Unpicking The Practitioner's Perspective: Value-Creation of Crafts Expertise And Repair As An Act Of Care Within The UK Crafts Industry.

Beth Gillings Pattison

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Abstract

On Wednesday 24th April 2013, an eight-story commercial building, commonly referred to as the Rana Plaza garment factory, collapsed in the district of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The collapse of the building killed 1,134 garment workers and injured an additional 2,500 making it one of the most destructive garment factory disasters in the 21st Century. 24th April 2023 marks the 10-year anniversary of the Rana Plaza garment factory collapse and there have been noteworthy changes in industry practices since, to an extent. One recent notable change in the fashion industry is the emergence of the circular economy model that poses an alternative to the current mainstream linear model whereby a garment is designed, made, bought by an individual, worn and then once that garment is either damaged, worn out, no longer needed or even wanted by said individual it is discarded, and in a majority of cases sent to landfill to the global south as waste from the global north. The circular economy acts as an alternative to this linear model by keeping the garment in circulation for as long as possible to keep finite resources in circulation and to reduce industry-wide overproduction and commercial waste.

One of the pillars of the circular economy is the repair and maintenance of clothing in order to ensure the longevity of a garment and therefore keep it within the circular economy as a usable, wearable item. Much of the literature related to repair of clothing mainly focuses on the consumer experience of repair as a leisure activity in addition to the patterns of user behaviour encountered at the interface of repair as a means of personal expression, as opposed to a skilled act of care towards the object itself to extend its usable existence. Therefore, there is little evidence to suggest that there has been extensive research into the subject of repair from a repair practitioner perspective. This study is a small-scale qualitative study investigating the repair practitioner perspective of the perceptions and value of expertise and skill within the framework of care in the repair of clothing. This project comprises of semi-structured interviews with four crafts practitioners based in London who make, and repair custom made garments for individuals who commission clothing from them. The reasoning for the selection of this sample group is that, due to the high cost of making bespoke garments, these crafts practitioners regularly work on garments they have had brought back to them by clients in order to maintain the condition of their custom pieces, therefore they are more likely to be repaired repeatedly. This can offer a unique insight into the perceptions of expertise from the practitioner perspective in addition to the notion of care at the interface of repair. Pragmatism and phenomenological paradigms are employed to guide the methodology for this study. My findings revealed binary tensions, first, between user attitudes and perceptions and crafts practitioner expertise within the framework of repair, and second, between the act of repair as an act of care for

the consumer and for the practitioner. These tensions are emulated in the interviews when discussing the value perceptions of expertise and the attitudes surrounding repair. Further to the binary tensions, my findings also highlighted the focus on the economic outcomes of labour in addition to the commodification and idealisation of labour associated with crafts for the purposes of aiding a sense of care that is characteristic of neoliberalism.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

1.1) Introduction

The focus of my research is to investigate cultural value creation within the crafts industry with particular focus on hand sewn crafts in the framework of garment repair, exploring the value perceptions of crafts expertise and the notion of care and garment repair within the UK crafts industry. The aim of my empirical research is to explore the crafts practitioner viewpoint of crafts expertise and the notion of care at the interface of garment repair. There was a seeming lack of studies carried out exploring this subject from a professional repairer point of view which I believe could provide a unique understanding into the perception of expertise at the interface of care in the repair of clothing.

The main research question is: How is crafts expertise valued and perceived within the framework of care in the repair of clothing? Additional supporting questions are: 1) Is the act of repairing and maintaining clothing considered an act or performance of care? 2) Does the consumer's sense of care for the self benefit from this act of care, and does this extend to the practitioner who is performing the repair work? And 3) Does the skill or expertise of the repairer influence the quality of the repair?

The Inception of this research study is founded in my previous professional experience as a tailor in the UK crafts industry in addition to my personal interest in the notion of value and meaning making surrounding skill and expertise. Further to this professional and personal curiosity to explore this subject, the UK fashion industry as a sector of the creative industries has been the subject of much criticism and scrutiny due to its ongoing unethical practices in terms of labour practices and environmental impacts. One recent and notable change in the fashion industry is the emergence of the circular economy model that acts as an alternative to the current mainstream linear model (Sustainable Fashion Forum, 2023). One of the central aspects of the circular economy is the repair and maintenance of clothing in order to ensure the longevity of a garment and therefore keep it within the circular economy as a usable, wearable item. I found that prior to this research study, both in my personal and professional experience, repair was adopted broadly by consumers as a leisure activity and as a means of personal expression to generate a sense of achievement, as opposed to a skilled act of care towards the object itself to extend its usable function. Therefore, I would speculate that due to this consumer behaviour at the interface of repair, this act of care towards garments was not contributing to the circular economy in any impactful way. However, I appreciate that this remains an assumption warranting further studies, hence the motivation to

investigate this subject more thoroughly, with research from previous academic research studies to form the foundations of the conceptual framework for the literature review section of this paper in order to better conduct my empirical research more reliably.

1.2) Definition of terms

During the initial stages of research for this project, it became apparent that there was an element of inconsistency in the definitions of relevant terms. Due to these inconsistencies, it would be pragmatic to outline the terms that will be regularly referred to through this essay and their definitions within this context.

Firstly, the term 'value' in the context of this dissertation will be used to refer to what is considered important, beneficial and desirable within a social group setting. It is worthwhile to make the distinction here between personal values and collective values as these can be influenced by a variety of factors. Personal values can be determined by an individual's inclinations, convictions and emotions, therefore making them unpredictable and subject to change. However collective values tend to be formed more rationally and act as a framework which mediates social practices (Horlings, 2015). Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that value is often used within an economical or financial framework. Within the context of this dissertation where I will be exploring the research question within the framework of neoliberalism, the term 'value' will also be used within an economical framework to a certain extent in the sense of "relative worth, or a fair return on exchanges, which are typically measured as numerical quantities" (De Vries and Petersen, 2009 quoted in Horlings, 2015). The justification for the term 'value' to be used within both frameworks of social importance and economics is because they do not stand in isolation from each other. It is possible for them to be contextually altered, intertwined and connected within value systems.

Secondly, the term 'repair' will be used frequently in this paper as it "sits at the heart of product longevity" (Terzioglu, 2017 in Durrani, 2019. Pp. 17) and involves extending the lifespan of a garment using techniques to mend a part of a garment that has become broken. The specific techniques employed in repair can range from simple tasks such as the hemming of a skirt or the sewing of a button that has come loose from a shirt to more complex tasks such as replacing a zip to the invisible mending of a hole caused by a moth infestation.

The term 'crafts' will refer to both the creative sector and professional role Involved In the sewing construction and mending of garments. For example, a tailor or seamstress would be professionally

involved in hand sewn crafts within the context of this dissertation as they earn their living or are remunerated financially from the labour they carry out on garments they either produce and/or repair. A variety of techniques fall under the term of 'crafts techniques' for the purposes of this paper. For example, hand sewing and machine sewing in addition to both visible and invisible mending will be used in the context of 'crafts techniques' as they all involve the tactile process of caring for garments by hand.

Further to this, the term 'crafts expertise' will refer to the advanced knowledge and skill acquired through experience in the crafts sector of the creative industries. In the context of this dissertation 'crafts expertise' will be used to refer to knowledge and advanced skills employed within hand sewn crafts to aid the repair and maintenance of broken and damaged garments.

The term 'care' will be referring to the comfort and contentment of an individual. Furthermore, the term 'care' will be referred to throughout this paper as the condition of good health, both physical and mental, and the consequential well-being of a person. Later in this paper, the term 'care' will be explored within the context of the notion of self-care within a neoliberal framework, which will refer to the care of the individual, by the individual, as an informal means to soothe oneself without the aid of a medical professional or caregiver.

Finally, the terms 'care work' will be used throughout this paper to refer to the labour deployed in caring for both the individual and the object of value to maintain the emotional attachment of the person/object relationship. From the professional repairer perspective, the term 'care work' will refer to the role of custodian and mender of the object that is being repaired.

1. Literature Review

2.1) Introduction

The literature employed to form the theoretical framework for this dissertation primarily focuses on three areas within the crafts sector of the creative industries: the cultural value of crafts expertise, repair, and the notion of care. Therefore, this chapter will initially address these topics in isolation to lay the contextual foundations and provide definitive summaries that will be used within the body of this dissertation. It will also explore the boundaries, relationships and interactions between these areas with reference to key landmark studies as well as more recent research studies.

2.2) The underlying conflicts and harmonies

The underlying conflicts between crafts and well-being begin with the romanticising of crafts, whereby the perception of its antiquated nature generates a misleading sense of nostalgia and affection towards it. Drawing from the writings of Theodor Adorno who criticises those who hold this misconception, who "get this wrong by making a fetish of craft itself, because of a misplaced love of its archaism or authenticity." (Adorno in Adamson, 2007. Pp. 11) This is due in part to the "retrospective infatuation with the aura of the socially doomed craftsman" (Adorno quoted in Adamson, 2007. Pp. 11). The idealisation of crafts and crafts skill has therefore caused a broad misunderstanding of craft's material processes and its technical nature. This could be partly due to the lack of records and artefacts left of early crafts practices, therefore the gaps left in this historical knowledge have had to be filled in with unsubstantiated information. "Much of the work that was needed to produce early threads and textiles is, of course, all but invisible today. The makers didn't often leave written records behind, and their techniques and skill have rotted away with the objects they created. What does survive leaves us with an asymmetrical impression." (St. Clair, 2019. Pp. 6) It can also be argued that the romanticisation of crafts is also partly due to the gradual depletion of the value of needlework originating in the 13th Century. In Clare Hunters' research surrounding the history of needlework in Great Britain, it seems that domesticity and needlework became increasingly affiliated due to the exclusion of female crafters from official positions in guilds. An expanding division emerged that encouraged the perception of sewing as a feminine craft and not worthy of professional recognition. "Without access to professional training, no longer having an equal role in managing the affairs of the guild and lacking the stamp of quality conferred through guild membership, the value of needlework was diminished. It became seen as unskilled and amateur." (Hunter, 2019. Pp. 209) Considering the above, it can be argued that the misconceptions of crafts have formed due to the depleted cultural and economic value of crafts that has already

occurred in addition to the inconsistent records and artefacts left behind of early crafts that could contribute to the present-day incomplete knowledge of crafts practices.

So, what bridges crafts and care, and do they function in parallel to each other in a mutually beneficial manner? I would draw first from the writings of Glenn Adamson in the sense that he presents "artisans as drivers of change, as well as its opponents." (Adamson, 2013. Pp. xiii) In addition to highlighting the escapist and corrective nature of crafts, touching upon William Morris' ideas surrounding crafts, Adamson exemplifies these ideas in addition to similar theories of other writers such as Ruskin and Marx. Adamson describes crafts as a "retreat, advocating a withdrawal from modernity; emphasising craft's ameliorative role, hoping it might soften the hard edges of the modern; operated in symbolic terms. It can only be understood as a corrective or an escape hatch" (Adamson, 2013. Pp. xv). In acting as an antidote to modernity, the notion of care can be seen to share the escapist and corrective underpinnings of crafts as they both function as a salve to escape modernity. Another commonality that crafts and care share is the supplementary role they play within their respective fields. Procedures of care are employed to achieve the comfort and contentment of an individual and the procedures undertaken in craft are used to create an object of functional and/or aesthetic value. These procedures are more or less invisible once the final result has emerged. To compare the supplementary role of care with Godfried Semper's writings on the supplementary role of crafts; "craft functions in this scheme as a transparent set of procedures, certainly to be deployed but not to be present in the context of the finished work. Craft always subjugates itself in the interest of the overall work." (Semper in Adamson, 2007. Pp. 11) Considering the above writings, I would argue that both crafts and acts of care operate in such a way that they are a means to an end, not intended to be present once the respective procedures have been performed. Procedures of craft and care "draws not attention to itself, it lies beneath notice, allowing other qualities to assert themselves" (Jacques Derrida in Adamson, 2007. Pp. 13).

