Art, archives and shifting objectivities:
The plurality of knowledges & the work of David Wojnarowicz and Minna Henriksson

Kaisa Lassinaro
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Faculty **Humanities and Social Sciences**	Department **Music, Art and Culture**
Author **Kaisa Lassinaro**	
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Abstract

This thesis looks at the production of knowledge and the myth of objectivity. Its starting points are the practices and thinking around archival knowledge. What kinds of knowledges can emerge through artistic practice? How is the archive activated to its subversive potential so other histories may emerge? By considering the places and materiality of the archive and art, this enquiry looks at their means in bringing about hidden and subjugated knowledges.

The thesis introduces the historical practice of David Wojnarowicz and the contemporary practice of Minna Henriksson as examples of artistic work surfacing knowledges that expand and dissolve historical narratives and counter the technocratisation of societies and our beings.

It considers the blurring of the boundaries of scientific research and art in order to advance individual agency and societal change. Feminist theorisation supports shifting standpoints in scientific research and dialogue across disciplines. The new materialist thinking of Donna Haraway and Karen Barad encapsulate the complexities behind objectivity, research and knowledge, serving as an ethos for this enquiry. It explores thinking that enables us to move from dichotomies and simplifications towards the ***sciences and politics of interpretation, translation, stuttering, and the partly understood***, as Haraway has put it.

Keywords **Agency, archive, art, hxstories, situated knowledges**

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Additional information

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If I don't have a realm of precedence, then I'm anomalous and my experience is constantly minimized as being exceptional, in that there is no tradition, there's no history, there's no language … But there *is* history, tradition, and language.

– Carolee Schneemann[1]

Possibility is neither forever nor instant. It is not easy to sustain belief in its efficacy.

– Audre Lorde[2]

I carry silence like a blood-filled egg, ready to drop it into someone's hands.

– David Wojnarowicz[3]

1 Juhasz 1997.
2 Lorde 1984.
3 Wojnarowicz 1991.

1 Introduction: the possibility of the moment

What is the possibility of a moment in time? The potential of some *things* that are emerging; of more and more things that are seeping from cracks on the monolithic wall of history. Histories that have been situating in the margins, waiting in the gaps for their moment. In the silences where one could hear the stories outside of the mainstream narrative. Many of those who take on a task to find out what has been omitted in *historywriting*[4] – the researchers – have started from the archive. Archives have been the official storehouses of the documentation left behind of past lives and events. What is cached in their vaults has been the material of narratives, and depending on the power of the story and its writer, it has or has not become part of the predominant storytelling. These 'left-overs,' the untold accounts, the other pasts, are offerings for other realities, leading us away from the constructed idea of the Normal. Normal is a subjective experience – many rarely feel 'normal' when reflecting themselves against its idea. Abandoning its idea can free us from the violence of the *pre-invented world*: a notion by the artist and activist David Wojnarowicz (1954–92), whose politics and work have been an incentive for this research. The narrow mould into which many of us are trying or are forced to fit, continues to cause unidentifiable discontent within us.

> And then there are tribes that suckle at the breast of telecommunications every evening after work, and are fatally lulled into society's deep sleep. Day after day they experience waking nightmares, but they've either bought the kind of language from the tribe that offers hope or they're too fucking exhausted or fearful to break through the illusion and examine the structures of their world.[5]

Counter-narratives can serve towards dissolving normative, binary and nationalistic ideologies, and the construction of simplified, linear stories. The prevalent historywriting is a *master narrative*. Master narratives have a key function as offering people "a way of identifying what is assumed to be a normative experience."[6] Counter-narratives can offer counter-realities to those whose perspective and experience have been abnormalised, and those counter-realities can have common meanings even if articulated individually.[7]

I begin from considerations around the archive, as a starting point for establishing how new knowledge, or rather, *knowledges* can be surfaced – there exists a myriad of pasts, experiences and per-

4 I am using the term 'historywriting' throughout this thesis instead of separating the two words, emphasising the connection with *storytelling* that is implemented in the writing of history.
5 Wojnarowicz 1985.
6 Andrews 2004, 1.
7 Ibid., 2.

spectives to build accounts from that run parallel to those included in Official Records. I begin by looking from the standpoint of feminist epistemologies[8] that regard master narratives and knowledge as being socially constructed and subjective.[9]

This enquiry looks at **artistic work and research surfacing subjugated knowledges: How has this manifested in the practices of David Wojnarowicz and Minna Henriksson? How is the archive used to emerge or suppress knowledges? And how is feminist theorisation approaching the production of knowledge?**

I consider the artist as a political agent, a researcher in the formation and *re*formation of knowledges. Other questions steering my enquiry ask what is the potential of artistic and archival research? How might the archive be utilised in order to bring forth awareness and knowledge that blurs national and cultural boundaries, obscures societal norms and brings the sensuous (back) into our lives? Into the epistemological considerations around the archive tie in the ontological[10] aspects of memory, body and feelings. The materialisation of knowledge affects different individuals in different ways: we need to consider *situated knowledges*.

As a sphere where ontological questions may materialise, art is the underpinning for my enquiry. Imagination together with art can help to form an individual's agency, and this way make sense of one's experience and become an agent in the world. It can be an instrument for protest and social commentary and at its best is something that makes you see the world in another light. Art and politics – or public life – are realms where imagination is acted upon and which form our agency.

> [T]o act is in an important sense always to create something new, an object, a change in an existing situation, a new reality. … Any organized attempt at improvement of our situation will include some at least minimal exercise of the imagination, in that it will require agents to think of ways in which their environment or modes of acting could be different from what they now are.[11]

But the imaginative is always in the future – an infinite process that must not be tainted by our current condition. It is "a way of letting the future 'come back' to us in the present to shake up our thinking and help us remember things are not as they must be, and that they could be different."[12]

8 Epistemology refers to knowledge and knowing. It answers to the question *How*?
9 Macey 2000, 'epistemology.'
10 Ontology refers to being and existence. It answers to the question *What*?
11 Geuss 2010, ix.
12 Haiven 2014.

The different aspects of the archive, art, knowledge and research presented in my thesis argue for the importance of pioneering and experimental practices and methodology in transforming the material conditions of knowledge production and this way, our reality. The enquiry advocates dissolving the boundary between science and art – an interdisciplinary connectedness which feminist ethics and politics subscribe to.

I am aware of the scope of the subject, and my enquiry is merely scratching the surface of these considerations. The purpose of the research is to describe, converse and make connections – to examine *some* of the theory and methodology involved in knowledge production in order to apply these in future research.

My starting point of regarding knowledge as a phenomenon that is culturally and socially produced, the research locates itself in the paradigm of poststructuralism and social constructionism – when using the categories introduced by Anu Puusa, Pauli Juuti and Iiris Aaltio in their handbook for qualitative research.[13] Social constructionism regards the notion of objectivity "as an impossibility, since each of us, of necessity, must encounter the world from some perspective or other (from where we stand) and the questions we come to ask about that world, our theories and hypotheses, must also of necessity arise from the assumptions that are embedded in our perspective."[14]

As well as the discursive production of reality, my enquiry is concerned with its material side. Material theorists have built on social constructionism by continuing from linguistic considerations. New Materialism is concerned with the ways "material bodies, spaces, and conditions contribute to the formation of subjectivity."[15] The materialist theorisation of Donna Haraway and Karen Barad are introduced in connection to considerations around knowledge production and its objectivity.

My research identifies with the adapting concepts of poststructuralism which may be redefined depending on the context they are used in. Poststructuralism incorporates a critical view of science as *a* discourse amongst others.[16] In connection to poststructuralism, I introduce the thinking of Michel Foucault. Foucault's concepts of 'genealogy' and 'the episteme' are apparatuses for rethinking the historical narrative and its linearity. The postmodern and feminist standpoints I have adapted regard knowledge as located and having multiple frames of reference.[17]

13 Puusa, Juuti & Aaltio 2020, 39.
14 Burr 2015, 172.
15 Sanzo 2018.
16 Puusa, Juuti & Aaltio 2020, 39.
17 Ibid., 47.

1.1 A note on the structure of the contents

My research forms a dialogue between the theoretical frameworks and their implementation in the three parts of this research (theory, methods and analysis). A dialogue runs through also in the form of the citations included, which I have an exchange with – throughout this enquiry I am in conversation with the literature.

In addition to my conversation with the theory,[section 2] I introduce the research of Minna Henriksson [section 4.2] as an example of work that embodies the theoretical ideas by contributing to local working class and feminist epistemologies, while presenting institutional critique and disputing the established nationalistic narrative. The work of David Wojnarowicz shares this political, while speaking of the body and politics being entwined.[section 4.1]

The introduction looks at the political aspect of the archive and how art and imagination come into play.[section 1.2] The notion of 'archival turn' is introduced along with philosophical and psychological considerations around the Archive.[section 1.2.1] Lastly, I speak about my personal encounters with archives and consider different archival practices through previous research.[section 1.2.2]

The part on methods [section 3] discusses my interviews with Finnish archivists and researchers[section 3.2] as well as with Minna Henriksson – extracts of which are included in this thesis.[section 4.2] Together with the method of interview, I detail other background projects helping to formulate my research question, such as a workshop conducted at the Aalto University in Helsinki.[section 3.2] I also contemplate on writing as a method, or *the* method in my research, and introduce feminist theoretical considerations on writing.[section 3.1]

Section two consists of a number of theories and methodologies that support deconstructing dominant historical narratives. The section begins by looking at Jacques Rancière's ideas on intellectual emancipation[section 2.1] which can be seen embedded in Minna Henriksson's artistic work.[section 4.2]
I introduce the New Materialist considerations on objectivity by Donna Haraway and Karen Barad, as well as Michel Foucault's concept of the episteme.[section 2.2] How art and aesthetic practices contribute to our self-formation are looked at in section 2.3. This is attached to political timing and imagination.[section 2.4] From imagination I move on to consider the tactility of the archive in connection to digitalisation and memory.[section 2.5] Memory leads to contemplation on feelings [section 2.6] and finally, silence.[section 2.7]

1.2 On the political potential of the archive

The political aspects of the archive and historywriting are entwined in calls for the expansion of knowledge and the transparency of knowledge claims. The archive is a source not only for researchers operating within an institutional frame, but provide material for artists and activists alike. Its political potential can be activated, in support of social change, which a conflict usually precedes. As Mikko Jakonen in their book on the possibility of conflict remarks:

> Politics is a skill, an art. Politics and art are about creating new, about opening up new spaces. In similar manner to art, it is the task of politics to make paths through the seemingly impossible into the possible. Politics reconstructs the existing elements of order into a new constellation and shows the previous construction simply as one possibility amongst many.[18]

The 'impossible made possible' is formed in our imagination. Art as a catalyst for thinking and imagination can help us to begin to rearrange ourselves and the conditions around us. It walks hand in hand with political agency, and like a political conflict, art can reveal further possibilities of being in the world. By considering the political and the imaginative possibility of art and the archive, I ponder on the ways of regaining an agency in a monetised society that isolates us and steers our attention away from our political potential. What can we bring to the present from historical work done by politicised artists and subversive scholars? How are they enabling us to shake off the constrains of the surrounding "commodity phantasmagoria"?[19]

Archives have a significant role in capturing a sense of ourselves, enabling us to become true political beings. There is political activity and power contained in the archive, waiting for activation. In its dormant mode, the archive serves as a storage place for recollections and memories where historians go to arrange them into stories of which some are amplified, becoming those aforementioned master narratives, and some are ignored, muted and forgotten. And some are never included.

Art, on the other hand, offers the means for arranging those memories by using imagination, enabling us to give form to the indescribable. Imagination is the mental space where we surface our memories; in a sense it is the archive of our minds. Here situates the subjective position to all things past: the way each individual experiences the world, 'makes it up.' European Enlightenment thinkers (Hume, Descartes) suggested that "our whole sense of reality was beholden to the imagination, that we could know nothing outside of our own minds."[20]

18 Jakonen 2020, 32 (my translation).
19 Leslie 2013.
20 Haiven 2014.

1.2.1 Archival turn

The notion of 'archival turn' impacted the cultural theory field of the late 1980s and early 1990s.[21] It is often mentioned in tandem with Jacques Derrida, who is associated with post-structuralism and postmodern philosophy. Derrida delivered their lecture *Archive Fever* (*Mal d'Archive*) at the Freud Museum in London in 1994, raising a few eyebrows as the lecture did not appear to have anything to do with archives, but more to do with memory and psychoanalysis. From this angle, the archive can be seen entangled to our desire "to take control of the present through a reorientation to the past."[22] Derrida began the lecture with an image of the *arkhe*, "as a place where things begin, where power originates, its workings inextricably bound up with the authority of beginnings and starting points."[23,24]

Thus, the archival turn marks the inception of a new type of consideration towards the archive, away from the technocratic institution of record keeping, or a place of preservation for documents and artefacts. Contemporary theorising has opened up the archive to the formation of new, multiple histories. Carolyn Steedman has noted in *Dust* (2001),

> [N]o one historian's archive is ever like another's (let alone like Jacques Derrida's). Each account of his or her experience within them will always produce counter narratives, of different kinds of discomfort. […] And this actual fever (Archive Fever Proper) will turn out to be only one more item in the litany of complaints that historians have drawn up, in the deeply *uncomfortable* quest for original sources that the new practice of 'scientific' history inaugurated, in the middle of the nineteenth century, and which is still the dominant idea of practice among modern, professional, Western historians.[25]

This 'uncomfortable quest for original sources' is what Donna Haraway and other feminist thinkers called out for questioning. The archive's position as an instrument for historywriting from the centre (Western, European, male) has slowly been eroding in the past decades, as the notion of what an archive is, or can be, has also expanded. It is of no coincidence that the archival turn aligns itself with the rise of neoliberal restructuring of societies since the 1980s. As Kate Eichhorn has noted,

21 Eichhorn 2013, 4.
22 Ibid., 7.
23 Steedman 2001, 1.
24 "*Arché* takes place 'whenever something new occurs, [when] it bursts into the context of predictable processes as something unexpected, unpredictable, and ultimately causally inexplicable – just like a miracle.'" Arendt cited Perica 2019.
25 Steedman 2001, 9.

the archive can offer us ways of "being in time and in history differently," when neoliberalism has eroded our agency and our "ability to collectively imagine and enact other ways of being in the world."[26]

The revision of the predominant historical narrative, along with questions on the objectivity of science and social stratification pursued its way into academe with feminist theory, in tandem with Foucault's thinking. In Foucault's concept, the archive governs "what can and cannot be said in a given period or situation," being "the general system that governs the formation and transformation of statements and sentences."[27] In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (*L'archéologie du savoir*, 1969) Foucault describes the archive as *not* as something "safeguarding" past events.[28] It is not a place of preservation, gathering dust, but the archive determines that,

> all these things said […] are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities; that which determines that they do not withdraw at the same pace in time, but shine, as it were, like stars, some that seem close to us shining brightly from afar off, while others that are in fact close to us are already growing pale.[29]

The plurality that Foucault talks about, the non-linear history and how the archive gathers these 'stars' – their brightness nor their dimness is determined by their chronological proximity. As Steedman notes,

> The archive is a record of the past, at the same time as it points to the future. The grammatical tense of the archive is thus the future perfect, 'when it will have been.'[30]

The redefined relationship with the past relates to *genealogy***,** as formulated by Friedrich Nietzsche and revised by Foucault.[31] Foucault discarded Nietzsche's psychological concept based on desire and ideals arguing that instead, social power and knowledge made up the "terms of genealogical inquiry."[32] Genealogy "opens possibilities through which various futures might be pursued" and thus "*reduces the political need for progressive history* as the only source of movement away from the present."[33] Through genealogy, a political critique can be generated, one that exposes the given or-

26 Eichhorn 2013, 26.
27 Macey 2001, 20.
28 Foucault 1989.
29 Ibid.
30 Steedman 2001, 7.
31 Brown 2001, 94.
32 Ibid., 99.
33 Ibid., 113.

der of things, denaturalising the values, categories and constructions that have been imposed on, but have also been internalised and embodied by individuals. These ideas, again, link up with postmodern feminism influenced by Foucault's thinking – thinking grounded on "making the present appear as something that might not be as it is." For Foucault this "constitutes *the* distinctive contribution of intellectual work to political life."[34] Foucault sees the political possibility for the left being one where it stops repeating the "logics of power and history," and instead opposes "specific regimes of rationality" rather than "specific policies within those regimes," or simply *opposes rationality itself*.[35] Foucault's ideas have been used to analyse how power circulates through society, operating in a variety of mechanisms and in unexpected places.

