, but the *life* of the object that they chose. Nordstrom (2013) described object interviews as a technique that “occupies a space in which objects, subjects, and events continuously fold together” (p. 245).

Figure 1
Object Interview Questions

Object Interview Questions:
1. Tell me about this object. What does (did) it do? Are there limitations to the materials?
2. Can you describe the object? Describe the materials that are used. Tell me about the properties of the object.... Is it shiny, talk about the texture of it, is it thick or thin, etc....
3. Ask the person to physically pick up/engage with the object.
4. What does the object do within the knitting/crocheting/needlepoint/, etc. process?
5. What is the history of the object? Where did you find the materials?
6. Does it remind you of/connect you to other people?
7. How has it changed? Or has it changed?

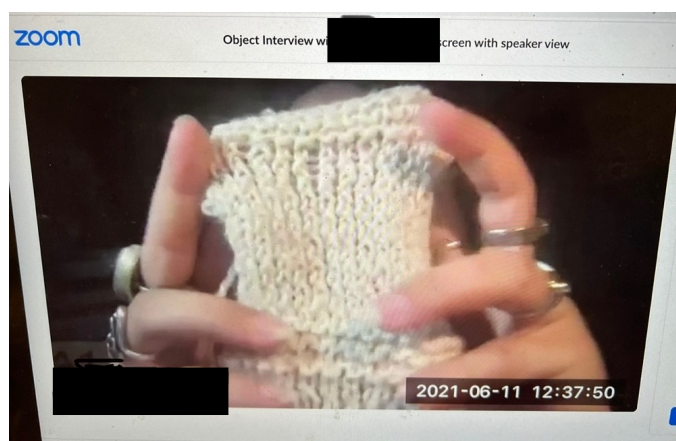
Indeed, there were many layers of materials that were continuously folding together during the object interviews as I could hear music playing in the background, watch a cat scuttle across the floor, and hear the interruption of a phone call or a ringing doorbell. There were also technological difficulties such as intermittent Wi-Fi that became a part of the materials within the fold. The participants brought fascinating items to the interview, and I did not need to prompt

them to initiate conversation as much as I had previously thought. They were extremely eager to discuss their chosen objects with me. Many times, I disregarded my questions and allowed the objects to speak. The conversations were delightful, and I gained a strong sense of the material connections that each object had within the lives of the women.

One participant, Jane, brought a thimble to our interview. This thimble had been passed down to her, and several generations of women in her family had used this beloved treasure. This object revealed a connection from the past, but connections to the present day were just as significant. I couldn't help but to speculate what might end up happening to the thimble, and what life it had outside of the jewelry box where it was stored. Also, Sally brought a pattern book to the interview. She described it as her first pattern book for crochet techniques and the object that prompted her desire to teach herself how to crochet. This book formed connections with the past, yet her knowledge of crochet was still utilized in the present. Rhonda discussed one of the first projects that she had ever done. It was the beginnings of an outfit that she was making for her child but never completed (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Rhonda's Unfinished Project



Even though my participants were talking about the objects from their point of view during the interviews, I was still able to see that the objects had a life beyond those human discourses, and there were even more possibilities that extended beyond those simple interviews. In essence, I was less interested in how the participants described their lived experiences, and more interested in the possibilities of all the materials that were entangled together within the spaces that the women occupied. Even though an interview is a traditional research method, the object interviews provided me with an entry point, or a means to discover how the materials came to matter. The object interviews were a starting point that eventually led me to seek out the life of the materials beyond those initial encounters by engaging with the participants' social media sites. The social media sites ultimately became the spaces where I situated my primary investigations due to a sense of intrigue and the rawness and vulnerability that the social media posts revealed. In those posts, I was better able to see broader the entanglements of all the materials and visualize the possibilities through the virtual frames.

Virtual Investigations

As noted, I ended up relying heavily upon access to the participants' social media accounts such as Instagram and Facebook. According to information collected from the surveys during the study, many of the participants solely engaged in virtual spaces as they interacted with others and even sold their fiber crafts within an online space. The pandemic revealed a need for virtual ways to access fiber crafts more than ever before, and many women who once gathered with other women to knit in their favorite local coffee shop shifted their craft to an online front due to safety issues. Bratich and Brush (2011) described such online spaces to be a new domesticity and the vehicles to propel fiber crafts into a new realm with cyberculture. Bratich and Brush (2011) defined "new domesticity" as a move from private (domestic) to public spaces

that alter previous stereotypes about the home and instead replaces them with a more affirmative meaning. In fact, they maintained that “the new domesticity is thoroughly an online affair” (p. 241). I found myself infatuated with this “online affair” that was a part of my participants’ lives, and I learned much more by interacting with their social media posts than the object interviews alone. Thankfully, the participants signed a waiver that gave me access to their social media posts, and therefore it was expected that I would not only see the posts, but could comment and interact with them as well. For example, I would hit the “like” button if it was a Facebook post, or the “heart” symbol for an Instagram post. To me, these small acts let the women know that I was interested in the work they were doing, and also served as a means of support. I even commented on the posts with phrases such as “love it,” or “great job.” My interactions led me to become entangled with not only the posts themselves, but many other materials that were part of the assemblages. I found myself feeling like I was a part of the process and the women’s lives. It gave me a window into the porous boundaries of the frames of the posts. The participants’ words and visual imagery were inspiring, informative, humorous, and even puzzling at times. In fact, the words or phrases from some of the posts found their way into the vignettes in Chapter 4.

I followed my participants for a year on these social media accounts, and I realized that the virtual spaces afforded a look into entanglements of space, time, gender, motherhood, domestic duties, fiber crafts, and much more. I noticed many interesting things about their “posts” on Facebook and/or Instagram in that sometimes the posts contained a finished product in the form of a blanket or beanie cap, and I noticed how each product was photographed in such a way to draw the viewer into its finality as well as the craftsmanship and beauty; yet, I could only wonder what its future held. I based my thought processes concerning the concepts of time (past, present, and future) on Barad (2007) who explained that “the future is not what will come

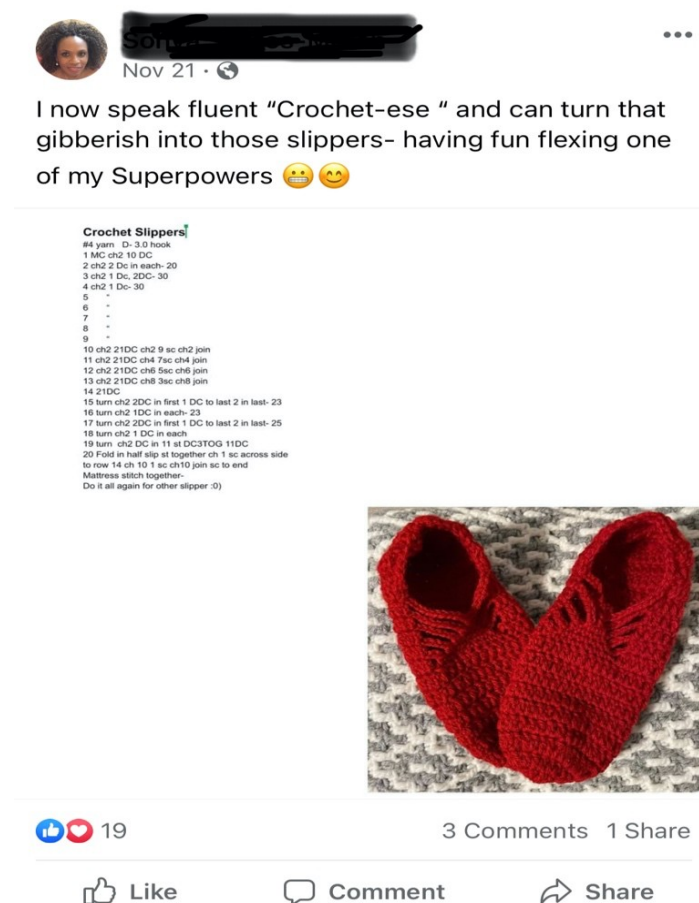
to be in an unfolding of the present moment; rather the past and future are enfolded participants in matter's iterative becomings" (p. 181). Some participants shared posts of the process and discussed the materiality, time constraints, and technique while other posts contained images of the spaces and studios where the work took place. For example, Rhonda posted a photo on her Instagram page of the sofa where she sat to crochet, and it was strewn with random yarn, finished products, tools, and even her unicorn backpack that allowed her to transport her materials.

Furthermore, I discovered that the social media accounts were materials that had the capacity to be boundary making spaces as well as materials that could pierce and disrupt boundaries. The idea of boundaries and how materials pierce the porous boundaries of virtual spaces became an interesting and unexpected part of the study. Longman (2018) argued that "we cannot draw a neat boundary around images, nor should we argue that multiplicities in photographs are indivisible, messy and disorderly" (p. 4). Therefore, I knew that my approach must be different than most ethnographic studies in which the researcher studies the human within their "online habitats." My motive was to view how the materials within these online spaces had lives within and outside of the porous virtual boundaries. As I viewed the social media posts as material, I considered how the materials were always forming and continuously offering new possibilities as they became entangled with one another. Additionally, I considered that the materials did not only exist in the virtual spaces but continued to form intra-actions with other materials outside of this realm. In other words, the materials had the potential to extend beyond the virtual realms and continue to intra-act with other materials that were also forming and not always visible to the human eye. For example, Sally posted an intriguing photo of a red crochet slipper that she had made (Figure 3). She maintained that she had "superpowers" since

she could understand the language of crochet. She had realized not only her unique gift of being able to understand how to utilize crochet language but had extended her feminine powers outside of the virtual realm. Her powers could extend into other entanglements as she embraced not only her craft, but her abilities as a woman to carve out her own virtual space. I realized that materials were constantly in flux even within a virtual realm, and the lives that extended beyond the frame had the power to intra-act and pierce boundaries that were once oppressive within the gendered notion of fiber craft.

Figure 3

Sally's Instagram Post



Nov 21 · 🌐

I now speak fluent "Crochet-ese " and can turn that gibberish into those slippers- having fun flexing one of my Superpowers 🤪🤪

Crochet Slippers
 #4 yarn D- 3.0 hook
 1 MC ch2 10 DC
 2 ch2 2 DC in each- 20
 3 ch2 1 DC 2DC- 30
 4 ch2 1 DC- 30
 5 -
 6 -
 7 -
 8 -
 9 -
 10 ch2 21DC ch2 9 sc ch2 join
 11 ch2 21DC ch4 7sc ch4 join
 12 ch2 21DC ch8 5sc ch8 join
 13 ch2 21DC ch8 3sc ch8 join
 14 21DC
 15 turn ch2 2DC in first 1 DC to last 2 in last- 23
 16 turn ch2 1DC in each- 23
 17 turn ch2 2DC in first 1 DC to last 2 in last- 25
 18 turn ch2 1 DC in each
 19 turn ch2 DC in 11 at DC3TOG 11DC
 20 Fold in half slip st together ch 1 sc across side to row 14 ch 10 1 sc ch10 join sc to end
 Mattress stitch together-
 Do it all again for other slipper :D)

19

3 Comments 1 Share

Like Comment Share

All my participants exhibited much pride in their creations and enjoyed teaching others about their processes. I found it to be quite fascinating that I learned from all these women simultaneously even though there was a vast distance between us geographically. Although the internet does often gain negative attention from time to time, I began to see the benefits of virtual spaces and how they allow fiber craft processes to transcend beyond personal spaces and studios. In fact, Marsh and Weida (2014) asserted that “while the Web does not connect us with tactile spaces of a ceramics studio, knitting circle, woodshop, or other physical craft places directly, it does reflect and reference materials and spaces of craft continually” (p. 38).

Therefore, the virtual space became one where the material met the discursive within a realm that included both human and more-than-human entities in moving assemblages of URL links, yarn, time, and distance. All elements of the assemblage become significant parts of these virtual fiber worlds as they collided and moved away from one another into different assemblages. In essence, the assemblages of participant experiences “demonstrated the complex and fluid relationship between physical identity, digital community, and gender” (Marsh & Weida, 2014, p. 40). In the end, my study was not just about the physical fiber crafts materials such as the yarn and needles, but all the human and more-than-human entities that comprised the assemblages.

The virtual social media posts (photos, etc.) had prompted me to consider how the materials were folding and unfolding and led me into letting go of more of the object interviews and other methods. The social media posts differed from the object interviews in that they were not constructed by me, but they were always already happening within a virtual space. The posts allowed me to truly come to understand and perceive assemblages from a new perspective.

Photographs

Within my study, I approached the photographs as an opportunity to decenter the participant and allow the agency to materialize, as I could observe still imagery of the tools, fibers, hands, and other materials that were involved within the process. Yet, on the other hand, the photographs could be seen as living assemblages that were always moving and changing beyond the picture frames as the past, present, and future folded into one another. The narratives, bodies, processes, and other materials extended beyond the still pictorial frames to allow for speculation and wonder about their becomings. Tamboukou (2020) asserted that photographic images “emit signs that might disrupt our usual pathways of understanding or draw our attention to visual details that would have gone unnoticed in the transcripts of lived experiences” (p. 405).

Therefore, photographs offer possibilities that help to present the life of materials beyond the scope of traditional qualitative interviews. I investigated these photographs as sites that visually exposed gender and complex relationships not only with the craft materials, but with other bodies and spaces. I approached each photograph as a visual encounter that left me with wonder and speculation about the past, present, and future. Likewise, in Bell and Vachhani’s (2020) study, they affirmed that images can be used to connect craft work encounters with affective states and bodily gestures. Their approach produced revealing data about objects and affective traces that resided within the materials. I also utilized the data from the photos to understand how things come to matter, as fiber crafts have the potential to affect through assemblages and relations. Again, I refer to Tamboukou (2020) as she maintained how photographs tend to reveal the visible and invisible as well as an attunement to light and shade. This caused me to consider not just the materials and bodies that were within the photographic frame, but those human and more than human entities that were not present but were still a part

of the assemblage.

Hence, photographs (Figures 4, 5, and 6) provided me with an insight into the raw materials and assemblages that were produced within the fiber craft processes. McCoy (2012) argued that being attuned to encounters and intra-actions that are both lasting and spontaneous can alter how we know or produce new possibilities for knowing and understanding. Although there were intra-actions occurring and being produced throughout these assemblages of human and more than human materials within each photograph, I began to also consider new possibilities by analyzing photographs and speculating about the life of the materials. The photographs were still images of the fiber crafts processes, materials, and spaces, yet I envisioned the vitality and life they embodied as they formed intra-actions with other materials within and beyond the picture frame.

I should also note that I asked the participants to give a brief description or title for all of the photographs they sent to me, and therefore, the captions listed for each of the photos are those given to me by the participants. Often, the photographs the participants sent made their way into the object interviews as I was able to see the spaces they had photographed and ask clarifying questions. In this chapter, I included some of the photos that I found to be interesting in order to offer the reader a glimpse into the life of the materials (both human and more-than-human) that were a part of the assemblages that I observed. Also, the images provided a visual portal into where and how the participants situated themselves and the materials within these entanglements.

One aspect of speculation that I considered focused on the spaces and materials that were in between assemblages. These spaces and materials were significant because “what they unhide, expose, or reveal should not be linked to mirroring or representing an image of the real”

(Tamboukou, 2020, p. 406). Likewise, I utilized photographs within the study not as mere representative data (the real), but instead as visual possibilities. I began to view these photographs through a diffractive lens. Haraway (1999) explained that “diffraction attends to the relational nature of difference; it does not figure difference as either a matter of essence or as inconsequential” (p. 300). Therefore, as I viewed these visual possibilities, I noted the differences that were part of the assemblages such as tension/release, human/more-than-human, and folding/unfolding. This in turn led me to view the materials in each photograph as entities within a moving assemblage, as I could see the (re)workings of many of these diffractive binaries. I referred to Barad’s (2007) concept of *becoming* as I viewed the photographs through the lens of FNM. Barad (2007) saw the constant movement among objects as an unfolding/refolding event—a becoming—in which objects change their forms as other objects come into relation with them. In fact, Barad (2007) argued that “becoming is not an unfolding in time but the inexhaustible dynamism of the enfolding of mattering” (p. 180).

For example, when materials intra-act, something new happens in a continuous pattern as these objects affect one another. Therefore, the objects in the fold assume a fluidity that continues to extend to new objects as well. One should consider Lomax’s (1995) process of *enfolding*, or “to adopt a practice of inclusion and involution, with one side implicating the other, being both and neither, being in-between” (p.5). These enfoldings bring forth implications for engagement with photographs, such as taking into consideration the continuously folding meanings of the photographs while the researcher is responsible for unfolding the multiplicities and possibilities. While employing these methods of Barad (2007) and Lomax (1995) during my study, I was able to call upon acts of spatializing and focus on the becomings of the materials as the photographic boundaries became porous, and I began to think about the life of the materials

outside of the picture frame. In effect, I knew that the photographs did not tell the full story, but it was up to me to investigate how the materials within the picture frame would find new possibilities to enfold into new creations that also continued to produce further becomings. I began to ask myself how the objects within the picture frame drifted outside of the frame to find new material, and what was being produced as the materials floated and unfolded/refolded into one another? I saw a continuum, and not a finality within the photographs. Thus, this was quite different from traditional research techniques in which photographs are most often viewed as final representations within a still frame that tells a story. Instead, I disregarded the picture frame, and viewed the boundaries as porous and continuous as these objects had (and still have) the potential to intra-act and form new possibilities.