2.3) Do It Yourself crafts and the quality of repair

With the emergence of domesticated crafts during the 19th and early 20th century giving rise to the movement of Do-it-Yourself crafts, it is necessary to explore whether craft skill forms the foundation of DIY garment repair or whether it is merely mentioned as a means to an end. There are artisans who argue that the skills required to execute craft techniques of high quality are simply brushed off. British sculptor Helen Chadwick argues that "skill is a precondition for all making – one might say, its craft foundation – but at best, it seems to be taken for granted." (Chadwick quoted in Adamson, 2007. Pp. 69). Due to craft's subjugatory tendencies as mentioned before, I would argue that the

skills required to carry out high quality crafts techniques are not acknowledged in favour of the sense of expression and achievement that comes from the tactile nature of mending an object. In a 2021 study carried out by Lee Jones and Audrey Girouard of Carleton University in Canada, they explored educator insights into DIY repair and the motivations for their students to take on DIY repair of garments. By interviewing a small group of crafts educators who specialise in garment repair, Jones and Girouard discovered that "individuals who make mends are often attracted to the DIY aesthetic and the act of mending their clothes strengthens their relationship to the item. Their motivations for mending often include their love for a favourite item of clothing, viewing mending as a leisure craft activity and an expressive hobby" (Jones and Girouard, 2021) Many participants also described turning to mending as a way of dealing with stressful experiences." (Jones and Girouard, 2021) These findings are reminiscent of the escapist and ameliorative attributes mentioned earlier that crafts and care share.

Judging from the literature I was able to uncover, apart from the 2021 study carried out by Lee Jones and Audrey Girouard, a majority of the research studies mainly focused on the individual user experience, the patterns of user behaviour in addition to the variety of barriers encountered at the interface of repair. Community based research projects, repair cafes, access to tools and materials in addition to which forms of repair were adopted by users and why, were the particular areas of focus within much of the literature investigated for the purposes of this paper. For example, Mariam Duranni's 2021 study was conducted during communal repair events hosted in four cities: Helsinki, Auckland, Wellington, and Edinburgh. "The overall aim of this article is to clarify how everyday menders become able to form an alliance with their practice, ultimately converting mending into an object of passion." (Duranni, 2021. Pp. 775) The focus of Duranni's research was to explore the practice of mending as an activity of taste development, which is typically understood within the Bourdieusian framework, where Duranni's research exemplifies the concept of taste as being relational as opposed to being the result of one's habitus. However, Duranni's research is an example of when craft is being used simply as a vessel or platform in which to explore the actual object of focus within a research study. As a result of Durrani's study within the communal events, "we saw that during the process of working intimately with materials and other menders, an active relationship was formed by training the senses, creating an attachment toward the practice of mending, and an attunement to the materiality of the garments being mended was identified." (Duranni, 2021. Pp. 798) Again, this is evocative of the supplementary role of crafts that Glenn Adamson identifies. However in the case of Duranni's study, the craft's supplementary role is employed in order to investigate a subject that can be related to the subject of care in that they

were attempting to identify patterns of user behaviour that 'converts mending into an object of passion'.

2.4) DIY, the role of crafts skill in the well-being and care of the neoliberal self.

Following on from Do-It-Yourself crafts activities as leisure, the concept of well-being itself I would argue, is a direct result of neoliberal selfhood and the concept of compulsory individualism. To begin with Antonio Gramsci's definition of neoliberalism, "the free-market ideology based on individual liberty and limited government that connected human freedom to the actions of the rational, self-interested actor in the market place." (Gramsci quoted in McGuian, 2016. Pp. 122) If there is an emphasis of responsibility placed on the individual actor due to free market ideology with little support from a collective body, the individual is solely responsible for their own care. Therefore, the free market and collective bodies are void of any responsibility for the care of the individual. Writers such as Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim have exemplified these ideas through the concept of 'compulsory individualisation': "Individualisation is a matter of institutionalised obligation, not free choice. Now that the old collective supports and scripts no longer apply, everyone is abandoned to their fate. But when things go wrong, there is no excuse for anyone. The individual is penalised harshly, not only for personal failure but also for sheer bad luck in a highly competitive and relentlessly harsh social environment." (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim in McGuian, 2016. Pp. 130) Through the removal of supporting social structures, individuals are bound by an obligatory sense of freedom and lonesome responsibility. Writers such as Goodin make a fundamental argument for the value of care. "In the minds of most people, care is a concern for those who are vulnerable or dependent. In truth, all human beings require care, all the time. Some are able to care better for themselves. Others are able to command the caring labour of others as 'personal service'. " (Goodin in Tronto, 2010. Pp. 163) Therefore, I would argue that crafts, in particular DIY crafts, within the neoliberal framework and the care of the individual, by the individual is used as an informal means to soothe oneself without the aid of a medical professional, caregiver or collective support system.

So where does the crafts sector of the creative industries and craft expertise situate itself within the neoliberal framework? Within neoliberal culture due to the free market ideology, the focus is often on the economic outcomes of labour, in this case crafts labour, but craft is rarely lucrative unless it enters the luxury market. At that point, skills and expertise are then needed in order to carry out the labour to industry set standards of quality. To draw from William Hazlitt's definition of skill; "skill is an all or nothing affair, objective rather than subjective, and which, with practise, becomes nearly automatic." (Hazlitt quoted in Adamson, 2013. Pp. 134) This perception of skill and expertise

seemingly fits well within the ideology of neoliberalism and within 21st Century manufacturing and production processes as it can be easily measured. However, it is problematic to situate the crafts sector within this narrative within the neoliberal framework as it contradicts the romanticised character of the modern artisan where they are placed on the fringes of modernity. In John Barnard's Present for an Apprentice, he describes this contradiction; "In the imagination of the time, this was the characteristic picture of the modern craftsman: admirable, yes, but standing somehow outside "the whole world," detached from the economic bonds that made it go round. This modern caricature of the artisan is potent because it masks marginalisation through idealisation." (Barnard quoted in Adamson, 2013. Pp. 140) Modern artisans such as Anni Albers highlight that this idealistic perception of crafts is merely the "result of an attitude rather than a procedure." (Albers quoted in Adamson, 2013. Pp. 181) It could be argued that crafts skill is rarely exhibited in its repetitive, mechanical nature as it lacks the novelty that is associated with creativity and innovation which tends to be valued within the neoliberal view of the creative individual. In Chris Bilton's Uncreativity: the shadow side of creativity, he identifies aspects of 'uncreativity' that I would argue are parallel to perceptions of crafts skill. "Indeed, self-doubt, resistance to change, value judgements and inhibitions are thereby considered to be inherently 'uncreative'. "The accusation of 'uncreativity' extends to those individuals, institutions or procedures outside the process of idea generation" (Bilton, 2015. Pp. 154). The resistance to change highlighted by Bilton within the notion of 'uncreativity' is similar to the resistive nature of crafts towards modernity. In addition to this, Bilton also alludes to the fetishisation of novelty that "reflects a reluctance to acknowledge doubt or failure in the novel idea. This in turn leaves the creative vulnerable to self-defeating commitments and to exploitation." (Bilton, 2015. Pp. 154) The similarities discovered here in the perceptions between novelty, uncreativity and the attitudes towards crafts skill highlight the problematic positioning of crafts in neoliberalism. The idealised craftsman character loses its appeal to the individual using DIY crafts as a means of achieving a sense of care for the self once the mechanical and repetitive nature of crafts skill is revealed through training and practice. The commodification and idealisation of creativity associated with crafts for the purposes of aiding a sense of care for the self is essential to neoliberal culture. The writer and mechanic Matthew Crawford demonstrates the notion of "today's white-collar worker as someone asked daily to engage in deception, a victim of the pervasive evils of corporate abstraction and 'learned irresponsibility'. His remedy is a day's (or better, a life's) honest labour." (Crawford quoted in Adamson, 2013. Pp. 170) This narrative of the marginalised, demoralised worker who takes responsibility for themselves is fundamental to the neoliberal ideology. Considering the literature explored so far, I would argue that the narrative of the demoralised worker seeking refuge in the crafts and the concept of the modern artisan serve

neoliberal ideology very well as it provides an informal means to achieve care without the input from a collective support system.

2.5) Inconspicuous thresholds and the aspirant gaze

It would be pragmatic to recognise the thresholds and barriers that may have been inadvertently created at the interfaces between 'DIY' amateur crafting and practitioner crafts. The research projects and studies I happened upon mainly focused on the consumer experience including the patterns of consumer behaviour encountered at the interface of repair with a particular focus on the barriers or thresholds that consumers encountered when interacting with the process of repair. For example, in Nazlı Terzioglu's 2020 study, she summarises the three main barriers identified in Drewbery et al's 2017 research where the main barriers were "a lack of repair and maintenance know-how, lack of time, inability to disassemble products because of design-related problems such as glued components." (Drewbery et al, 2017 in Terzioglu, 2020. Pp. 2) It could be argued that in the act of romanticising crafts and adopting it widely as a means of expression and leisure, an inconspicuous threshold has been unintentionally created that is only recognised once the differences in skill and knowledge become apparent at the interface of repair. To better demonstrate this, Tony Morrison's allegory of a fishbowl illustrates the idea of an invisible enclosure between consumer and practitioner whereby the curious consumer looks into the environment of professional crafters, and this "barely perceptible threshold" (Richards, 2018. Pp. 45) becomes visible once the restrictions and limited positions on the consumer side become clear (Morrison, 1992 in Richards, 2018). It is worth clarifying here that Tony Morrison's concept of the fishbowl was originally employed to analyse the discourses of race and the hegemony of whiteness in architecture, however this theory of an invisible enclosure that becomes distinguishable upon further interaction also helps to highlight the thresholds and barriers encountered at the interface of repair. By the same token, the lack of repair and maintenance know-how on the part of the amateur crafter to reference Drewbery et al's 2017 study, could also be thought to contribute a feeling of apprehension at the interface of repair. In Elaine Heumann Gurian's 2005 paper on reshaping museum spaces, she generated the term 'threshold fear' to describe "in a broader context to mean the constraints people feel that prevent them from participating in activities meant for them. To lower these perceived impediments, the fear-inducing stimulus must be reduced or dissolved." (Gurian, 2005. Pp. 203) It could be argued that in this context the 'fear-inducing stimuli' are the lack of repair knowledge and lack of time that restrict consumer access to repair procedures mentioned above in Marie Louise Richard's study.

It would be worthwhile to explore Tony Morrisons analogy of the fishbowl coupled with Elaine Heumann Gurian's concept of 'threshold fear' from where the fishbowl is situated within neoliberalism itself. It could be argued that the true representation of the skill and labour involved in repair is hidden from view within neoliberal culture. Stephen Graham and Nigel Thrift in their 2007 study explore the work of Heidegger and Henke by highlighting the ways in which repair procedures are concealed. "The way in which maintenance and repair is officially represented in most bureaucracies as subordinate hides this work from view" (Graham and Thrift, 2007. Pp. 4). There are parallels to be drawn here between the ideas developed by Hannah Ardent that are exemplified by Andrea Francke and Ross Jardine in their 2017 study on administrative labour that can be related to the perceptions of repair procedures, "in making visible how the perception of certain jobs and the subject who performs them are paramount in enabling those same subjects to enter the public sphere, through the "relegation of chores that one would rather have someone else perform." (Ardent in Francke and Jardine, 2017. Pp. 26) I would argue that repair labour especially within the crafts sector is subordinated within neoliberal culture due to the reality of crafts labour in that it loses its appeal once it's mechanical and repetitive nature is revealed, and the neoliberal caricature of the artisan becomes less attractive. As a result, the true representation of the skill and labour involved in repair is concealed within neoliberal society.

2.6) What makes a good piece of crafts repair work?