Genealogy resists the universal, temporal historiography and its hegemonic conditioning, and instead emphasizes the contingency and discontinuity of events. Wendy Brown uses Foucault's definitions in outlining how genealogy can shift perspectives:

> Where there is narrative logic or continuity, genealogy assaults it by introducing counterforces and revelations of discontinuity: an "event" is deconstructed as "the reversal of the relationship of forces"; "destiny" is upset by insistence on "the singular randomness of events"; "profound intentions and immutable necessities" are forced into relationship with "countless lost events, without a landmark or a point of reference"; reason is revealed as a rhetorical strategy, neutral (scientific) knowledge is exposed as a massive exercise in power, and the unique individual is rewritten as a messy historical production.[36]

The archive then, could be regarded as instrumental for genealogy, as the fractures and openings introduce new ground for material considerations and outcomes. Minna Henriksson's practice is an example of such considerations, their approach to the archive makes cracks into the fragile commonplaces of the established historywriting.section 4.2 Archival organisation of knowledge could be seen as a space for conflict where the spark for political possibility can alight. The organisation of the space (rather than time) is itself a technique of power, as Foucault has observed.[37]

The material organisation of the archive has also seen the demands for transparency, cultural inclusivity and participatory knowledge production. The transforming views on the archive and the professional operations within are part of the archival discourse.[38] The voice of an authoritarian expert

34 Brown 2001, 113.
35 Ibid., 117-18.
36 Foucault cited Brown 2001, 106.
37 Brown, 2001, 117.
38 Kilkki 2020, 28.

is replaced by a multitude of voices that connect to the archive in a rhizome-like formation, becoming agents rather than mere subjects of the archive.

We are able to get involved in our narratives once we stop seeing historywriting as "preserving human elements and time as fixed in nature."[39] We can gain agency by viewing the past and the present through the kaleidoscopic lens of genealogy, awaking our imaginations for political possibilities of the future.[40] As "genealogical practice emerges through conflict" it "denaturalises existing forces and formations"[41] and thus, could be applied in a political move for bringing the sensuous back into societal everyday. Art being an example of this and embodied in the practice of David Wojnarowicz. section 4.1

1.2.2 Standard and Radical archiving

As noted, archives are political places of documentation of past struggles of groups and individuals, which can be brought to the present to an empowering effect. The reactivation of counter-hegemonic histories through analysis "can lead to the development of more sophisticated long-term strategies for social change."[42] Archives are not simply places to revisit histories and ideas. As Kate Eichhorn has noted, "the making of archives is frequently where knowledge production begins."[43]

I came across the concept of 'women's library' in London in the late 1990s. The women's library I encountered was located in East-London, in a damp basement of a university building. It was called the Fawcett Library, named so after suffragette Millicent Garrett Fawcett and their mathematician offspring Philippa Fawcett. The origins of the library are in the women's suffrage movement that surfaced in the UK in the late 19th century.[44] In the early 2000s, the Fawcett Library had moved into a purpose-built wing and was renamed 'the Women's Library.' However, after a decade in purpose-built surroundings, the Women's Library was forced to move out due to the austerity politics initiated by the Conservative government from 2010 onwards,[45] cutting the funding across the public

39 Brown 2001, 102.
40 "Its point is to introduce the possibility of a different discursive understanding of ourselves and our possibilities." Ibid.
41 Burchell, Foucault, Gordon, & Miller 1991, 103.
42 Fonow and Cook 1991, 6.
43 Eichhorn 2013, 3.
44 History of the Women's Library on the London School of Economics website, http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/collection-highlights/The-Womens-Library [accesssed 30.3.2020].
45 A culmination of austerity politics could be seen in the UK's parting from the EU; an Open Access article exploring the causes on *Intereconomics* website, https://www.intereconomics.eu/contents/year/2020/number/1/article/austerity-and-brexit.html [accessed 30.3.2020].

sector, education included. The library was put under bidding for a new home, and is now found – perhaps somewhat ironically – at the London School of Economics.

In Scotland, the Glasgow Women's Library became one of my regular local places to visit, owning to its particularly inclusive atmosphere – cups of tea and chatter included – while being busy with archival researchers, operating as a community hub for diverse group meetings, and as an exhibition space hosting events and discussions. Adele Patrick, the director of the Glasgow Women's Library, has said,

> There's no other library in Europe like [the Glasgow Women's Library], it's not purely academic, not hand in glove with government [...] People who are most marginalised don't think they have a place in galleries or archives.[46]

Eric Klinenberg defines social infrastructure as "the physical places and organisations that shape the way people interact,"[47] emphasising the value of human acts, civic engagement, and social interactions within these places. In like manner, Tim Huzar argues that the library's sociopolitical potential lies not in its being an "instrument of democracy," but its initial "assumption of equality" among those who use it.[48] Equality cultivated within infrastructures and institutions leads to emancipation, and Rancière sees this as "the process of verification of the equality of intelligence."[49]

The Finnish National Archives, as well as private archival institutions connected to the National Archives, are mainly publicly funded and run by authorities and professional archivists. Activists tend to get formally organised and these associations donate materials to form collections in centralised archives.[50] This system has its advantages as well as its problems. On one hand, documents are

46 Brooks 2016.
47 Klinenberg 2018.
48 Huzar 2014.
49 Rancière 2007, 275.
50 "On an institutional level, the Finnish archival system consists of the National Archives, which is responsible for collecting and preserving government files as well as documentation of phenomena in society that are considered most important. The National Archives is liable not only for preserving cultural heritage but also for promoting research and developing recordkeeping. … The National Archives has an official policy to gather documents of all kinds of important phenomena in society, including ethnic and other minorities. […] Two of the left-leaning private central archives, the People's Archive (Kansan Arkisto, archive of the former Communist Party and People's Democratic League, currently the archive for the Left Alliance) and the Labour Archives (Työväen Arkisto, archive for the Social Democratic Party and labour unions), have developed into general social history archives. They collect and preserve the documents of various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and movements. This broadening of scope outside the traditional working-class movement has happened during approximately the last 20 years. It has been due to changes in society, as civil society has grown more diverse and the role of traditional working-class movements has diminished." Taavetti 2016.

stored in ideal conditions, and are organised and looked after by a trained and waged staff. On the other, a small specialist archive may stay dormant, having less visibility within a large umbrella organisation hosting a number of collections of diverse subject matters. Centralised archives also have limited allocated funds for the growth of the collections they host. In addition, the formal ways of archival filing may lack understanding towards handling materials from marginal groups. Senior archivist at the Fales Library & Special Collections (NYU) Lisa Darms points out the problem with language as a challenge when ordering 'non-standard' documents:

> The need for descriptive standards and controlled vocabularies seems incompatible with the indescribability of non-standard materials and the right of activist or oppressed cultures to self-describe, whether those descriptions cohere with professional standards or (more likely) do not. Language is quick to change (and in activist terms, generally for the better), but standards are inherently stodgy and slow to develop. Yet the stodginess of descriptive metadata is, in my opinion, innately radical because standardized language is what enables people to access archives.[51]

Darms mentions this in relation to 'radical archives,' a term that has been widely used since the archival turn, so much so that it has become hard to know what is meant by it.[52] Darms speaks on behalf of the archivists' role in broadening institutional collections with materials from communities located off-centre that have been "self-documenting for decades, creating their own archives, libraries, and oral histories." 'Radical' and 'standard' practices of archiving have moved towards each other and "archivists are focusing less on justifying the need for active collecting and more on how we can become better collaborators."[53] Darms reflects on their experience on working with collections:

> I now believe that the innate qualities of an archive are not rigidity or bureaucratic order-making, but rather fluidity and even a kind of productive chaos. […] There is never one narrative in an archive; there are always many.[54]

Riikka Taavetti has pointed out how "the tradition of establishing alternative institutions has been very weak in Finland. For example, the feminist movement has developed very few counter-institutions such as libraries, health centres or other services that formed an important part of the move-

51 Darms 2015.
52 Eichhorn 2015.
53 Darms 2015.
54 Ibid.

ment in many other Western countries."[55] However, Taavetti remarks the advantages of the centralised private archives as the threshold between different sociopolitical movements and their archived materials is lowered by this.

> The fact that the queer archive is not located in a separate, identity-based community archive, but in a social history archive, may also prevent over-labelling the archives. The blurred lines between communities and identities can stay blurred when the archive is working with several communities from different walks of life and with researchers who will need the help of an archivist to access the documents.[56]

The research of subdued histories contains sources outside of the rigid guidelines of standard practices. To discover these, you may need to find less conventional sources and look for what is not included in the archive. For instance, these can include rumours, "either as a source or as hints to what – or who – to look at. […] [R]esearchers have listened to silences in archives in order to trace what has been left unspoken."[57] Thus, it is required that researchers and archivists have an understanding, a sensitivity towards the material they are handling – also to know when something is to be left out, not to be researched or archived – the ethics of dealing with sensitive materials and pasts of individuals. Respect and consideration is required for that which is not included – it may not always be a case for 'filling in the gaps.'

2 On the theoretical approach

In this section I introduce theoretical thinking that offers wider perspectives to the "cartesian belief in the inherent distinction between subject and object, and knower and known."[58] Theories and methodologies presented here link to considerations on the objectivity of scientific research.

2.1 Intellectual emancipation

As my research originated in the archive and the political aspects of knowledge production, I find it fitting to begin by considering the emancipatory effect of knowledge, as conceived by Jacques Rancière. While the subjective positioning provides a ground for research producing emancipatory knowledges, it is crucial to have an understanding of the hegemonic middle; how the dominant part of society thinks and acts. Middle is where political decision making happens. If we take our eyes off the centre and only focus on the margins, the centre may keep its opaqueness and maintain its

55 Taavetti 2016.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Barad 2007, 138.

surveillance of marginal elements.[59] So we must not only consider the location of knowledge, but the political values and power creating alliances. These 'epistemic communities' configure their "access to knowledge collectively rather than individually." A dialogical process is called for between the members of epistemic communities, between those "who are positioned differentially to establish common narratives."[60]

In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1987), Rancière writes in a story format[61] about the relationship between emancipation and knowledge. Since the 1970s Rancière had been absorbed in researching the nineteenth century workers' archives. Their work revolved on the philosophical and historical relations between knowledge and 'the people.'[62]

> Rancière wrote books that eluded classification – books that gave voice to the wild journals of artisans, to the daydreams of anonymous thinkers, to worker-poets and philosophers who devised emancipatory systems alone, in the semi-unreal space/time of the scattered late-night moments their work schedules allowed them. […] [Rancière] focussed on workers who claimed the right to aesthetic contemplation, the right to dead time – and, above all, the right to think.[63]

This 'dead time' allows for poetry and philosophy to emerge regardless of an individual's social position, due to "the reconfiguration *hic et nunc* of the distribution of Time and Space."[64] In Rancière's view, the emancipation of the working class people was not rooted in the knowledge about their condition, but in time and space that would allow them to do more than mere recuperation for the next working day.[65] This connects to the idea of aesthetic practices, which I will look at in section 2.3.

Rancière sees no separation between intellectuals and workers, or any other social groups, everyone is levelled on an equal position. Knowledge is a dialogical process – for everyone is knowledgeable and this is how the production of knowledge would be carried out in practice, and by rejecting the borders between disciplines.[66]

59 Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis 2002, 319.
60 Ibid., 320.
61 "The very act of storytelling, an act that presumes in its interlocutor an equality of intelligence rather than an inequality of knowledge, posits equality, just as the act of explication posits inequality." Ross 1991, xii.
62 Ibid., xvi.
63 Ibid., viii, xviii.
64 Rancière 2007, 279.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.

> This is what emancipation means: the blurring of the opposition between those who look and those who act, between those who are individuals and those who are members of a collective body.[67]

Feminist standpoint theory has also argued for a dialogical truth, as "a paradigm of knowledge is always unstable and shifting, open to different readings, and is not the exclusive property either of the hegemonic elite or of any particular identity grouping."[68]

Rancière has been critical of educational theories of the French sociologists, Pierre Bourdieu's namely, as Rancière has seen their ideas only maintaining the hierarchical status quo, "a distance discursively invented and reinvented so that it may never be abolished," that places the sociologist "in the position of eternal denouncer of a system."[69] Rancière has noted how "the system reproduces its existence because it goes unrecognized."[70] The intellectual emancipation thus calls for operators outside of 'the system,' those independent from institutional positions, those who are not part of 'the hegemonic elite.'

Artist Minna Henriksson works towards emancipatory knowledge in their research of the leftist pasts of Finland. As a specimen of such practice is the feminist archive of the leftist artists' association *Kiila* that Henriksson put together from their research.[71] The archive (displayed at exhibitions in Austria and Finland) brings to the fore literature created by working class women. The work also consists of discussions with current women members of Kiila on themes selected from the works of Iris Uurto, who was a member of Kiila in 1930s.[72] Uurto's writing did not centre around working class struggle, but featured depictions of "instinct and the libido" that were "inspired by the new psychology of the age."[73] This proved too much for the conservative cultural circles of Finland.[74] Uurto was excluded from the Finnish literary canon until recently, when discussion around their work has surfaced again. I will return to Henriksson's archival research in section four, where I focus on theirs and Wojnarowicz's work in more detailed examples.

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67 Rancière 2007, 279.
68 Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis 2002, 327.
69 Ross 1991, xix.
70 Ibid., xi.
71 On Henriksson's portfolio site, http://minnahenriksson.com/2019-kiila-the-wedge-feminist-archive/ [accessed 20.11.2020]
72 The topics of the recorded discussions: Ways of marginalisation; leftism and feminism; histories and herstories; resistance to sexual objectification; traditions as status quo; Diamond Laws* in feminist organising today; language of political art. (*Translation of the title of the 1938 book *Timanttilakien alla* by Iris Uurto.)
73 "*Ruumiin ikävä* (1930; *The Body's Yearnings*) by Iris Uurto (1905–1994) is about a woman named Paula Lassila who leaves her husband. Like Lilith, who according to Midrashic literature fled from the Garden of Eden to satisfy her sexual needs among the daemons, Paula is driven by erotic passion." Juutila 2012.
74 In the 1930s Helsinki was considered as a 'city of women' that provided office work and study-opportunities for women escaping the physical labour and predetermined destinies of the countryside. This is what Iris Uurto also did, moving away early on from the village of Kerimäki in Eastern Finland to work and study in Helsinki. See for example *Helsingin Sanomat*, https://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005409852.html [accessed 21.11.2020]

2.2 Shifting objectivities

Approaching the past by using a variety of methods and viewpoints brings us to a nonlinear, non-hierarchical narrative, which no longer fits the conventional chronological historywriting. History has become *messy*. From a solid block it melts and morphs into fluid pasts and presents that contain a multiple of narratives. As Hannah Arendt has pointed out, stories are the inevitable result of action, but the story is never understood or created by the one taking action; (hi)story is always created and owned by the one who *writes* it.[75]

Occasionally in my text, I will refer to *hxstories*writing.[76] *X* marks a separation from patriarchal records of the past; *stories* points to a plurality of accounts, of knowledges.