Figure 4

Melody's Storage Closet



Figure 5

Rhonda's Cat and Knitting Tools



Figure 6

Rhonda's Favorite Knitting Spot



Analytical Becomings

The daunting task of data analysis left me a bit confused at first as I thought that my analysis had to be based on a certain methodology that would provide me with a dependable way to derive authentic data. At first, I thought I could fit my study into a neat, tidy box; but—much to my initial dismay—my study called for something different, something that would allow me to engage with materiality and the assemblages that form from animate and inanimate material. But, how? And why? I knew that I had to return to the theory (FNM) and view everything that I had encountered through that lens. In fact, once I began the analysis phase, many facets began to converge that led me into not only an understanding of the theory, but how it applied to the assemblages that I had been investigating. St. Pierre (2013) explained how she thought data should function in qualitative research, explaining that “the meaning and function of data depend on the meaning and function of a constellation of other concepts with which it is imbricated” (p. 223). This was indeed liberating for me in that I was initially concerned about finding “themes” and coding them in the most intellectual manner. However, St. Pierre’s work helped me to understand that it was not the themes and codes that made my study relevant, but the possibilities and materials that glowed forth from the data entanglements that were of utmost significance.

I initially concurred with Augustine’s (2014) reasoning that “coding is too often divorced from the theory that supposedly guides the study” (p. 748). However, St. Pierre (2002) clarified this notion and encouraged researchers to read more about the theory so that during the writing phase, the meaningful concepts would come to light. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) also contributed to my work with their concept of plugging one text into another and thinking with theory. This process of thinking and writing is how the analysis develops. I must admit that this was very true

for me. Once I read more about the theory of FNM and continued to write, so many concepts became more distinct. That is when I realized that the “materials” that I had been investigating were not just crochet needles and yarn, but much more than that. Alvermann (2002) encapsulated my exact feelings when she exclaimed that through writing one may discover “something other than what [they] went looking for in the first place” (p.6). Above all, I began to make interesting discoveries as I looked beyond the obvious fiber craft tools and products.

Indeed, I comprehended that all the human and more-than-human entities played a significant role throughout my investigations. Gender, time, space, COVID, mothering, care, and many more materials helped to guide my study in an entirely atypical course. In essence, the theory also became the data. While these are only a few of the materials that I encountered, I continued to write and memo about the speculations that I developed from the processes and the materials. In all, I knew that I had to learn to let go of some things and embrace others.

Data that Glows

While investigating the assemblages that were always forming within my study, I became attuned to not only the repetition of time and stitches, but also how some materials such as gender began to glow or come forward with more significance through my analytical processes. MacLure (2013) theorized how, during a researcher’s engagement with the coding process, “some things gradually glow or grow into greater significance than others, and become the preoccupations around which thought and writing cluster” (p. 175). In her discussion of coding, MacLure (2013) presented arguments that acknowledged the ways coding could be limited by its ultimately representational function; yet, rather than suggest that researchers do away with coding altogether, she encouraged researchers to consider coding as “an experiment with order and disorder, in which provisional and partial

taxonomies are formed, but are always subject to change and metamorphosis, as new connections spark among words, bodies, objects, and ideas” (p. 181). In other words, though coding processes serve to classify worldly happenings recorded as data, the provisional relations created during coding are open-ended and can provoke new opportunities for “making sense” (MacLure, 2013, p. 181).

I aimed for my own analytical processes to align with MacLure’s suggestion to approach analysis as an open-ended process of making sense that would leave room for seemingly uncategorizable elements of my data to emerge as significant. I made sense of all of my data by first reading through the transcripts from the object interviews and highlighting words that were often repeated, or even phrases that I found to be interesting. I then designated these words as potentially significant concepts to return to. I found my way back to these interesting phrases while taking up MacLure’s suggestion to locate those aspects of the data that “glowed,” which meant following aspects of the data that were intriguing, even if they did not at first seem to fit the research inquiry that I thought I was pursuing.

Some of the key words that I highlighted began to coalesce around several key concepts of feminist new materialism such as time and space, but also around fiber crafts terms and affective reactions such as happiness and frustration. I began to see connections among many of the themes and concepts that I had discovered through this open-ended approach to coding, and they materialized in different ways for each participant. Through this process, I also began to become attuned to the ways gender was being (re)produced through the intra-actions of these emergent concepts within the fiber crafting assemblages, and I even became entangled within the data in an unexpected way.

As I pored over the transcripts and engaged with the photos, videos, and social media posts, I was constantly aware of how the histories of women within fiber craft assemblages seemed to be ever-present, continuously unfolding into these fiber craft assemblages. I felt the ghosts of the past sneak into the fold as I thought about the histories of so many women who used a needle and thread for acts of subversion in order for their voices to be heard and to become visible. I felt a strong bond with the women from the past as well as the women in my study, and I realized that I too felt an urge to delve into feminism and better understand how to disrupt the patriarchal boundaries that continue to be (re)produced. I revisit my analytical approach at length towards the end of this chapter.

Consequently, I began to regard my study with an emerging sense of wonder. MacLure (2013) posited that an open-ended approach to coding and attunement to things that glow opens a new method of thinking that is grounded in inquiry, wonder, and a shifting body of knowledge. In turn, it becomes an open system that creates both stability and instability. By approaching coding through a sense of wonder and allowing certain aspects of the data to glow forward, I was able to participate in a continuous process of making sense, not only of the data but of my positionality as the researcher as well. For example, I felt wonder in the data when I could not turn away from the coffee stain that was a part of the cross stitch pattern that Jane acquired at a yard sale. Even though it seemed to be an insignificant snippet of data, I became transfixed on the possibilities the coffee stain held and could hold.

Furthermore, MacLure (2013) spoke of how wonder has the potential to disrupt boundaries of power and knowledge and does not always function as a “safe, comforting, or uncomplicatedly positive affect” (p. 229). This was true in my analysis when the role of

gender disrupted what I thought my study should encompass. While the raw data pointed towards an abundance of fiber crafting tools and processes, the gendered notion of craft lingered within the crevices and caused me to wonder in a way that caused uncomfortable and complicated feelings to arise. I realized that I was grasping for my feminist voice and slowly becoming entangled with the histories of subversion that women fiber crafters initiated long ago. MacLure (2013) described this experience with wonder as she relayed, “when I feel wonder, I have chosen something that has chosen me, and it is the mutual ‘affection’ that constitutes ‘us’ as, respectively, data and researcher” (p. 229). Given the ways gender emerged unexpectedly through my early coding processes, I recognized that I was in need of a way to write through my on-going analysis that would allow me to articulate the wonder that I had experienced along with the intra-actions that occurred among the data, myself, and the participants. Therefore, I devised a way to present the wonder and speculation I had encountered by constructing small vignettes that encompassed diagrammatical thinking and that were abundantly speculative. The following sections will provide more details about this experience.

Diagrammatical Thinking

In terms of my study, I originally proposed to observe various fiber craft groups in my community and apply a theoretical lens of communities of practice. However, after completing my pilot study, I realized that I was yearning for a more artful, fascinating, and elusive way to represent data. Although the literature review revealed obvious reasons that women engage in fiber crafts in historical and present-day times, I wanted to find a way to investigate the entanglements of not only the *seen* objects within my study, but the *unseen* as well. Therefore, I centered my analysis around a diagrammatical approach.

The diagrammatical approach is inclusive of the theoretical conceptions of Barad as it considers intra-actions and disruptions of how things come to matter and are framed within the moving assemblage (Freeman, 2017, p. 96). It must be understood that diagrammatical thinking is not a collection of visual representations such as Venn diagrams or maps, but instead focuses on moving assemblages that have the potential to transform and affect “everyday lives and practices” (Freeman, 2017, p.97). Most notably, diagrammatical thinking encompasses a more creative and experimental way of thinking that orients to research as “an intervention and the world as a vast arena of, and for, ongoing experimentation” (Freeman, 2017, p. 103). Lastly, this method provides a disruption in traditional modes of representation and “established hierarchies” (Freeman, 2017, p.108) to investigate the assemblages that are already there and unpredictable in nature.

Furthermore, it conjures the foundational work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), and Freeman (2017) affirmed that it “might allow humans to create themselves and their worlds differently” (p. 97). Overall, Freeman stated that this method places emphasis on the “becomings” and shifts the focus from being fixated on “one thing or the other thing it becomes, but on *that* which transforms it; that is, the line of becoming” (p. 103). The way in which I was able to position these intra-actions and assemblages into the data was by creating vignettes in the style of those in Kathleen Stewart’s (2007) book, *Ordinary Affects*.

The short vignettes that I created were utilized as a data analysis tool so that I could continue to think in a diagrammatical way. With diagrammatical thinking, I was not interested in preconceived ideas or commonalities among the data. Rather, I saw the research and analysis as an unpredictable process that allowed for investigation and creativity. Therefore, the vignettes follow what glowed from the transcripts, from the object interviews, photographs provided by

the participants, and the Instagram and Facebook posts made by the participants. In essence, even though I knew that I could not predict the future, I could connect the past, present, and future in a narrative format with the vignettes in order to speculate about the potential intra-actions as well as the intra-actions that were always already forming. Moreover, the vignettes afforded me a way to view the intra-actions and becomings in a speculative manner that revealed possibilities and creative forces. For me, speculation served as an invitation to envision what the transcripts, photographs, and social media posts could become as the intra-actions were explored. The speculative process offered a way to trouble traditional methods based solely on empirical data. In effect, it allowed my wonderings about the lives of the materials to glow forward to emphasize the ordinary in an unordinary way.

Speculative Vignettes

After reading Kathleen Stewart's book, *Ordinary Affects*, I had somewhat of an epiphany that I could analyze my data in the style of small vignettes, similar to the vignette structure used by Stewart in her book, that would allow the materials to "*speak*." This seemed to fit with how Barad (2007) describes that, in agential realism, agency is associated not just with humans, but with matter as well. Stewart (2007) focused on affect within each of her vignettes as she maintained that "the ordinary is a shifting assemblage of practices and practical knowledges, a scene of both liveness and exhaustion, a dream of escape or of the simple life" (p. 1). Stewart (2007) went on to reveal that human and more-than-human bodies are always moving and shifting as they are "defined by their capacity to affect and be affected" (p. 4). Essentially, the moving and shifting of the objects within my study is what I found to be most intriguing as I realized that the assemblages were always already forming, even at the time of my initial object interviews with the participants. The photographs and social media posts, for example, were not

merely to be viewed as a “big reveal” of a specific occurrence or event. Instead, I investigated each image as an assemblage that was not static, but rather revealed much potential as a fluid network of intra-actions that were already and continuously forming.

I began to see Stewart’s book and her approach as one that could allow me to investigate these movements (intra-actions) and the lines of becoming as the materials were constantly in flux within each vignette. The way in which I was able to utilize this as an analytical technique is that I observed either a photograph or social media post, and then I would subsequently *speculate* in a creative way by writing about the materials that resided within and beyond the picture frame. Following Barad (2010), I viewed speculation in a diffractive sense through “multiple entanglements, differences, cutting through and re-splicing one another” (p. 245), in order to encounter “a sense of connectivity through the traces of variously entangled threads and of the (re)workings of mutual constitution and unending iterative reconfigurations” (p. 245). Through speculative writing, I explored intra-actions that juxtaposed past, present, and future within these frames. I wrote about the intra-actions that may have occurred in the past that could have been linked to the materials of the present within these frames. Additionally, I also considered the potential of the future and how the materials would continue to move and change beyond what I could observe in the present.

To me, there was an unexpected beauty that I found in the speculative process as the unknown played a significant role in the trajectory of the words and the materials. According to Feiger (1976), “any decisions or actions that involve risk or some forecasting of future events are described as speculative” (p.677). I used the process of writing speculative vignettes to forecast potential trajectories even though there was no certain outcome, endpoint, or solution. I aligned with how Cortiel et al. (2020) conceptualized speculative inquiry when they stated that

“speculation ventures to create knowledge by conjecturing what may come, but it is not exclusively directed towards the future: societies speculate backwards and sideways as well as forwards and beyond” (p. 14). Thus, the vignettes that I created produced knowledge and stories that moved in various paths as possibilities gave rise to new links in between and beyond the materials. I considered the life of the materials, and they began to speak to me. Those words became the vignettes, as I reframed how data could be represented and allowed the theory to guide my mode of thinking. I reflected, forecasted, and intra-acted with all the materials I became attuned to in the data. I discovered that the data were alive with possibilities, and I wanted to invite the reader to become part of these encounters as the materials continued to ebb and flow through and beyond the pages of the dissertation.

The form of the vignettes became small poem-like narratives about the materials in each photo or social media post along with the possibilities that could arise from the many entanglements that caused for speculation. Of course, these vignettes weren't always based on so called “truths,” but more of a creative sense of the how, what, why, and where of the lives of the materials. Basically, I sought to investigate how the materials within these fiber crafts assemblages came to matter, and what was produced within the intra-actions. By using this speculative mode of reasoning for the analysis, I was able to shift my positionality as the researcher in order to focus on the materials, but in the end, I knew that I could not separate myself from the entanglements in which the materials and I were co-implicated. These vignettes established a unique way to view the materials as their lives and encounters with other materials formed new possibilities. In effect, what I sought to examine was not just the fiber crafts processes, but the human and more than human entities that had occurred and were continuing to occur around the process.

My aim was to speculate about the materials that perhaps seemed insignificant, yet continued to fold and unfold into the assemblages. Again, I referred to MacLure's (2013) concept of *glow* in that I viewed the data that continued to move towards me with a sense of wonder as I utilized the theory of FNM to consider the possibilities of the materials. This feeling of wonder was sometimes uncomfortable and complex, but it allowed for gender to come to the surface. Overall, I learned to release some data while other aspects of the data produced a glow that I could not ignore. This allowed me to not only have the freedom to represent my encounters with the data, but also to provide a creative approach to visualize and construct where the materials had been, and what possibilities were created as they were formed and reformed.

In conclusion, this process involved letting go, yet breathing in the new possibilities that had always already been forming. This offered a technique in which I could intra-act with the data and observe the becomings of the human and more than human materials. Additionally, it provided me with a creative way to represent the data as well as the encounters with materials that I experienced. The representation of data were not an enclosed and solid boundary. Rather, I saw it as a porous and open boundary that allowed the materials and encounters to flow in and out of the assemblages as a sense of wonder was cultivated. This technique afforded new ways to construct knowledge, but allowed me to become entangled with the materials as well. To me, it made the process not only more interesting, but provided a refreshing take on what research *could* be, not what it was *supposed* to be.