We will now address the notion of repair in order to explore the relationships and interactions between crafts skill and care at the interface of repair. To apply Terzioglu's definition of repair whereby it, "sits at the heart of product longevity" (Terzioglu, 2017 quoted in Durrani, 2019), the act of repair involves extending the lifespan of a garment using techniques to mend a part of a garment that has become broken. To quote Gigi Argyropoulou and Hypatia Vourloumis who study repair as a non-reproductive occupation, "repair is commonly associated with improvement, with making better, with fixing." (Argyropoulou and Vourloumis, 2019. Pp. 401) This notion of repair is complimentary to Steven Jackson's research Rethinking Repair, analysing repair and broken world thinking. He lays out two elements of his approach that require "an appreciation of the real limits and fragility of the worlds we inhabit and a recognition that many of the stories and orders of modernity are in a process of coming apart, perhaps to be replaced by new and better stories and orders" (Jackson, 2014. Pp. 221). By engaging in the act of repair, we redirect our perceptions that shape the relationship and meaning of the objects we surround ourselves with and as a result, redirect our perceptions that shape the relationships we have with our environment. Considering Jackson's, Argyropoulou and Vourloumis's approaches to the act of repair, I would argue that the

value and care through repair procedures can by default create a sense of well-being. For example, in a 2021 study Tomás B. Ramos et al researched the collective behaviours, perceptions and attitudes surround the notion of repair from both the user perspective as well as from the viewpoint of a crafts worker. Through their research study, Ramos et al found that "the value of 'care' may be a further inspirational motivator, which extends to include care of owned objects and materials, and acknowledgement of the labour required to sustain them. In this way repair can be observed as a relational rather than technical act. By reframing repair as an act of care, promotion of repair can move towards a more universal value orientation" (Rogers et al, 2021. Pp. 9). By caring for objects of personal value in addition to the understanding of the labour and skill required to maintain and repair such objects, both the user and professional crafter can benefit from the impact of acts of repair.

Rachel McQueen et al's 2022 research into the role of repair practice explores the engagement of younger consumers with varying degrees of repair. Based on three options of repair; self-repair, paid repair and unpaid repair, the study found that "Self-repair is often focused on relatively simple tasks, with more complicated repairs such as changing a zipper, outsourced to more skilled individuals, or by a professional. Despite the relative simplicity of many self-repair tasks, it is still imperative that an individual has sufficient skill to mend clothing, as well as access to the necessary tools in order to carry out self-repair successfully." (McQueen et al, 2022. Pp. 3) McQueen et al established from their research that there often needs to be a baseline level of skill required to perform even the simplest of repair acts from the individual user, so what happens when a repair is beyond the skills of the individual and requires professional intervention? McQueen et al found a "positive correlation in our study between expense and self-repair, as many who repair themselves also take some more challenging repairs to a professional, as they value the outcome of the repair process generally." (McQueen et al, 2022. Pp. 13) These findings are reminiscent of Ramos et al's research findings that the appreciation of the labour and skill required to maintain and repair objects could influence the collective perceptions and attitudes towards the notion of repair.

Consequently, we should ask; does the perceived level of quality in the final repair impact the sense of well-being within the individual, whether that be the user or the artisan, or both? It is worth mentioning here that the perception of quality at the interface of repair will be subjective as this will be influenced by factors such as personal values, cultural values and personal aesthetics. However, I would argue that the perception of quality is relational and dependent on the perceived skills of the repairer, but it is also dependent on the expectations of the recipient of the repaired object. For

example, to revisit Jones and Girouard's 2021 study, they found that the mending educators preferred to teach visible mending because it was "easier and more flexible than invisible mending. The stitches are also often simpler. The visible nature of the visible mending stitches, and the contrasting colours used, makes it easier to show students the individual stitches and steps of the process. "With invisible mending it's hard to show students what I'm doing. If I'm doing it visibly it's easier to see if I'm using contrasting yarn. It can take some of the pressure away and some of that idea of striving for perfection." (Jones and Girouard, 2021). Considering these findings, I would argue that the quality of repair and the perceived value of repair is dependent on the perceived expertise of the repairer. However, I would argue that these expectations mainly focus on the consumer/user perspective. As a result, the exploration of the professional repairer perspective will be the focus of the empirical research undertaken in the next chapter with the view to contribute further to the already existing body of landmark studies and research projects analysed in this literature review.

2. Methodology

3.1) Introduction

The focus of this study is to investigate cultural value creation within the crafts industry with particular focus on hand sewn crafts within the framework of garment repair, exploring the value perceptions of crafts expertise and the notion of care and garment repair within the UK crafts industry. The aim of my empirical research is to explore this topic from the crafts practitioner viewpoint. This chapter aims to lay out my paradigm, research design and strategy in addition to the methods of data collection and analysis employed for this study. This chapter also demonstrates the limitations and bias that can impact the research methodology of this study for reflective purposes.

3.2) My Research Paradigm

A paradigm, also referred to as a research philosophy, is a set of ideas and assumptions that form a viewpoint through which a subject is understood at a particular time (Salmons, 2019). Research projects and studies are typically guided by the ideas and assumptions of the researcher undertaking the process of understanding the phenomenon or issue under investigation. Janet E. Salmons breaks down the theory, where the term paradigm is used to answer the foundational questions in research such as: What is truth? What is real? What counts as knowledge, and what knowledge is of importance? How do we realise what we understand about the world? "When we conduct scholarly research, we do stop and think. We take ontological and epistemological positions to explain the nature of the problem, how we know what we know about it, and what is important to know to understand it." (Salmons, 2019. Pp. 11) This framework of viewpoints, assumptions, ontological and epistemological positions form what is known as a paradigm. According to Hilary Collins, research paradigms are not only shaped by practical or logistical circumstances, but also impacted by the researcher's preconceived ideas surrounding the processes of knowledge development. "Research philosophies relate to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge. When you undertake research, you develop knowledge in a particular field. This knowledge development can come about from answering a specific problem in a certain context. The research philosophy you adopt means you are accepting assumptions about the way in which you view the world." (Collins, 2019. Pp. 42) Depending on what the researcher considers to be important or of use in the context of the study, the strategies and methods will vary.

In this study, I employ both phenomenology and pragmatism as the paradigms in which to approach the problem being investigated as a phenomenon that is experienced based on factors that influence actor's interpretations, whereby I captured the values expressed in the participant's experiences. I

focus on seeking to understand the world as a lived experience and made meaningful by individuals who interact with their environments, and I further believe that the purpose of knowledge is to investigate and explain the nature of a problem that has been identified rather than to solve it and produce evidence to be understood and measured. My aim as a researcher here is to investigate the processes of meaning making and value creation within the creative industries using a pragmatic approach within the paradigm of phenomenology in order to explain current cultural practices. As part of my research philosophy, I need to be aware of my preconceived philosophical foundations, assumptions and opinions that could impact the identification and development of my research problems. In addition to this, I should also be aware of the potential practical applications of my research findings on policies, practices and potential theoretical contributions to fields of study and practice.

3.3) Research Design and Strategy

Preceding the research project, to familiarise myself with the appropriate methodological approach for the empirical research to be undertaken during this project, it was essential for me to review the pre-existing literature on the three areas within the crafts sector: the cultural value of crafts expertise, repair, and the notion of care. Whilst there was an abundance of literature and studies surrounding the notion of care at the interface of repair and the feeling of care that can result in interacting with the tactile nature of crafts processes, it was apparent that much of the research I happened upon involving repair within the crafts industry mainly focused on the consumer experience in addition to the patterns of consumer behaviour encountered at the interface of repair. There were few landmark or recent studies such as Duranni's 2019 study on the sociomateriality of garment mending practices and McQueen et al's 2022 study on consumer engagement with modes of clothing repair, that I came across during my literature review that explored these areas from a practitioner perspective.

Therefore, to investigate this subject further and uncover this topic from the practitioner perspective, a phenomenological approach using pragmatism to guide the research methodology was deemed to be the most appropriate for this study. Derek Layder (2013) argues that pragmatism is an approach in which "methods are chosen on the basis of what is most 'useful' or 'practically expedient' or 'works best'" (Layder, 2013. Pp. 6). Inductive reasoning has been used in order to examine how the participants interpret their experiences into an intelligible explanation (Salmons, 2019. Pp. 62). Thematic analysis was undertaken with two cycles of value coding in order to organise the initial value codes and secondary themes into overall themes to be discussed and theorised later

in this paper. The thematic analysis method was undertaken as laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006) that consists of six stages: (1) becoming familiar with the data, (2) generating codes, (3) generating themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) locating exemplars. (Braun and Clarke, 2006 in Mihas, 2023)

3.4) Methods of Data Collection and Data Analysis

The research collection for this study was gathered from semi-structured interviews with prepared set questions that were used in order to keep the interviewer/participant interaction on the subject of the investigation. The four individuals who participated in the interviews are crafts practitioners based in London. The reasoning for the selection of this sample group is that they offer a unique insight into the perceptions of expertise from the practitioner perspective in addition to the notion of care at the interface of repair.

There were five set questions that were presented to all the interview participants in order to study the key areas surrounding their experiences of the perceived value and perceptions of expertise from the practitioner perspective in addition to the notion of care and care work at the interface of garment repair. The semi-structured interview framework was chosen as it provides the structure of using set questions whilst giving the respondent scope for expressing themselves freely and at length that can then provide the researcher with a greater depth of qualitative data (Collins, 2018. Pp. 138). Each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Because the initial value codes are generated based on the raw data from the interview transcripts, it is important for the researcher to keep an open mind to all the possible explanatory concepts in order to draw new themes and theories from the qualitative data collected. Due to the fluid nature of semi structured interviews, the researcher doesn't always know which direction the conversation will take, and so codes can be developed or generated according to the progress of the researcher's analysis (Crosley, 2020). During the initial analysis cycle of the data, I first familiarised myself with the raw data from the transcripts and identified fragments from the participant's responses that were deemed either relevant or important to the research study. I then labelled these fragments using initial value coding in order to identify data surrounding the experiences and values that are specific to the participant's lived experience and that were viewed as useful for further analysis. Given that the participant's views and interpretations of their experiences are central to the investigation, short extracts and fragments from their transcripts were used to generate the initial value codes such as 1) repair as care work, 2) crafts as a means of escapism, 3) consumer

expectations, 4) crafts labour and 5) economic outcomes of labour, to name a few out of 17 value codes. The full summary of the Initial and second cycle thematic analysis can be found in the appendices.

The secondary analysis cycle involved the comparison of the participants transcripts in order to generate shared themes that emerged from the initial cycle value codes. By further analysing the transcripts during this secondary cycle I was able to review and label the themes that emerged from the cross comparison of all the participant transcripts. For example, the themes that emerged from the initial value codes were 1) repair as care, 2) repair as a service, 3) value measured against metrics, 4) repair as reshaping attachments to objects and 5) crafts as social reproduction, to name a few out of 11 themes that emerged in the second analysis cycle. The benefit of this secondary cycle of thematic analysis and in-depth comparison was also the identifying of exemplars within the data that emerged from individual participant experiences such as the theme of 'crafts practices as a means of coping with stress'. I then reviewed the emerging common themes from the comparison of all the participant transcripts and refined them into the overall four themes: 1) value as relative, 2) reshaping relationships, 3) Altruism and 4) Thresholds. The summary of the emerging common themes into overall themes is displayed in Figure 1 in the Findings chapter.

3.5) Research Limitations and Bias

As the sole researcher for this research study, despite my personal experience of the value creation and perceptions associated with crafts expertise and the notion of repair as an act of care, I have maintained a level of self-awareness that my experience and knowledge gained from my profession may introduce bias into the overall research process. In order to maintain the validity of the research project and to avoid any potential criticisms associated with favouritism (Layder, 2013), this research project has been conducted as far as possible in a reflective manner in order to remain aware of the personal biases or preferences. It is also worth mentioning that I am not an expert or specialist within the subject of focus in this study, however I did engage with and analyse a body of literature associated with this topic prior to undertaking the empirical research due to my inadequate familiarity of this field of research.

The use of semi structured interviews can be regarded as subjective as the researcher is more involved in the interaction with the participant in addition to the framing and direction of the interview in contrast to structured interviews where there is less scope for subjectivity from the researcher. However, that is not to say that the use of structured interviews is innately objective, as

bias can be introduced in the question generation stage. As demonstrated by Derek Layder, "the questions you ask in interviews, although not standardised or rigidly set out in advance, will nevertheless be directed by your problem-focus and the research questions that follow from it. Consequently, your interview questions will be directed towards eliciting information relevant to the research problem" (Layder, 2013. Pp. 84).