Hxstorieswriting can contradict itself, go back on itself, find new tangents, growing like a rhizome underground, forming trans-species. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have described how *rhizome*

> assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to connection into bulbs and tubers. […] Any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. […] It ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles.[77]

Their notion is a decentred network for "self-organizing material systems" extending to "the social, linguistic, political-economic, and psychological realms." Some suggestions, nodes of the rhizome are collected in the title *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), which hints for "experimentation with de-regulated flows of energy and matter, ideas and actions – and the attendant attempts at binding them – that make up the contemporary world."[78]

Plunging further into energy and matter: Uncertainty is an intrinsic feature of human thinking, which, together with complementarity formed the "nucleus of the so-called Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics."[79] Karen Barad takes Niels Bohr's quantum theoretical ideas and applies them into epistemological consideration of *agential realism*, which combines epistemology

75 Arendt 2017, 198.
76 "The etymology of the word 'history' is presumably gender-free and comes from the Latin word 'istoria' (7th or 8th cent.) and earlier from ancient Greek ιστορια meaning inquiry, research, account, description, written account of past events, recorded knowledge of past events, story, narrative." *The Digger Archives*, https://www.diggers.org/history.htm [accessed 24.11.2020]
77 Deleuze & Guattari 1987 cited de Vries 2018.
78 Smith & Protevi 2018.
79 Barad 2007, 3.

with ontology and ethics. Barad takes the smallest unit in physics, the atom,[80] and brings it into agential realism as 'phenomenon;' phenomena being the smallest units of analysis.[81] It is a theory of knowledge and reality that accounts for the validity as well as the arbitrariness of knowledge:

> It provides an understanding of the interactions between human and nonhuman, material and discursive, and natural and cultural factors in the production of knowledge. One of its basic aims is to move considerations of epistemic practices beyond the traditional realism versus social constructionism debates. […] Agential realism acknowledges the agency of both the objects and subjects of knowledge.[82]

Agency for Barad, "is not an attribute but the ongoing reconfigurings of the world."[83] Barad develops a notion of *intra-active entanglement* that situates between the agencies of observation and the objects of observation – Barad uses the term 'intra-action' rather than 'interaction,' as 'interaction' reinscribes cartesian dichotomy.[84] This intra-action constitutes a phenomenon, and phenomena, according to Barad, are what reality consists of:

> Reality is composed not of things-in-themselves or things-behind-phenomena but of things-in-phenomena. The world is a dynamic process of intra-activity and materialization in the enactment of determinate causal structures with determinate boundaries, properties, meanings, and patterns of marks on bodies.[85]

Agential realism sees the researcher entangled in the phenomenon they are researching. There is no removed position where knowledges can be produced from as "the researcher is of the world."[86] According to Barad, "objectivity is a matter of accountability for what materializes, for what comes to be."[87]

> Knowing is a matter of intra-acting. … Knowing is not a bounded or closed practice but an ongoing performance of the world.[88]

80 "According to Democritus, the properties of all things derive from the properties of the smallest unit – atoms ... Liberal social theories and scientific theories alike owe much to the idea that the world is composed of individuals with separately attributable properties." Barad 2007, 137–138.
81 Sauzet 2018.
82 Barad 2000, 15.
83 Barad 2007, 141.
84 Barad 2000, 16.
85 Barad 2007, 140.
86 Sauzet 2018.
87 Barad 2007, 361.
88 Ibid., 149.

In agential realism the division between theory and practice is broken down, as it is a methodology that is about creating reality instead of reflecting it.[89] To distill this idea: What I am researching is entangled with the way I am researching it;[90] I produce knowledge from my standpoint to the phenomena I am looking at; *I am making it into a new*.

> Analyzing phenomena, then, is a methodological practice of continuously questioning the (situated) effects that the way we research have on the knowledge we produce.[91]

I talk about 'looking' and 'perspective.' In their essay on situated knowledges (1988), Donna Haraway emphasises the role of vision to challenge dichotomies in language and research. While reflection is a "metaphor for analysis that invites images of mirroring, diffraction is the process of ongoing differences."[92] *Diffraction* helps us to analyse the research process and its effects. The methodological chain of practice unavoidably results in something being left out while something else is being emphasised and surfaced. As Sofie Sauzet puts it,

> In ethnographic fieldwork, this might be understood as how answers emerge from questions, or how analyzing through particular interests makes particular aspects come to the fore and leave others out.[93]

According to Haraway, diffraction patterns "are about heterogenous history, not originals,"

> I'm interested in the way diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference. In this sense, "diffraction" is a narrative, graphic, psychological, spiritual, and political technology for making consequential meanings.[94]

The looking, the research, the meaning-making forms into words. The idea of dialogue is contained in Haraway's concept of *situated knowledges*, which developed in the considerations on diffraction. They carry the shifting nature of feminist methodologies, their ability and willingness to create exchange between different fields of science:

> Feminism loves another science: **the sciences and politics of interpretation, translation, stuttering, and the partly understood**. Feminism is about the sciences of the multiple subject with (at least) double vision. Feminism is about a critical vision consequent upon a critical positioning in unhomogeneous gendered social space. **Translation is always interpretive, critical, and partial.** Here

89 Sauzet 2015, 37.
90 Ibid., 39.
91 Ibid., 39-40.
92 Ibid., 40.
93 Ibid., 40.
94 Haraway 2000, 101, 102.

> is a ground for conversation, rationality, and objectivity – which is power-sensitive, not pluralist, 'conversation.'[95]

The term 'situated knowledges' appeared in an essay for the *Feminist Studies* journal in 1988 and is part of a wider concept of *standpoint theory* that emerged from work done by various independent feminist authors.[96] Situated knowledges and standpoint theory could be considered as critical distillations of the *sociology of knowledge* – a discipline studying the social origins and consequences of knowledge.

The societal surrounding for Haraway's essay was the United States governed by president Ronald Reagan, where David Wojnarowicz was also living and working as an artist, and saw his friends die of AIDS. During Reagan's term the disparity of the American society was increased in favour of the wealthy, by embracing the neoliberal economy doctrine, as was done in the UK by the Thatcher government. Without the safetynet of social services, free healthcare, or education it was down to individuals to fend for themselves, as USA formed into a monetary society. Since the 1980s, the free market doctrine spread like a pandemic, morphing into more seemingly complex forms, such as neoliberalism, so that it has become difficult for many to recognise it as an ideology, a political choice, or to imagine alternatives for it. It became 'the new norm,' it became air and polluted the air, making breathing difficult for those without power, without money. Polluting the environment and extracting from nature without restraint, monetisation also contaminated societies, and we are now living in, what Haraway calls, 'the new fascist capitalism.'[97]

Situated knowledges requires making one's position known, declaring wherefrom an issue is being looked at. "Researchers should be accountable for what they 'see' and should limit their claims."[98] The so-called neutral position – e.g. of a white male academic – is what Haraway calls the 'god trick,' a 'gaze from nowhere.'[99] Haraway's arguments concern the position of knowledge: Who is being questioned and who is not? Who is required to position themselves and who is above such

95 Haraway 1988, 589 (emphasis mine).
96 Stoetzler &Yuval-Davis 2002, 317.
97 "*The Cyborg Manifesto* [Haraway's prominent text from 1985] was written within the context of the hard-right turn of the 1980s. But the hard-right turn was one thing; the hard-fascist turn of the late 2010s is another. It's not the same as Reagan. The presidents of Colombia, Hungary, Brazil, Egypt, India, the United States – we are looking at a new fascist capitalism, which requires reworking the ideas of the early 1980s for them to make sense. […] If the public-private dichotomy was old-fashioned in 1980, by 2019 I don't even know what to call it. We have to try to rebuild some sense of a public. But how can you rebuild a public in the face of nearly total surveillance? And this surveillance doesn't even have a single center. There is no eye in the sky. […] Then we have the ongoing enclosure of the commons. Capitalism produces new forms of value and then encloses those forms of value – the digital is an especially good example of that. This involves the monetization of practically everything we do. And it's not like we are ignorant of this dynamic. We know what's going on. We just don't have a clue how to get a grip on it." Haraway 2019.
98 Livholts 2012, 4.
99 Haraway 1988, 581.

matters, declared as 'neutral'? In their essay Haraway is arguing for "politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claim."[100] Situated knowledges look critically at the universal position of scientific knowledge. Like agential realism, it weaves together epistemology, ontology, ethics and politics, underlining the fallacy of singularity that disregards interconnectedness. It aligns with Foucault's thinking opposing the technocratic "validity and efficacy of a scientific discourse as a universal rule for all other practices, without taking account of the fact that it is itself a regulated and conditioned practice."[101]

Haraway's call for shifting objectivities has been accused of relativism and questioned whether this kind of varying of viewpoints works for the advantage of the 'post-truth' advocates: that the validity of an argument might be something up to selecting, a matter of pick-and-mix – a 'method' used in far right rhetorics. Haraway has responded to this criticism by pointing out the materiality of the 'meaning-making' that is embedded in knowledge production and discourse:

> "Post-truth" gives up on materialism. It gives up on what I've called semiotic materialism: the idea that materialism is always situated meaning-making and never simply representation. These are not questions of perspective. They are questions of worlding and all of the thickness of that. Discourse is not just ideas and language. Discourse is bodily. It's not embodied, as if it were stuck in a body. It's bodily and it's bodying, it's worlding. This is the opposite of post-truth. This is about getting a grip on how strong knowledge claims are not just possible but *necessary* – worth living and dying for.[102]

The 'worlding'[103] and 'bodying' refer to the material manifestation of discourse in social life: how people understand and talk about matters has a material outcome.

Foucault has pointed out how "discourse is not a place into which the subjectivity irrupts; it is a space of differentiated subject-positions and subject-functions."[104] Discourse is not removed observing, social commentary in a vacuum. Barad has noted that "discourse is not what is said; it is that which constrains and enables what can be said."[105] Discursive practices define what counts as meaningful statements. Deliberations on materiality and the historical specificity can be tied to Foucault's notion of *the episteme*. The episteme contains all of the many scientific discourses and

100 Haraway 1988, 589.
101 Burchell, Foucault, Gordon & Miller 1991, 69.
102 *Logic* 2019.
103 "Worlding is a particular blending of the material and the semiotic that removes the boundaries between subject and environment, or perhaps between persona and topos." Palmer & Hunter 2018.
104 Burchell, Foucault, Gordon & Miller 1991, 58.
105 Barad 2007, 146-47.

knowledges, and their relations in a period of time. It does not refer to zeitgeist; it is not attempting to summarise and generalise a moment in history. In Foucault's words:

> [T]he *episteme* is not *a sort of grand underlying theory*, it is a space of *dispersion*, it is *an open and doubtless indefinitely describable field of relationships*. They make it possible furthermore to describe not a single common trajectory, but the kinds of history – that is to say, of remanences and transformation – characteristics of different discourses. […] [*T*]*he episteme is not a slice of history* common to all the sciences: it is *a simultaneous play of specific remanences*. […] *The episteme is not a general developmental stage of reason, it is a complex relationship of successive displacements*.[106]

The concept of genealogy applies here, as it undermines historical continuity and given power constructions that rely on its narrative. Based on this idea, archival research can function in a genealogical way of exposing and dismantling historical constructions.

The thinking of Haraway and Foucault resonates in the present which calls for the recognition of multiple histories, narratives and individuals, human and non-human. The philosophies help us to move onwards from normative generalisations and dogmatism. It is a point in time where the notion of fluidity has its moment of surfacing: matters and beings are allowed to become more complex than clear-cut polarities of either 'this' or 'that.' A person is a person larger than a fixed identity of nationality, occupation, gender or sexuality – for identities are fluid as well.

2.3 Art and aesthetic practices

In this section, I look at how art becomes an apparatus in social change. How a wider change first takes place in the self-formation of an individual, and how this is initiated through aesthetic practice – aesthetic practice not only in the sphere of art but in connection to our senses. Conjunctural analysis bridges art into the sociopolitical and to historical periods. I introduce imagination as it is instrumental in the shaping of a public body, an active human being. And I advocate for the position of art in scientific research and dissolving the art/science dichotomy.

When looking at art as a method in the production of knowledge, I first ask if art is an optional pursuit. Can its intention be filled by other means, for example by *work*? (*And what is the intention of art? Does it have one, does it need to have one?*) An essential aspect of the human condition, work has been rendered over centuries into assessed, profit-oriented toil in the current mode of extreme

106 Foucault cited Burchell, Foucault, Gordon & Miller 1991, 55.

capitalism that has harnessed much of the world's population in debt.[107] As a consequence, much of our work has been drained void of meaning and fulfilment. Ideally 'art' and 'work' would be synonymous, but in the present, art can be regarded as an *antidote* for work. It offers a domain for participation (instead of consuming), as well as for social commentary. Being political, like working, is a human condition; an ideal state of a keen existence – following the thinking of Arendt and Aristotle.[108] Artist acts as a political agent, engaged with their surroundings, responding and communicating with it. The observer does not passively tconsume art as entertainment, but actively processes what they are experiencing, what art is stirring within them. A dialogue, an *intra-action*, takes place between art and its audience.

An understanding of agency and human condition includes *aesthetic practices* that contain integral value:

> Aesthetic practices bridge the fields of everyday aesthetics and art, and thereby indicate a central place for aesthetic agency (as thinking and doing) in human life. They indicate that an aesthetic dialogue, involving and connecting self and world, is not the privilege of art only, but takes place in more mundane contexts as well. … The existential and aesthetic dimensions of well-being and self-formation, including creative and responsive interactions with the world and others, invite ethical reflection.[109]

As pointed out by Pauline von Bonsdorff, the aesthetic practice can take place in the habitual activities of the everyday. Aesthetic dialogue situates in engaging with our surroundings, in the sensuous aspects of being. However, the technocratic era which values the quantifiable has resulted in the repression of the sensuous in our lives. When the value of everything is determined in numbers, the immaterial part of our lives, our spirit, our holistic being is impoverished and neglected. In a deprived condition, it is difficult to have a sense of one's self. Aesthetic dialogue can build this and inform an awareness *beyond* one's self. This brings aesthetic practices into a societal context that, through conflict, enable change in the society.