Knit and Purl: Glowing Investigations

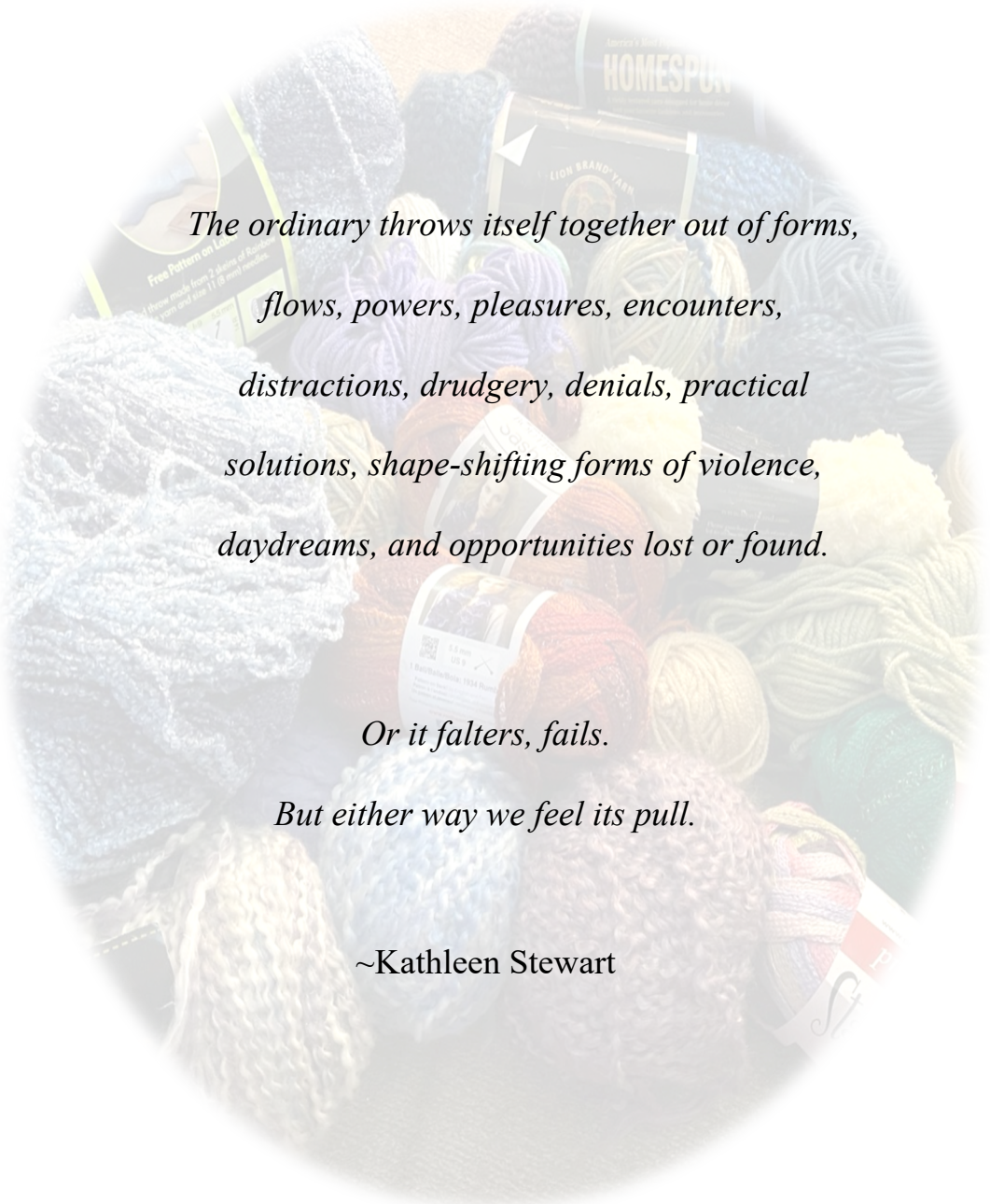
In conclusion, I was inspired by the analytical techniques that I explored, which allowed me to pursue creative investigations into the human and more-than-human entities involved in my study. Not only did my chosen methods provide me with interesting insight into the lives and

fiber craft processes of my participants, but I also felt that I was able to creatively portray the seemingly unnoticed aspects of the multiplicity of materials that folded and unfolded in the assemblages. What surprised me the most was that I could employ the use of speculative vignettes and the simple act of wonder to manifest interesting revelations about gender, space, and time. In the following chapter, I present the vignettes that I carefully curated from all of the data, including photographs, Zoom transcripts, and social media posts. It is my hope that the reader will view these vignettes with wonder and curiosity as they encounter possibilities that continue to weave their way in and out of each vignette. Even though the vignettes do not serve to predict the future, they do offer possibilities that challenge and transform the materials beyond their ordinary callings.

In connection with each vignette, I offer both theoretical interpretations and autoethnographic contemplations. The autoethnographic contemplations serve to demonstrate how I became entangled with the fiber crafts assemblages in unexpected ways. These entanglements incited me to think about the role of gender not only in fiber crafting but within society as I embodied some of the same tensions and struggles that the participants described in their experiences. These contemplations also serve to illustrate where I situated myself as the researcher in that my life and the materials within my life shifted and changed with the moving assemblages that I was observing. As I wrote and contemplated, the connections were uncanny as new things were being (re)produced. I remain connected to these women through social media, and I still feel as though I am a part of their lives even though I completed my study and dissertation. The participants and I are in and away from the same spaces all at once, as time, space, and matter are constantly being produced through on-going intra-actions

CHAPTER 4

DIAGRAMMICAL ANALYSIS



*The ordinary throws itself together out of forms,
flows, powers, pleasures, encounters,
distractions, drudgery, denials, practical
solutions, shape-shifting forms of violence,
daydreams, and opportunities lost or found.*

Or it falters, fails.

But either way we feel its pull.

~Kathleen Stewart

The Vignettes

Vignette #1: Coffee Stains and the County Fair

The cross-stitch pattern of the serenity prayer had been sitting in the damp garage for what seemed like years. It was positioned among all the trinkets, toys, clothing, and housewares in the garage sale on Maple Street. It had a coffee stain on it, but who knows how it got there. Perhaps it had been used years ago as a coaster on an old coffee table in the widow's home. It called to her again. She felt the connection, the pull, and knew she could salvage it, add a little tape, and she could use it to create her next cross stitch project. 25 cents. What a deal. The pattern drifted to its next home. She worked for many hours, the needle pierced the canvas, and the threads worked their way in a linear fashion that resembled an X. The finished piece ended up in the county fair after a friend encouraged her to enter the contest. "You can win prize money," she told her. Surely, the piece was worth more than 25 cents now? It sat among the stench of the barn animals, the mesmerizing lights, and the tantalizing smells of the funnel cakes drifting between all the game tents. The Serenity Prayer won 3rd place AND prize money.

Unbelievable!

Now, it is hanging on a wall in the local charity house down the street. It is befitting,

don't ya think?

Figure 7

Serenity Prayer by Jane



In terms of the complete collection of my data, I considered Jane's story about a piece she had cross stitched and submitted to the fair to be captivating, and I remained transfixed on it as I kept returning to this part of the object interview. The data I focused on for the vignette mentioned above was derived from the transcripts of the object interviews I conducted using the Zoom platform. My participant, who I referred to as Jane, led me through a discussion about an object from the present day that related to her fiber craft. She initially showed me a cross-stitch composition of a colorful and meticulously stitched geometric design. However, the conversation turned a bit toward an object of her past as I asked her what she was going to do with the current (geometric) piece once it was completed. She expressed interest in entering it into the county fair and selling it as well. This led to the details about a past project involving the subject of the Serenity Prayer (Figure 7). She entered this piece into the fair on a whim at the suggestion of a friend. She ended up winning prize money and a third-place ribbon. Her description of the materials within the interview led me to investigate the intra-actions within the assemblages and how these assemblages morphed and changed as objects moved from one assemblage to another. I realized that it was the changes that occurred within the first spaces of the garage that connected the piece to new spaces such as the county fair and the charity organization, and I was able to see what was happening as materials were in flux as well.

Initially, I thought about the garage sale, and how the tattered, coffee-stained cross stitch pattern containing the subject matter of the Serenity Prayer called to Jane even though it seemed quite ordinary and unassuming. She purchased the pattern for 25 cents and repaired it with some tape once she got home. I saw the pattern moving from the dusty garage into a new space where it was changed as it intra-acted with Jane's hands, the patience involved in cross stitch, the threads and other tools, the other bodies within the house, the sofa where she worked, and the

nightly news blaring across the television. The materials (both human and more-human) have agency as the possibility to affect and be affected is produced as these assemblages move and change. According to Barad (2007), “agency is doing/being in its intra-activity” (p. 235), and doing/being was apparent in the assemblage of Jane’s cross-stitch practice. As the nightly news erupted over the television, it had the capability to affect the reactions of Jane and her husband. Bodies can exhibit feelings and are impacted depending on if good news or bad news is shared. As the news came through the television, the cross-stitch pattern served as a guide that intra-acted with Jane’s hands and tools as a new cross-stitch creation came into being. All of these things were intra-acting within the space, and every time these human and more-than-human materials came together, more intra-actions occurred, and new things were produced.

Moreover, Bennett (2010) noted that “agency is also bound up with the idea of a trajectory, a directionality or movement *away* from somewhere even if the toward-which it moves is obscure or even absent” (p. 32). Once the piece was complete, and became something new, the trajectory continued to the county fair, where it was able to link to assemblages at the fair that contained new intra-actions, such as the smells, the food, flashing lights, screams, and laughter, livestock, rides, and blue ribbons. In an obvious sense, the piece physically moved from her house to the fair, but the piece was changed through the intra-actions with the above-mentioned materials, and then followed the trajectory *away* from the moving assemblage as new intra-actions were formed. Once the piece spent time in that space, it emerged into the process of assembling to follow a trajectory to a new space at a local charity, where she donated the piece. I wondered what new intra-actions and assemblages formed as the piece moved and assembled? I wondered how the piece affected those that saw it hanging on the wall in the new space?

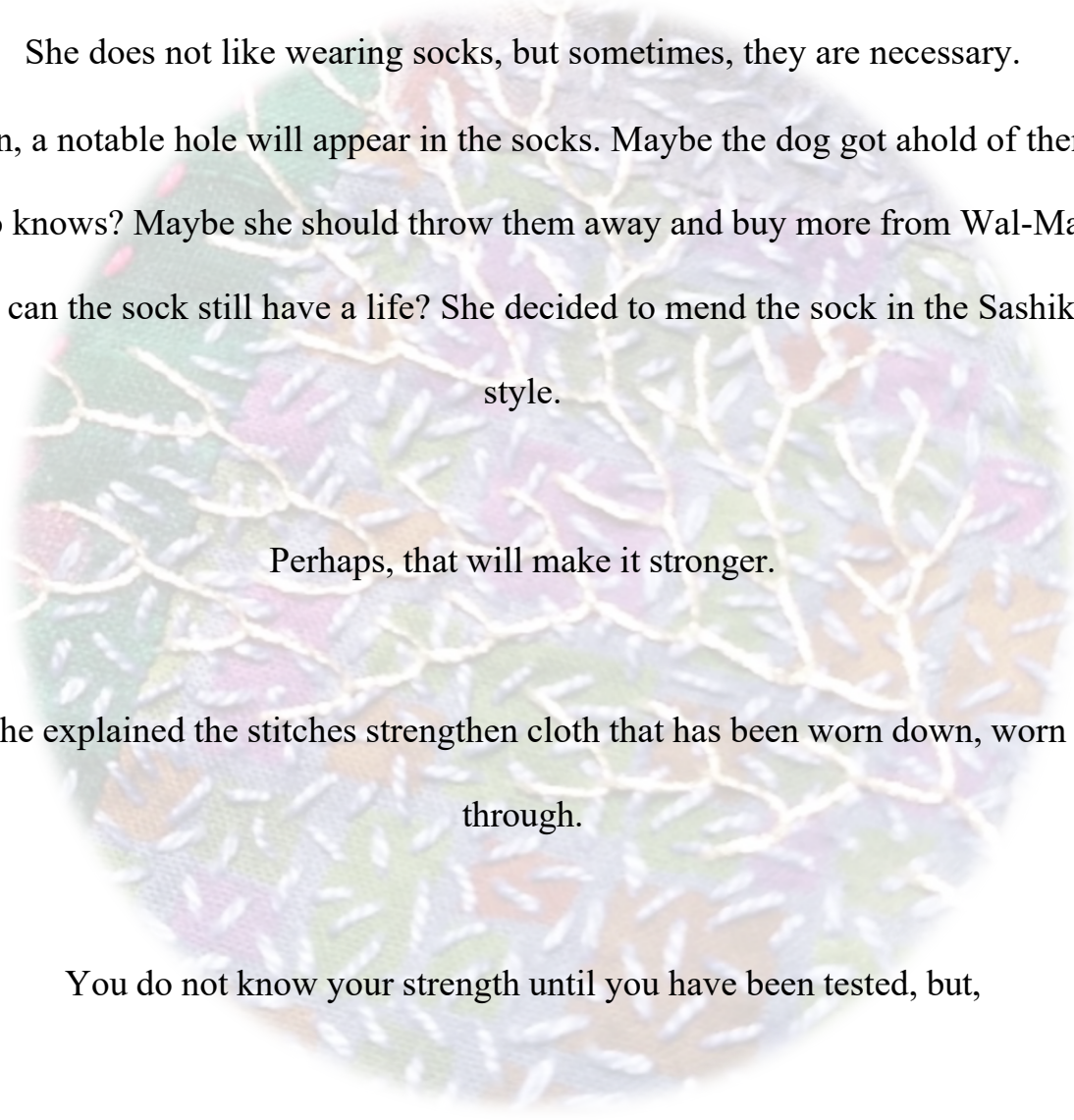
Through this exploration of Jane’s Serenity Prayer cross-stitch piece, I recognized the

correspondences to the ways women have historically used fiber crafts to make themselves seen and heard. It seemed that Jane felt seen when she found out she won an award at the fair and when her work was accepted by a charitable organization and displayed for all to see. The histories of fiber crafting are present in an enfolding of time and space, (re)configuring gender relations and fiber crafting in new ways. Barad (2010) explained that “phenomena are not located in space and time; rather, *phenomena are material entanglements enfolded and threaded through the spacetime mattering of the universe*” (p. 261). This vignette recognizes Jane’s act of cross-stitching and entering work into a local fair as material entanglements in which past and present are enfolded. These enfoldings might even surface as memories, and Barad (2010) described memory as “the pattern of sedimented enfoldings of iterative intra-activity” (p. 261). As in past narratives of women fiber crafters, Jane seemed to embark upon creating fiber craft items in order to be seen and heard, calling up histories from the past that were seemingly threaded through and (re)configured in Jane’s present.

Autoethnographic Contemplations

I am not a fiber artist or fiber crafter, though I did attempt to crochet when I was very young. Yet, this vignette prodded me to become entangled in Jane’s experiences and prompted me to think about how women have used their fiber crafts throughout time to gain visibility. For Jane, this meant entering a piece into the county fair and contributing to a charitable organization. Jane’s actions offer an example of how women can take their work from private, domestic spaces into spaces where they become visible. Such efforts for visibility caused me to recall the ways women fiber crafters have historically been cast aside into the shadows of hidden domesticity. Why were the women who worked on the Bayeux Tapestry, for example, omitted from the pages of history? Are contemporary fiber crafters more visible, especially through

practices such as yarn bombing, craftivism, and social media posts? Are those practices a way to become visible?

Vignette #2: I Hate Socks. I Love Mending.

She does not like wearing socks, but sometimes, they are necessary. Often, a notable hole will appear in the socks. Maybe the dog got ahold of them? Who knows? Maybe she should throw them away and buy more from Wal-Mart, but can the sock still have a life? She decided to mend the sock in the Sashiko style.

Perhaps, that will make it stronger.

She explained the stitches strengthen cloth that has been worn down, worn through.

You do not know your strength until you have been tested, but,

even if your strength fails, you can be restored, even more

beautifully than before.

Figure 8

Melody's Instagram Post About Mending Socks



Melody's vignette and Instagram post (Figure 8) brought about a focus on the art of mending, and it should be noted that, even though mending has been known as a necessity of the

past, there is quite a resurgence in mending today both for practical and artful purposes (Lewis-Hamond, 2019). In fact, Rose Sinclair (2015) argued that “we can use cloth and making to ask questions, to query through art, craft, and activism,” and she affirmed that we must also reexamine how we value cloth and understand the political constructs hidden within the fibers (as cited in Terry, 2020). Melody utilized the Sashiko method in the mending of the socks. This method is an artful and geometric technique that originated in Japan, and its name means “little stabs.” Siddle (2016) asserted “Sashiko is a technique of transformation that honors the impulse to re-use waste and use materials efficiently. A long, sharp Sashiko needle is a magic wand, a tool of salvage that produces style as well as economy” (Siddle, 2016).

Because Melody valued the sock and the act of being a good steward of home practicalities, the sock, thread, the design, and the long needle were only a part of this forming assemblage. How these materials came together brought about nontangible concepts such as the valuing and reusing of materials to give prolonged life or renew them. To me, this vignette revealed a great deal in terms of how new assemblages were formed. In terms of exploring the role of materials within these assemblages, Freeman (2017) explained that it is vital for a researcher to “seek to understand their materializing affects from inside materialization itself; a materialization that never ceases to flow and change” (p. 101). Overall, these assemblages are sites of potential where the focus is not on what they might become, but on the process of transformation. I understood how a sock with a hole might be deemed unusable by some, but Melody saw it as an opportunity to change the sock into something new so that it could emerge with new life. The stitches reinforce yet help to connect the socks to new ways of assembling with other bodies and entities. These trajectories also have the potential to connect to forming assemblages that consider political constructs, such as how the American culture is often

transfixed on capitalism instead of resourcefulness. These intra-actions occurred due to the agency of the materials in flux.