The selection of the 4 interview participants was by direct invitation via online social media platforms to invite them to participate voluntarily in academic research on a subject that they may have a personal interest in. I do have a prior relationship to all the participants in that I met them on educational courses and other educational programmes and kept in touch with them as they advanced in their individual careers in the UK crafts industry. I do acknowledge that this may introduce possible conflict of interest between participants, however as each individual participant remained anonymous throughout the research process this risk was mitigated. It was acknowledged that a sample group of four participants for a study may have limitations with regards to reaching a saturation point for the purposes of theory generation. However, it is worth noting that by the time the fourth transcript was analysed, it was apparent that a saturation point had been reached, but this saturation point may have been reached prematurely due to the nature of the interview questions being asked. Furthermore, it is also worth noting, due to unexpected logistical challenges encountered at the fieldwork stage of the study, whereby 6 participants were identified but due to schedule clashes 4 participants were interviewed for this research project.

In addition, it is worth mentioning here that it was initially planned as part of the interview and data collection process to take photos during the interviews of 'objects of interest' that were being repaired by the practitioners in order to collect in depth and rich qualitative data, however it was subsequently decided against in order to avoid creating an imbalanced perception for the viewer (Collins, 2018. Pp. 107). In the interests of presenting an intelligible explanation for the subject of focus it was more appropriate to prioritise narrative and explanation over imagery that may distract from the participants interpretations of their experiences. Furthermore, upon later reflection of the research design and strategy for this study as laid out in sub-chapter 3.3, I would dispute my initial use of inductive reasoning for deductive reasoning due to the nature of the questions that were put to participants during the interview process. Due to the participant responses essentially being answers to the questions asked during the interview, this would suggest that my approach progressed from preconceived, general ideas that were being tested to generate specific conclusions.

3.6) Summary

This chapter has outlined my paradigm, research design and strategy in addition to the methods of data collection and analysis employed for this study. Both phenomenology and pragmatism as paradigms were employed to approach the problem being investigated to capture the values expressed in the participant's experiences. The raw qualitative data for this study was gathered from semi-structured interviews with prepared set questions with four participants who are crafts practitioners and each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed. Inductive reasoning was initially used in order to examine how the participants interpret their experiences into a theoretical explanation, however upon later reflection it was disputed whether I had unconsciously employed deductive reasoning as my approach seemed to progress from preconceived, general ideas that were being tested to generate specific conclusions. Thematic analysis was undertaken using the six-stage method as laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006) in order to organise the initial value codes and secondary themes into overall themes to be discussed and theorised in the next Findings chapter of this paper.

3. Findings

4.1) Introduction

The purpose of this research is to investigate the repair practitioner perspective of the perceptions and value of expertise and crafts skill within the framework of care in the repair of clothing. The aim of this research is to explore the notion of value creation and perspectives surrounding expertise at the interface of repair as an act of care within the field of the crafts industry. The main research question of this project is: How is crafts expertise valued and perceived within the framework of care in the repair of clothing? This section of the paper summarises the main findings generated from the semi-structured interviews conducted with 4 participants from the UK crafts Industry, specifically in the craft sector that falls under the description of hand made textile crafts and hand sewn crafts.

This can offer a unique insight into the perceptions of expertise and skill from the practitioner perspective in addition to the notion of care at the interface of repair due to the very motivations for having the repair done in the first place. The participants will be identified throughout this section using terminology, PT1, PT2, PT3 and PT4. The fragments drawn from the interview transcripts will be cited by the 'PT' number with a following line number from the transcript, for example, 'PT2, L11'.

The use of the initial thematic analysis cycle using value coding on the interview transcripts generated a series of initial themes that were specific to each participant's interview experience surrounding the values that are specific to the participants's lived experience. The secondary cycle of thematic analysis and in-depth comparison enabled the identification of the emerging common themes from the comparison of all the participant transcripts and subsequently refined them into the overall four themes: 1) value as relative, 2) reshaping relationships, 3) Altruism and 4) Thresholds. The summary of the four themes is displayed in Figure 1.
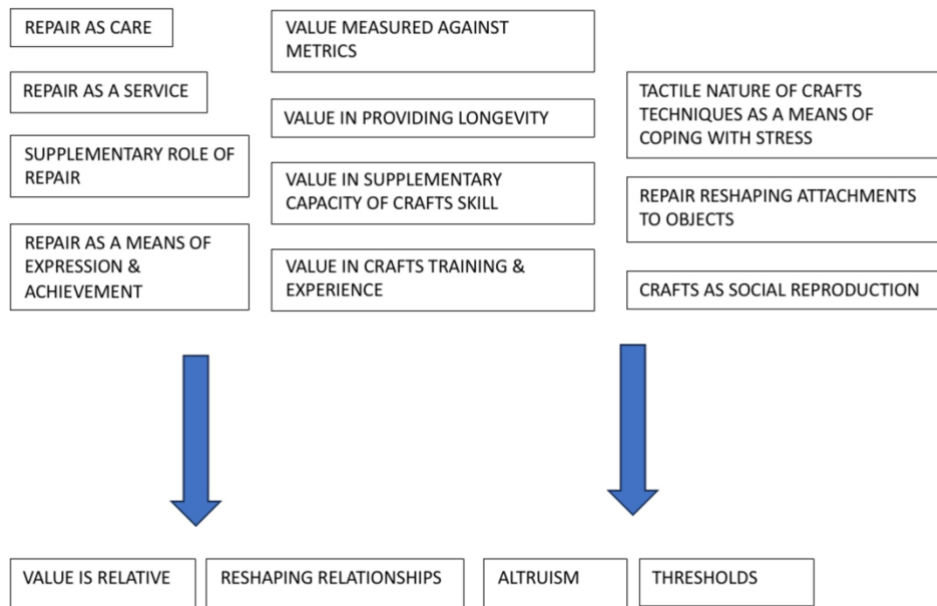
Figure 1. Common themes to overall themes

4.2) Value is relative

The term 'value' in the context of cultural, or collective, value refers to what is considered important, beneficial and desirable within a social group setting. Personal values can be determined by an individual's inclinations, convictions and emotions, therefore making them unpredictable and subject to change. Value can be used within both frameworks of the collective and personal as they don't stand in isolation from each other. It is possible for them to be contextually altered, intertwined and connected within value systems. Across all participant's feedback, there was a unanimous response from all interviewees that there was a high regard for crafts skill and expertise. Two of the four participants highlighted in their feedback that crafts skill seemed to be highly valued from both their customers and by their fellow practitioners within the crafts industry. However, this notion of value held by consumers and fellow practitioners was based on different understandings of craft skill. For example, both Participant 1 and Participant 2 (also referred to as PT1 and PT2) referred to their own clients in their responses whom they had repaired items for previously, that their clients had expressed a sense of awe and appreciation for the labour and technique that has been involved in a piece of repair work, and therefore the skill and expertise involved is highly valued. However, both PT1 and PT2 also mentioned in their response that this notion of value seemed to be unconsciously measured or compared against numerical metrics such as the cost of the repair or the length of time taken to carry out the repair work, or in some cases both time and cost were used to gauge the perceived value of the skill involved. For example, PT2 elaborated that, "what can be done is really valued, but I think the amount of time it may take to get it done for

someone and the cost of that is always a tricky point." (PT2, L12). "So even if you really value or cherish the garment, what people are willing to pay, to have it repaired and mended is not always in line with how much it costs someone like myself or my colleagues to put the time and love and energy into creating that repair." (PT2, L16) Further to Participant 2's feedback, Participant 4's response alluded to the idea that crafts skill within the framework of repair was highly valued by clients because of what that act of repair as a service promised in terms of ensuring the longevity of a treasured object. "I think people get very excited about what we do as tailors and to be able to create something that has longevity because of its ability to be repaired and resized." (PT4, L13) In this sense, value is ascribed to crafts skill and expertise in its ability to enable the further use of an item.

On the other hand, from the fellow practitioner perspective, the notion of value surrounding crafts skill and expertise seemed to be based on the existing understanding of the training involved to become a practitioner to begin with. In Participant 1's response, they highlighted the length of time involved in training to become a tailor, "I think the people that work within the houses really do value, the skill and the craft and it's their life a lot of the time. I mean, the training involved to become a cutter is six years on average and on average for a coat maker which is what I am is three years. So, to permit that amount of time you have to value what you're doing" (PT1, L6). As a result, a high regard for crafts skill and expertise seems to be held by fellow practitioners due to the prior knowledge that years of training is invested during an aspiring practitioner's training and education. In addition to this, the assigned value of crafts skill and expertise from fellow practitioners also seemed to be based on the recognition of the crafts techniques and processes involved in carrying out a piece of repair work to a professional standard. Participant 2 elaborated on this by responding that, "we're really grateful for our specialist alteration tailors because they have an abundance of patience. We give them so many difficult jobs. You have to be more creative. It's a creative problem solving. You've given limited resources. Each job is different what you're working with" (PT2, L43).

4.3) Reshaping relationships
The roles carried out by the act of repair within the framework of care seemed to take many forms according to the participant's feedback overall. However, the overarching theme that bridged these fragmented roles appeared to be that the act of repairing an item was an act of care in order to subsequently mend a relationship surrounding the object. The roles played by the act of repair seemed to vary from repair as a means of reshaping our relationships with objects and latterly with

our environment, repair as a means of expression, repair as a means of coping with illness or stress, as a means for social reproduction, to a more practice-focused role of repair as a service.

For example, participant 3's feedback highlighted the multiple roles that can be performed by the act of repair in that it can reshape relationships with objects and with our environment, repair can act as a means of expression, and as a means of coping with a medical diagnosis. Participant 3 is a crafts practitioner who specialises in hand-woven textiles and conducts weaving workshops to small groups of students whereby the students are encouraged to bring with them material that can be repurposed and incorporated into their hand-woven piece as part of the classes. Participant 3 referred to specifically a group of mature students who were recently diagnosed with early onset dementia and attended the classes as part of a community-led care programme. Participant 3's response with regards to the notion of repair, in the repurposing of material, as an act of care alluded to the multi-purpose role that it can play. "In a way definitely like an act of care for the environment, but also an act of care for the actual material because a lot of the time it's maybe a sentimental piece of material or just material they really like or an item of clothing that reminds them of something or a time or that, but they don't want to throw it away, but they have no use for it. So, it's kind of act of reworking it into another special thing that they can sort of cherish." (PT3, L 88) Participant 3 also mentioned, "I think when someone has had a diagnosis like that it can have such an effect on your confidence and can be stressing and going to classes like this can be a reminder that you are creative, you're skilled person just because you've got this diagnosis it can be a distraction from this very worrying thing that's going on." (PT3, L40) In the repurposing of a material that holds sentimental value or in reference to this specific example, a material that potentially holds memories, the act of repair or repurposing using crafts techniques to provide a sense of care and can generate a sense comfort for an individual in the process of coping with a life-changing medical condition.

With regards to the role of repair as a service, participants 2 and 4's feedback focused on the notion of repair as an act of care in that their client has "been wearing something to death probably you've worn it out, you still want to enjoy wearing it. You're aware that it's still not going to be perfect as it once was. However, you still want to give it some attention and some magic behind the scenes just so you can keep enjoying like feeling or the, holding on to feeling of you having it with you." (PT2, L58) This response seemed to demonstrate that the act of repair as a service not only mended the damaged object and the relationship that the object has with the individual, therefore extending the relationship that the person has with the object itself through the act of repair. Participant 4's

response further reinforced this idea of the act of repairing an item as an act of care in order to subsequently mend a relationship surrounding the object, "I'll take the garment back away from my client and repair those things and then give it back to them as it was when they first received it. I think they really appreciate the fact that they can have these tweaks and it can come back and be better than it was before." (PT4, L35) By providing repair as a service, the crafts practitioner is able to positively reinforce the relationships that surrounds the object being repaired in that, not only do they maintain the condition of the object itself, but also the act of repair can be considered as an act of care and maintenance towards the relationship between the practitioner and consumer.