I am looking at reproductions of images David Wojnarowicz took of their close friend, former lover and mentor, the photographer Peter Hujar moments after Hujar's death from AIDS. Wojnarowicz has photographed Hujar's sunken, stilled face. But the images that stir me are of Hujar's hand and feet lying on the bed sheets.[110] The black and white close-ups of those body parts; the tender, ex-

107 See for example David Graeber, *Debt – The First 5000 Years* (2011).
108 Aristotle saw that the good for human beings is embodied in carrying out what is 'right' for them, "an activity of the soul in conformity with excellence or virtue." *Nicomachean Ethics* cited Piper 2013, 221.
109 Bonsdorff (2020) in Vinogradovs (forthcoming).
110 Donegan 2018.

posed feet; I feel like grabbing and squeezing one of Hujar's (lifeless) toes. *The idea of capturing the feet of a dead friend*.

> When I put my hands on your body, on your flesh, I feel the history of that body. Not just the beginning of its forming in a distant lake, but all the way beyond its ending.[111]

The bodily in Wojnarowicz's work is political, the sensuality is political. I see this historical work speaking in the present, where many are awakening to question the lack of sensuous in our lives, the dullness instead of desire, and the prevalent fear instead of willingness to understand that which is unfamiliar to us. And like Wojnarowicz, many are becoming increasingly angry about it.

2.4 Timing and imagination

When looking at a historical work of art and 'getting it', there often is a need to position it in the time of its making and the sociopolitical context – into its *situation*. Claire Bishop observes how "works of art that are political timing specific often appear too closely tied to the particularities of their moment."[112] The historical works were "immediately legible at the time of their appearance, but now require considerable explanation to be understood." This perhaps is not only the problem of time passing, but many of us are firmly placed in so-called bubbles. When something situates on an uncommon ground to our own standpoint, it is easier to shut down. It is easier to undermine the complex entanglement of history: *Times were different; it was another world; it speaks of these times no more.* Yet it does.

Bishop makes a connection with timing specific art and *conjunctural analysis*, used in cultural theory. Stuart Hall defines a conjuncture as "a period during which the different social, political, economic and ideological contradictions that are at work in society come together to give it a specific and distinctive shape."[113] Like Foucault's episteme, a conjuncture is not simply about a momentum, like a political upheaval, nor is it defined by time.[114] Conjunctural analysis aims to understand how social relations and underlying historical processes fuse in particular contexts.[115]

111 Wojnarowicz 1985.
112 Bishop 2019.
113 Hall & Massey 2010, 58.
114 Ibid., 57.
115 Featherstone 2017.

> As I see it, history moves from one conjuncture to another rather than being an evolutionary flow. And what drives it forward is usually a crisis, when the contradictions that are always at play in any historical moment are condensed, or, as Althusser said, 'fuse in a ruptural unity.'[116]

The political movements emerging in the 1960s could be seen as a catalyst for a conjuncture that ended with neoliberalism having spread globally by the 1980s. The concurrent advent of the Women's Liberation movement with the Civil Rights Movement and the protests against the Vietnam War in the US, as well as the New Left in Europe were steering politics towards a less polarised and more equal societies perhaps for a moment. In the arts, the awakening political consciousness manifested in work that had an emphasis "on the process and temporality."[117] Screen-printed posters, pamphlets, performances as well as demonstrations, community gardens and murals took place away from the white cube gallery spaces and art dealers of the bourgeois art world.

> Emory Douglas, the Black Panther Party's Minister of Culture, produced incendiary image-text works that were published in the pages of the party newspaper and sold as posters; they called for artists to subvert the forms of capitalist propaganda – advertising and publicity – in the service of the BPP's revolutionary ideology.[118]

Lucy Lippard recalls the interventions of the local political artist groups in New York that formed during the late 1960s and early '70s:

> a false press release to the media claiming the Whitney [Museum of American Art] had decided to make the Annual [now the Whitney Biennial] half women and half 'non-white'; faked invitations to the opening to facilitate a sit-in; slide projections of women artists' work on the outside wall of the museum; fake docent tours of the show; whistling in the stairwells; the placing of unused tampons and eggs marked '50% Women' in corners; and weekend demonstrations.[119]

The past continues in the present: Black Lives Matter campaigners, abolitionists, climate-, crip-, trans- & queer-activists, and third wave feminists – to name a few of the many – are agents in political motioning stirring up a rupture for a new conjuncture. They are faced with opposing forces creating mass-disruption to keep the rising rumble quiet, in its own bubble, as it is threatening the power positions that have remained intact throughout the written history. As Hall observes, "Crises are moments of potential change, but the nature of their resolution is not given."[120]

116 Hall & Massey 2010, 57.
117 Lippard 2007, 413.
118 Bradley 2007, 17.
119 Lippard 2007, 413.
120 Hall & Massey 2010, 58.

Crisis, conflict, and conjuncture rub elbows with imagination. Like art, the Western understanding of imagination has seen its shifts and mutations through times, its two fundamental dimensions being the poetical and the ethical.[121] Both dimensions could be seen as feeding into each other when considering imagination and its relation to knowledge production. Acknowledgement of the sensuous and affective qualities as well as the ethical and scientific, will produce holistic understandings containing myriad positions that form feminist epistemologies.

Marcel Stoetzler and Nira Yuval-Davis argue that it is "crucial to theorize the imagination as situated, that is, as shaped and conditioned (although not determined) by social positioning."[122] Our socialisation sets a framework to how and of what kind of things we are *able* to imagine. *How* our bodies are seen affects the way we consider our self-potentiality, and this has material consequences. The ability to imagine is reflected in one's self-confidence; how a person sees their position in the world, and how this may lead them to realise the things imagined. Hence, imagination is not only an individual inner faculty, but it is a social sphere and of "epistemological importance" with an entry to the body as well as to the society.[123] Our ability to apply imagination is shaped by privilege, class experience, and by experiences of oppression.[124]

> The faculty of the imagination not only conditions *how* sensual data are transformed into conscious knowledge, but that the imagination is also fundamental to *why*, *whether* and *what* we are ready to experience, perceive and know in the first place.[125]

Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis observe imagination as "rooted in corporeality as well as in society; as constructing the social world and its meaning; as well as providing the 'anticipatory desires' and resistance to society's 'reality-principle' – which are necessary for defining the goals, values and ideas that any 'standpoint' or 'political community' may contain."[126] They accurately point out – following the thinking of Baruch Spinoza on the corporeal faculty of imagination[127]– the two-sided quality of 'creative imagination' – as conceived by Cornelius Castoriadis[128] – and how this applies to political decision making:

> The imagination that allows for emancipation and border crossing is the same faculty that constructs and fixes the borders. The 'creative imagination' is Janus-faced like modern bourgeois society

121 Kearney 1988, 366.
122 Stoetzler &Yuval-Davis 2002, 315.
123 Ibid., 325.
124 Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis cited Haiven 2014.
125 Stoetzler &Yuval-Davis 2002, 325.
126 Ibid., 324.
127 See Gatens & Lloyd 1999.
128 See for example Maria Kli on Castoriadis and the creative potential of the imaginary, http://cosmosandhistory.org/index.php/journal/article/viewFile/672/1224 [accessed 16.9.2020].

> which, on the one hand, promises emancipation but, on the other hand, creates borders and boundaries. The imagination is the source of freedom, change and emancipation as much as a source of the borders and boundaries that emancipation wants to challenge. […] [F]antasy as much as memory carries traces of the social situatedness of the thought and also constitutes the drive behind possible change.[129]

The relationship of the political and the imaginative binds into the public body. In their seminal book *The Human Condition* (1958) Hannah Arendt considers the significance of public life: the importance of being seen and heard by others, as each individual sees and hears from a different position. Arendt's ideas resonate with that of Haraway's situated knowledges: the reality of the world can only truly appear when it is being seen from a myriad of angles, and when those who have gathered to observe, acknowledge that matters are seen (as well as formed) from several aspects.[130] This also relates to Hall's idea of conjunctural analysis that "forces you to look at many different aspects, in order to see what the balance of social forces is and how you might intervene, or have a better idea of how to intervene effectively."[131] Art is to engage in public life: the artist is bringing a point of view to the public, if not directly for a debate, as in politics, but potentially to trigger one. Therefore, art has a capacity to "intervene effectively,"[132] to steer the public discourse. It can take quick steps that political decision makers and researchers in academe are not able to take. Art can make timing specific commentary. It moves culture forward and stops culture from stagnation, from becoming a museum. It is necessary for our fulfilment as living, political beings. Susan Hiller regards artists having the right to "talk about the meaning of art and its *truth in the real*" and art being "a *first-order practice* as important in contributing to our fund of cultural knowledge as any of the other humanistic or scientific disciplines."[133]

The material manifestation of another individual's experience provides us an insight to our own, increasing our capacity for empathy. We live in the ongoing cycle of the everyday, always thinking of the next step we must take in order to maintain the accepted facade of life tied in the social norms – this is the violence of Wojnarowicz's pre-invented world. In order to maintain this cycle, we are living in the future forever. This is part the political power of art: it can make us question the pre-invented world and the pattern of our lives. It can provide a pause to the constant cycle of living for the next thing: art has the potential to activate us. Rephrasing Jakonen's point from earlier,[note 15] *Art* reconstructs the existing elements of order into a new constellation and shows the previous construction simply as one possibility amongst many. In *Thinking about art* (1996), Hiller speaks of

129 Stoetzler &Yuval-Davis 2002, 324.
130 See Arendt 2017.
131 Hall & Massey 2010, 58.
132 Ibid.
133 Hiller & Einzig 1996, 6.

art's capacity to "enable certain futures not otherwise possible to appear,"[134] artists being "the only professional members of Western culture who never bought the cartesian viewpoint and its valorization of detached 'objectivity'."[135] In their poem, David Antin questions the dichotomy created between science and art:

> Bacon and Descartes & the rest of their
> family … cut the world into reason &
> unreason, claimed the domain of truth &
> reason for their own & left this truthless
> domain – the imagination – to the artists.
> It was a dreadful gift, made to us most
> formally by Kant, I suppose, & this domain
> … excluded us from any capacity to
> construct the true & the real.[136]

In Western European philosophy, Spinoza made connections between the body, imagination and affect. Spinoza's thinking came to see these entities as not separate of reason and knowledge, but as developing and increasing them. Spinoza places emotions, desires and affects in the centre of political life.[137] These aspects emphasised the corporeality of sensation and challenged the cartesian mind/body dualism, instead seeing the mind as the body's consciousness. Spinoza saw the experience of other bodies together with our own as the basis of imagination,[138] thus bringing imagination into the sphere of the social, into the society – *situating* imagination.

2.5 Archives and memory

In this section, I consider the materiality of the archive through personal experience as well as theory, conveying the connections of archives with our memory and the effects digitalisation may have on our memory and materiality. In conjunction with digital transformation of our memories, I introduce the technoscientific envisions of Donna Haraway.

While visiting grassroots-like feminist and queer archives housed in women's libraries in the UK, I went through boxes stored as work-in-progress and many times rather chaotic shelves of cramped storage facilities – the 'productive chaos' mentioned earlier by archivist Darms. I found a sense of

134 Hiller cited Hiller & Einzig 1996, 3.
135 Hiller & Einzig 1996, 3.
136 Ibid.
137 Gatens & Lloyd 1999, 26.
138 Ibid., 19.

urgency present in the ephemera I came across and was able to handle. Hand-drawn, typewriter-written, cut-and-paste, black-and-white xeroxed pamphlets, flyers and fanzines on various types of coloured paper – in stark contrast to sleek, glossy full-colour campaigns or digital animations and video ubiquitous around us. I was taken by the energy and humour of this DIY printed matter: the visual appearance and the feel of the material, the tactility containing an appealing warmth – an aesthetic absent in digital technology. I was being seduced by the archive and its ephemera – a phenomenon well known amongst researchers, as Zeb Tortorici notes:

> The archive – as material reality, state secret, attraction, metaphor, and simulacrum – lures and seduces. And, while some scholars admit to having been seduced by the idea and materiality of the archive, others caution strongly against it. Some fetishize the archive and others decry such fetishization.[139]

I am aware that I am, like many before me, fetishizing the analogue aesthetic. Commentary and campaigning by digital means requires a lot less effort. However, this is entwined in the commercial exploits of the mammoth-sized internet corporations, which is a technocapitalist problem societies are facing. Now no-one makes statements like the Black Panthers' Ministry of Culture, as no-one would hear them outside of the fascist-capitalist social media (to borrow from Haraway).

Digitising the archives and libraries has been enthusiastically embraced by the Finnish archival bodies. Efficiency and technology have always been much valued – many times over nature and ethics – in this highly functional Nordic corner of the world. This makes researching accessible – when you know what you are looking for. But as observed, digital filing limits the chance-encounters; the new considerations brought upon by the random discoveries when browsing through physical shelves, folders and boxes of documents. Digital archiving enables you to find what you were already looking for, not what you *did not know* you were looking for.
I can have hundreds of PDF documents and ebooks stored on my laptop and hard drive (*how practical and space-saving*).[140] But when checking for something, first I reach for the tangible pile of papers and publications on the corner of the table. The fruitful accidental findings within a book – I can leaf through and something interesting catches my eye on page 236. I can turn the corner of this page as a material reminder of an interesting occurrence which I can easily re-

139 Tortorici 2015.

140 It is easy to forget about the digital footprint of the energy used by online browsing, viewing and storing. The internet seems to appear from thin air, but our constant online presence requires vast amounts of energy. To get a more material sense of the energy requirements of high-performance computers, see for example 'Challenges in Cooling Design of CPU Packages for High-Performance Servers,' https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01457630701686727 [accessed 24.11.2020].

turn to. I do not have the faintest idea of the digital bookmark I have made on a PDF, unless I explicitly remember to search for this – first remembering the existence of the digital document in question. I need to scribble a note to remind me and tape it somewhere; perhaps onto a fridge door. It is absurd of course that I need to make analogue notes to remind me of the digital ones. It is of no use mimicking printed matter in a digital world.

When looking at a work of art on screen, we no longer have an idea of its material, feel, or its true colours – the same applies to any reproduction of an artwork, printed or digital. If the reproduction contains size information, we are able to form some sort of an abstraction in our heads of the scale of the work at least – which is not the same as standing by the work. Visiting a museum online is not really visiting it; we have not been nowhere near the *aura* of the artwork (cue Walter Benjamin), or the place. Physicality, dimensions, as well as touch are essential to human experience and memory.

> Touch, unlike other senses, modes its object. It reminds us that we are not only observers of the world but actors in it.[141]

We are losing the physical connection to material and place that hold a connection to our memory.[142] What is happening to our memory and agency in a digital environment? Carolyn Steedman has pointed out how the archive is not the same as memory – it does not store everything in the way our unconscious mind does. It does not make uncanny connections appear like our mind does; sometimes in a dream, sometimes when we are wide awake.

> The Archive is made from selected and consciously chosen documentation from the past and also from the mad fragmentations that no one intended to preserve and that just ended up there. […] *Nothing happens to this stuff in the Archive.* It is indexed, and catalogued, and some of it is not indexed and catalogued, and some of it is lost. But as stuff, it just sits there until it is read, and used, and narrativised. In the Archive, you cannot be shocked at its exclusions, its emptinesses, at what *is not* catalogued, […] [I]n its quiet folders and bundles is the neatest demonstration of how state power has operated, through ledgers and lists and indictments, and through what is missing from them.[143]

141 Tuan 2013.

142 The body–memory connection is being used to treat dementia at care homes in the Netherlands, Italy, Canada, Australia and the US: "Many homes have rooms that re-create, with period details and vintage artifact, a past world that their residents remember from childhood: The Dutch countryside of the nineteen-forties; small-town California in the nineteen-fifties; east Germany under Communism." MacFarquhar, 2018.