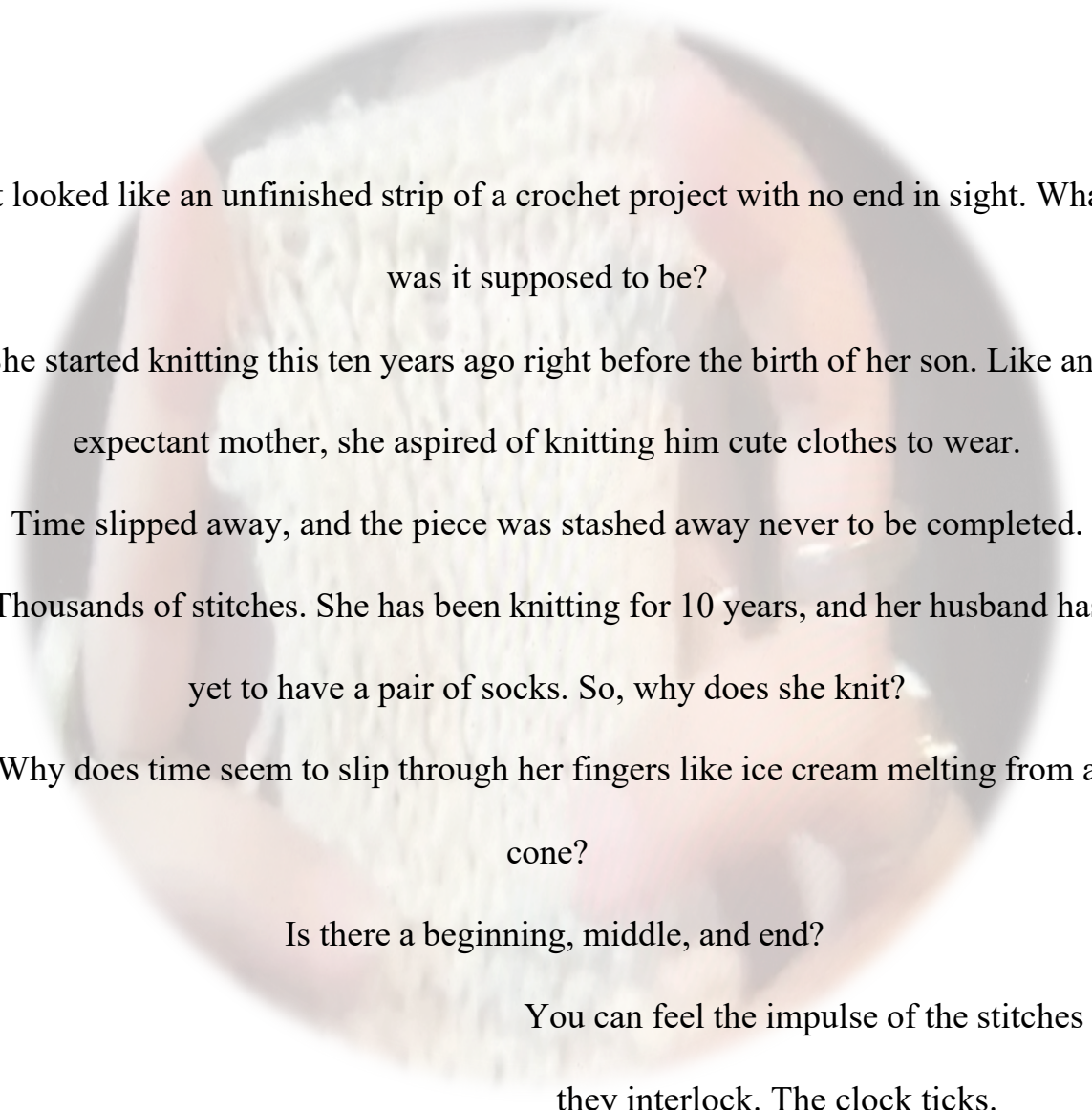
Bennett (2010) asserted that assemblages are agentic in their “capacity to form a culture, or to self-organize, or to participate in effects” (p. 34). The agentic nature of the sock-mending assemblage, then, has the potential to produce trajectories that shoot off in many different directions while also forming and reforming thoughts, ways of being, and socio-political constructs, including the gendering of fiber crafts. Just as in Jane’s vignette, Melody’s vignette calls up histories of women and fiber crafts. Throughout time, women have extended the life of objects through stitching and created objects through stitching (König, 2013). In fact, König (2013) stated that “historically, mending was typically unpaid, invisible work, usually carried out by women in a domestic setting” (p. 577). Many of these objects that were mended served their families as they protected their bodies and kept them warm and covered, or extended wearability of a piece of clothing. In Melody’s case, no one knows how long the socks will keep the feet of the body warm, or where they will go, but the act of valuing a material gives more life and meaning as it can continue towards new becomings. It opens the door for possibilities and materializations to emerge.

I must also add that this was one of Melody’s Instagram posts, and this never arose from our object interview. However, I was drawn to this post as I scrolled through her Instagram feed and felt that it had an almost ethereal effect within the confines of the popular Instagram frame. However, as mentioned previously, the materials continued to follow new trajectories through these intra-actions, and Instagram was also an intra-active agent within the fold as well. Because social media accounts like Instagram garner millions of followers, we may never know how the Instagram post affected the viewers; we can only speculate as to how some of the intra-actions

formed as the materials progressed and continued their journey. The mended pair of socks is contained within a literal frame, but what is interesting is the potential that the socks had to erupt beyond the frame to intra-act with new materials and bodies as others viewed the post and intra-acted with bodies in different ways. Did the post spark curiosity? If so, then the trajectories from the original post continued and formed new assemblages with new bodies. This made me aware that the fiber crafts process is continual, and a virtual “frame” will not limit the potential interactions the socks may have.

Autoethnographic Contemplations

I do not know how to mend socks, but my artistic capabilities have always influenced my problem-solving skills in being able to “fix” things that may break in my house. Glue guns and Gorilla Glue are two useful items that have allowed me to mend children’s toys and other objects over time. As a wife and mother, I felt that I was extending the life of things to not only save money, but to save hurt feelings over a favorite toy that could no longer be purchased online. What about women’s bodies? Are we broken at times, but renewed when mended by new possibilities? Like Sashiko stitching, are women reinforced within the fabric of society, or are we hidden within the invisible strands?

Vignette #3: Unfinished**Figure 9***Rhonda's Unfinished Knitted Piece*

It looked like an unfinished strip of a crochet project with no end in sight. What was it supposed to be?

She started knitting this ten years ago right before the birth of her son. Like any expectant mother, she aspired of knitting him cute clothes to wear.

Time slipped away, and the piece was stashed away never to be completed.

Thousands of stitches. She has been knitting for 10 years, and her husband has yet to have a pair of socks. So, why does she knit?

Why does time seem to slip through her fingers like ice cream melting from a cone?

Is there a beginning, middle, and end?

You can feel the impulse of the stitches as they interlock. The clock ticks.

But what is time?

The segment of data I focused on for this vignette is derived from the object interview that I conducted with my participant Rhonda. For this segment, she led me through a discussion about an object from her past that related to her fiber craft. She showed me a long strip of a knitted piece and explained that she started the piece 10 years ago when she was pregnant with her son (Figure 9). She aspired to knit him cute clothes, but only ended up knitting a hat. The fragment represented the beginning of something she was making for him, yet she subsequently abandoned the project because she was not happy with the texture and outcome of the yarn. In the interview, she went on to expound upon why she preferred diverse types of yarn and described the process as well. In fact, she enthusiastically exclaimed, “knitting lends itself to making whatever fabrics that I want in any fiber that I want and any combination of stitches I want...it’s really...like limitless....I think it is” (Rhonda, personal communications, June 6, 2021). Lastly, she exclaimed that she had been knitting for 10 years and had yet to knit her husband a pair of socks. The one word that encapsulated this vignette was the word “limitless.” As I perused the data, I was always captivated by this word and wondered how it offered new possibilities for how assemblages form and how something always changes or shifts with these becomings.

Furthermore, this vignette signified the concept of time that I noticed within most of the interviews. Like many of the participants, Rhonda discussed how time passed, and she never created the baby clothing or the socks that she had envisioned so many years ago. She exclaimed, “the yarn wants to be something....and the yarn has a life” (Rhonda, personal communication, June 6, 2021). Other participants mentioned that one of the ways they placed value on their work was the amount of time it took to create the finished product. Moreover, most of the participants discussed not always having time to engage in their fiber craft due to other obligations

(materials) such as family, housework, jobs, etc.

Yet, while Rhonda and the other participants expressed time as most know it to be a militaristic, Western, and/or capitalistic indicator, Barad (2010) theorizes time as understood through quantum physics in a more diffractive manner that allows for differences to erupt these traditional ways of measuring time. Barad (2007) clarified that “time has a history. Hence it doesn’t make sense to construe time as a succession of evenly spaced moments or as an external parameter that tracks the motion of matter in some pre-existing space” (p. 180). Therefore, as I viewed these concepts of time through this diffractive lens, I saw that this unfinished knitted piece did not represent a succession in time, but was part of an entanglement that was constantly being (re)created through Rhonda’s life and experiences as more materials moved into and out of the enfolding events. This ongoing process created more possibilities, not through succession of a ticking clock, but through entanglements that are never-ending and continue to thread themselves into one another. I refer to Rhonda’s enthusiastic response in that the yarn has possibilities, and these possibilities might continue to thread themselves into entanglements of future events. The past, present, and future continue to cut into one another and move in various directions rather than in a sequential order. Moreover, this moment within Rhonda’s life was not complete, just as the piece of knitting was not complete. In my conversation with Rhonda, she explained that the piece was not complete, but her love for the piece and the possibilities that it had kept her coming back to work on it (Rhonda, personal communications, June 6, 2021). Furthermore, she posited, “I think that’s why I keep going back to my knitting a little bit at a time...I’m like okay, eventually, it will be done” (Rhonda, personal communications, June 6, 2021). As Rhonda returned to the piece repeatedly, the experiences with the initial piece of knitting would continue to entangle themselves in more events as her life evolved and changed.

In addition to noting the significance of time, I noticed that Rhonda, like all of the other participants most often sought fiber craft solace within her chosen space in her home. This made me consider the possibilities that were generated when the co-existing spaces of home life and creative life merged and crashed into one another or went their separate ways as assemblages were moving and forming. From a historical perspective, women have often been part of a co-existing sphere of home and creative/professional work (Zipf, 2007). I began to ponder how my participants might disrupt these boundaries as they attempted to find time to be creative yet felt pulled by these acts of service for their families. Following Barad's (2010) conceptualization of time through quantum physics, the gendered relations of fiber crafting did not end in the past, but continue to weave their way through contemporary (re)configurings that disrupt entanglements they merging together and apart. It seemed that Rhonda had come to terms with a dis/continuous (Barad, 2010) notion of time, constantly putting away her knitting only to bring it back out again to pursue a new or different outcome. Each time she did this, the entanglements were always changing and creating opportunities for eruptions that allowed for her personal and creative projects to emerge not in succession, but as the materials were forming and (re)forming new possibilities.

Autoethnographic Contemplations

This vignette resonated with me in a very personal way as I have felt the tensions of balancing work (professional) obligations with domestic obligations, especially in relation to time. I have often felt that everything I have been doing in relation to work both inside and outside of the home has been bound by the ticking of the clock, and that I have never had enough time to complete all of the daunting tasks piling up before me. However, Barad's (2007, 2010) conceptualization of time has caused me to question why I have been so bound by this

idealistically accurate method of keeping time. Rhonda seemed to embrace the unfinished nature of her knitting project, with the understanding that she could always pick it up again and continue the project. This made me wonder how I might likewise make myself vulnerable to ongoing acts of (re)working that open themselves to further intra-activity and new iterations. I have left so many daily tasks unfinished, and it has made me feel unaccomplished; but, what if time was not the deciding factor in my daily tasks? Would they feel as daunting? There are always floors to be mopped, students to advise, meetings to attend, and carpools to run, and somethings remain unfinished and “not on time.” However, I now recognize that time is continuously (re)produced through the processes of spacetime-mattering. Perhaps this recognition opens possibilities for new ways of being within this hectic world.

Vignette #4: The Cavernous Bag

She rescued the fabrics from the landfill. She could not bear for them to be taken to some desolate landfill where they would never be seen or appreciated.

It was a huge piece of fabric with a beautiful design. She turned it into a big bag. Embroidery dictionaries, hoops, thread, scissors, needles, and pins are all entangled together.

They all had different uses, and they were often transported to embroidery classes, and other locations as well. As an artist and mother, it was essential to be able to pack the items when motherhood called only to pull them back out again when the children were settled.

Two realms co-existed. Motherhood and embroidery. She found she could be creative wherever she was. Everything was in one place. It was not organized, but all the materials had a place as they intra-acted with

this

bottomless bag.

Figure 10

Melody's Bag



ject bag. It has all the tools I
ish project or two.

These are the tools inside my proj
hooks, scissors, a little tin of

Figure 11*Rhonda's Bag*

For this vignette, I focused on Melody and Rhonda's fiber craft bags (Figure 10; Figure 11). However, the vignette describes Rhonda's bag (Figure 11) and the object interview relating to the bag. Rhonda made the bag with scrap fabric that was going to be discarded from a fabric library. She decided to keep a piece of cloth so that she could sew a large bag to store all her embroidery tools, books, and other items. She explained that the bag had been with her for a while, and not only was it transportable, but it also allowed her to be a mother and fiber crafter simultaneously. She explained, "like when I was an early artist and a mom, I needed something that I could pick up and put down easily...take with me and be creative wherever I was" (Melody, personal communications, April 27, 2021). When her motherly duties called, she was

able to quickly throw everything in the bag and set it aside until she found herself with free time. This vignette illustrates the co-existing spaces of motherhood and fiber crafting. The act of being a mother was an intra-action that occurred and reoccurred as Rhonda and Melody attempted to create. Motherhood assembled into and out of the fold depending on the bodies that were creating other assemblages and the movements that affected her being able to fully immerse herself in her craft, only to hurriedly throw it back into the large bag again.

Though not connected to motherhood, Ahmed (2010), a feminist scholar and independent researcher, described similar intra-actions in her own experiences as a writer who constantly attempted to orient herself towards her work. Ahmed's (2010) work led me to consider the role of gender that arose within these assemblages and how women's bodies have historically been oriented towards domestic spaces. In my own research, it became evident that some orientations (like fiber crafting) are not always available as motherhood often redirects these intra-actions. Ahmed (2010) articulated how women have often inhabited interior spaces along with the orientations that affected how bodies took shape in these interiors. She argued that "women do things by claiming spaces that have not historically belonged to them" (p. 252). Ahmed (2010) argued that "if orientations affect what bodies do, then they also affect how spaces take shape around certain bodies" (p. 250).

Moreover, she posited that bodies are also oriented towards the work that happens at a certain place and women have historically been "shaped by the work they do on the table, where work involved gendered forms of occupation" (p. 251). Thus, I saw both bags pictured (Figures 10, Figure 11) as spaces and objects where the women oriented their bodies towards this historically gendered craft and occupation that has historically co-existed with motherhood. The work took place in and around the bag as intra-actions hung in the balance, rose to the surface, or

sank into the cracks and crevices of daily life.

Autoethnographic Contemplations

As an artist and mother, this vignette resonated with me. Throughout my time as an artist, I worked around my children, even when they were in my womb. I set my oil paints aside while pregnant so my baby would not ingest any harmful fumes and thought of ways to make my art transportable so that I could easily throw it all into a corner, tote bag, or closet so that it was out of reach from tiny little fingers and curious minds. For me, motherhood and being an artist have always been held together in co-existence. My body was oriented towards my children and the spaces we inhabited together. I felt the tensions of desiring to be a good mother, yet good artist as well. Why should I have to choose? To me, these tensions can also be perceived as boundaries that make balancing so many roles feel impossible at times. Women's bodies have often been oriented towards the domestic sphere, but how might new intra-actions and porous boundaries enable new things to be produced such as a disruption of patriarchal forces and the (re)orientation of women's bodies?

Vignette #5: It Called to Her

Some years ago, she was walking through a yarn store, and everything was so expensive. She just did not think she could afford to buy anything.

Then, she picked up this beautiful blue yarn that had an interesting texture and was beyond soft. So, she picked it up...and she said, "It's so gorgeous," but she did not know if she wanted to do anything with it.

So, she left it at the store and exited the parking lot. About an hour later, she made her husband go back to the yarn store because she said the yarn was calling to her. She did not really know why, but she had to have it.

It has been six or seven years since she bought that yarn,
and she has yet to make anything with it.

Figure 12

Sally's Favorite Yarns



This vignette describes Sally's affinity for the actual yarns that she used to crochet or knit. She relayed a story to me during the object interview surrounding an object from her past,

which was one of her favorite types of yarn. She vividly remembered going into the yarn store and leaving empty handed due to the expensive prices. However, once she got home, she realized that she needed to return as there was some yarn there that was “calling to her,” and she had to buy it (Sally, personal communications, May 7, 2021). She did not even have a project or end goal in mind, but it was the material properties such as the texture and color that made her return. Ironically, that yarn that she coveted was still sitting in her yarn closet in storage—in a room that also contained her work desk and that was a shared space with her husband—and she had yet to even make anything with it at all. She defended her storage closet in that she said, “I never thought in a million years that I would have a yarn closet. My mother is a quilter, and she has a closet full of fabric...umm, I am not quite sure why I didn’t think that I wasn’t gonna follow in her footsteps..but, so....” (Sally, personal communication, May 7, 2021). I kept wondering throughout the interview how she could love the yarn that much only to abandon it in a musty storage closet.