4.4) Altruism

Altruism as a concept can be defined "as a specific motivational state often related to prosocial behaviour, for which actual consequences play a negligible role. In a similar but distinct approach, altruism has been considered as a subtype of (intentional) prosocial behaviour with a specific underlying motivation." (Pfattheicher et al, 2022) When asked whether the sense of care for the object being repaired and subsequently care of the self extended to that of the practitioner's sense of self care, three of the four participant's feedback indicated a positive response in the form of a job well done and a sense of satisfaction or achievement from devoting their time and energy to repairing an object to the best standard possible. The sense of altruism was demonstrated more strongly in participants 2, 3 and 4's responses, for example participant 3 reported that, "I always feel like I have a buzz after doing the workshop and yeah, definitely, I just love seeing because everyone has a different taste like the pieces are also unique and different. So yeah, definitely contributes my well being." (PT3, L105) Further to this, participant 4's feedback indicated a sense of personal enjoyment and satisfaction in the act of repair as a service and care work. "I really enjoy it when they bring them back. Because it means that they want it and that's the biggest satisfaction I get from making a suit is that knowing that my clients have worn it and they've loved wearing it. So it's shown those signs of wear. So if I can repair or maintain the issues with the suit so it can be worn and loved for years to come, then it makes me very happy." (PT4, L40) Participant 2 expressed that the sense of care extended to the practitioner in the sense of a job well done through the employment of their crafts techniques that displayed the supplementary role of their crafts skill. They responded, "from the practitioner's perspective, you're trying to find your best way of repairing this so like it's not so obvious or if it is obvious, make it intentionally part of the design. So yes, from that, definitely from both perspectives" (PT2, L63). "Because you're doing the transforming […]I think there's definitely that satisfaction in the process." (PT2, L80)

On the other hand, whilst participant 1's feedback did express a sense of achievement when carrying out repair work, their response also mentioned the economic outcomes of labour as something they had to keep at the forefront of their mind as a freelance practitioner. Participant 1 did express in their response that they appreciate that the repair work they carry out is an act that they enjoy and care about the outcome of, however "at the end of the day, you do have to earn money. So, there is obviously love and passion and talent that goes into a job, but you have also got to pay your bills." PT1, L96) This response is reminiscent of aspects of neoliberal ideology due to the focus often being on the economic outcomes of labour, in this case crafts labour. It could also be disputed that judging from participant 1's response, crafts skill is rarely exhibited in its repetitive, mechanical nature as it lacks the novelty that is associated with the notions of creativity and innovation, which tend to be highly valued within the neoliberal ideology. Further to this, participant 1 went on further to express the effect that the economic outcome of their labour has on their approach and employment of techniques used for each repair project; "There's no shortcuts, but I have been taught in a way that you're very strategic, I suppose in like the way you tackle a job. You don't mess around. You see what you need to get done and you're constantly thinking what's ahead of you. You're not kind of like, messing around and, tweaking something that doesn't really need that much attention. You get in you get out with that like you need to at the end of it you do need to earn money." (PT1, L108) Participant 2's response expressed a similar opinion in that care of the self can extend to that of the practitioner's sense of self care depending on the approach of the individual practitioner towards their work. "I think it's also about your attitude. How, you do your work because you can, I think you can have 30 years of experience but if you don't really care about what you're working on. Someone else who doesn't have a lot of experience might do a better job because they'll really consider everything in a different way. So yeah, I don't think it's so straightforward with that depends on your work ethic." (PT2, L103) Considering the above responses, the act of repair as care work towards the self seemed to generate that sense of care when the approach of the practitioner towards the repair work involved a sense of care and devotion towards the labour in the first place. Therefore the theme of altruism that emerged from the participant's responses emerged when the repair work was carried out as a means of achievement and devotion to the labour involved as well as a service.

4.5) Thresholds

The theme of thresholds was an unexpected finding that emerged in the sense that all of the participants expressed the notion of a barrier or misinterpretation between themselves as crafts practitioners and consumers. For example, participant 1 responded that "I suppose it's such a niche industry, that not many people know anything about it." (PT1, L19), further to this, participant 4

responded that "the customers don't know what it's taken to get to that point. As much as they would respect what we do as a craft and the things we create or repair or maintain. I think actually being in it. You know, how long things take to make so you, you understand it better." (PT4, L99) These experiences of perceived misconceptions of crafts expertise suggest that there is an aspect of ignorance of crafts skill that creates an inconspicuous barrier. Participant 2 described their experience of these thresholds as being the result of the misjudgement of a practitioner's skill based on the practitioner's work environment. "I think people are very swayed by how your shop looks to your environment." (PT2, L116) They further expressed their experiences with individuals that they have encountered who have overlooked the experience of the practitioner and judged the value of the practitioner's skill based on the condition of their work space in the sense that if the practitioner's crafts space is seemingly disorganised or is visually un appealing, they have a lower regard for that particular practitioner. "Whereas I think they probably think oh, this is like a very small shop. It looks really messy or chaotic. It's on the corner. It doesn't look jazzy and clean. So they don't want to spend the money there." (PT2, L134)

One participant provided a more nuanced view in that when education of crafts processes is provided, these thresholds and misconceptions can be dispensed with as the awareness of the skill involved in crafts processes is then understood. After the individual is educated on crafts techniques, "then they're pleasantly surprised, but most people do find it quite hard work, like physically challenging. But I think a lot of people have sort of been surprised" (PT3, L182) This participant's experience of providing crafts education and information on crafts techniques seemed to demonstrate that the thresholds and misconceptions surrounding the notion of crafts expertise were a result of a lack of general knowledge and awareness of crafts labour and skill.

4.6) Summary

 The exploration of the four themes: 1) value is relative, 2) reshaping relationships, 3) Altruism and 4) Thresholds has attempted to interpret the themes that emerged from the findings that revealed and captured the values expressed in the participant's experiences. This chapter has attempted to summarise and distil the main findings generated from the semi-structured interviews conducted with 4 participants. It is worth mentioning that whilst a preparatory review of the literature surrounding this topic was undertaken, my research findings prompted additional reading into the areas relating to thresholds and barriers. The literature review chapter has been amended according to this unexpected research finding in order to inform the theoretical framework of this study.

4. Discussion

5.1) Introduction

It is evident from the participant's accounts that whilst there are similarities between responses, they are not uniform. Each participant has individual perceptions with regards to the notion of perceived value and the role that repair plays within the framework of care. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate individual participant's accounts in relation to the literature already set out surrounding perceived value of crafts skill and repair as care work in order to find possible theoretical explanations for the perspectives and values revealed in the interviews. This discussion section is laid out according to the themes that emerged in the findings chapter.

5.2) Gauging value within neoliberal culture.

The perceived value of expertise within the crafts sector of the UK creative industries seems to be overall held in high regard, however this notion of value can be perceived from multiple standpoints. From a macro-level notion of collective or cultural value in the sense that expertise is considered important, beneficial and desirable within a social group setting. Crafts expertise can be viewed as an important attribute of a crafts practitioner in addition to the idea that crafts expertise is important in order to carry out crafts processes and contribute to the continuation of that specific practice. From a micro-level standpoint, an individual's personal values determined by their inclinations, convictions, motivations and emotions can generate different perspectives on the notion of value towards crafts expertise. The perceived value of crafts expertise from the viewpoint of an individual's personal values can vary widely and be subject to change. However collective values that tend to be formed more rationally and act as a framework which mediates social practices can have an overarching influence on personal values. The focus on perceived value subsequently can switch between the collective and the personal.

This investigation into the notion of value within the setting of neoliberal culture can be considered to be reinforcing the neoliberal ideology itself, as attempting to in a way measure the concept of value that is widely considered to be boundless and subject to change, is in itself an act of neoliberal ideology. Considering this, neoliberal ideology can be seen to be employed in the perceived valuation of crafts expertise within repair work from the consumer perspective, especially when repair work is provided as a service. Considering the participant's responses when asked about the perceptions of their skill as crafts practitioners, it can be disputed that the perception of value is relational and dependent on consumer expectations as, in this context of repair as a service, they are the recipient of the repaired object for which they are engaging in a financial transaction. Within

neoliberal culture, due to the ideology surrounding the free market, the focus is often on the economic outcomes of labour, but craft skill and craft labour is rarely lucrative unless it enters the luxury market. At that point, skills and expertise are then needed in order to carry out the labour to professional industry set standards of quality. Further to this, consumer expectations of this skill within the luxury market are then employed to further attempt to measure the value of crafts expertise.

Despite many of the participants expressing overall that crafts skill seemed to be highly regarded from both their customers and by their fellow practitioners within the crafts industry, this notion of value held by consumers and fellow practitioners seemed to be based on different understandings of craft skill and expertise. It was apparent that from both the consumer perspective and the fellow practitioner perspective that this notion of value seemed to be unconsciously measured or compared against numerical metrics. Metrics such as the cost of the repair, the length of time taken to carry out the repair work, or in some cases both time and cost were used to gauge the perceived value of the skill involved from the consumer perspective. From the fellow practitioner perspective, the notion of value surrounding crafts skill and expertise seemed to be measured against numerical metrics such the number of years of training involved to become a practitioner in addition to how many years a practitioner has been working within that specific practice. The findings suggest that despite that fact that as indefinite and boundless the notion of value may be, metrics such as time and economic outcome are frequently undertaken in order to allocate the sense of importance towards the notion of expertise within crafts practices.

In contrast, it was also found from another participant's feedback that value can also be ascribed to crafts skill and expertise in its ability to enable the further use of an item that consequently generates a sense of comfort to the consumer. The procedures undertaken in craft are often used to create a material object of functional and aesthetic value, similarly procedures of care work are employed to achieve the comfort and contentment of an individual. The commonality between care and crafts in their supplementary capacity is that these procedures are more or less invisible once the final result has emerged. Taking into account the findings from the data collection in comparison to the literature reviewed previously, it can be disputed that value can also be gauged quite simply by the sense of care generated when a material object of personal importance is mended.

5.3) Repairing relationships with and around objects.

Despite the variety of responses when the participants were asked about repair as an act of care, the overarching characteristic seemed to be that the act of repairing an object of importance was an act of care in order to subsequently mend or reshape the relationships surrounding the object, whether that be a relationship directly between the individual and the object itself, or relationships associated with an object. The concept of repair as an act of care seemed to vary in that the resulting feeling of care was achieved depending on the initial motivations to conduct the repair in the first instance. For example, repair as a means of reshaping our relationships with objects and latterly with our environment, repair as a means of expression, repair as a means of coping with illness or stress and as a means for social reproduction.

For the participants in this study, the subsequent emotion of care and well-being created through the act of repair was inherently individually motivated by the inclinations, convictions, and emotions that were associated with the object of importance being mended. One participant's experience for example was that crafts repair was a means of coping with stress through the learning of crafts procedures as a means of escape from a life-changing diagnosis. In a similar vein, another participant described their experience of repairing an individual's garment that had previously belonged to their recently deceased father, and in the act of repairing this object of importance they were able to handle the sudden loss of a parent. Considering these findings in relation to the literature already surrounding this subject, I would argue that these repair roles are reminiscent of the escapist and ameliorative attributes mentioned earlier that crafts repair and care have in common.

In contrast, two of the participants described their experiences of repair as being motivated by the desire to reshape relationships with objects and latterly the environment due to growing concerns surrounding climate change and sustainability. In the context of repair as a service in addition to an act of care, the motivations were fuelled by the desire to support the circular economy by keeping the garment in circulation for as long as possible in order to ensure the longevity of the garment and therefore keep it within the circular economy as a usable, wearable item.

The notion of care in this context can be seen to perform a role similar to that of repair as they both operate in a supplementary manner respectively. Procedures of care are employed to achieve the comfort and contentment of an individual and the crafts procedures undertaken in repair work are used to mend an object of functional and/or aesthetic importance. The commonality between care and repair in their supplementary capacity is that these procedures are more or less invisible once

the final result has emerged. Considering the findings from the research, I would argue also that both repair and the notion of care operate in such a way that they are a means to an end, not intended to be present once the respective procedures have been performed.

5.4) Practices of devotion to the welfare of people and their objects

Many of the participants in the study commented that the sense of care resulting from repair work materialised in the sense of satisfaction or achievement from devoting their time and energy to repairing an object. One participant for example, expressed that the sense of care extended to them as a practitioner in the sense of a job well done through the use of their crafts skill that displayed the supplementary role of their crafts processes in that they incorporated particular processes that were undetectable once the repair work had been completed. However, it was also commented by the participants that this sense of practitioner devotion towards their practice and the subsequent sense of care towards individuals and objects of importance was also determined by their inclinations, convictions, motivations and emotions surrounding crafts labour in general. This was described by two of the participants as a practitioner's 'work ethic' or 'attitude' towards crafts processes in repair work, where the practitioner's approach to crafts procedures can also have a detrimental effect on the material outcome of the repair work and consequential scrutiny of their devotion to their role as a custodian and mender of the object that is being repaired.