143 Steedman 2001, 68.

Steedman talks of the connection of memory and space in relation to history and the archive. They note how memory gets pressed into *things.* Steedman elaborates on Gaston Bachelard's notion of topoanalysis that is "an 'auxiliary of psychoanalysis', that is 'the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives'."[144] Bachelard considers the house as the site where the time of our intimate lives gets compressed: how the corners of the rooms, the nooks and the crannies, the cupboards, the stairs… all provide an archive for our dreams. The poetic images are a pathway to our imagination.

> In the theatre of the past that is constituted by memory [...] we think we know ourselves in time, when all we know is a sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being's stability – a being who does not want to melt away, and who, even in the past, wants time to 'suspend' its flight. In its countless alveoli space contains compressed time. That is what space is for.[145]

Continuing from the poetical and the ethical dimensions of imagination, Bachelard distinguishes between *the formal* and *the material* imagination, which are found to be working in the nature and in the mind.[146]

> In the mind, the formal imagination is fond of novelty, picturesqueness, variety and unexpectedness in events, while the material imagination is attracted by **the elements of permanency present in things**.[147]

Instead of the fleeting, free, formal imagination, Bachelard conceived a new concept for the "philosophical study of the poetic creation" by focusing on the "images of matter."[148]

> In us as well as in nature the material imagination is productive of germs, but of germs where the form is deeply sunk *in* a substance.[149]

Material imagination aligns with tactility and the "permanency present in things." In the context of the archive, this speaks of the ephemera housed in the archive and its digitisation. 'Ephemera' derives from the Greek word *ephēmeros* meaning 'lasting only a day,'[150] creating a peculiar pairing

144 Steedman 2001, 79.
145 Bachelard 1969, 8.
146 Gilson in Bachelard 1969, ix.
147 Ibid., (my emphasis).
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid.
150 *Oxford Dictionary*, Mac OSX operating system.

with the act of digitisation. Digitisation is seen as a mode of preservation, though the perpetual evolution of devices renders its many formats obsolete one after the other, deadening documentation, freezing it into a digital vault no-one has access to anymore, making the ephemera truly ephemeral.

After mass-digitisation is complete, the concrete dwellings of the archive are the warehouses of supercomputers. Archives are no longer physical places of visiting. What is being lost when the ephemera documenting our memories is turned into digits more fleeting than paper? Perhaps historical categories are melting into zeros and ones along with our pasts, and we are constantly being reinvented and renewed.

Along with feminist science fiction, Haraway made a case in their *Cyborg Manifesto* (1985) for "the cyborg as a fiction mapping our social and bodily reality and as an imaginative resource." In a chapter of their theoretical fiction, Haraway summarises much that is ongoing in our present moment in the twenty-first century:

> By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation. In the traditions of 'Western' science and politics – the tradition of racist, male-dominant capitalism; the tradition of progress; the tradition of the appropriation of nature as resource for the productions of culture; the tradition of reproduction of the self from the reflections of the other – the relation between organism and machine has been a border war. The stakes in the border war have been the territories of production, reproduction, and imagination.[151]

Haraway sees a pleasure in the confusion of these boundaries between organism and machine, and argues for responsibility in their construction. The cyborg is "a creature in a post-gender world,"[152] it is free of historywriting, free of the archive. Karen Barad has noted how "*technoscience* and *natureculture*s are now commonly used terms in the science studies literature,"[153] and Haraway further elaborates on technoscience:

> Technoscience extravagantly exceeds the distinction between science and technology as well as between nature and society, subjects and objects, and the natural and the artifactual that structured the imaginary time called modernity.[154]

151 Haraway 1991, 150.
152 Ibid.
153 Barad 2007, 407 (italics mine).
154 Haraway cited Barad 2007, 407.

While we are approaching a New Materialist conjuncture, the politics and policies are still housed in our human bodies. We are the dwellings for our memories, our life-events and sensations reside in our bodies. The body is a starting point from which we make sense of the environment: the physical as well as the social and emotional landscape. Considering the following by Bachelard:

> Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are "housed". Our soul is an abode. And by remembering "houses" and "rooms", we learn to "abide" within ourselves.[155]

We orientate our ways in the world, this being 'body-based knowing,' which Sara Ahmed talks about in connection to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's thinking on phenomenology:

> The starting point for orientation is the point from which the world unfolds: the ''here'' of the body and the ''where'' of its dwelling. Orientations, then, are about the intimacy of bodies and their dwelling places. The body provides us with a perspective: the body is ''here'' as a point from which we begin, and from which the world unfolds, as being both more and less over there. The ''here'' of the body does not simply refer to the body, but to ''where'' the body dwells.[156]

Here is a meeting point of Merleau-Ponty's bodily centrality and Derrida's analogy of the archive as a dwelling, which connect to Bachelard's conception of the house that stores time.[157] As archives are the public place where intimate dwellings are stored, they could be considered as homes where bodies once resided. Bodies are the matter that makes up the archive, the private becoming public and thus, political. Ahmed points out that archives are therefore orientation devices, which are "not neutral but directive."[158]

2.6 Archived feelings

In *An Archive of Feelings* (2002) Ann Cvetkovich explores how cultural texts store feelings and emotions, "which are encoded not only in the content of the texts themselves but in the practices that surround their production and reception."[159] Cvetkovich suggests how the notion of trauma enforces new considerations on behalf of "the institutionalising force of museums and monuments," as well as on behalf of archives, in order to do emotional justice in collections and installations.[160] I draw an example of this from Minna Henriksson's work: *Unfolding Nordic Race Science* (2016) –

155 Bachelard 1969, xxxiii.
156 Ahmed 2006, 8.
157 "It is thus, in this *domiciliation*, in this house arrest, that archives take place. The dwelling, this place where they dwell permanently, marks this institutional passage from the private to the public." Derrida 1996, 2.
158 Ahmed 2006, 118.
159 Cvetkovich 2003, 7.
160 Ibid., 269.

realised together with historian Fredrik Svanberg – was an installation at the Swedish History Museum speaking of the country's involvement in the pseudo-science of eugenics.[161] It is an attempt on the museum's behalf to acknowledge the institutional support for racist ideology that has taken place, and which has helped to fuel racism in the present, in Sweden, Finland and elsewhere in Europe.

Jack Halberstam has pointed out the complex relationship of between the institutional dwelling and the marginalised body. Because of this, queer and feminist archives for example, have often developed outside of the conventional spaces associated with the university and the state, and have been "frequently developed in response to emotional rather than strictly intellectual needs."[162] These grassroots archives – usually started as activist projects outside of institutions – are "often collected according to sentiment and emotion."[163] Instead of records of events, minutes of meetings, and the 'primary sources' requested by conventional historiography; letters, drawings, fanzines, personal photographs, along with oral history recordings, video and audio tapes... help to form a picture of everyday life giving the faceless statistic a persona.

The *affective turn* appeared in the field of humanities and social sciences in the late 1990s.[164] Michael Hardt considers the work of feminist and queer theorists as a precursory for the rising interest in the exploration of body and emotions in academia.[165] The concept of the bodily imaginary, influenced by the work of Luce Irigaray, underlines how experiencing our bodies "invests particular contours with emotional and affective salience."[166] In philosophy, 'affect' refers to the amalgamation of bodily and emotional experiences, a blending of reason and passions. As previously noted, the roots for the affective perspective can be seen in the work of Spinoza:

> For Spinoza, the ethical and political project involves a constant effort to transform passions into actions, to replace encounters that result from external causes, which may be joyful or sad, with encounters determined by internal causes, which are necessarily joyful. […] Spinoza's preference for internal causes does not lead to an isolation of any sort since every increase of the power to act and think corresponds to an increased power to be affected – the increased autonomy of the subject, in other words, always corresponds to its increased receptivity. […] [T]he perspective of the affects re-

161 On Henriksson's portfolio site, http://minnahenriksson.com/main/works/2016-unfolding-nordic-race-science/ [accessed 17.11.2020].
162 Halberstam cited Eichhorn 2013, 19.
163 Cvetkovich 2003, 269.
164 Clough & Halley 2007.
165 Hardt lists the work of Judith Butler, Elizabeth Grosz, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Lauren Berlant as "examples of feminist theory that focuses on the body as a central problematic." Hardt 2007, xii (note 1).
166 Lennon 2019.

> quires us constantly to pose as a problem the relation between actions and passions, between reason and the emotions. We do not know in advance what a body can do, what a mind can think – what affects they are capable of. […] Spinoza thus gives us a new ontology of the human or, rather, an ontology of the human that is constantly open and renewed.[167]

This 'new ontology of the human' is an invitation for a new arrangement of bodies and new considerations of technologies, taking erased histories as nodes to begin from. The affective weaves together technology and phenomenology in the way Haraway envisioned a cyborg as a reassembled, collective self.

2.7 Silence

Earlier on I hinted at 'silence' section 1.2.2 – I wish to include a consideration on that which is not included: as that which is absent is what we search for. And those gaps make cracks into the narrative built by those residing in the centre.

Silence can be an active choice, a form of resistance – *not absence*, as Adrienne Rich in their poem *Cartographies of Silence* writes,[168]

> The technology of science
> The rituals, the etiquette
>
> the blurring of terms
> silence not absence
>
> of words or music or even
> raw sounds
>
> Silence can be a plan
> rigorously executed
>
> the blueprint to a life
>
> It is a presence
> it has a history a form
>
> Do not confuse it
> with any kind of absence

167 Hardt 2007, x.
168 Rich 1975.

As the archive is never complete, the societal memory is always compromised. And as the archive is never complete, history is always incomplete. And an unfinished history offers the opportunity to be acted on. Its writing is subjective, but it can offer a sense of fulfilment for those working in a personal or a common sphere of struggle.

Control and power over information materialise in the institutional archive. Rodney G.S. Carter writes about *archival violence* that "is found in the use of documents to enforce and naturalize the state's power and in the active silencing of the disenfranchized" – how a peripheral position in society may prevent an inclusion in the archive.[169] Records have been destroyed, manipulated, or removed so that the narratives cannot be transmitted across time, and may ultimately disappear from history.[170]

We are required to be aware of the silences, the exclusions from the archive as we cannot deem archives to operate as a universal, central memory of an assumed collective history. Those whose past is not considered as history may *choose* to stay outside of it, their input withdrawn as a protest. As a result, they maintain their narratives amongst themselves, in the fringes, away from the societal core and the establishment culture. But the presence of silence does not necessarily signify a protest, an active resistance – it may be *a simple refusal to participate*. To keep narratives alive by passing them on outside of archives, and keeping them alive only as long as those in the fringes are alive may be a strategy to maintain their narratives undistorted by recordings and interpretations. We are also required to mind these silences, to leave the gaps unfilled.

3 On methods

In this section I introduce the main methods applied in my research. In addition to these, I wish to emphasise the dialogue with the literature that runs through my thesis – it could be considered as a method as well; I leave it to speak for itself.

3.1 Writing

I regard writing as *the* method in my enquiry. It has made me go back to the words, again and again, to my reconsiderations and to reconnect the words and sentences that carry out the thinking. In the hope of communicating despite of its quicksand-like quality.

169 Carter 2006, 219.
170 Ibid., 217.

Writing is a shifting medium, "a material practice, emerging and assuming particular form in conditions of historical specificity."[171] Through the act of writing, one's thinking finds a form and materialises. One can speak without thinking, but it is hard to write without doing so first. Writing is a method which gives prominence to reflexivity: You are reviewing your process as a researcher as well as the scientific structures you are following – it is a self-reflexive and a considered technique.

I am aware that I am writing an academic text. I am aware of a certain conduct of language that is required. I go back to sentences I have written and delete ones that do not have the correct tone. I am aware of the simplicity of my language. Even though I feel an emoji would be in place at the end of a sentence to convey, say, light irony, I am certainly not adding one anywhere in this thesis. I am aware I have just written 'I feel' in an academic text. Writing produces language (and vice versa) and language has been regarded as holding up cultural constructions, such as as acceptable academic language. Could I write this thesis as a poem? Could I present it as a comic? – Chances are I would not gain my degree. *The process of producing text is incredibly slow. Several days go by. I have written two paragraphs. I end up deleting the other one. I write a sentence, I end up changing most of the words. In the end I delete that sentence. My page count stays at 25 for months. I revise revisions and find new texts to read and re-read. The struggle between me, the subjects and the mountains that have been written before me goes on. I make some wild combinations in my head of the theories I've read but I'm not able to make them materialise in writing. Convoluted; what a lovely word. Luckily, I have a deadline; I need parameters to keep myself in check. I have worked as a designer; parameters are my best friend. But I'm not keeping myself in check: I've allowed myself to mull over this particular section since Monday. It's Friday tomorrow. A doubt creeps into my mind that perhaps I am keeping myself in check way too tightly, my writing has become contrived. The pressure of producing convincing language: Every. Single. Word. Is. Considered. And. Reconsidered. Sentences shrivel up and curl back on themselves; they are not reaching out.*

> Reflexivity can be described as a process of thinking about one's own thinking, as reconsideration and doubt, as the interaction between and construction of the researcher and the researched, as different levels of interaction in the research process, interpretation, language, power, contradictions, nuances and ethics.[172]

171 Burns 2010 cited Livholts 2012, 5.
172 Maxey; Guillemin & Gillam cited Livholts 2012, 4.

The normative boundaries for what is considered as adequate theorising point "toward the dominance of a mainstream textual form that does not need to name itself."[173] A writer of a scientific text keeps in mind the rules that apply in order to produce a paper that will pass the peer review. A dichotomy between academic writing and literature exists and an academic author often dislocates themself in order to avoid marginalisation.[174] Writing from the safety of imagined objective remoteness, the researcher writes in a dry manner, keeping their feelings in check, not getting carried away by urgency they may *feel* towards their subject. The academic writer follows instructions that, according to Livholts, "are not neutral or innocent guidelines, but are shaped by political forces."[175] But even within the boundaries of academe, writing can have transformative capacity. It can be a form of activism against neoliberal assessment of the 'usefulness' of research.[176] Annelie Bränström Öhman points out the dangers of quantifiable evaluation at the cost of originality:

> [I]f the revision or elaboration of text is seen just as an instrumental aim for fitting into the model, meeting the demands of journals, its stylistic as well epistemological originality is at risk of going to waste.[177]

This shares Livholts' concerns for the potential of writing methodologies in critical fields of studies being neglected in the drive for ratings, rankings and counting:

> A central issue here is that mainstream textual forms are often related to a system that privileges certain kinds of knowledge over other, subjugated knowledge. This is indeed paradoxical at a time when excellence and innovation are part of the political research agenda.[178]

The "gaze from nowhere" appears in the form of so-called objective and neutral language. Drawn on Haraway's idea of diffraction, Livholts proposes a diffracted writing strategy "as a research and writing method across the humanities, social sciences and art based research." According to Livholts, "it is from situated locations with partial perspectives that writing emerges through acts of translation. … Diffracted writing is a creative strategy for the researcher to situate and re-situate themselves, to shift writing positions, to see and see again."[179]

The shifting of positions is what art historian Linda Nochlin also talks about in regards to their methodology of 'bricolage,'[180] which resembles hermeneutic approach to research. But instead of a

173 Livholts 2012, 6.
174 Ibid., 5.
175 Ibid., 3.
176 Bränström Öhman 2012, 28.
177 Ibid.
178 Livholts 2012, 3.
179 Livholts 2018, 13.
180 In *The Savage Mind* (1966, orig. *La Pensee sauvage*, 1962), Claude Levi-Strauss uses the concept of 'bricolage' to make a distinction between scientific thought and mythical thought. "Although his often dated terminology – 'savage,' for example – might lead the reader to assume that Levi-Strauss privileged scientific thought, he stressed that

circle, it flows to and fro as a dialogue, never to distill into a single truth. Nochlin describes their writing as a conversation: opinions are shifting, things are in flux.