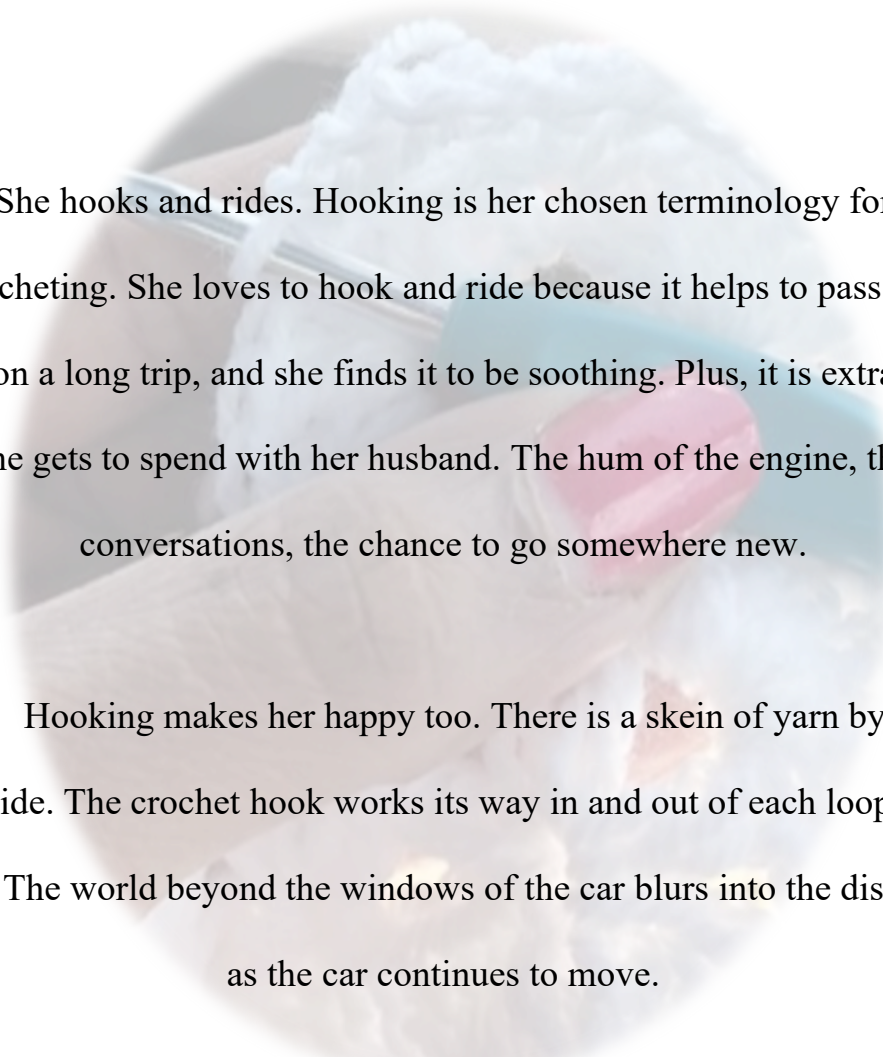
As I reread the data and the interview transcript, I realized that it wasn’t about the fact that she never used the yarn, but about the intra-actions that happened that day, and how that yarn affected her in a certain way. The yarn still waits for possibilities, both the possibility to be used for something special and the possibility of affecting other bodies and materials as they shift and move into and beyond these assemblages. Then, there was also the presence of her mother’s affinity for quilting and her storage of fabrics as well. The question remains: does an ordinary skein of yarn have the potential to affect and be affected? Stewart (2007) emphasized that “the potential stored in ordinary things is a network of transfers and relays,” and she went on to explain that this potential stored in an ordinary object, such as a skein of yarn, “lives as residue or resonance in an emergent assemblage of disparate forms and realms of life. Yet it can

be as palpable as a physical trace” (p. 21). As Sally’s yarn continues to sit in waiting, the potential still resides within the yarn, and the dust particles continue to multiply within its strands as it intermingles with new yarns added to the box in the storage closet. While the photograph above (Figure 12) is not the actual yarn that Sally described, I included this visual image of her Instagram feed to illustrate how she is always thinking in terms of potentiality when it comes to the materials. There was a certain level of excitement and indulgence she garnered from buying new yarn, and the potential that the yarns held for her added to the never-ending excitement.

Autoethnographic Contemplations

This vignette made me think of my own approach to data analysis in which I followed the data that glowed (MacLure, 2013). When Sally exclaimed that the yarn in the store “called to her,” I saw a parallel between our approaches. Rather than see the skein of yarn as a bounded object, Sally recognized its vitality and dynamism, and this is also how I engaged with my data. As I was analyzing data, certain phrases, words, emotive responses during the interviews, or intriguing social media post seemed to glow, affecting me in a way that I could not ignore. These were often unassuming pieces of data, much like an unassuming skein of yarn sitting on a store shelf. The potential within the yarn as well as the data has allowed me to visualize possibilities that I may not have noticed initially. By becoming open to the glow of data or of material objects, human-centric boundaries begin to fall away, making evident our mutual intra-active entanglements.

Vignette #6: Hooking and Riding



She hooks and rides. Hooking is her chosen terminology for crocheting. She loves to hook and ride because it helps to pass the time on a long trip, and she finds it to be soothing. Plus, it is extra time she gets to spend with her husband. The hum of the engine, the conversations, the chance to go somewhere new.

Hooking makes her happy too. There is a skein of yarn by her side. The crochet hook works its way in and out of each loop. The world beyond the windows of the car blurs into the distance as the car continues to move.

Where is the car taking them?

Will she complete her project?

Figure 13

Sally Crocheting While She Embarked on a Road Trip



This vignette was inspired by a social media post that Sally made on Facebook (Figure 13) that stated, “Doing my favorite thing in my favorite place to do it with my favorite guy—hooking while riding” (Sally, Facebook post, May 29, 2021). I was drawn to this photo for many reasons, but the main one being the way Sally was negotiating being a loving wife while pursuing individual passions and interests surrounding crochet. Sally used the word favorite twice within her post to indicate her passion for crocheting, her husband, and her favorite space for crocheting. Sally was obviously balancing all these materials within one space, which was the car in which she was riding. I recalled that Sally mentioned in the object interview that she did love to crochet while in the car and found it to be very soothing. Also, the transportability of her craft added to the satisfaction of being able to balance her passion for crocheting along with spending time with her husband and traveling.

I considered this assemblage that was comprised of the car, the husband, Sally, crochet

yarn and tools, the luggage packed in the car, the hum of the engine, and the fleeting scenery beyond the car, and I noted that as these materials intra-acted with one another, there was a certain gendered balancing act that was produced. Sally was balancing being able to pursue her interests while still maintaining an interest and affection for her husband. I wondered if this balancing act arose from the entanglement of the role of women that has been perpetuated over time? Women have often had to balance many things from running a household and raising children to having a career outside of the home. This continues to be true in the present.

According to Germano (2019), “while women are more educated and more employed than ever, they are still taking on most of the household and familial duties,” and many of these duties not only involve domestic and child related chores, but women are also more likely to take on caregiving roles of elderly family members as well (Germano, May 27, 2019). My engagement with Sally’s “hooking and riding” assemblage brought forth recognition for the ways women are tasked with adhering to society’s expectations of showing affection and devotion through acts of service, whether as a wife, mother, or both, and how these expectations are negotiated even when pursuing fiber crafts.

It seemed that the balance that Sally was seeking materialized through the intra-actions within the car. At the outset, I saw the bodily satisfaction and the photo of Sally’s hands doing what she loved. The crocheting encounter was becoming something new within a space outside of the home. Bell and Vachhani (2020) described this embodied technique as one that “is not just a means to an end but an action of co-presence that involve[s] the hand and materials unfolding” (p. 691). Likewise, it seemed that within the rhythm and textural feel of the materials, Sally derived pleasure, and this was a rhythm “that resides in the body and is realized through relational encounters with materials” (Bell & Vachhani, 2020, p. 691).

Nonetheless, I also viewed this vignette through the lens of a more feminist approach as the material of gender seemed to arise from the intra-actions. As I was considering the possibilities of speculation, I recalled the “superwoman syndrome” that many women experience when negotiating the boundaries around being a domestic goddess/mother/wife/crafter (Chansky, 2010, p. 690). Chansky (2010) elucidated the feelings of guilt and the tensions that arise as women struggle to find a balance among these expectations. I saw a tension between different identities within this vignette. Sally saw herself as someone that enjoyed spending time with her husband, an avid fiber crafter, and a woman who was eager to set off on new adventures outside of the domestic sphere. Even though the intentions of Sally’s social media post were not meant to show negativity or tension, these unseen materials were just as agentic in her life as she was trying to conciliate all the human and more-than-human bodies within this entanglement.

As Sally and her husband reached their destination, and the world passed by the windows of the vehicle, the gendered notions of craft remained inextricably entangled as the assemblages continued to move. This vignette incited me to question the tensions created through the intra-actions, and how, even though materials and assemblages are in constant flux as they fold and unfold, the material of gender is a constant material that moves freely within and in between these boundaries.

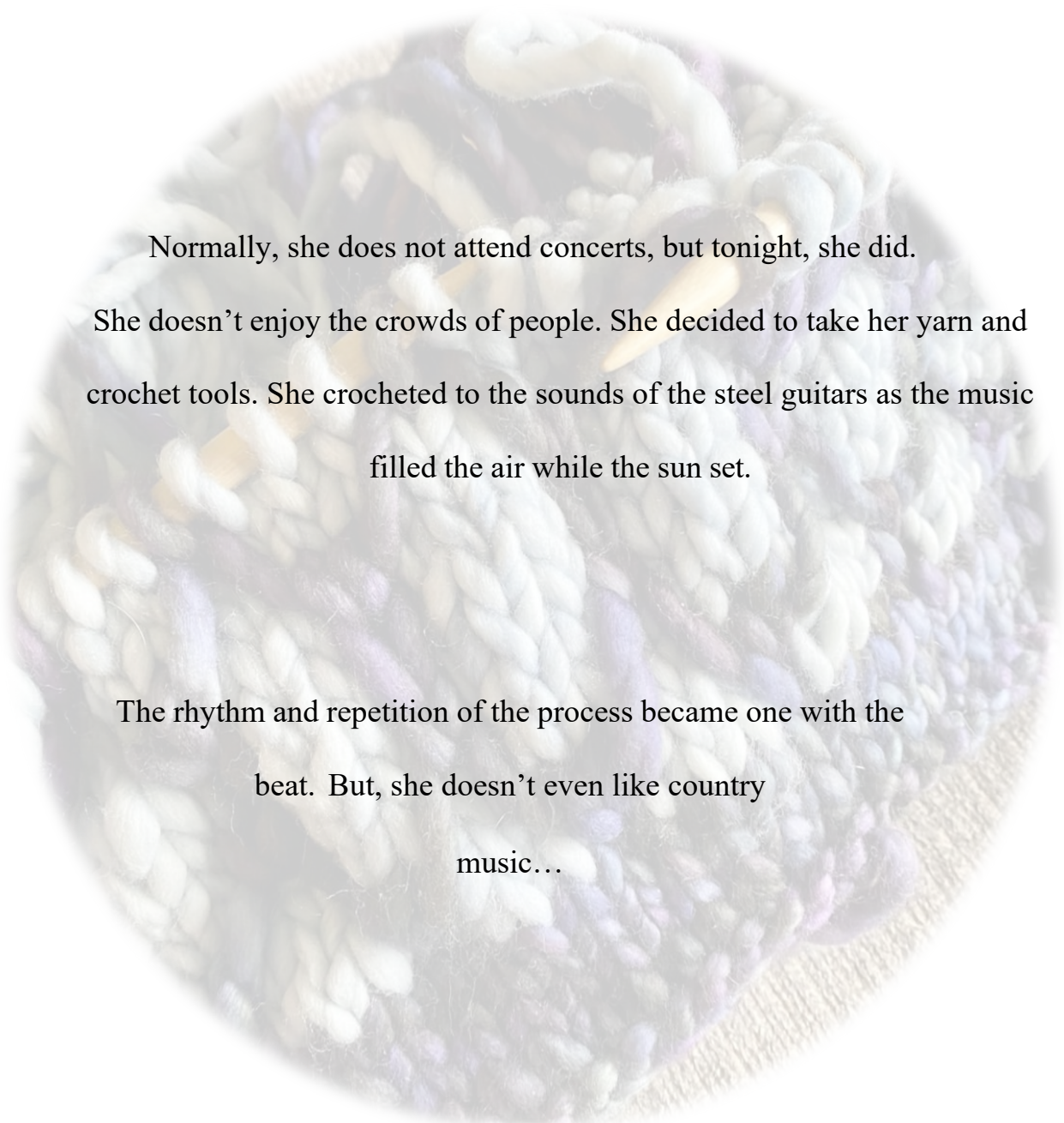
Autoethnographic Contemplations

Similar to Sally’s crochet tools and yarn, I felt like my dissertation was transportable. I have read articles while in the carpool line waiting for my children, read while on a road trip with my husband, and even worked on the writing portions of the dissertation early in the morning while on vacation. This dissertation has traveled to various countries and cities because I knew that I could not separate myself from the work that needed to be done. The dissertation

was a weight on my shoulders, but I threw it all in a large pink canvas tote and carried it wherever I went. This often created tensions for me as I begrudgingly forced myself to add the dissertation to my packing list even though I wanted a break from it all. Sally found pleasure in the balance it seemed, but I did not. However, I now recognize how these experiences functioned as complex entanglements that continuously opened for new possibilities. New places contain new becomings where sights, sounds, bodies, and many other materials comingle with the materials that enter into the entanglements (whether fiber crafts or a dissertation).

I see the ways gender is made (in)visible through these fiber craft assemblages in that both Sally and I had to make choices about when, where, and to whom we would bestow our devotion. In my experience, I have seen that society makes it difficult for women to excel at multiple things at one time. Society tells us that we cannot be a good mother if we have a career, or that a woman with a career should not become a mother. Society continuously (re)creates boundaries that force women to have to choose. While these boundaries are certainly porous, the issue at hand still seeps back into the lives of many women intra-acting to produce a variety of outcomes. Some women, like Sally, may embrace the challenge of negotiating commitments, but others, like me, may be burdened by such challenges.

Vignette #7: Crochet and Country Music



Normally, she does not attend concerts, but tonight, she did. She doesn't enjoy the crowds of people. She decided to take her yarn and crochet tools. She crocheted to the sounds of the steel guitars as the music filled the air while the sun set.

The rhythm and repetition of the process became one with the beat. But, she doesn't even like country music...

Figure 14

Rhonda Crocheting at a Concert



This vignette illustrated a country music concert that Rhonda attended that happened to take place in an outdoor setting (Figure 14). Rhonda lamented, “I typically don’t go to concerts because of the crowds” (Rhonda, Instagram post, July 31, 2021), but she also expressed her enjoyment of sitting outside in the open air. Additionally, she brought along her yarn and crochet tools so that she could crochet while listening to the music. The numerous materials that were a part of this assemblage reminded me that time and space are interchangeable and nonlinear. As Barad (2010) explained,

it is not merely that the future and the past are not ‘there’ and never sit still, but that the present is simply not here-now. Multiply heterogeneous iterations all: past, present, and future, not in a relation of linear unfolding, but threaded through one another in a nonlinear enfolding of spacetime-mattering, a topology that defies any suggestion of a smooth continuous manifold. (p. 244).

The rhythms of the crochet process weaved their way through the beats of the music.

My conversation with Rhonda during the object interview led me to view her efforts to crochet at the concert as an escape from housework and mothering as she gave herself time and space to listen and enjoy the chance to create. During the interview, Rhonda described and showed me her small corner space where she knitted at home on a large sectional in her living room. It seemed to me that, by finding a private spot to be alone with her craft, Rhonda was attempting to negotiate the tensions between housework, mothering, and her fiber craft. She noted that her friend said, “you know, just take some time for yourself and just sit by yourself” (Rhonda, personal communications, June 6, 2021). However, she went on to say that, “you know...my family will not let me sit in a room by myself, like I can’t go to the restroom without

them like wondering where I'm at" (Rhonda, personal communication, June 6, 2021). Rhonda decided that she had to integrate her craft into the same room as her family and that privacy was not going to occur for her. She seemed to have come to terms with it, and said, "like, I'm really here, and I think that's when my youngest son like appreciates it because he has a spot right next to me and he cuddles right next to me when I am working" (Rhonda, personal communication, June 6, 2021). Thus, she had found a way to make her world of motherhood and fiber craft co-exist in the same space. However, her children were not at the country music concert, and even though she was seated beside others, it seemed that she had negotiated a way to enjoy herself outside of the walls of domesticity and mothering.