Further to this, one participant also expressed a sense of achievement when carrying out repair work, however they also commented that the economic outcomes of labour was something they had to keep at the forefront of their mind as a freelance practitioner. Due to the widespread precarious nature of freelance labour, it is understandable that the economic outcomes of labour were central to their experience, as they earn their living from the labour they carry out on garments they work on to repair. Within the neoliberal setting in which these practitioners operate, it could be argued that the sense of satisfaction or achievement from devoting their time and energy to repairing an object is a means of seeking refuge in their own crafts practice, and the concept of the modern artisan in order to avoid demoralisation of self-exploitation through neoliberal ideology.

This narrative of the marginalised, demoralised worker who takes responsibility for themselves with both hands is fundamental to the neoliberal ideology, as it provides an informal means to achieve well-being without the input from a collective support system. Through the removal of supporting social structures, practitioners are bound by an obligatory sense of devotion and responsibility.

5.5) Can thresholds be re-established?

The concept of thresholds as described in the literature review chapter of this study as an inconspicuous boundary seems to be propagated by a general lack of awareness surrounding crafts skill and crafts processes. Much of the pre-existing literature suggests that these thresholds become visible once the restrictions and limited positions of the consumer's crafts abilities become clear. Amongst the participants, there was agreement that consumers generally held a high regard towards the skill and expertise of crafts practitioners, however this sense of high regard could be argued to be fuelled by misconceptions or idealised views of the crafts sector overall. Drawing from the literature reviewed already, it could be argued that with the romanticising of crafts, whereby the perception of its antiquated nature generates a misleading sense affection towards the practice, the idealisation of crafts expertise and crafts skill has therefore caused a broad misunderstanding of the crafts sector's material processes and the reality of its technical nature. Taking both the literature and the participant feedback together, the 'fishbowl' effect of inconspicuous thresholds as described previously by Tony Morrison is established once the mechanical and repetitive nature of crafts skill is revealed, and the caricature of the artisan becomes less attractive. As a result, the true representation of crafts skill and expertise involved in repair work is concealed from view.

However, it was evident according to one of the participant's responses that the notion of the inconspicuous threshold can be re-established through crafts education. In this participant's experience, when education of crafts processes is provided, these thresholds and misconceptions can be dispensed with as the skill involved in crafts processes is thereafter understood. The lack of repair and crafts know-how on the part of the amateur crafter could also be thought to contribute a feeling of apprehension at the interface of repair in addition the interaction with a threshold or barrier that becomes apparent when the restrictions and limited positions of the consumer's crafts skill abilities emerge. To draw on Elaine Heumann Gurian's term 'threshold fear', it could be argued that in this context the 'fear-inducing stimuli' are the lack of repair knowledge that restricts consumer access to repair procedures mentioned in the literature in addition to the division between the consumer and practitioner caused by the romanticisation of crafts practice. Through the provision of education that the participant took part in, the fear-inducing stimuli were removed and accessibility to crafts practices emerged that subsequently repositioned the threshold at the interface of crafts repair.

However, it is worth considering here that in the act of repositioning these thresholds through crafts education, whether materiality and accessibility is prioritised over the expertise and the quality of the repair itself. Two of the participants commented on their personal experiences that in cases when consumers have attempted to carry out their own repair work instead of taking it to a practitioner, the outcome of the DIY repair using crafts procedures falls short compared to the quality of technique or skill that would emerge from a practitioner's expertise. Therefore, it can be disputed that despite the possibility for thresholds to be re-positioned through crafts education, the divisions between amateur crafts skills and practitioner skill and expertise are evident when the quality of the technique employed in crafts repair work emerges.

6. Conclusions

The UK fashion industry is currently undergoing a period of transition which began with the 2013 Rana Plaza garment factory collapse in the district of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The current transition from the current mainstream linear model to a circular economy model has brought to the forefront the current production practices in addition to the attitudes towards the repair and maintenance of clothing. This transition has demanded new approaches around production models in addition to the repair and maintenance practices of clothing.

This study has been a small-scale qualitative study investigating the perceptions and values surrounding crafts repair expertise and skill within the framework of care from the perspective of four UK crafts practitioners. The focus of the study was to explore insights into the perceptions of expertise from the practitioner perspective in addition to the notion of care at the interface of repair. The main research question investigated in this paper is: How is crafts expertise valued and perceived within the framework of care in the repair of clothing? Additional supporting questions are: 1) Is the act of repairing and maintaining clothing considered an act or performance of care? 2) Does the consumer's sense of care for the self-benefit from this act of care, and does this extend to the practitioner who is performing the repair work? And 3) Does the skill or expertise of the repairer influence the quality of the repair?

For this study, a phenomenological and pragmatic paradigm and methodology was applied to guide the research data strategy for collection and analysis. The empirical research for this study was gathered from semi-structured interviews with set questions that were used in order to keep the interviewer/participant interaction on the subject of the investigation. Set questions were presented to all the interview participants in order to study the key areas surrounding their experiences of the perceived value and perceptions of expertise from the practitioner perspective in addition to the notion of care and care work at the interface of garment repair. The semi-structured interview framework was chosen as it provides the structure of using set questions whilst giving the respondent scope for expressing themselves freely and at length that can then provide the researcher with a greater depth of qualitative data. Thematic analysis with two cycles of analysis consisting of initial cycle value coding and secondary cycle value coding of the transcripts was used to distil the raw data from eleven secondary cycle themes into the four themes that emerged: 1) Value as relative, 2) Reshaping relationships, 3) Altruism, and 4) Thresholds.

The connecting theme that emerged here is concatenation. The overarching theme of concatenation demonstrates how the carrying out of garment repair acts as a means of linking an object and subsequently linking individuals in a chain in order to achieve a sense of circularity. Concatenation further reflects the current fragmented production processes that are being practiced in the UK crafts sector and the wider fashion industry at present within the mainstream linear model. Practitioners and consumers alike are becoming increasingly aware of the impact that their actions have on the environment, therefore demanding new approaches to consumption and production. Changes in public awareness outside the sector has required internal review to scrutinise current practices in addition to implementing the transition from the current mainstream linear model to a more circular model. Concatenation has further highlighted attitudes towards the repair and maintenance of clothing in terms of value creation as well as perceptions of expertise and skill within the framework of repair as an act of care for the self and consequently for the wider environment.

This study has revealed that the participant's experience of value creation surrounding crafts expertise is somewhat fragmented, due to the attitudes and perceptions of crafts expertise from both outside and within the sector that are based on different understandings of crafts skill. Participants expressed that from an external perspective of the crafts sector, there is a sense of awe and appreciation for the labour and technique that has been involved in a piece of repair work, and therefore the skill and expertise involved is highly valued. However, this notion of value seems to be unconsciously measured or compared against metrics such as the cost of the repair or the length of time taken to carry out the repair work in order to gauge the perceived value of the skill involved. Crafts skill within the framework of repair was highly valued because of what the act of repair promised in terms of ensuring the longevity of a treasured object. In this sense, value is ascribed to crafts expertise in its ability to enable the further use of an item in addition to distilling a sense of comfort in knowing that the item can be returned to the original maker should it become damaged or in need of amendments. On the other hand, perspectives from within the sector, the notion of value surrounding crafts skill seemed to be based on the existing understanding of the training involved to become a practitioner to begin with. As a result, a high regard for crafts expertise seems to be held by fellow practitioners due to the knowledge that several years of training is invested during crafts training and education.

The findings of this study provide insights and explanations of the practitioner perspectives surrounding repair of clothing as acts of care for the individual, the self and subsequently for the wider environment. The expressed findings reflected the act of repairing an item was an act of care

in order to subsequently reshape a relationship surrounding the object, whether that be a relationship directly between the individual and the object itself, or relationships associated with an object. The roles played by the act of repair seemed to vary from repair as a means of reshaping our relationships with objects and latterly with our environment, repair as a means of expression, repair as a means of coping with illness or stress, as a means for social reproduction, to repair provided as a service. Further demonstrated was that the act of repair as a service not only mended the damaged object and the relationship that the object has with the individual, therefore extending the relationship that the person has with the object itself through the act of repair. By providing repair as a service, not only can the condition of the object itself be maintained, but also the act of repair can be considered as an act of care and maintenance towards the relationship between the practitioner and consumer.

Participant's feedback indicated that they did experience a sense of self care in the form of a job well done and of satisfaction or achievement from devoting their time and energy to repairing an object to the best standard possible. The sense of altruism was demonstrated in a sense of personal enjoyment and satisfaction in the act of repair as a service and care work. The feeling of self-care further extended to the practitioner through the employment of their crafts techniques that displayed the supplementary role of their crafts skill. Considering the participant's responses, it can be argued that both crafts skill and the notion of repair as an act of care operate in such a way that they are a means to an end, not intended to be present once the respective procedures have been performed. Participants responses also mentioned the economic outcomes of labour as something they had to keep at the forefront of their mind as freelance practitioners despite appreciating that the repair work they carry out is an act that they enjoy and care about the outcomes of. However due to the neoliberal focus often being on the economic outcomes of labour, crafts skill is rarely lucrative unless it enters the luxury market. The act of repair as care work with regards to the practitioner's self seemed to generate that sense of care when the approach of the practitioner towards the repair work involved a sense of care and devotion towards the labour in the first place. Due to the precarious nature of freelance labour, it is understandable that the economic outcomes of labour were central to the participant's experience. It could be argued that the sense of satisfaction or achievement from devoting their time and energy to repairing an object is a means of seeking refuge in their own crafts practice in addition to the concept of the modern artisan in order to avoid demoralisation of the self-exploitation through neoliberal ideology. The character of the marginalised, demoralised worker who takes responsibility for themselves is fundamental to the neoliberal ideology as it provides an informal means of self-care without the input from a collective

support system. Through the removal of supporting social structures, practitioners are bound by an obligatory sense of devotion and responsibility.

The notion of a barrier or threshold between crafts practitioners and consumers suggest that there is an aspect of misconception surrounding crafts skill that creates an inconspicuous boundary between crafts practitioners and consumers. In contrast, other participant's experience demonstrated that by providing crafts education and information on crafts techniques, that the thresholds and misconceptions surrounding the notion of crafts expertise were a result of a lack of general knowledge and awareness of crafts labour and skill. The 'fishbowl' effect of inconspicuous thresholds as described previously by Tony Morrison is established once the mechanical and repetitive nature of crafts skill is revealed, and the true representation of crafts skill and expertise involved in repair work is revealed. However, it was evident from the research findings that the notion of the inconspicuous threshold can be re-established through crafts education. In one participant's experience, when education of crafts processes is provided, these thresholds and misconceptions can be dispensed with as the skill involved in crafts processes is thereafter understood and the fear-inducing stimuli that generates a feeling of apprehension at the interface of repair were removed to increase accessibility to crafts repair practices.

This subsequently begs the question of whether materiality and accessibility are prioritised over the expertise and the quality of the repair itself, which would be an area of interest for further research from this study. Another topic for future research would be to investigate the education and training of craft techniques for the purposes of garment repair and maintenance and whether this translates into successful career pathways. This study did not differentiate between the practices of the participants despite that they all worked within the UK crafts industry with textiles and clothing within the capacity of repair, however this was not their sole job role. The participants were all crafts practitioners who took on repair work as an obligatory aspect of their role as maker and mender of garments. Such research could draw on the existing studies and research that focused on the relationships between training of repair and maintenance skills and whether this translated into career pathways. Further research such as this could have implications for creative industry production practices in addition to influencing models of circular structures within the fashion and textiles industry.

The findings from this research study have implications for policy and management within the creative industries and to inform future governmental and company policies in the crafts sector as

well as the wider creative industries such as the fashion industry. Whilst the study has attempted to explain the perceptions and values surrounding expertise and skill within the framework of repair as an act of care and care work, it is for the creative industries and the actors within it to assess the importance of these findings. Pre-existing research into the three areas within the crafts sector of the creative industries: the cultural value of crafts expertise, repair, and the notion of care as mentioned in the literature review chapter revealed the inconsistencies in the knowledge development of these three areas and the subsequent discussions in this study have revealed the somewhat fragmented nature of value creation surrounding crafts expertise. Overtime, it will be interesting to observe whether the creative industries that eclipse the fashion industry and crafts sector will develop successful circular models and develop a better understanding of expertise within the framework of repair practices.