> Writing history 'Otherly', is, once again, a dialectic process. As I formulate the issue, the methodology, so to speak, grows partly out of it, and that is the notion of 'bricolage', a kind of back-and-forth between problematising the issue and the theoretical apparatus of approaching the issue. Such methodology is always on the move, it shifts all the time.[181]

These methods offer my writing process an openness: Instead of writing towards a great big knot of truth that will neatly tie in all of the messy threads, I weave my stance into the theoretical apparatus, at the same time shifting my position as I attempt to grasp the possibilities of what the apparatuses are offering.

As writing is a fluid process, it is morphing constantly. *I have written these pages twice and still the paragraphs are slipping away, demanding reformation*. I see this enquiry as a space for experimentation as well as the required demonstration of skills acquired towards academic research at the end of my studies. Inspired by Haraway, I am tempted towards theoretical fiction – *research that imagines* instead of arguing.

In regards to situated writing, it is appropriate to clarify my position: I am a Northern European person who has had access to free higher education and has not faced discrimination based on the colour of my skin or religion. I am part of the privileged minority whose cultural background is considered as a norm in academe. My enquiry revolves around Eurocentric production of knowledge and does not include considerations on, for example speech acts and oral traditions of indigenous peoples who have formed their own epistemologies. However, the research looks at methodologies that address the problematics of historical Western conventions in knowledge production.
I consider situated writing together with diffraction patterns (of a heterogeneous history) forming an approach to archival research. Biographies, oral histories, personal letters, photographs... all the ephemera is a possibility to write histories of difference, to consider these particles from other angles, detached from fixed or predetermined narratives, arrange them in a bricolage and write them up in a language that conveys the researcher's relation to that material as well. Positions, nodes, diffraction patterns are about our orientation in the world, not about a fixed position in it.

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both scientific and mythical thought should be understood as valid and that one does not supersede the other. They are two autonomous ways of thinking, rather than two stages in an evolution of thought. Thus, magic is not primitive science." Mileaf.

181 Pachmanová 2006.

3.2 On the research process

At the very beginning of my research, while mapping out the background and finding its angle, I set up a few meetings with Finnish archivists and researchers. I spoke with researcher Marjaliisa Hentilä and project archivist Iiris Olavinen at the Labour Archive (Työväen arkisto) in Helsinki; head of collections Leena Ahonen and researcher Marita Viinamäki at the Finnish Labour Museum Werstas in Tampere; and historian Riikka Taavetti from the University of Helsinki, specialised in oral history, cultural memory, and the history of sexuality and archives.

The interviews took the open form of a recorded conversation, with the possibility to transcribe them afterwards. No questions were sent beforehand. It became clear that my approach to the subject of archives was less on the analysis of the archival systems – for example Taavetti has conducted thorough research on the Finnish archival practice (see Taavetti 2016) – I therefore chose not to transcribe the recordings, but referred to the notes made during the conversations. In the meetings, I steered the conversation with a few questions, letting the interviewees talk broadly about their experiences of working with and within the Finnish archival system, the collections they are involved in, and exhibiting the archival material. I reflected the discussions on my own archival visits to the Women's Libraries in England and Scotland.
I also asked the interviewees about the ways the archives were brought to the public, in forms other than academic papers and publications: exhibitions, screenings, discussions, and other modes of distribution. Labour Museum Werstas has an active public programming and a varied catalogue of exhibitions not only of their archival materials but of societal issues.[182] Labour Archive and Labour Museum are institutions, umbrella archives which contain a wide cross-section of Finnish associations and organisations. As Marjaliisa Hentilä pointed out during our conversation, they could be considered more as social archives rather than the archives of the Labour Movement specifically.

While visiting the Labour Archive, I read through a memory collection on feminist awakening (not found online at the time of writing) – a call conducted by the archive, where people of all ages could send in their feminist histories. I was interested in the actions and demonstrations organised by Finnish feminist groups, as the radical feminist history in Finland has not been documented in such a cohesive way as in the UK. During the background sourcing, I would also reflect on the difference of the written and spoken language of professional experience and private memory, words

182 As an example, Werstas holds collections on anti-racism, http://www.werstas.fi/kokoelmat-ja-tutkimus-en/collections-on-anti-racism/?lang=en [accessed 9.9.2020].

of ‘experts’ in contrast to the words of ‘amateurs,’ and by comparing institutional archives with grassroots ones from the perspective of my own experience.

The conversations with the archival professionals enhanced my existing understanding of the benefits of these types of institutional umbrella archives, which is the prevalent archival structure in Finland. As well as acknowledging the advantages of this highly organised system, I wish to maintain my partiality towards the grassroots, private archives common in the UK and the US (my experiences of these described in sections 1.2.2. & 2.5). In my encounters with archives, the small-scale, non-institutional ones have allowed me to be closer to the ephemera – the access has been more immediate. The small archives may have less technically preservative premises but they are also less precious, more hands-on, allowing a more intimate connection to the materials they contain: I wrote of this tactility in the section on digitalisation and our disappearing connection to materiality.

During a semester-long residency at the Aalto University in Helsinki, I organised a project for the Visual Communication Design MA students, which became a part of this background research. We visited three different archives in Helsinki, or places that consider themselves as an archive: Aalto (Taikki) archives, Museum of Impossible Forms, and People’s Archive (Kansan arkistot). Based on these visits, and on their own conception of what an archive is or can be, the students developed new work by appropriating archival work which resulted in an exhibition – appropriation used as a mode of distribution in this case.[183]
In addition to the workshop, together with Arja Karhumaa, we edited a publication exploring the idea of ‘local knowledge’ and compiled texts that spoke of knowledge formation in the context of visual communication.[184] As an example of the contents, we visited an exhibition at the Design Museum in Gent, Belgium on the relatively undocumented history of Belgian graphic design, curated by Sara De Bondt.[185] We also conducted an interview with De Bondt for the publication on the issues of language, visual communication, nationalism and archives, which features in the publication.

Artist Minna Henriksson’s work involves themes such as gossip as a source knowledge, as well as researching the Finnish working class and the history of solidarity.[186,187] I was interested in Henriks-

183 One of the outcomes on https://kaisalassinaro.net/index.php/duunit/aalto/ [accessed 15.6.2020]
184 https://kaisalassinaro.net/index.php/duunit/local/ [accessed 16.9.2020]
185 https://www.designmuseumgent.be/en/events/off-the-grid [accessed 16.9.2020]
186 See *Helsinki map* (2009) on Henriksson’s portfolio site, http://minnahenriksson.com/main/works/2009-helsinki-map/ [accessed 24.7.2020].
187 The case of Hjalmar Linder explored in a work for the 2019 Helsinki City Museum exhibition *Objection!*, http://minnahenriksson.com/2081-2/ [accessed 24.7.2020].

son's work as it spoke directly of my concerns on the validation of knowledge, and the possibilities in the way archival materials are being implemented, presented and distributed. Especially Henriksson's handling of the topic of nationalism and Finnish historywriting was something I wanted to look at. Their work relates with Haraway's theorising on the location of knowledge and steers my argument for the validation of artistic research parallel to science as a field of research.
To engage with Henriksson's work, I chose the method of an open interview-conversation. This resonates with the methodology of writing described previously, of including voices and subjective positions in the text.
I conducted two conversations with Henriksson, which took place in two working spaces in Helsinki, one in *Poimu* (*a feminist, antiracist studio space*) – and the other at the basements of a gallery space in the town centre. The first interview focussed on their awakening to the problematics of Finnish nationalism and how this became the source for their artistic work. An example of this is their 2014 research and an article written on the use of the swastika symbol in Finland and the historical discourse around it,[188] – a topic which has received attention in the national newspaper and drawn interest at the University of Helsinki.[189] This as an example of the artist's capacity to surface silenced topics, awakening the interest of the mainstream media and academia, with a capacity to influence the public discourse as well. In the second recorded conversation, we returned to some of the details of artistic projects discussed in our first session, as well as Henriksson's ongoing research into leftist histories of Finland. The interviews were transcribed and parts are featured in section 4.2.

The urgency of politics and the sensuous in the work of David Wojnarowicz led me to read Cynthia Carr's biography (2012) on the artist. Wojnarowicz's book *Close to the Knives – a Memoir of Disintegration* (1991) features solely the artist's writing and gives an impression of the same intensity as their visual work, if not more. I looked up what little I could find in the Finnish libraries on Wojnarowicz's work. As well as their work, I was interested in the publication the work features in, this being a document of its time. The publication in question was the special issue of the photography magazine *Aperture* from 1994 dedicated entirely to the work of Wojnarowicz. While looking up their work online, I came across *Visual AIDS* (visualaids.org); an extensive online archive featuring

188 See http://minnahenriksson.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/finnish-swastika_henriksson_rab-rab.pdf [accessed 24.7.2020].
189 *Helsingin Sanomat* reports on the Finnish airforce removing swastika from their emblem, https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000006557623.html [accessed 10.9.2020].

the work of archivists, activists and artists done to combat the epidemic – however, I am not delving further into online archives in this enquiry as this would be another research altogether.[190]

In the work of these two artists, I am interested in its political context, the manifestation of conjuncture in artistic work. I am interested in the ways the artists' work contributes towards knowledge as well as the different types of knowledges it contains: the rational and the sensuous, both being equally valid. My enquiry is an assembly of methodologies and theoretical concepts that are applied in the work of David Wojnarowicz and Minna Henriksson.

4 The agency of an artist: David Wojnarowicz and Minna Henriksson

I have weaved the artists David Wojnarowicz and Minna Henriksson into the theories and methods of previous sections, giving snippets of their work so far. In this part, I further expand on their work and its relevance to hxstorieswriting. The practices of these artists are immersed in counter-narration, and in critical examination and commentary against the prevalent social norms and its history-writing. The two practices are very different in their approaches, but similar in their direct and indirect political objectives.

4.1 Against the pre-invented world: the political poetics of David Wojnarowicz

A catalyst to my research has been the work of David Wojnarowicz, whose art, writing and life were acutely political. Wojnarowicz became an AIDS activist in New York during the 1980s epidemic, dying from AIDS in 1992 at the age of thirty-seven. Art and political activism were channels for their fury at the US government led by president Ronald Reagan for its disregard towards the disease: the slowness and lack of funding in medical research, which resulted in a catastrophic number of young people dying from the complications of HIV/AIDS. As a queer person, they were outraged at the society and its homophobia. Wojnarowicz's artistic work and writing dealt with their alienation with the society around them, which they had been experiencing since their childhood. It also dealt with nature and animals, and has a profound connection to feminism and posthumanism. I look at Wojnarowicz's work through Gaston Bachelard's theorising on the poetics of imagination, which entwines with Wojnarowicz's images and words; a poetry that was always political. By connecting Bachelard's phenomenological with the political of Wojnarowicz, the artist's practice can be seen as affective – the embodied knowledge that contains the ephemeral experience and emotions. It

190 "David Wojnarowicz … died on July 22, 1992. In response to his death, activists marched in the East Village and began a series of political funerals to mourn, defy, and commemorate those dead from AIDS and to demand political action, funding, and an end to discrimination against people with HIV and others affected by the pandemic." *Visual AIDS* 2018.

is a kind of erotic awareness that Audre Lorde talks of in their essay *Uses of the Erotic* (1978). Lorde refers to the erotic as "true knowledge," one that "empowers us," "the nurturer of all our deepest knowledge."[191] Lorde speaks of the very same lack in our lives that Wojnarowicz sees present in the pre-invented world.

> Our lives are limited by external and alien forms, and we conform to the needs of a structure that is not based on human need, let alone an individual's. But when we begin to live from within outward, in touch with the power of the erotic within ourselves, and allowing that power to inform and illuminate our actions upon the world around us, then we begin to be responsible to ourselves in the deepest sense.[192]

The self-evidently political and one of Wojnarowicz's most well-known works *Untitled, (One day this kid . . .)* (1990–91) features a childhood photo of themself, superimposed against a block of text that reads,

> One day this kid will do something that causes men who wear the uniforms of priests and rabbis, men who inhabit certain stone buildings, to call for his death. One day politicians will enact legislation against this kid. One day families will give false information to their children and each child will pass that information down generationally to their families and that information will be designed to make existence intolerable for this kid.

The designed information Wojnarowicz calls out is the master narrative of monoculture, feeding the idea of the Normal. In 1975 Wojnarowicz composed a manifesto for resisting the 'pre-invented world:'

> To make the private into something public is an action that has terrific repercussions in the pre-invented world. The government has the job of maintaining the day-to-day illusion of the ONE-TRIBE NATION. Each public disclosure of a private reality becomes something of a magnet that can attract others with a similar frame of reference; thus each public disclosure of a fragment of private reality serves as a dismantling tool against the illusion of a ONE-TRIBE NATION.[193]

Wojnarowicz described their alienation with society as "feelings on the voice within the body, the voice of the subconscious," and how it would take "a separation from the normal levels of existence," a rejection of "the foundation that really covers over the real world underneath."[194]

The film *Teaching a Frog to Dance (or Building a Patriotic Beast)* (1979) speaks of this alienation. The two and half minute long film shows a pair of hands forcing a bullfrog to dance to 'patriotic

191 Lorde 1984, 56, 57.
192 Ibid., 58.
193 Wojnarowicz cited Carr 2012.
194 Carr 2012.

music.' "That's about making people go against their nature – the function of society," Wojnarowicz has said of this work.[195] Wojnarowicz was an individual who was at a war with a society that would rather see them dead than living the life they lived. They considered photography as a medium for preserving an alternative history.[196]

In their classic text *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936), Walter Benjamin notes how the camera is a guide that aids us to focus on the "hidden details of familiar objects" and the film extending "our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives," offering perspectives to our surroundings which we would not see with our naked eye.

> Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling. With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended. The enlargement of a snapshot does not simply render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear: it reveals entirely new structural formations of the subject.[197]

Wojnarowicz began documenting the world around them in the back alleys of New York – they started hustling around Times Square at the age of nine. Wojnarowicz's words resonate with Benjamin's on what the camera enables:

> A hustler nods out against a wall amongst the huge rush of people exiting from the three-dollar movie and he's squeezing his dick absent-mindedly and I'm taking pictures which will never come out because of the light quality and the speed of the film but the visions are so intense that 'til the day I die I will always have these photographs in my brain.[198]

Photography is strongly associated with memory,[199] and Wojnarowicz used the camera as a main medium in their work. The explicitly political, the poetic and the dreamlike intermingle in their work. "Hell is a place on earth. Heaven is a place in your head," they've said.[200]

Benjamin's observations on the way photography makes us look at our surroundings, removing us from them, yet again immersing us in them ties to Bachelard's concept of topoanalysis – "the study of the sites of our intimate lives"[201] – which is present in the work of Wojnarowicz. In *The Poetics*

195 Lippard 1994, 9.
196 "History is made and preserved by and for particular classes of people. A camera in some hands can preserve an alternative history." Wojnarowicz cited Lippard 1994, 9.
197 Benjamin 1969.
198 Wojnarowicz cited Lippard 1994, 8.
199 Bachelard aptly contests the simplifying notion of memory being equated with images: "[T]here is nothing to be gained by saying that the imagination is the faculty of producing images." Bachelard 1969, xxx.
200 Wojnarowicz cited Lippard 1994, 15.
201 Bachelard 1969, 8.

of Space (1969), Bachelard uses the house as a metaphor for our imagination and memories that hold those "hidden details of familiar objects," like Benjamin's photographs. Bachelard uses the house as "a *tool for analysis* of the human soul."[202] The human soul is found in "knowledge of intimacy" and for this knowledge a "localization in the spaces of our intimacy is more urgent than determination of dates."[203] The idea of space gaining importance over time goes against historywriting which does not recognise the experience of intimacy. A house as a site for human soul ties into the work of Wojnarowicz: a stencil image of a burning house became an image associated with themself. Wojnarowicz used the metaphoric house in their final text accompanying a photographic work *Inside This House* (1990): a small white house built from cardboard which they had photographed while trying to set the house on fire.