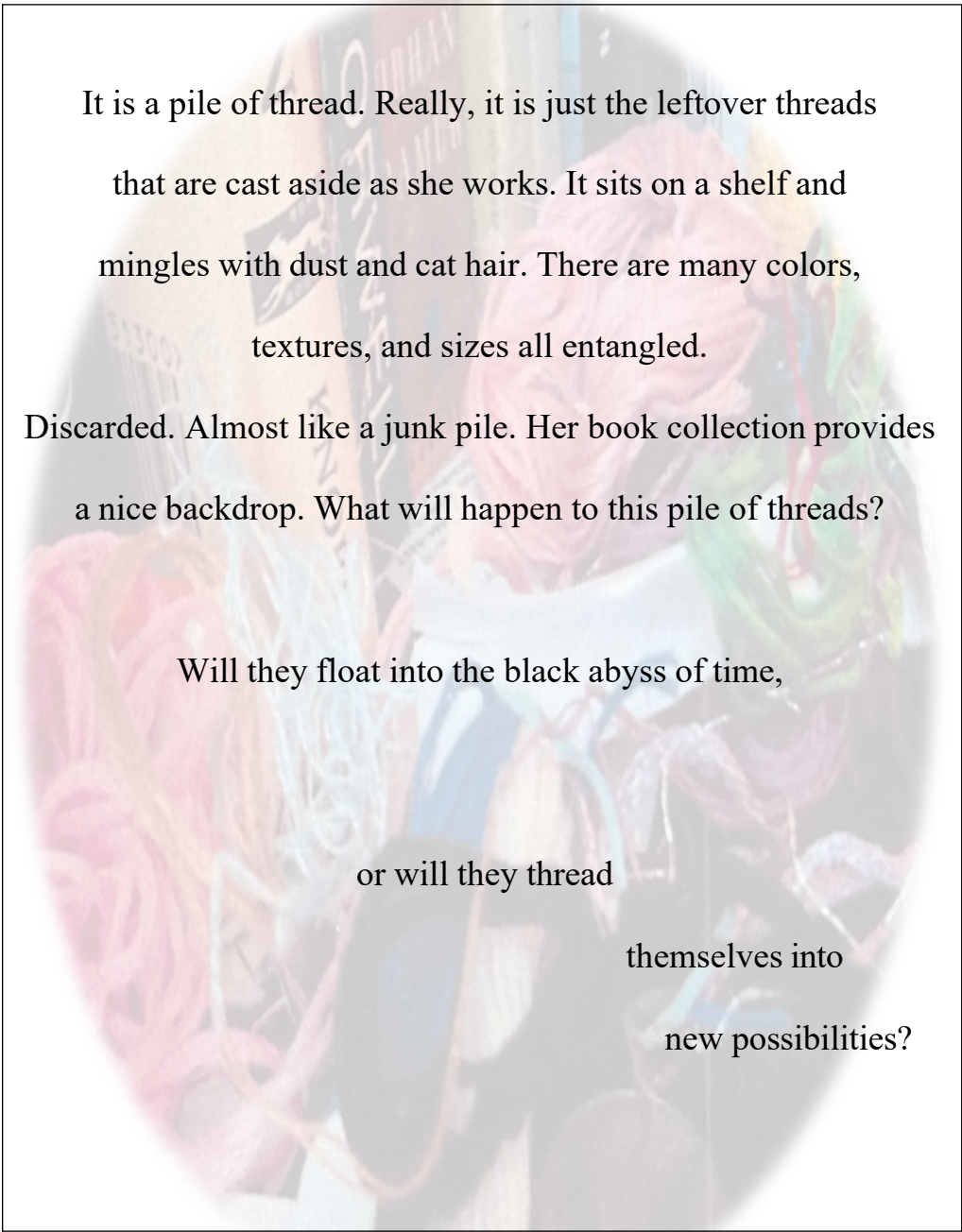
The world often tells us that we cannot slow down and enjoy a simple pace in life, and that we should be confined to work that is encompassed by four walls. In this vignette, the materials broke free from walls and boundaries as they pierced the crisp air to intra-act with the beats, repetitions, and sounds. There were many bodies present, and most of them were not engaging with their fiber crafts. However, the materials that were intra-acting and assembling and reassembling within this scenario were an interesting mixture of so many factors moving and affecting one another. Hickey-Moody (2020) explained that all these materials are not separate, and their "inter- (and intra-) relationships are vital both to how we come to know ourselves as human and how we interact with our environments" (p. 100). This exemplified the fact that even though Rhonda was not a country music fan, the overall outdoor environment seemed to cause her body to feel at ease as she used her body for creative bodily intra-actions with the yarn and tools to engage in the crochet process. Therefore, comfort and peace were materials that also intra-acted with time and space. All the bodies at the concert were intra-acting with the sounds, food and beverages, actions, and emotions of the concert.

The space was alive with the vibrancy of the pleasure and comfort of being in that space at that time. Was this concert a means of escape for many of these bodies? It became a place where pleasure and space intertwined as the worries and pressures of the world were put aside if just for the duration of the concert so that the freedom to choose this leisure time rose to the forefront of the assemblages. However, it was also the music and the melodies that united the bodies and other materials as they moved in and through one another in the infinite outdoor space. Barad (2007) argued that “intra-actions themselves matter to the making /marking of space and time” (p. 180). Therefore, the intra-actions that were produced were marking how space and time existed. I began to wonder what other women there were doing. Were there other women crocheting, texting friends, engaging in conversations, tapping their feet to the beat? What emotions, issues, and stressors did they leave at the entrance to this concert, or were those things carried inside only to intra-act with the other materials present? I recalled the question that Rhonda posed in her Instagram post: “are there others that bring their yarn to concerts too?” Could yarn symbolize all the materials we bring into the fold? How does the “yarn” within our lives intertwine and weave its way in and out of other materials present?

Autoethnographic Threads

I continue to ponder the notion of carrying yarn into a concert as a metaphor for all of the materials, forces, and affects we carry with as “yarn” that is always intertwining within the places we may go and intermingling with other materials that enter into these spaces. As this “yarn” intra-acts with new materials, what is produced? Do our “yarns” make us (in)visible? Create tensions? It seems that new iterations of patriarchy continue forming and weaving in and out of porous boundaries to produce on-going effects. As the “yarns” that women carry with them continue to move and shift, I wonder what is being produced, and where we will find

ourselves in the social fabric of our society amid these ongoing spacetime matters. Perhaps music or the crisp nighttime air can provide opportunities for renewal as we are still becoming, still waiting for things to perceptibly change.

Vignette #8: A Collection of Possibilities

It is a pile of thread. Really, it is just the leftover threads that are cast aside as she works. It sits on a shelf and mingles with dust and cat hair. There are many colors, textures, and sizes all entangled.

Discarded. Almost like a junk pile. Her book collection provides a nice backdrop. What will happen to this pile of threads?

Will they float into the black abyss of time,

or will they thread

themselves into

new possibilities?

Figure 15

Melody's Space and Leftover Thread



This vignette was inspired by photographs that Melody shared with me. The photographs consisted of visual imagery of the space where she engaged with cross stitch as well as a zoomed in photograph of a space on the shelf where all the leftover threads were discarded as she worked (Figure 15). This segment of the data called to me and glowed forward as I could see a literal entanglement of threads and other materials, but from a FNM perspective, there were many materials involved in these entanglements that were already forming to produce something new. The photo is a visual and material assemblage. One can see the entanglement of actual materials such as the pile of thread, the magnifying lamp, the sofa, the bookcase, other collectibles, and the shelf. Nevertheless, I began to think of other aspects of the assemblage that were less explicit within the photograph, such as space.

In the photograph, there was the space where Melody retreated at the end of a long day while her husband claimed a recliner close by towards the center of the room. The TV was a material that played in the background while her husband watched documentaries. She explained that she usually filled in one color at a time when working on her cross-stitch projects. She explained, “I do have the TV on usually, and my husband is in the recliner trying to carry on a conversation....I can just mindlessly fill that (color) in while watching TV, or you know he’s watching one of his documentaries” (Melody, personal communications, April 27, 2021). Often, she sat in her space and engaged in cross stitching, and they would often have conversations, and watch television together if she was interested in what he had chosen. These gendered spaces merged yet existed in isolation as well. Massey (1994) emphasized that spaces are gendered in various ways, but this “gendering of space both reflects *and has effects back on* the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live” (p. 186). Melody’s separated/unseparated spaces demonstrated an interesting assemblage of materials present as the gendered spaces were forming. I began to wonder more about how women have been able to negotiate their own spaces within more communal spaces. What conversations or situations occurred between Melody and her husband, for example, that gave way to decisions about where Melody sat and where her husband sat, or why her husband was in control of the TV remote? While this seemed like a very natural and unassuming use of space, it did cause me to consider how spaces have become gendered throughout time, and what materials intra-act with both human and more-than-human bodies to carve out these shared and separate spaces.

Additionally, there was the matter of the ordinary pile of threads within Melody’s cross stitch space. She maintained that “it just ends up in that collection spot, so I’ve got a pair of scissors that are always there, and then most of the rest of the threads are mostly just leftovers

from old projects and sometimes they migrate back up and again” (Melody, personal communication, April 27, 2021). Visually, this spot on her bookshelf acted as a cache pot for these random threads and other materials. However, these often overlooked and discarded materials provided for interesting analysis as they formed intra-actions. I could only construct my own speculations about the life of these discarded threads and see their life and intra-actions beyond the obvious pile. The life of these threads began long before the resting place within the photo. Their intra- actions consisted of being a part of a floss of embroidery thread created in a factory, sitting in a store somewhere intra-acting with other materials, and somehow finding their way into Melody’s home. There were always possibilities being formed, and the threads could have gone in many different directions depending on what emerged through the intra-actions with the human and more-than-human materials.

I saw these more-than-human materials as having trajectories beyond their obvious pile as they sought negotiations with other human and more-than-human entities. In fact, Massey (2005) emphasized that “the nonhuman has its trajectories also and the event of place demands, no less than with the human, a politics of negotiation” (p. 160). Although it is easy to assume that these materials were lying in wait for those possibilities, it is quite the contrary as even in a resting position, the assemblages were always already forming. The pile of thread may grow larger, or smaller. They may drift to new locations such as the garbage can, a new art project, or accidentally be swept underneath the sofa. The dust, cat hair, and other particles mixed and mingled with these threads, and Melody’s book collection provided an interesting backdrop as well. This is where the stories, words, theories, and themes from the literature began to merge into this pile. The pile was an assemblage of the in-between spaces that have existed, moved, and continued to flow into new assemblages and spaces. I return here to Stewart’s (2007) description

of how the potential that is stored in ordinary things “is a network of transfers and relays,” (p. 21). Furthermore, it is in the unfolding of these items where one might find the traces of potential. As some materials move and realign, there is an opening, an eruption, that allows for an ebb and flow of potential. While the question remains as to their next destination, it is the intra-actions and innate potentiality that rejects stagnation and unfolds and refolds into these new assemblages that are in constant motion. It is not *what* they are, but what will *transform* them.

Autoethnographic Contemplations

I think about the spaces that we inhabit, recognizing that spaces are not fixed points, but evolve through the processes of intra-actions. My husband enjoys watching sports and other shows on our TV. He usually tries to control the remote, and I must admit that it does annoy me at times, so we end up watching TV in separate parts of the house, or I end up working on research or some mundane household chore. It is not that he doesn't want to watch TV with me or is so unkind that he can't share the TV, but somehow these are the routines that have been produced in our home. It seems that gender relations are produced in and through positions and spaces. How have spaces been marked and gendered throughout history as intra-actions occur? Here, I refer back to my literature review and bring forth the gendering of spaces that have been the places of women's work as well as the subjugation of women as being the sex to tidy, clean, and remain domesticated while men were expected to create and lead separate lives outside of the domestic sphere. Women's art and women's domestic duties were seen as insignificant extensions of their domestic work, perpetuating the gendering of spaces and tasks that can still be observed in contemporary society.

Vignette #9: Yarn Hoarder

Her husband said that she was a yarn hoarder.

But how can she help it?

When she enters the yarn store, the yarns call to her.

It is difficult to choose which ones she will purchase. Their colors and textures are sometimes too much to resist.

She collects them in this dusty closet.

She does not always have anything in mind in terms of their purpose,
but they wait.

Perhaps, they will eventually be transformed into something different.

By her hands. With the tools. Over time.

What potential lies within this closet?

Only the materials know their escape.

Figure 16

Rhonda's Yarn Storage Closet



I constructed this vignette from a photo along with portions of the object interviews. I asked Rhonda to share parts of her home that were connected to her fiber craft. She jokingly said that her husband thought that she was a yarn hoarder. This phrase – yarn hoarder – struck me, calling forth an assemblage relating to gender/space. Although there were many other materials that were entangled within the assemblage such as yarn, tools, and emotions, it was the notion of gender and space that directed my analytical thinking. Although Rhonda’s husband may have meant no harm in his accusation of her being a hoarder, I could not help but view this statement through a feminist lens. I began to think of historic relegations of women and domestic spaces, but also how, throughout time, men have been able to label women with derogatory statements.

Therefore, I also saw the gendered history of fiber crafts as a material within this vignette. This was indeed Rhonda’s space, yet, she had to defend her desire to immerse herself in her craft and the materials in general. Apparently, collecting yarn brought her great satisfaction, but she found the need to defend her decisions and emotional desires. I began to wonder, how many times throughout history have women had to defend their decisions and emotions? And, how many times have women’s attempts to extend themselves into the creative sphere led to deprecating statements or feelings of guilt? As Ahmed (2004) explains, “emotions play a crucial role in the ‘surfacing’ of individual and collective bodies through the way in which emotions circulate between bodies and signs” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 117). In other words, the emotions produced and circulated in women’s fiber crafting pursuits are not a private matter, but become agentic forces within the on-going entanglements and intra-actions taking place.

As I referred to the theoretical framework of Feminist New Materialism (FNM), I explored how space and gender were transformed and made within this encounter. Did the husband’s stance consciously or unconsciously arise from gendered relations of power and

materials that inhabited the space?

Ahmed (2010) described the orientation of women regarding space and affirmed that “those who are ‘out of place’ have to secure a place that is not already given” (p. 254). This could be viewed in a literal and figurative sense in that Rhonda had to claim a space that was solely hers in an environment that she also shared with other bodies and materials to assert her desire to collect yarn. From a figurative stance, she also had to secure a place in the world as a woman whose body had been gendered throughout time. This vignette caused me to consider how bodies acquire and take up space, and in turn, how those bodies transform and become transformed within the intra-actions. Additionally, I recalled the stereotypes that I discovered through my literature review that many women who engaged with fiber craft have always endured. Women are still faced with stereotypical or derogatory material within their lives relating to fiber craft. Words and phrases turn into materials that pierce and leave scars on the body, as women continue to justify their space and interests. Negativity could envelop the body just as the storage closet consumed the yarns as they were tucked away for future use, or never to be seen again.

Autoethnographic Contemplations

I am not sure why, but I walked away from this object interview slightly annoyed. Rhonda’s husband had been sitting in the room during our entire interview. WHY was her husband listening? I understood that COVID had forced everyone to not only work from home, but to occupy spaces simultaneously. However, I wished Rhonda could have been alone in the interview. Rhonda’s husband’s presence caused me to think about the power of the male gaze (Armstrong, 1986) and wonder whether Rhonda might have been worried about her husband’s approval or disapproval of the things she was saying during our interview. I was also upset that

he had joked about her hoarding yarn even though she explained that he collected many things as well. It seemed that there was an imbalance in what was allowable. Why did Rhonda have to defend her actions but her husband did not? I refer back to McLean's (2017) argument that the patriarchal discourses perpetuated the notion that women were the weaker sex, and men were the only ones capable intellectual and artistic pursuits. One might say that these things happened in the past, but these discourses are agentic in the present as women fight to make themselves visible in a world that has historically regarded them as weak and insignificant.

Binding Off or Unraveling?