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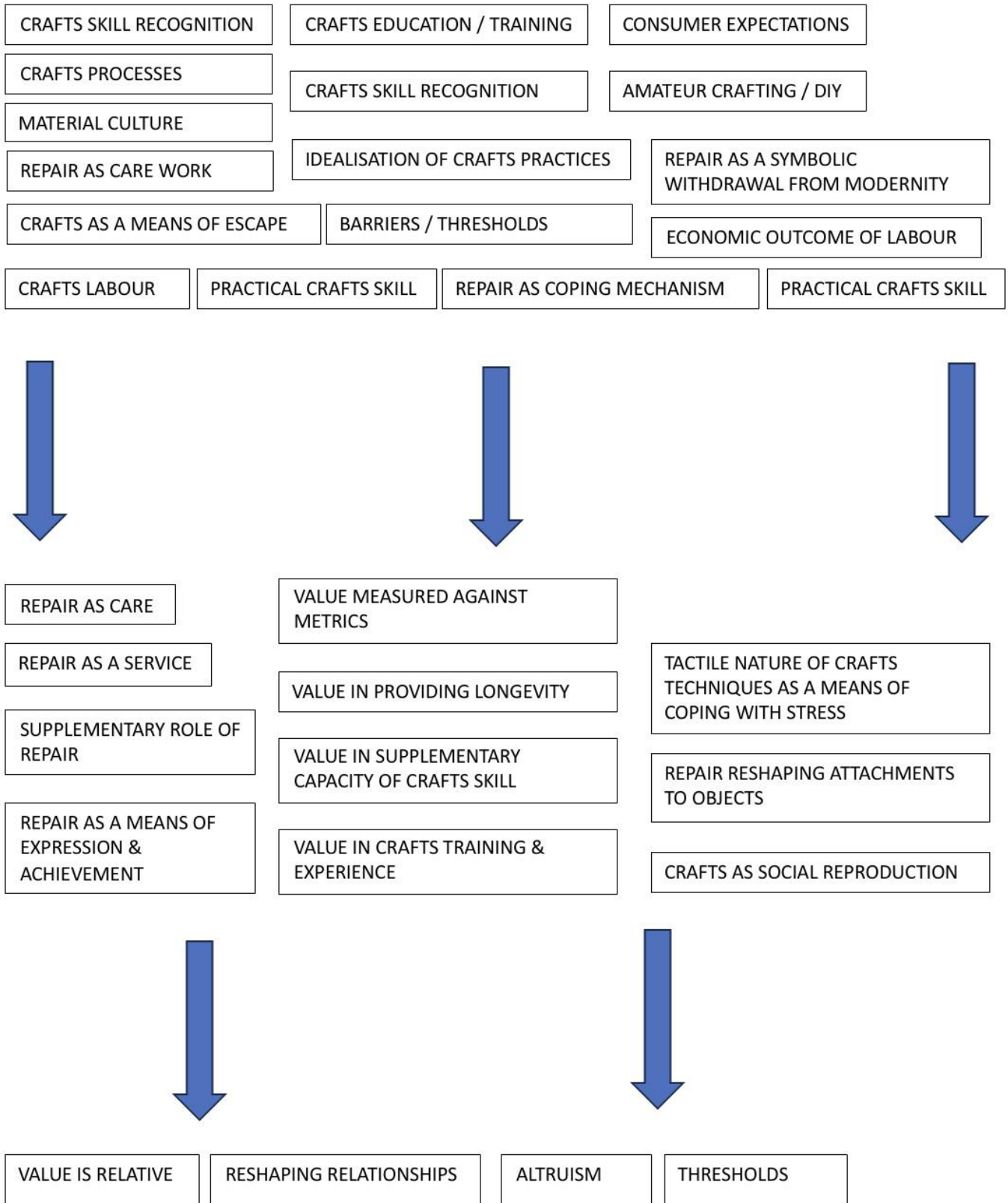St Clair, K. (2019), The Golden Thread. London: John Murray Publishers.

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8. Appendices

A. Initial and second cycle thematic analysis summary/diagram

| CRAFTS SKILL RECOGNITION | CRAFTS EDUCATION / TRAINING | CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS |

CRAFTS PROCESSES

CRAFTS SKILL RECOGNITION

AMATEUR CRAFTING / DIY

MATERIAL CULTURE

IDEALISATION OF CRAFTS PRACTICES

REPAIR AS A SYMBOLIC WITHDRAWAL FROM MODERNITY

REPAIR AS CARE WORK

CRAFTS AS A MEANS OF ESCAPE

BARRIERS / THRESHOLDS

ECONOMIC OUTCOME OF LABOUR

CRAFTS LABOUR

PRACTICAL CRAFTS SKILL

REPAIR AS COPING MECHANISM

PRACTICAL CRAFTS SKILL

REPAIR AS CARE

VALUE MEASURED AGAINST METRICS

REPAIR AS A SERVICE

VALUE IN PROVIDING LONGEVITY

TACTILE NATURE OF CRAFTS TECHNIQUES AS A MEANS OF COPING WITH STRESS

SUPPLEMENTARY ROLE OF REPAIR

VALUE IN SUPPLEMENTARY CAPACITY OF CRAFTS SKILL

REPAIR RESHAPING ATTACHMENTS TO OBJECTS

REPAIR AS A MEANS OF EXPRESSION & ACHIEVEMENT

VALUE IN CRAFTS TRAINING & EXPERIENCE

CRAFTS AS SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

VALUE IS RELATIVE

RESHAPING RELATIONSHIPS

ALTRUISM

THRESHOLDS

B.   Interview questions

      I.   From your experience as a crafts practitioner, how do you think crafts skill and expertise are valued in the context of repair?

      II.   Do you consider the act of repairing clothing or objects as an act of care?

      III.   Do you think that the individual's sense of self-care or well-being benefits from this act of repair in addition to having a valued object fixed?

      IV.   Does this feeling of self-care extend to you as the repairer or practitioner performing the repair?

      V.   Do you think your skill or expertise influences the quality of your repair work?

      VI.   Is there anything thing that you're currently working on at the moment, or do you have an example of a repair project that required your expertise as a practitioner?

C.   Sample Interview transcription – Participant 2

INTERVIEWER:
Just testing 123. Okay, interview with suyamba on the 31st of May 2023. So the first question from your experience as a crafts practitioner, how do you think craft skill and expertise are valued and perceived in the context of repair? You can ask me to repeat myself

PT2
Yeah, think people value

INTERVIEWER
don't look at it, [laughs].

PT2
Repeat your sentence.

INTERVIEWER
Okay, I got it. You can read it. (*Interviewer hands over the interview question in writing to PT2 for them to understand the question*)

PT2
I'm gonna use your words back at you. So I think craft is the context of value, in the context of repair. I think they're valued by especially, say consumers or customers who damage or wear their garments really, really well and see that they need a bit of TLC or sort of refreshing or they're really valued. What can be done is really valued, but I think the amount of time it may take to get it done for someone. And the cost of that is always a tricky point.

INTERVIEWER
So is that kind of time is money kind of fix in that situation?

PT2
I mean, the Labour involved I think, is always frightening because especially as we were just saying, like, the cost of everything is going up. So even if you really value or cherish the garment, what people are willing to pay, to have it repaired, amended is not always in line with how much it costs someone like myself or my colleagues to put the time and love and energy into creating that repair.

INTERVIEWER
Okay, can you kind of elaborate on the time and money versus kind of almost like the time investment into repair?

PT2
Yeah, so it's funny sometimes it's kind of easier just to start something from scratch and make it fresh. Then go into it carefully around damages or worn areas and you're carefully picking pieces you're trying to match something that might be 5-10 years old, even two years old, with another piece of cloth. That doesn't matter but your your, you spend a lot of time searching through what you're your trimmings and your bits to carry out a more seamless repair. But there's a lot of that. So you're searching for the bits to match. See if you had a patch and you don't have any spare cloth right? So we're looking for fabric that will blend in as well as possible even though each fabric roll is a different piece number and batch. Then carefully unpicking something from the inside, do the repair work and then seal it up. Takes a long time. Like sometimes I'll monitor alteration tailors gets really stressed because it's like it's not just doing its unpicking it also like right, give this to me do you want me to and pick it out quickly and pick it while you're working on that and there's so much more than just the repair and people aren't always aware of that. That's not everyone. Lots of people I speak to are amazed and really pleased with how things can be transformed and saved actually, because that that memory that attachment to that garment is saved so they can cherish it for x number of months years longer. So it's a mixed bag but

INTERVIEWER
so do you think that's because I'm thinking in the context of crafts expertise and skill Do you think the skill needed to make something from scratch is valued more than the repair? Or do you think they're parallel to each other? Or do you think it's relational depending on the project?

PT2
I think it takes more skill to repair because you need a lot of patience. You do

INTERVIEWER
Yeah,

PT2
if you ask so the first thing we will say when I say what I do that like oh great, you can do alterations. I'm like nope, no thank you. I will pay you not to give me alteration please. I don't want to know because like I said patience, I don't even want to alter my own clothes. It's really funny, but we're really grateful for our specialists alteration tailors because they have an abundance of patience. We give them so many difficult jobs. With pieces from customers that they really want saving. We think you know what you need a new garment but they're just so attached to this and they really want to make it work, which is very lovely and special. But yeah, I'd say repair more because I think you have to be more creative. It's a creative problem solving. You've given limited resources. Each job is different what you're working with some top picks or nightmares, whereas I think starting from scratch me personally, always easier, more welcome.

INTERVIEWER
So following on from that, do you then consider the act of that?, Well, the act of repairing and maintaining clothing as an act of care from both sides?

PT2
Yeah,

INTERVIEWER
from the consumer and the tailors the practitioners perspective?

PT2
Yeah. And then you want me to expand or if I haven't distracted from your question, like that's not what I want to know.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah, I mean, if you could elaborate on that, if you think that repairing and maintaining is an act of care, would you say either from the clients perspective or tailors perspective?

PT2
He, I think, yes, it would be an act of care from both perspectives because say, you've been wearing something to death probably you've worn it out, you still want to enjoy wearing it. You're aware that it's still not going to be perfect as it once was. However, you still want to give it some attention and some magic behind the scenes just so you can keep enjoying like feeling or the one

INTERVIEWER
Yeah,

PT2
holding on to feeling on you having it with you. And then again, from the practitioners perspective, you're trying to find your best way of repairing this so like it's not so obvious or if it is obvious, make it intentionally part of the design. So yes, from that, definitely from both perspectives,

INTERVIEWER
okay. And then once that repair is done, do you think that the either the, from the individual sense of self care or that that act of care benefits the individual in addition to just having an item fixed? Do you think there's a sense of satisfaction from having that repair done on something that's sentimental, for example?

PT2
Yeah, I think anyone that has the mind set the mind frame of going Oh, actually, I'll see if I can find someone to fix this. Will but there are a lot of people that oh, that's done now. I'm over and then gone. They don't care. They don't give a shit.

INTERVIEWER
Yes,

PT2
no, they don't. They really don't care. But I think if you already have that first thing to go, Oh, can I save it somehow? Is it salvageable is this is there that next step before getting rid of it and

INTERVIEWER
given a new lease of life?

PT2
Yeah.

INTERVIEWER
And do you think this extends to the person doing the repairing? Do you think they benefit in a way from that act of care? Like the feeling of a job well done?

PT2
Absolutely. Because you're doing the transforming, aren't they? Because I've seen jackets that have been so worn around the elbows, and then they've been repaired on my oh my gosh, you've actually like we've managed to find a really good piece of fabric that well they've hidden it or cut a shape in such a way where it is really hidden and camouflage. You'd never know that this person blew out the elbows and everything. So yeah, I think there's definitely that satisfaction in the process.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah. And then going back to the differences between a bespoke tailor like yourself and an alteration tailor. Do you think that skill or expertise influences the quality of the repair? So for example, if you were given something to repair would your skills influence the job differently as opposed to the alteration tailor?