> Inside this house, many things go on. Many people, many lives, many personalities. Some of them dream, some of them don't. Some of them fall, some of them rise.[204]

"He could only get smoke to come out the windows, however, he decided that image was beautiful."[205] Walter Benjamin also used the house in their writing to go inwards. Benjamin's *One-Way Street* was "written out of turmoil of hectic modernity of 1920s Germany."[206] After descriptions of the urban setting with modern buildings and traffic, they leave the cityscape to return indoors, and in a chapter titled 'Breakfast Room' they describe the transitional space and time between sleeping and waking.[207] Esther Leslie considers dreaming as knowing, associated to Bachelard's knowledge of intimacy, and the spaces we and our dreams inhabit:

> Perhaps the dream can be translated into other types of knowledge, for example, into the type of knowing that overturns the settled world of day, with its light of reason, in pursuit of an inspired life. […] Our houses form us and we form our houses. Our dreams, the ghosts of our past, and our things are stored in us and in our houses. This process is not simply an individual one, but a collective act, and it is subject to historical pressures.[208]

According to Leslie, "Benjamin shows that is it necessary to enter into the depths, the underworld or the unconscious, in order to awaken to the present."[209] Like the present of the external world requires an understanding of the past, we need our memories in order to form ourselves in the here and now. And in the same way as Bachelard, Benjamin describes different rooms in the house stor-

202 Bachelard 1969, xxxiii.
203 Ibid., 9.
204 Wojnarowicz cited Carr 2012.
205 Carr 2012.
206 Leslie 2013, 1.
207 Ibid.
208 Ibid., 2, 17.
209 Ibid., 11.

ing memories where those dream contents may reside. In *One-Way Street*, a motto appears under a chapter on the cellar:

> The hours that hold the figure have run their course within the house of the dream.[210]

Wojnarowicz returned to the sites of hustling of their teenager years, the derelict piers where different kind of cruising was now taking place. Here they began a series called *Arthur Rimbaud in New York* (1979). Wojnarowicz placed the turbulent, drifting poet in various sites in the city, eight of the images taken in the Hudson River warehouse that they used as 'a journal' and 'a sketchbook' at the time, covering the walls of the dilapidated buildings by the pier with their stencilling and graffiti work. A figure wearing a mask of Rimbaud's face is seen in various situations: reading, lying on bed with a beer in hand, eating in a diner, jerking off, injecting heroin. Wojnarowicz considered the images representing a compression of historical time and activity, of which they have noted: "Photographs, like writing, could strip the power from a memory or an event… cut the ropes of an experience."[211] 'The ropes of an experience' can be interpreted as personal, cultural, or societal history. Photography and writing could be seen as mechanisms for Wojnarowicz to isolate events and take distance from the violence of their childhood, resisting their history to define themself. They identified with Rimbaud, determined to "find that area in the vast cosmos both internally and externally where the true voice is to be found."[212] They considered Rimbaud coming close to this territory but saw the poet turning away:

> [H]e came so close but turned his back to it on its very steps, either out of fright from what he saw or because he was unprepared to meet it.… I am a poet, one who hasn't found the true voice yet.… I won't worry about total acceptance once I break through the immediate binds around me which hold me back. What is really more important is that I at least give my life up to it.[213]

It would be easy to take this statement as part of the conduct of a romantic poet, of an artist who 'gives their life to art.' However, Wojnarowicz is not an embodiment of the mythical idea of an artist – their art was visceral, a prosthetic of their body political, confronting the unjust and confining society around them while processing this through their work. For Wojnarowicz, art and poetry appear closely to, what Bachelard called, the 'phenomenon of freedom.'[214]

210 Leslie 2013, 2.
211 Wojnarowicz cited Lippard 1994, 10.
212 Wojnarowicz cited Carr 2012.
213 Ibid.
214 Bachelard 1969, xxiii.

Phenomenon could be regarded as an antidote to history. In the words of Bachelard, it "liquidates the past and confronts what is new. Even in an art like painting, which bears witness to a skill, the important successes take place in independently of skill. […] In poetry, non-knowing is a primal condition."[215] In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard cites the thoughts of Jean Lescue studying the painting of Charles Lapicque:

> Although his work gives evidence of wide culture and knowledge of all the dynamic expressions of space, they are not applied, they are not made into recipes. … Knowing must therefore be accompanied by an equal capacity to forget knowing. Non-knowing is not a form of ignorance but a difficult transcendence of knowledge. This is the price that must be paid for an oeuvre to be, at all times, a sort of pure beginning, which makes its creation an exercise in freedom.[216]

Imagination coils itself into 'non-knowing' by the "swiftness of its actions."[217] As imagination is always facing the future, it therefore "separates us from the past as well as from reality. […] If we cannot imagine, we cannot foresee."[218] The collage/montage form that Wojnarowicz had adapted can be considered constructing a *diffracted narrative* of their conceived history. The work is research, activism and poetry amalgamated.

> All my life I've made things that are like fragmented mirrors of what I perceive to be the world…. […] Started developing ideas of making and preserving an authentic version of history in the form of images/writing/objects that would contest state-supported forms of "history." […] Became more active in exploring art as a record of the times we live in as well as a vehicle of communication between members of certain social structures and minorities. I'm the robotic kid with caucasian kid programming trying to short-circuit the sensory discs. I'm the robotic kid looking through digital eyes past the windshield into the pre-invented world.[219]

Here, Wojnarowicz shares Haraway's vision of a cyborgian approach to history where they reset the past by "trying to short-circuit the sensory discs," causing glitches to the "state-supported forms of "history"."

Cynthia Carr's biography on Wojnarowicz's life, is also an account in hxstories. The index of the research conducted by Carr reads like a narrative of its own. The narrative is assembled from memories, oral histories, diary entries, intimate letters which blend into recorded dates and events, court

215 Bachelard 1969, xxviii, xxix.
216 Lescure cited Bachelard 1969, xxviii-xxix.
217 Bachelard 1969, xxx.
218 Ibid.
219 Wojnarowicz cited Lippard 1994, 10.

papers, news articles and of course, the work of Wojnarowicz. Carr was a personal friend of Wojnarowicz; as well as including themself in parts of the narrative, Carr conducted much of their research at the Fales Library at New York University where the Wojnarowicz papers are held. They recall the process of piecing together the narrative of the artist's life – a story which had been part-mythicised by Wojnarowicz themself:

> He always felt like he was an alien and that people wouldn't accept him as he was. He created camouflage. […] I found audiotapes at Fales where he would record things, especially during the years when he wasn't really writing things down. He made these audiotapes, and no one had ever listened to them until I did, and I transcribed all of them. Especially after he was diagnosed [as HIV+], he would talk about his fears about dying, you know, but all kinds of things. His disgust with the art world or whatever it was that was on his mind, and he would put dreams in there. I felt like I had some access to his inner life, and I would not have had an interest in writing a biography otherwise.[220]

Carr's interest as a researcher and a writer in the inner life of Wojnarowicz builds a picture of the artist's consciousness while narrating an era in New York's East Village art scene and the culture war of the AIDS crisis, Wojnarowicz being a central figure in both. The researcher has narrated cultural and marginal histories through an individual.

4.2 Countering nationalist narratives: Minna Henriksson surfacing leftist hxstories

Hannah Arendt has observed how the establishing of the Royal Society in Great Britain created the modern ideal of scientific objectivity. The members of the society agreed to steer away from topics that were unfavoured by the king, especially topics involving religion or politics. This reveals how the origins of objectivity are political, *not* scientific. The fact that scientists organised themselves into societies, made the research produced within these societies more important than the research conducted outside of them, and hence, a scientific society is always a political institution. Wherever people organise themselves, it is done with the intention of action and gaining power, and collective scientific work is never simply about science.[221]

That science *is* politics is at the heart of the work of Minna Henriksson. Their research and artistic work is placed in a local context – Henriksson is based in Helsinki. Our conversations concerned the research, the reception of the work and its political aspects.

220 Carr cited Highberg 2012.
221 Arendt 2017, 412 (note 347).

Henriksson's work is not conducted within an institutional framework, but is an autonomous artist's practice supported by, and dependent on public funding.[222] The research may be formalised as a diagram on a gallery wall, as an installation in a historical institution, as an intervention in a national museum, as an article in an art journal, or as a feminist archive of an artists' association.[223] Some of these works are introduced here in Henriksson's own words, representing a materialised political consciousness and critical cultural commentary.

Henriksson has been bringing up lesser known, and in some cases deliberately silenced narratives from the Finnish history by conducting archival research. This work begun when they observed an increase in nationalism in Finland around 2008 after living abroad for a number of years:

> Nationalism was not so seen as something negative, but as something to celebrate, which was then used commercially as something people wanted to buy, the blue and white national flag appearing in numerous products. It was something people wanted to associate with – that was quite surprising to me. Quite a shock. I started to read more about the history of Finland, other than the mainstream white hegemonic point of view. At the same time the Finns Party started to become a serious political party.[224]

After the Finns Party gaining a significant number of votes in the general election of 2011, it was clear to Henriksson that nationalism had become normalised in the political field of Finland. Henriksson began to use their artistic work against this thinly veiled fascism, which has gained foothold in a country where far-right ideology had a political stronghold not too long ago in its history.[225]

4.2.1 Hxstories of solidarity

One of Henriksson's first political archival works, *Works on Paper* (2015), dealt with Finland's trade with South Africa in the 1980s. The work draws attention to the significance of the trade union activism in boycotting the apartheid regime of South-Africa. Only when the trade union expressed

222 The precarity of art funding can result to an artist aiming to produce work which appeals to the funding body. This compares with academic researcher producing language, or adhering to certain subjects that comply with the expectations of scientific journals, for individual career-advancing purposes. This strategic production of art and knowledge can cause stagnant cultural conditions and further economisation of society.

223 See Henriksson's online portfolio, http://minnahenriksson.com/ [accessed 21.3.2020]

224 Interview with Minna Henriksson 22.11.2019.

225 In their book *Suomalaiset fasistit* ['Finnish fascists'] (2016) Silvennoinen, Tikka and Roselius expand on the profound influence fascist movement had on Finnish society during 1920s and '30s. A coup came close in 1930, but as Aapo Roselius points out, the right-wing radical Lapua Movement did not have to realise this as the government had met so many of their demands with the so-called communist laws, which limited freedom of speech and organisational activities. "The democratic sovereignty was under tremendous pressure." https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2019/03/11/vuosi-jolloin-suomea-uhkasi-fasistinen-vallankaappaus-lapuan-liikkeen. [accessed 3.3.2020]

solidarity with the Black workers and stopped handling goods between the two countries, the Finnish government finally agreed to apply sanctions:

> Finland was a major paper supplier for the South African government and most of the predominantly white owned printing industry in apartheid South Africa. The government of Finland protected this trade by maintaining the diplomatic ties with the South African apartheid regime. It wasn't until the Transport Workers' Union [*Auto- ja kuljetusalan työntekijäliitto – AKT*] in 1985 decided to stop handling goods between the two countries that finally put a halt to the trade by responding to the call by the broader anti-apartheid movement abroad and internally to apply sanctions and divest from apartheid South Africa. This act of working-class solidarity took place in other Nordic countries as well. Today Finland prides itself together with other Nordic countries, for their role in bringing the apartheid regime to its knees, while silencing the role working-class solidarity played in it pressuring Finnish business and the state to adhere to Black South Africa's calls for solidarity.[226]

Henriksson's critical work brings up working class narratives of solidarity to balance the right-leaning historywriting of the establishment Finland. The narration has roots in the 1918 civil war when the Red workers' movement was violently suppressed by the property-owning White forces and their supporters. Henriksson's work can be seen as a part of only a fairly recent turn in Finland, where critical questions about the war and its 'winners' as well as its sociopolitical consequences are brought into the public discourse.[227]

Working class solidarity, as well as the consciousness of the civil war trauma are contained in *political affect*. As defined by John Protevi, once individual "bodies politic" become aware of situations, these become "collective political categories," and this is considered as "the notion of political affect."[228] It relates to conjuncture, and a combination of these two – the corporeal-emotional and the timing-specific that are contained in a conflict – can manifest into nuanced counter-narratives containing diversity and subjectivity that speak of 'bodies politic.'

4.2.2 Research and digitalisation

As much of their work is based on archival research, I asked Henriksson about their relationship to the materiality of archives, the experience with physical archives in contrast with digital ones:

226 http://minnahenriksson.com/main/works/works-on-paper/ [accessed 7.1.2020]

227 As an example, the National Museum's exhibition *The Public and the Hidden Finland*, which took place during 2017, the hundred-year anniversary of the Finnish state. The photography exhibition featured themes such as racism, welfare cuts and social exclusion, and aimed to highlight the diversity and social divisions of the Finnish society in contrast to a mythical one-folk nation.

228 Protevi 2009, 35.

> I haven't found internet archives very useful; not everything is online. Institutions are trying to push people to use online archives, but you cannot trust those because there is so much that you might be missing. [Physical ephemera] is a totally different thing to look at. For example the boycott campaign against South Africa – The Historical Papers Archive [Wits University, Johannesburg] had all these little flyers, posters, all types of brochures, fanzines – really interesting things, difficult to digitise. You just don't get that sense [online]. When you go into archives, like you can actually hold papers which are a hundred years old. Everything becomes so much more concrete, than when it's been digitised. And what is being put into a certain folder, and what is next to that folder. But when you are online and you just put in some search word – you lose the connections and you don't bump into random stuff. And you have to know what you're looking for when you look online.[229]

As noted, digitisation deprives us of material imagination. As noted in section 2.5, losing the tactile connection with ephemera, as well as the connections between physical folders and documents can result in fewer spontaneous, accidental findings and a lack of new, previously unimagined relations between ideas, people and events. The linear process of digital research may result in providing towards an already determined outcome, impoverishing both art and science from transformative and unconventional end results.

Henriksson spoke of their visit to the National Archive in Helsinki with a group of students from an art university they were teaching at. After the official powerpoint-presentation, their tour guide began to speak about how they were glad to be retiring from the institution, as the digitisation was getting highly problematic features and some of their colleagues had already left their work due to this. They spoke about the practice of cutting the spine off the book, which allows fast scanning, and then tossing the book in the bin. They could not bear doing this to books any longer. The guide was also worried about the Finns Party and their propagation of eliminating Swedish-language education from Finnish schools.[230] Archival documents more than hundred years old exist in Swedish only. Hence, if people do not read Swedish, they cannot access the past any longer – leaving it all to *Google translate* seem an unnerving prospect.