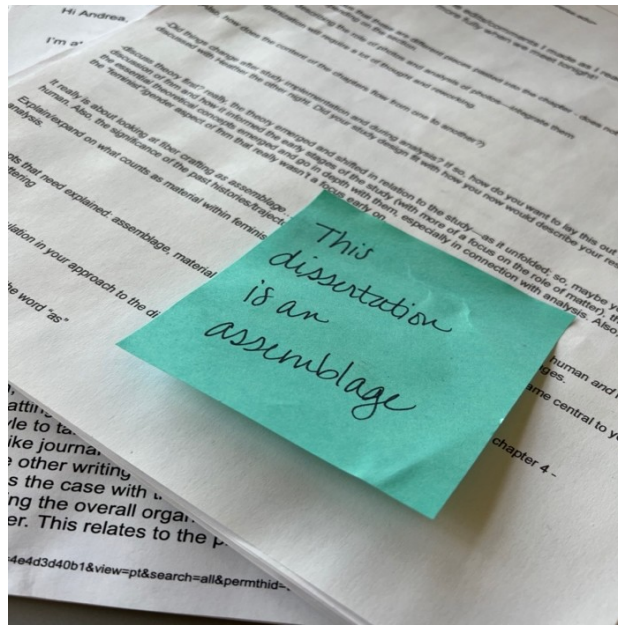
Binding off is a term used by knitters to signify that the project is complete and that it will undergo a finishing process where stitches are “bonded” or reinforced so that unraveling will not take place. Some might suggest that “binding off” could be symbolic of the end of data analysis, as if the analysis process could be considered complete, with nothing more to discover or discuss. However, I now see that this is impossible, and the intra-actions will continue along with the possibilities and trajectories as the processes continue. When I began the journey of conducting my study and drafting my dissertation, I was under the impression that I must make a definite discovery within the data that could impact the field or produce the “perfect” dissertation. However, as I moved through the data and findings, I realized that it is not about perfection, nor am I supposed to produce a definitive solution or idea. What I realized was that the movement of the ever-changing materials within the study was not only my guide but would allow me to see those materials that do not always float to the surface.

There is a beautiful transcendence that comes with looking beyond the obvious parts of a story, and seeing what lies beneath, in between, and beyond the parameters of those boundaries that we tend to form. What I did learn is that all material within our lives can be simple or complex, but in the end, there is more that is in the process of always becoming something new. Nothing remains stagnant or refuses to move. Movement and transformation are the necessary vehicles that propel us into more possibilities that align us with more attunement to the unexplained, undervalued, and unnoticed parts of life. I found this approach to be exciting and illuminating in that it manifested itself into something much more interesting than strict coding and transcribing focused on human words. This method brought all the participants into the fold yet continued to catch and release as new possibilities arose. Perhaps, it is ok to skip binding off

and to allow the fold to unravel. It may be in the unraveling that the most momentous discoveries and speculations are discovered.

CHAPTER 5

THIS DISSERTATION IS AN ASSEMBLAGE



Edit after edit. It is just words on paper.

Books, articles, papers are everywhere.

They have engulfed my kitchen table.

Is it supposed to mean anything? Why am I doing this?

I feel like quitting. I am struggling. I cannot do this.

How can I be a good mother and researcher?

Will this ever end?

The light grows brighter.

Is it the light at the end of the tunnel?

In a moment of weakness and frustration, I scribbled this phrase onto a post-it note: *This dissertation is an assemblage*. Somehow, that scribble helped to calm my anxiety at a time when I was feeling the weight of trying to meet dissertation deadlines yet feeling so isolated and unmotivated. I began to see so many parallels between myself and the women that were a part of my research, and I realized that we were all entangled in various types of assemblages. Often, these assemblages contained tensions as we balanced our various roles of wife, mother, teacher, and many others. I longed for space and time for myself alongside the tasks that were always present. As it turns out, the dissertation was unraveling and rethreading in a constant motion, pulling in a myriad of intra-actions and entanglements that produced provocative questions and new ways of thinking. I recognize that, like assemblages, this dissertation is not final and will go on into the world and continue to form new assemblages with other materials. Perhaps my findings and revelations will continue to move through the porous boundaries of academia as new possibilities arise for further research and connections with other materials. New entanglements will ensue, and as time and space collide and then move apart again, what will be left? I am not sure of the answer. Even though I present this dissertation as a finished piece of my work from a formal academic perspective, I know that it remains unfinished as new possibilities arise, and new things are produced. This is the nature of the theory and materials as they assume a life beyond themselves, and beyond the words on these pages.

Early on, I developed research questions that guided and informed my study. I revisit the research questions here not to offer any definitive solutions but to explore how they were also part of the entanglements of this dissertation. I mapped responses to these questions as I created the vignettes and subsequent memos in Chapter 4. I began this study thinking that I would gain a great deal of knowledge about the fiber crafts tools and processes. Instead, I saw other materials

in fiber crafting emerge. My theoretical stance of feminist new materialism allowed me to see beyond the obvious materials to investigate how space, time, and gender were agentic within the fiber crafts assemblages and in constant flux as they moved in and through the countless assemblages that materialized in the study. I have been a part of a transformative journey. I am forever entangled with the fiber craft materials and the women because spacetime-matterings are not final and cannot be stopped.

Space/Time/Matterings

How is gender (in)visible in the spacetime-mattering of women's fiber crafting?

Space and time became significant sites of analysis as I conducted my research. Time and space, for example, were forces that highlighted the limitless emergence of new possibilities through intra-activity. Yet, as Barad (2007) explained, “space, time, and matter are mutually constituted through the dynamics of iterative intra-activity” (p. 181). In the interviews, all of the women gauged their journey with fiber crafts from a standpoint that emphasized a Western, capitalistic standard of time, chronologically recalling significant moments, such as when they created their first projects, when they first learned their craft, or even how long it took them to stitch or knit a particular item. They also spoke of the spaces where they created such as the sofa, or a spare bedroom in their homes. When analyzing these interviews, however, Barad's conceptualization of spacetime-mattering troubled the aforementioned conventional concepts of time/space. In one example, Jane recalled the moment when a fire devastated her childhood home, which housed so many items from her past. She explained,

I literally lost everything, so I'm just kind of rebuilding everything that I had lost. I lost all my previous pattern books and you know, all older patterns that were kind of tried and true things that you know. You work out all the bugs with them and figure

out a better way to assemble things. The house was a total loss. (Jane, personal communications, May 18, 2021).

Although the fire was devastating to Jane, and she described how her pattern books and many memories had erupted in flames, I wondered about life beyond the ashes, and how time, space, and matter were produced simultaneously. As the flames intra-acted with the matter of Jane's home, something new was produced through the charred remains of what was left and the memories and things that were part of Jane's childhood and early adulthood. Barad (2017) explained that "landscapes are not stages, containers. Or mere environments for human and non-human actors," and "land is not property or territory; it is a time-being marked by its own wounds and vitality, a layered material geo-neuro-biography of bones and bodies, ashes and earth, where death and life meet" (p. 83). The fire attempted to destroy the matter of Jane's past and present, yet the ashes became enmeshed in the earth and Jane's memories in connection with the land and materials continued to intra-act. Physically, her materials were lost, but traces remain of the knowledge and joy that resided in those pattern books, and those traces continue to unfold and entangle themselves producing on-going intra-actions through Jane's continuing practice of collecting new pattern books. Spacetimematterings were continuously produced through these intra-actions.

In terms of gender, I saw the inheritance of pattern books that were gifted to Jane by a female family friend and her mother to be acts of visibility, just as the act of fiber crafting such as sampler making and mending has been something that was shared between mother and daughter or other female influences within a young girl's life throughout history (Parker, 1984). There is an entanglement of these shared acts of fiber crafting between mother and daughter that have kept the knowledge of fiber crafting alive and relevant within contemporary times. A fire

could not destroy Jane's knowledge and passion for fiber crafting. Likewise, one of my other participants, Melody, explained that "one of the reasons that I am a fiber artist is because my mom did so much sewing...I hung out in this quilt shop and played with fabrics...it was just—this like world of fabric around me" (Melody, personal communications, April 27, 2021).

Melody continues to sew and fiber craft while utilizing the knowledge she learned from her mother. Even though many scholars such as Parker (1984) saw the acts of teaching young girls to sew or create samplers as solidifying gendered approaches to fiber crafting, perhaps the communal aspect of fiber crafting does have the potential to create bonds and relationships among women that might in fact foster a collective commitment to visibility throughout time and space. As discussed, the literature review chapter, samplers served as a prime example of both submission and subversion, and such subversion is one way in which women have attempted to become visible through the means of fiber crafting. The inheritances of fiber crafting from the past are apparent in acts of sharing, memories, visibility, and activism that continue to (re)surface in the present. They may be traces, almost like ashes from a fire, but these traces continue to intra-act with time, space, and matter to produce new ways of creating and thinking about fiber crafting.

As mentioned previously, many of the spaces the women described in terms of where their fiber crafting took place were nothing more than a sofa in the living room, or a highly organized craft room, but these spaces were also a significant part of the entanglements of various bodies and materials within the fiber craft assemblages. I noted how the women sought fiber crafts spaces as sites of refuge, creativity, and comfort. One participant, Sally, described her favorite places to engage in fiber crafting by exclaiming,

my most favorite place to crochet is in a car...and if I'm going to church or

something. I'll just have a like, a little Ziploc bag in my purse because I can just carry it around; or like on the airplane, you know you can't have scissors. (Sally, personal communications, May 7, 2021).

Rhonda also described her personal knitting corner on the far end of a sectional in her living room, explaining, "so we bought this couch then my son and I...he cuddles with me while I knit and crochet" (Rhonda, personal communication, June 6, 2021). Within these examples that illuminate the spaces where women engaged in fiber crafting, I saw mothering, familial connections, history, comfort, and more as time unfolded and made the histories of women's fiber crafting visible through spacetime-mattering. My participants described space in terms of designated places, but I noticed how those places were indicative of spacetime-matterings that were never complete. The gendered notion of fiber crafts continues to be (re)produced within fiber crafts assemblages even today as women negotiate the tensions and balance from the many roles that they assume. These intra-actions are not based on the ticking clock, but demonstrate how the histories of fiber crafting continue to unfold into the present and future, where new spaces are created for women to embrace its calling, and take up a responsibility for making fiber crafting visible within our world.

Tension-Filled Spaces

The women designated their spaces, and even though some were shared spaces with other members of their families, the spaces were interesting locations teeming with tensions and respite. On one hand, the spaces served as sites of peace and contentment, and on the other hand, they served as sites of tension as the women struggled with their various roles and domestic tasks along with other distractions such as a blaring TV or ringing doorbell. Rhonda struggled with the balance of motherhood and being a fiber crafter as she lamented, "before my youngest son was

born, I really struggled with finding like a hobby and something that fulfills me and something that was just mine, but I told my husband...I'm like listen, I am a maker, like it is inside of me. I have to be doing something and take it with me everywhere I go" (Rhonda, personal communications, June 6, 2021). The cost of materials also created economic tensions, such as when Jane's husband questioned her spending. She explained "My husband looks at me like 'you're going to spend how much on shipping?,' and I said, 'This is the only place that has all the stuff that I need'" (Jane, personal communication, May 18, 2021).

Many times, these tension-filled spaces became gendered when the husband would designate the spare room or living room as "his" space since the room contained the recliner and the television, thereby forcing some of the women into minute areas of the room in a corner or small section. The items the women displayed from the present were often unfinished, and time was an indicator in terms of how long it would take for them to complete the project, or how much leisure time they had to work on a certain project aside from other household duties. They often informed me that they did not have "enough" time to engage in fiber crafting as other duties (work/home) claimed much of their spare time. I saw time as a material that was embraced, cast aside, and altered depending on the women and assemblages of other materials that were forming. Time could change the trajectory of the materials and the processes as well. As for the future, it is not predictable, nor is it final. The vignettes helped to establish the fact that the future is not final or predetermined, and we can only speculate about the trajectories that all the materials within the assemblages could take.

I also noted tensions that were created as my participants attempted to find a balance between the public/private spheres. Apart from Sally, who is a retired schoolteacher, all the participants held jobs outside of the home. However, as mentioned previously, COVID was an

unexpected factor that produced an interesting yet frustrating disruption between the domestic/public spheres because all the women were forced to share the same workspaces/rooms with their husbands and other members of their family for a significant amount of time. For example, Rhonda spoke of her job as a graphic designer and how she and her husband were sharing the same office space (Rhonda, personal communication, June 6, 2021). Also, she showed me her storage closet full of yarn, and she spoke of her husband's words of caution when he said "If you can't keep all the yarn in the closet, there might be a problem" (Rhonda, personal communication, June 6, 2021). Spare rooms became workshops or makeshift offices, and spaces that used to provide privacy became communal spaces. Melody also spoke of the tensions created for her as an art educator when trying to maintain her fiber arts studio while teaching in an unprecedented way via Zoom. She expounded on this, stating,

I think it's just...it's the pandemic. It's...I'm a little burned out from teaching and being creative. With the kids, I am finding like digital learning taking up so much time. You're so much more accessible to students...Like I just don't come home anymore. (Marie, personal communications, April 27, 2021)

In these examples, the public sphere merged with the domestic sphere until many of the COVID restrictions were lifted. This was an unanticipated development within my research that allowed me to observe various assemblages within one space. The concept of spacetime mattering offers an explanation of how a deadly virus such as COVID carved out different and often shared spaces under one roof due to the pandemic. These newly altered spaces contained many personal and political tensions, and fear at times. Ironically, the spaces also provided the women with respite from the stress and fear that everyone in the world was experiencing. Fiber crafting offered them peace and solace during these unsettling times. Even

though many humans attempted to negotiate a time-frame with this virus, it acted on its own accord, and continues to invoke fear and alterations for daily life. It seems that the world has gotten used to the virus' looming presence, and many have stated that it will probably haunt us forever as its intra-actions continue to produce various kinds of tensions and knowledge relating to the virus. COVID altered spaces within its own time frame while exposing the dynamics of gender roles as tensions, sadness, fear, respite, helplessness, and stress were all produced and continued to shift within these fiber craft assemblages.

Virtual Spaces

Another fascinating component of the study was the virtual spaces. My interest in these spaces emerged unexpectedly and allowed me to view a different aspect of space. In fact, I enjoyed the virtual interactions that I had with the women, and I was able to observe more than just the formal photographs they sent to me. For the women, these spaces consisted of their social media feeds such as Facebook and Instagram. The participants had given me permission to interact with their social media sites, and I was captivated by their social feeds. The feeds produced a much more interesting look into fiber craft assemblages than I had initially expected. These were very personal spaces for the women, and yet they were public spaces where they shared things such as their latest completed project, favorite yarns, or even a glimpse into the places they took their fiber craft materials. These feeds also allowed me to observe their daily lives and thought processes, thus, going beyond surface level investigations.

I followed these virtual spaces for a little over a year and was able to form my own intra-actions as I often clicked on the heart icon to like their Instagram post or clicked on the thumbs up icon or heart on their Facebook posts. I often laughed at certain posts or was captivated by the finished products the women posted. Even though not all the posts were related to fiber crafts, I

relished the opportunity to see all the materials in their lives evolve through these virtual spaces. Essentially, I became a part of these virtual intra-actions that produced so many different trajectories that reached far beyond the world wide web. These virtual spaces seemed to provide a safe and liberating place for the women, but also opened possibilities for new materials to emerge and move through these spaces as their followers witnessed these visual assemblages materialize. The posts were visual vignettes that gave the viewer a small glimpse into the women's lives and all the materials that were a part of each assemblage within the virtual frames on the social media posts. What was interesting to me was that all the materials within these frames intra-acted with one another and continued beyond the virtual frame to form new intra-actions and assemblages. The virtual spaces were unending, and never truly disappeared. The materials from those posts can continue to linger in complex ways. Space and time are created simultaneously as new materials are produced that incite various reactions and intra-actions within these virtual spaces. In addition, these virtual realms produced ways for my participants to become visible to others through their fiber crafting.

Time/Space

During the object interviews participants often mentioned items from the past such as a pattern book, thimble, or unfinished pieces of clothing, and these experiences prompted me to realize what was produced in the past was not final, and that the past (along with these items) still had a life beyond what it seemed. According to Barad (2010), "The past is not closed (it never was), but erasure (of all traces) is not what is at issue. The past is not present. 'Past' and 'future' are iteratively reconfigured and enfolded through the world's ongoing intra-activity" (p. 261). The items from the participants' pasts were not gone or forgotten, rather they potential to intra-act with new assemblages and move in and beyond those intra-actions. In fact, Barad

(2010) explained that “memory—the pattern of sedimented enfoldings of iterative activity—is written into the fabric of the world,” and they went on to say that “the world ‘holds’ the memory of all traces; or rather, the world is its memory (enfolded materialization)” (p. 261).

Melody recounted memories of her mother and grandmother with her object from the past, which happened to be an interesting thimble that had belonged to her great grandmother. She said that she stores it in her jewelry box, and never uses it because her mother wore it on a necklace, and later passed it down to her. She explained, “so. it’s....it’s just the thimble is strung onto a necklace, but the reason why it’s important is because I really connect to this sort of matrilineal heritage of fiber craft” (Melody, personal communications, April 27, 2021). She also went on to say that, “one of the reasons why I’m a fiber artist is because my mom did so much sewing, and when I was little she would bring me to the smocking class that she taught” (Melody, personal communications, April 27, 2021). This excerpt from Melody’s object interview illustrates how fiber crafting becomes visible through these intra-actions of the past, present, and future. Melody described the matrilineal heritage of fiber crafting that had been passed down to her through a thimble, but also through memories spent with her mother in the sewing/smocking classes. The thimble was a more-than-human object, but as it intra-acted with the past (memories from her mom and grandmother) and the present (her devotion to fiber crafting) spaces and possibilities were produced that allow fiber crafting to continue its matrilineal heritage.