PT2
I'm trying to think of an example of what kind of like what kind of repair it would be and how we'd approach it differently.

INTERVIEWER
So it'd be purely for example, if they had more experience, for example, they'd be kind of they'd already have kind of a back catalogue ready of techniques that they could pull from, whereas someone who's not as experienced and repair might need more time to think about it or

PT2
100% Yeah, they would be way faster. Yeah, way more effective. But then again, I think it's also about your attitude. How, how do you work because you can, I think you can have 30 years of experience but if you don't really care about what you're working on. Someone else who doesn't have a lot of experience might do a better job because they're really consider everything in a different way. So yeah, I think it's a mixed bag. I don't think it's so straightforward with that depends on your work ethic. And your attitude, as well.

INTERVIEWER
And then do you think that in terms of, how to say, from the clients perspective, would their expectation of the repair be influenced by the skill of the tailor for example, so if they know that the tailor is really experienced their expectations will be higher than someone who's only been, you know, repairing for a handful of years?

PT2
Can you ask that again?

INTERVIEWER
Yeah, but the, my kind of question for elaboration would be from a client's expectation. Do you think that is changed or that their expectation of the works that will be repaired? Their expectation of the quality will be dependent on the practitioners experience?

PT2
Yes. But also, I think people are very swayed by how your shop looks to your environment. Yeah, I think some people think oh, I don't want to go to my local dry cleaners. I might say, why not? Why the hell not? They do that all day long. Job.

INTERVIEWER
Okay. And you think that when people say I don't want to take to the dry cleaners, do you think it's because it's not the environment isn't dedicated to repair? It's just like an add on.

PT2
I would argue that there is is dedicated to maintenance and repair but people sometimes like oh, I don't want to go I'd rather go to you or your colleague. I'm like no, but while we have this front of shop, but the nice shelves and the bunches blah blah blah, like the work is the same but yes, we do a lot of alterations on garments being made and garments. We haven't made and blah, blah, blah, but we're making a fresh work to us. I see the dry cleaners and those setups like they're maintaining your garments or cleaning them, they're going to look over, they're going to refresh, they're going to repair okay, you have bad companies everywhere, but I would say that they're the ones you would go to first.

INTERVIEWER
Okay, so you think the environment will dictate the kind of the perception of the expertise?

PT2
Yeah, someone's asked me so it's like my hairdresser asked me if I would reline a coat and I'm like I can but I'd be very expensive. So my local cleaners quote with this, I said, don't even whinge pay them, tip them, pay that price and get it done because that's a hell of a job. But it's funny because I think after they speak to me and I, I tell them how much value was in that repair and how much time it takes. Whereas I think they probably think oh, this is like a very small shop. It looks really messy or chaotic. It's on the corner. It doesn't look jazzy and clean. Like I don't know. Soho House.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah.

PT2
However thereafter. So they don't want to spend the money there. And it's like, well, you should because they do all day long.

INTERVIEWER
Okay, that's interesting. But yeah, okay. So it's almost like if it seems, if the amount that you would charge, like if it's more expensive, the expectation is that the quality will be better.

PT2
Yeah. Oh, they think that what I've noticed they think that dry cleaners are overpriced and like they're under price, because if you came into our shop, you don't even want to know how much that would cost. But then you're we're factoring in that alongside our other work. And obviously, you've

got overheads here that are different. So I think people really judge it on the appearance of the practitioner, rather than how much experience they have.

INTERVIEWER
So the kind of the appearance of the of the practitioner and the appearance of their environment also dictates the expectations.

PT2
I think so.

INTERVIEWER
Okay, that's interesting. And then I think that my kind of final question would be, is there anything that you're working on at the moment or that you that is memorable? That required, like a lot of expertise for you to repair, like something that was particularly difficult or memorable about repair that requires a lot of expertise and skill?

PT2
Memorable. I've recently grown out all of my trousers and I split them all. When I say all of them, it's about six or seven pairs. So I do remember that because I had to rip the fabric so I had to unpick the zip fuse it or patch it. Do like the zigzag stitch and you can see the areas of where I've grown out of them, because I love to wear them. I've now retired them to home clothes. But I do remember that because it's a very sore reminder of my lifestyle change and how that's affected me bursting out of my lifestyle change without me. It was just eating more junk and not exercising. It was kind of a stark reminder.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah.

PT2
I had to live through while I still couldn't be bothered I gave up on altering trousers and you know what I'm done. It's a sore point for me. I don't want that reminder of me growing out of my clothes.

INTERVIEWER
I love that you'd rather repair other people's clothes than your own. I mean, obviously you get what you would get paid for repairing other people's clothes but and I found this as well when I was a tailor where I'd rather spend time fixing other people's stuff than my own. Because obviously you want to give it back to them quickly and it's like oh my stuff can wait is not as important.

PT2
Yeah it's annoying.

INTERVIEWER
Putting it off.

PT2
But now I try. Like there's some stuff I made last year. I mean, i used to alter and I quickly or did it this year but I'm trying to drip feed my alterations amongst fresh work and this work but in terms of other memorable alterations probably some said linen ages quite a lot. Especially like after 10, 15, 20 years you can be see, it's like faded, it's rubbed away. So we've recently done some repairs on a couple of linen suits. And they look so much younger. Like even just putting in a fresh lining,

shortening the sleeve so the rubbed edges are now obviously fresh, putting a new collar top collar on. And that is such a massive facelift for the garment which has been quite impressive.

INTERVIEWER
So that's added easily five years.

PT2
Yeah, suddenly onto that big job realigning all that work and then going inside maybe like fusing a bit or trying to mend by hand. So lots of like complex jobs, but yeah, totally transformed it.

INTERVIEWER
And do you think people understand how much work goes into that?

PT2
I think some people do. And some people don't or they might not want to because if they realise how much work you've done, there'll be frightened of the bill you get out. But it is nice to see when people go I've really lived in this and I can't really let it go. I can still wear it you know I can still right it as well yeah, you can and then we work on it and they're always really pleased after when that's nice to see because they're refreshed and you know we don't see them for a while then after because they're still enjoying their seats

INTERVIEWER
cuz I think what I've noticed in the research that I'm doing is that people, almost idealise crafts practitioners like they think that this is like this novel character who kind of lives in their own kind of world that's kind of stopped in time and once and they get interested in doing crafts as like or repair as kind of like a leisure activity or they do it to kind of escape the kind of, you know, the stressful parts of their lives and then when the the reality of it is that it's quite laborious work, and most of the time, especially when you're learning how to do it, you're really bad at it. That's the kind of the reason for the research is that there seems to be this tension between DIY crafts where people do do it for fun, rather than as a profession. And it's kind of understanding the tensions and the misconceptions between that it's kind of almost people look into the world into the crafts industry through a fishbowl. So it's like it's very nice to look at from the outside but the inside is quite a different world.

PT2
Yes, for the experiencing. Oh, wow, that's really cool. I'm like, I really do love my job. There's 10% that I'm obsessed with and there's 90% of nonsense I have to deal with. But for some reason that 10% is so enjoyable or rewarding makes up for it makes me put up with the 90% But people do think Wow, that must be amazing. I think yeah, that's pretty cool. It's like a niche job. It's old school. It's really traditional. But it's not glamorous. It's far from glamorous, actually. I see the people that come in and all of their suits.

INTERVIEWER
Yes.

PT2
They have a glamorous life. We do not because we work it is very Yeah, I find that funny.

INTERVIEWER
Can you kind of expand on that? 10% 90% Because that's quite interesting. Like out of the 10% of the work makes up for 90% of nonsense or difficulty that you have to put up with. Can you elaborate on that?

PT2
Yes. So I love the measuring drafting fitting side. Also I do like making for myself, which I don't have a lot of time for because I've been here working a lot. But it's just the things that go wrong. So fabric, not turning up because you you haven't been told this up stock and you're waiting for it. You haven't chased it. And then you've got deadlines, there's loads of deadlines, and you've got so many people that you're working with to get these garments done. And so many variables, a lot of people every day at risk of letting you down and getting in trouble. With the customer, which you can never disappoint because if they're happy with you always they're gonna keep coming back and that's what you need to keep yourself going need Yeah. So because of that, even tailor's like missing deadlines, call them up. Be like, Have you done this or mistakes made on things and then you're like, I need to bluff this or fix it quickly myself. So it's that's what I mean. There's a lot of

INTERVIEWER
so would you. So, from what you've said, there's a lot of non creativity which constitutes the maintaining organising, doing things management,

PT2
managing fully grown adult human beings. So I feel like I've got lots of tailor children. I check in on every morning on my Hey, what are you working on? You know, he's coming in, right. And I don't like that fabric, but you can't just avoid it forever. You're gonna have to, so it's sort of a lot of managing, organising. And I stupidly told myself and were at uni I was like, Oh, I'm never gonna have to do have deadlines again. It's like it's it's Psych. Because every day we've got so many deadlines every day. But yeah, that's what I mean about the 90%. That is tougher. Yeah, not really creative. It's memory and time management.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah.

PT2
And also people management. How do you manage all these different personalities because everyone is quite entailing there's a lot of strong characters, strong egos and a lot of stubbornness. So it's interesting to navigate that to get the products at the end. Happy customers too.

INTERVIEWER
I think that's a good place to finish it. Cuz I mean that that's given me a lot of.

PT2
Yeah,

INTERVIEWER
I mean, I think when people do like I said before about that kind of fishbowl idea that's not I can't take credit for that idea, someone else's theory but it's the idea of wants people to look at.

PT2
Okay,

INTERVIEWER
let's use the fishbowl for how many fish are working on a suit? That constitutes the price of a custom garment that's made just for you like that won't exist for anybody else.

PT2
Yeah, it's going to sell how much receipts in your workplace unless like a lot of money but I said, think about if you get this 10 to 12 people worker that's 10 to 12 wages. I mean, and then when you put it into that perspective, Oh, wow. And I say look, we've got specialists, cutters, coat makers, waistcoat makers, trouser makers, special finisher just for trousers special finishes just for jackets and be pressing all day, alterations here then there, there's so much more there's people don't realise it because they just see the end product. And then you've got so many different ranges of prices because of where they're made and how they're made and what they build from.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah,

PT2
and how the people that make them are treated. So yeah, totally different scale.

INTERVIEWER
And how much time goes into

PT2
so much time.

INTERVIEWER
So, yeah, there's definitely a tension between the two perspectives of the consumer and the practitioner, especially in crafts, because people I think, especially when I was saying before about neoliberalism is that people are not taught how to make anything anymore. Like, just for example, like my, my mum's generation were taught home economics, which was sewing and basic cooking and all of this kind of stuff. And that is really uncommon now, generation because we had was it design and technology and had the units of all these different practical skills, but I don't know because they always dropped the Art section first.

PT2
Budget cuts say yes, I have kids these days. I don't know. I ask my little cousins about D&T.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah. It would be interesting to look at between what would be the baby boomers or basically our parents generation and our generation compared to Gen Z, in terms of what is taught and then what is dropped at GCSE level. That will be interesting.

PT2
Unless you choose to carry it on, based on whoever teachers you had that were nice, basically.

INTERVIEWER
Well, yeah, I mean, it's also the way the curriculum is set up. For example, when I was doing my GCSEs I couldn't mix science and arts because they because of scheduling a really Yeah, so when I was doing Yeah, I did biochemistry and in textiles. Yeah. So I did GCSE triple science. So biology, chemistry, physics,

PT2
and I sorry, I didn't do that. I'm thinking of a level a level

INTERVIEWER
Yeah, I couldn't make say level because the you could do whatever you wanted, but at GCSE like it was basically, if you're doing science, you must be far too clever to do any kind of arts.

PT2
You can be clever in both, also.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah, exactly.

PT2
It was but that's why I'm Yeah, that's the kind of this is the kind of misconception of people who are not academic. Can't be creative, or it's kind of there's,

INTERVIEWER
there's a tension between uncreativity and creativity or what you see as not creative and creativity or kind of the arts and that the kind of harder STEM subjects like science technology was so different.

PT2
I think I'm quite glad my friendship group but we're specialists in so many different areas, which is always lovely catching up and just seeing what our day to day work is because it's so different. And yeah, that is interesting.

INTERVIEWER
Yeah, exactly.