It seemed that from a theoretical lens, space, time, and matter were inseparable within my study. The histories of women fiber crafters from the past were agentic within the present day as my participants sought space and time for their work within a world that still contained patriarchal overtones. I wondered how women might intentionally consider how materials make

and (re)make time and space through the intra-actions of fiber crafting. How might women become attuned to the ways the heritage and histories of fiber crafting continue to be (re)made in the spacetime matters of the present, for better or worse? What forms of activism might be productive? What might future iterations of visibility look like?

Boundaries

How are boundaries (re)produced through material intra-actions within fiber craft assemblages?

Societal Expectations

Within my study, boundaries were often produced and (re)produced through tensions as the women struggled to find the time to create yet remain faithful to household duties, mothering, and upholding relationships and various other commitments. These boundaries have existed throughout history and had the potential to become blurred or (re)formed as the women's bodies intra-acted with other materials within their spaces. Societal expectations have often been placed on the shoulders of women as the caretakers, domestic miracle workers, and givers of this world. Thus, a superwoman mentality is produced through boundaries as these expectations tell women to work inside but outside the home, and to embrace motherhood only to be told that motherhood serves as a boundary toward career goals. Patriarchal notions of how femininity and women's roles should be defined have shaped these boundary making practices. Such practices are continuously (re)produced as women must constantly renegotiate their place in society and struggle with roles and expectations that are often perplexing.

It seemed that the women in my study found their fiber craft processes to be simultaneously bounded and porous. They described their pursuits to find a balance between the boundaries of domestic/feminine duties and their creative endeavors, but they also pursued their

fiber crafts across a wide variety of spaces such as concerts, road trips, the home, the office, and in an airplane. The women embraced their identities, but at the same time felt the tensions from their identities as they balanced being mothers, wives, career women, and fiber crafters. I also noticed a parallel between my participants' experiences and my own. I experienced similar tensions as I considered my own role as an art educator, college professor, mother, wife, and much more, and I embraced this personal connection with my participants. Most would assume that these roles are just part of my identity, or their identity, but it is more than that. These roles are produced through agentic assemblages that form my participants' lives, my life, and the lives of fiber crafters in the past.

Public/Private/Virtual Boundaries

Another boundary that was produced and (re)produced was that of the domestic and the public spheres as these boundaries also produced creative tensions as well. The literature review provided much evidence that many women across the world utilize virtual platforms to sell their fiber craft products, engage with other fiber crafters, and learn how to improve their skills.

Nonetheless, some of my participants felt creative tensions when they attempted to disrupt the private/public dichotomy. Therefore, the boundaries that formed and (re)formed often created tensions, but compromise arose as well as they had to choose one passion for another or find a means to balance these endeavors. These tensions trickled into the virtual realms in boundaries that were produced and (re)produced there as well. Virtual spaces could be seen as a merging between the private and the public boundaries. For example, the women often created and posted on social media within the confines of their private spaces, but the world wide web is a public arena despite supposed "privacy" settings. The new domesticity (Bratich & Brush, 2011, pp. 238–239) described in Chapter 2 aims to disrupt the boundary between the public/domestic

spheres. It utilizes the internet as a vehicle and “demands reappropriation of oppressive and violent stereotypes and epithets of gender regarding e.g., space or previously negative charged meanings loaded on femininity” (Koivunen & Ahmas, 2020, p. 150). Consequently, the new domesticity prompts disruptions to virtual and domestic boundaries and creates new opportunities as oppressive language and attitudes can be challenged and exonerated as women seek to disrupt the virtual realm in innovative ways.

There is a lingering promise of freedom, and I found that my participants desired the freedom to choose. They wanted to choose where they knitted, what time they cooked dinner, how long they could knit before bedtime, and what pattern or yarn would influence their next project. All these materials formed intra-actions that acted as both boundary-making and boundary-disrupting processes as their roles became more complex. I do not have any answers or solutions for the tensions felt in these gendered spaces, but I will continue to linger in the messiness of what it means to be a woman who happens to be an art educator, mother, wife, and more. Ultimately, I wonder if an attunement to public/private encounters could reveal those materials and forces that are often silent as they rupture these preestablished, though porous boundaries? Would an attunement to these materials provide an opportunity for more movement, freedom, and new possibilities to arise? How are identities produced through the intra-active workings of the histories of yesterday and the promises of the future?

Resonation Chambers of Art Education

I began to consider how the spacetime matters of fiber crafts had correspondences to art education in schools, where materials and bodies merge, collide, and then move once again to intra-act with other materials. In fact, Niccolini et al. (2018) maintained that within the classroom, “the teachers’ and students’ bodies, the spaces we teach and learn in, and the very

materialities that make them up are affective ‘resonation chambers’ for larger histories, tensions, traumas, possibilities, and trouble” (pgs. 328-329). Niccolini et al. (2018) use the term resonation chamber to describe the way vocal cords function and how sound and song are produced.

Another definition of a resonation chamber is “a hollow chamber whose dimensions allow for resonant oscillation of electromagnetic or acoustic waves” (Definitions.net, n.d.). Following these definitions, an art classroom can be understood as a resonation chamber – a space in which materials move continuously and tensions such as identity and other histories collide then break apart to form new assemblages.

Grube (2019) spoke of the entanglements within an art classroom and described them as an “assemblage of mobile workspaces, eclectic accumulations of materials, shutting down, intersecting, disregarding the old patterns and looking to the new” (p. 106). Many forces and material objects can affect this assemblage such as gender, class, race, time, space, and even the autonomy to approach art materials with no trepidation. Garber (2019) expounded upon these assemblages when she stated, “intra-actions and correspondences arising from the materialism of the classroom—the media, processes, people, site, and outcome—form an entanglement that students and other makers value” (p.16). Perhaps art classroom chambers are akin to a sound board that allows prevalent tensions and histories to echo loudly for all to hear?

Spacetime mattering and the Art Classroom

Ultimately, a focus on spacetime mattering raised certain questions about art education and how thinking with this framework could produce innovative ways of thinking and making in the art education classroom. For example, how does time play into the assemblages within the classroom space? Time is of essence in terms of education in general. Students work until a bell sounds, or a clock indicates their class time has ended. Students arrive at a certain time, leave at

a certain time, and are counted as tardy if they do not arrive on time. Hickey-Moody (2020) cautioned that time can be a challenging material within a school due to “the constraints of timetabling, room booking, staff availability and the more general structures that force education to be contained into individualized pockets of time” (p. 103). A linear perspective of time dictates much of what happens in a school and classroom setting and is entangled with many materials such as bodies, books, desks, hallways, and more other human and more-than-human entities.

I began to consider these intra-actions and how space is created and remade through individualized pockets of time. I saw parallels between the women in my study and the art education classroom. Time seemed to be a powerful force that contained significant agency to direct forces together or apart. Often, time and space remained in flux as they pushed and pulled against patriarchy, power, class, and race. Does time need to be at the forefront of what happens within an art classroom? Should we place timeframes on students as they create within spaces that are constantly remade through intra-actions? What if approaches to art education centered around an open-endedness that embraced curiosity and speculation while rupturing predetermined space-time boundaries?

(Re)producing Boundaries in the Art Classroom

Many architectural boundaries are institutionalized within a school building and are based on a patriarchal mindset that continues to form boundaries for students. FNM seeks to disrupt those boundaries and calls into question the relevance of perfectionism and institutionalization within the art classroom space. Grube (2019) described the boundaries of schools as “institutional boundaries, categories, inventories, taped lines on the linoleum to designate where each child should stand” and goes on to say that these boundaries are the “stuff

of schools” (p. 108). While many of these boundaries exist within a school building and even within many art classrooms, art educators might ponder how they can critically assess the boundaries that exist in their classrooms and allow for bodies, materials, and space to merge as moving assemblages. Niccolini et al.’s (2018) study considered the possibility of boundaries becoming blurred and often unrecognizable between the human and more-than-human components as encounters and intra-actions differed within the classroom space. In fact, they asserted that “the objects of each student as part of his/her body became part of the other bodies affording new affective relationalities” (Niccolini et al., 2018, p. 330). This study caused me to consider what types of boundaries exist within the art classroom, and how art educators can aid in creating open spaces where resistance to the oppressive notions of our world are confronted. In fact, I began to think about how boundary making processes could hinder the growth and satisfaction of women art educators. Does a patriarchal mindset create boundaries that cause women art educators to conform to predetermined standards?

Seeking a Balance for Art Educators

The experience of pursuing this dissertation study with women fiber crafters caused me to consider implications for women art educators, and if or how we protect them within their roles as mothers, wives, community leaders, and more. In fact, the National Center for Education Statistics (2020) reported that the field of teaching is comprised of 76 % female teachers overall. Also, the most common distribution of bachelor’s degrees in art education are awarded to women. In fact, the data shows that among the five institutions that awarded the most undergraduate art education degrees in 2017, 86.7 % of the degrees were awarded to females (Data USA, n.d.). Therefore, it seems that women are the prominent gender within not only institutional training, but within the field as well. My research with women who engage in fiber

crafts raised questions about how society often disregards the many roles that art educators balance. In fact, Shelton et al. (2019) explored the many tensions and experiences of women doctoral students and in academia. Shelton et al. (2019) argued that “women doctoral students, and women in academia in general, balance contradictory and multiple roles throughout their programs, including a multitude of gendered negotiations relative to family and other relationships” (p. 112) What if women art educators and women in academia were given time and freedom to balance being mothers, wives, and community leaders with their careers? What would that look like?

The Unraveling: It is Not Finished

There is no conclusion for this dissertation. Rather, I will leave the reader to continue to speculate as to where the materials may lead. This dissertation is an assemblage. It is an entanglement of thousands of intra-actions that have spanned across time yet is not final. Like the participants in my study, I sought to disrupt my own boundaries between domestic/work/student life as well as the stereotypical comments about the fact that I was a woman attempting to balance these materials while pursuing a PhD. I also suffered from superwoman syndrome, and there were many days in which I felt that I could not continue my journey because I felt overwhelmed or defeated. I often felt guilty if I enjoyed a dinner out with girlfriends or a weekend getaway because I knew that I should be working on my dissertation instead of enjoying these things. I knew the women in my study felt the same guilt when they thought they should be cleaning the kitchen or answering work emails, but instead they chose to engage in fiber crafting. The guilt that I felt was a material within the assemblage of the dissertation. It was heavy, and it constantly weaved its way in and out of each page and caused me to question my own mental health at times.

Nevertheless, as I found a way to negotiate with the material of guilt, motherhood, and doctoral studies, I found my feminine voice. This is not to say that I had never been a feminist or never previously cared about feminist issues, but what I discovered was a personal opposition to patriarchy and all the systems of oppression that created tension in my life. Mazzei and Jackson (2019) explained that an emphasis on voice in agentic assemblages aims to “draw attention to the movement, or the agential force, or all sorts of voices (human and otherwise) that attach in an agentic assemblage to mark new territories and to create new becomings and different conceptions of voice” (p. 19). In essence, my voice was intertwined with many women’s voices from the past and present as I sought to represent those who do not have a voice and to disrupt patriarchal boundaries. At times, I became angry; angry that no one understood my frustrations, that COVID was a constant distraction, and that I struggled to find a balance between motherhood and academia. At first, I thought that this dissertation and study were only about the women, but I also became entangled in the assemblages as I related to their fears, frustrations, and ways of dealing with the spacetime matters and boundaries of the world. Many of my participants experienced an unraveling, and so did I. Furthermore, what I learned from my participants was that we are not the architects of our assemblages. Instead, as histories and other troubles pierce through certain boundaries, we (re)form the boundaries that cause us to assert our femininity and confidence in a world that tells us differently. As women, we must claim and (re)claim the spaces in which we have been excluded. We can (re)form these spaces to create open systems that acknowledge the past, live in the future, and yet are vulnerable to the possibilities the future holds. Sometimes, we must unravel to find our truth. Ask yourself: where do materials go, where do they lead, what transforms them, and with whom or what do they intra-act? When you find a truth that glows with the brightest light, you know you have found

your answer. This dissertation is not finished...I offer no solutions and no best practices.

However, it is within the unraveling where we find the truth.

.. It continues to live...

To intra-act...

as...

moving assemblages.....

producing....

new.....

October 15, 2022

***Responsibility.** According to Barad, things are never finished, as time is not sequential and never ends. The traces of what has been entangled with women fiber crafters from the past and present are entangled in a beautiful, yet complex way. This dissertation, and the research it encompasses, continues to (re)produce me, and I know that I must acknowledge the complexity of all that I inherit. I must take this knowledge and act responsibly as I am entangled within the gendered past and present of fiber crafting and aim to take on a more feminist role in my life, my community, and my work. Through this dissertation, I found my feminist voice, and I know that I must acknowledge the “entangled relationalities of inheritance” (Barad, 2010, p. 264). In fact, Barad (2010) asserted that:*

“to address the past (and future), to speak with ghosts, is not to entertain or reconstruct

some narrative of the way it was, but to respond, to be responsible, to take responsibility for that which we inherit (from the past and the future), for the entangled relationalities of inheritance that ‘we’ are to acknowledge and be responsive to the noncontemporaneity of the present, to put oneself at risk, to risk oneself (which is never one or self), to open oneself up to indeterminacy in moving towards what is to come” (p. 264)

Although the women did not teach me about techniques of fiber crafting, they taught me that fiber crafting is gendered yet porous, and is comprised of much more than just fiber craft materials. There are ebbs and flows of creativity and making. The women described these ebbs and flows, and I have felt them as a researcher and artist myself. The women in my study and I are connected through the intra-actions that occurred as I entered into their worlds and became a part of their entanglements. I unexpectedly found myself intrigued and intertwined within the lives, materials, spaces, and times of the women. By following them on social media, I gained a sense of more than just their identities and engagement with fiber crafts; I saw their inheritances as well. I became a part of their past, present, and future. We will remain inextricably linked. I open myself up to what is to come, and the things I cannot change. I will respond in a way that seeks justice for all women, yet I know that I cannot fix what has been broken. Time does not reset, but continues like a thread weaving in and out of the fabric of life.

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APPENDIX A
CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS



Participants needed:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Art and Design at the University of Georgia, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Art Education. The purpose of my research is to investigate the materiality of women's fiber crafts while also focusing on how space and place influence the craft engagement as well by way of virtual research methods and platforms. I am seeking out eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must meet the following criteria:

- At least 18 years of age
- Female
- Engage in fiber crafts (needlepoint, sewing, quilting, weaving, embroidery, cross stitch, and felting) either individually and/or collectively.
- Participate in online platforms related to your chosen fiber crafts in virtual spaces such as Facebook groups, Instagram, blogs, websites, and other virtual entities.
- Must be comfortable with all research and data collection to take place through Zoom, email, text messages, Internet research, and phone calls.

- Must have appropriate technology such as computer, good Internet access, email, cell phone, and possibly a camera/video device.
- Participant is willing to work with the researcher for a time span of 1-2 months in order to gain data that are needed.

In order to participate in the survey, please click here:

https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ebaiNC1addXyemW

*While there is no incentive to complete the survey, chosen participants will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card for volunteering their time and knowledge for my study.

*I will select 5-6 participants based on the survey responses for my study. If you meet the criteria, I will notify you of your eligibility via email, and will produce a consent form as well as further instruction and information regarding the study.

*If you are not selected to participate, the information you provide will be deleted.

*Research will be conducted online only. No in person meetings or observations required.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study.

Thank you for your time,

Andrea E. Elliott

Doctoral Candidate at the University of Georgia

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APPENDIX B

QUALTRICS SURVEY FOR PARTICIPANTS

Survey Questions

1. How often do you engage in fiber crafts?
2. What is your chosen fiber craft(s)?
3. Do you belong to a virtual fiber craft community or participate in a blog or other virtual platforms such as YouTube or Instagram? If so, would you grant me access to your site(s) for research purposes?
4. Do you belong to a face-to-face fiber craft community? If so, what is it called?
5. Where do you normally engage in your fiber craft?
6. Are you also a K-12 art educator?
7. What is your race/ethnicity?
8. Is culture or religion tied to your fiber craft?
9. Would you be willing to participate in a study that utilizes videos and photos of you engaging in the fiber craft process within your normal setting, such as your home?
10. Due to the strange circumstances surrounding COVID, would you be willing to take photos and videos of your crafting objects along with your process to send to me for data collection so that face to face meetings are not necessary?