4.2.3 *Kiila* Feminist Archive

Henriksson's work involves looking at what is missing from the archive. The silences, the gaps in information start to speak volumes and bring up questions – this, of course, works against the original intention of those who were managing archives at the time.

229 Interview with Minna Henriksson 22.11.2019.

230 News article on the Finns Party proposal for removing mandatory Swedish language education from schools, https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9579193 [accessed 8.1.2020].

Kiila Feminist Archive (The Wedge) (2018) is a recreated, or a reconsidered, archive for a past that 'vanished' after the second world war in Finland. *Kiila* ('the wedge') is a historically leftist writers' and artists' association in Finland, which was founded in 1936 and is active today. Many leftist cultural makers in Finland were imprisoned during and after the second world war, and the Kiila archives from 1936 until 1944 disappeared due to the Finnish state's official anti-leftist stance.

> Kiila has throughout its existence stood for leftist ideas and has been influential in representing leftist artistic positions. Four out of seven founding members of Kiila were women: sisters Aira and Elvi Sinervo, Tyyne Maija Salminen and Katri Vala. Also many other female writers and critics were active in the early years of the organisation. After the war the history of Kiila was written by its notable male members. By compiling the [new] archive of Kiila, the aim has been to observe the connections of socialism and feminism in collective organising of artists and cultural workers.[231]

Henriksson has brought back into the archive notable writers such as Iris Uurto and Tyyne Maija Salminen, who were written out of the association's history, and out of the canon of Finnish literature by 'notable male members.' According to Henriksson, the work of Katri Vala was considered as 'proper' for the leftist cause by the men rewriting the history, but for example the books by Uurto and Salminen were deemed as questionable for their portrayals of psychological and bodily experience.**section 2.1**

This portrayal of the attitudes of historians speaks of a denial towards an experience that cannot be presented as an uncomplex 'primary source.' A suspicion towards phenomenological which does not support a linear historywriting and documentation. How does one archive feelings? The spacial has been conceived as feminine against the linear, masculine time. We know much more about time than we know of space.

Henriksson and their fellow art workers brought about a generational and a discursive shift in Kiila by joining in numbers and becoming active in the board meetings, making its activities relevant again by materially supporting artists and joining in events and demonstrations to express solidarity with workers in precarious positions.[232]

231 http://minnahenriksson.com/2019-kiila-the-wedge-feminist-archive/ [accessed 10.1.2020]

232 In summer 2020 it was reported that the cities of Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo have used public funds to hire private cleaning companies that have violated labour- and human rights; see for example *Helsingin Sanomat*, https://www.hs.fi/sunnuntai/art-2000006560486.html). In August 2020, members of Kiila joined a demonstration before the city council meeting of Vantaa, see *Tiedonantaja*, https://www.tiedonantaja.fi/artikkelit/siivoojille-vaadittiin-oikeutta-vantaalla) [both accessed 8.9.2020].

4.2.4 Pseudo-science making nationalist waves

This is a studybook example of Henriksson's research is scientific while conducted within the context of art. Introduced in section 2.1, *Unfolding Nordic Race Science* (2016) consists of an art installation and an academic text written by archaeologist Fredrik Svanberg, who collaborated with Henriksson. Sweden was the first country in the world to establish a National Institute for Race Biology (1922–58).[233] Together with Svanberg, Henriksson conducted research in the collections of The Swedish History Museum, as well as other institutions. As a result of being accompanied by a reputable historian, Henriksson gained access to collections which most likely would have been closed to them otherwise. One such collection was at the Natural History Museum in Helsinki, in an attic room named after the national romantic painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela. The room houses numerous skulls, possibly used for pseudo-scientific studies, as the Finnish state followed Sweden's interest in race hygiene from 1920s onwards.[234]

As a scientific researcher, Svanberg had some concerns for the validity of the collaboration's outcome. Henriksson was going to draw a wall-diagram in order to make transparent the connections of names, events and institutions related to the racist practice endorsed by the Swedish parliament. Diagramming was a method Henriksson had used in previous work to highlight connections inside the art scenes in different cities, some of which they had also used gossip as a source.[235] Svanberg was somewhat apprehensive; certainly gossip could not be regarded as a source in scientific research. No gossip ended up featuring in Henriksson's mapping of race science practiced in Nordic countries, and their sources were examined by Svanberg. However, the project made Henriksson question scientific authority and its contextual presentation:

> It was interesting for me to realise that it is necessary to have these so-called facts, whereas in art context, it is almost expected that the information you present is not factual, but it is fictional. It is interesting, these kinds of expectations and assumptions people have. And at the same time, I am wondering if it is always *a fact* which is in a historical, national museum, when it can be informed by race science and other quasi-practices. I would put into question this factualness of all of the so-called facts and science. Maybe then sometimes art, *in fact*, is the place for real facts. Facts which do not fit into the factualness of the official museums.[236]

233 https://www.ub.uu.se/finding-your-way-in-the-collections/selections-of-special-items-and-collections/state-institute-for-racial-biology/ [accessed 14.1.2020]

234 Mattila 1997.

235 By using scientific visual language in the form of a wall-diagram Henriksson's *Helsinki Map* (2009) made the local art scene transparent: the connections between funding bodies, galleries, institutions and artists as well as individuals in power positions, resulting in Henriksson losing funding from certain bodies and being threatened with a lawsuit, http://minnahenriksson.com/main/works/2009-helsinki-map/ [accessed 23.3.2020].

236 Interview with Minna Henriksson 18.12.2019.

What then makes a fact a fact? Is it simply something that can be proven to be true? 'Fact' is a component in the construction of scientific truth, truth which is based on an agreement amongst a peer group of scientists – an agreement contingent on human factors. Roger Berkowitz notes:

> The trouble here is that scientific truths must – as scientific – claim to be true and not simply an opinion. Science makes a claim to authority that is predicated not upon proof but on the value and meaningfulness of impartial inquiry. It is a value that is increasingly in question.[237]

Here we face the question of authority and its position; the impossibility of its 'neutrality.' Who has a say in the matters of scientific truth, who is above questioning? 'A fact' has suffered an inflation with the omnipresence of the internet. Contextual representation, language, rhetorics and personification are all elements that can make something appear as a fact. If both 'scientific truth' and 'fact' are on a shaky ground these days, where do we go from here? Theories introduced in this enquiry provide standpoints for self-reflexive scientific practices. On a more conventional ground than Barad and Haraway perhaps, feminist empiricists, while situating in positivism,[238] maintain a critical eye on the traditional scientific establishment.[239] Landa Schiebinger points to the values of feminist research that consist of

> eliminating research that leads to exploitation of nature or other humans, resisting explanations stripped of social and political context [...] being honest in our assumptions, being responsible in our language.[240]

Scientific research benefits of becoming inclusive when the research process is allowed to be more complex and when the political, social, and cultural implications of the research are taken into consideration.[241]

4.2.5 The case of the 'women undesirables'

Claims of objectivity in partial and selective historywriting made Henriksson look at what was swept under the carpet of the official narrative on Finland's war time activities:

237 Berkowitz 2012.
238 "Positivistic science, the traditional paradigm for the social science research endeavor, built itself on the foundations of objectivity, reason, and truth seeking. As feminist empiricists began to draw women into the empirical pursuits, they began to show that traditional positivism was not objective at all." Leckenby 2007, 30.
239 Ibid., 28.
240 Ibid.
241 Ibid., 29.

> Certain things are still not really spoken about. How is it possible that only in 2019 comes out a research about Finnish involvement in the SS crimes?[242] Is it really a case of 'you are innocent until proven guilty'? We know that any kind of discriminatory documents about Nazi involvement have been systematically destroyed and erased.[243]

With a critical view on Finnish historywriting, Henriksson conducted an interview with historian Marjo Liukkonen on their study *Hennalan naismurhat 1918* [*Women Murders in Hennala 1918*] on the killings of young women at the Hennala prison camp at the end of the Finnish civil war.[244] Misogyny accompanied with eugenic notions were feeding the violence against women and girls seen as 'undesired material' and Liukkonen voiced out these motivations.

> Just before the end of the Civil War, Martti Pihkala, a close friend of the commander of the guard company in charge of Hennala, Hans Kalm, had written that the conflict provided an opportunity for the Finns to improve their 'own race'.[245] "He said that short-haired women who imagine that they can do whatever men can are undesirables. Rather, the role of women should be to give birth to Finns. The 'bad women' living in factory districts should definitely be shut away somewhere and never be let out. This is exactly what was done at the Hennala camp," Liukkonen states.[246]

Liukkonen's research was questioned, even undermined by some historians arguing that the research lacked in 'primary sources.' The historians' objections speak directly of Haraway's concern of *claims* on objectivity (or the lack of): How the deliberate erasure of archival records achieves the desired outcome of erasing people and events out of history. And how the creation of historical evidence in the first place has been based on subjectively made decisions which require similar deconstruction as is demanded of the use of oral history records for scientific research. Liukkonen had used oral history records, letters and memoirs, as well as conducting quantitative research to establish a more definitive number of the women who died at the camp.[247] They had decided to look closer at what had happened at a particular prison camp which previous research had only approx-

242 Westerlund 2019.
243 Interview with Minna Henriksson 18.12.2019.
244 Liukkonen is specifically using the word 'murder': "We [Liukkonen and the publisher] thought about the title of my book […] or a long time. Another option was 'Hennala's Woman Shootings'… It was an intentional killing without trial, where the victims were not random; they were selected so 'murders' is justified." Henriksson 2019, 101.
245 Martti Pihkala was the brother of Lauri 'Tahko' Pihkala, an inventor of the Finnish national sport *pesäpallo*, a version of baseball. The siblings were advocators of race hygiene and active in the White Guards during the civil war. Lauri Pihkala's support for race hygienic ideas has been kept quiet about due to 'sports hero' -status, but Martti Pihkala is regarded as one of the "central figures in national radicalism" (in Silvennoinen, Tikka & Roselius 2016).
246 https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/in_the_wake_of_finlands_civil_war_severed_heads_and_piles_of_childrens_bodies/10123426 [accessed 16.1.2020]
247 Liukkonen 2018, 214-218, 273.

imated. Liukkonen saw the impact of these historical events as something which still echoes in the behaviour and public life of Finnish women:

> I thought about how the destiny of these women influenced the way Finnish women appear in public and politics. It has unconsciously influenced women.[248]

The use of oral history records in the research gives the imprisoned women an agency which conventional historywriting denied from them. They no longer exist as objects of men's actions. With the help of their stories, letters and poems, an insight to their thoughts is gained, giving them personalities. They become subjects of their own justification, which is the premise of feminist knowledges.[249]

An echoing narrative of 'lost women' can be found in Saidiya Hartman's *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (2019) which reconstructs the lives of a group of Black women in New York after the Reconstruction in the U.S. Their lives have been reassembled from rent collectors' logbooks, reports of parole officers, prison case files, interviews with psychiatrists, slum photographs – from documentation that represents them as a problem to the society.[250]

> Few, then or now, recognized young black women as sexual modernists, free lovers, radicals, and anarchists, or realized that the flapper was a pale imitation of the ghetto girl. They have been credited with nothing: they remain surplus women of no significance, girls deemed unfit for history and destined to be minor figures.[251]

Counter-narration does not simply make a problem visible but takes its cue from where the master narrative ends: the margins, which – consequently – become the centre. Hartman describes their methodology for the book:

> I have crafted a counter-narrative liberated from the judgment and classification that subjected young black women to surveillance, arrest, punishment, and confinement. […] The endeavor is to recover the insurgent ground of these lives; to exhume open rebellion from the case file, to untether waywardness, refusal, mutual aid, and free love from their identification as deviance, criminality, and

248 Henriksson 2019, 95.
249 Liukkonen 2018, 274.
250 Roberson 2019.
251 Hartman 2019.

> pathology; to affirm free motherhood (reproductive choice), intimacy outside the institution of marriage, and queer and outlaw passions; and to illuminate the radical imagination and everyday anarchy of ordinary colored girls, which has not only been overlooked, but is nearly unimaginable.[252]

Hartman's research bears similarity to Liukkonen's pursuit to recover the lives of the Finnish Red women. Recalling the lives of those not assigned 'male' at birth and of those without birthrights, requires looking beyond the official records, as these standards "were generated by and serve the master narrative. […] Subversive methodology becomes the major practice relegating the original documents to minor, nearly obsolete status."[253] Decentring and pluralising the narrative necessitates analysing scientific methodology, as well as re-examining archival practices and motivations behind documentation.

4.2.6 Unlocatable knowledge claims

Henriksson's criticality towards institutional authority echoes in the concept of situated knowledges, which Haraway equates as feminist objectivity:

> Science has been about a search for translation, convertibility, mobility of meanings, and universality – which I call reductionism only when one language (guess whose?) must be enforced as the standard for all the translations and conversions. […] Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see.[254]

In short: an unlocatable knowledge claim is an irresponsible knowledge claim, irresponsible meaning unable to be called into account.[255] The myth of relativism present in scientific rhetorics, promising a vision from everywhere and nowhere simultaneously, has its opponent in "partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology."[256]

In academe, Henriksson's research may not be considered as scientific. It may be regarded as taking 'artistic freedoms,' not having to face up to a scientific peer review. However, an outsider position – outside of institutional politics – can allow critical, radical and imaginative research to emerge more acutely than within an institutional frame. As pointed out at the beginning of my enquiry, this autonomous position is in aid of intellectual emancipation, as called for by Rancière. section 2.1 As in

252 Hartman cited Roberson 2019.
253 Roberson 2019.
254 Haraway 1988, 580, 583.
255 Ibid., 583.
256 Ibid.

the case of Henriksson, their work bears a possibility and an urgency which is noted, even followed by institutional researchers.

5 Conclusion

The archive as my starting point led to questions around politics and power, the power of knowledge stored in the archive that manifests itself in public culture. Public culture then sets the boundaries of public space[257] – and public space marks the boundaries of our bodies. The ways which we make use of the archive and how it is distributed and presented to publics, will define its potential as a site of resistance in the present.[258] This led me to consider the subjective and the political nature of knowledge, and the myth of objective research.[259] Knowledge production as a social practice has discursive and material implications, and thus, the practice not only produces but also constrains, excludes and has a role in the very tangible of our being, in the materialisation of the body.[260]

Dialogue is an ethos in feminist theorisation, allowing the shifting of knowledge which is open to many readings. The new materialist considerations of Donna Haraway and Karen Barad encapsulate the complex entanglement of knowledge that is constructed from archival material; knowledge that is found in art and aesthetics; and knowledge that is embodied within us. It became my intention during this research to orientate through a number of considerations that surface when taking the starting nodes of the Archive, Knowledge, and Art. It revealed the intricate nature of knowledge production, the difficulty and consequences of categorisations and dichotomies that aim to simplify and streamline.[261] If it has been difficult enough to structure this very enquiry under headings and categories, how complicated it must be to categorise matters in a wider, societal context? And what are the consequences of a coerced categorisation to living, complex bodies – human and non-human alike?

257 Cvetkovich 2003, 245.
258 Eichhorn 2013, 160.
259 A personal reflection: The question around knowledge production began forming as I entered university after a substantial break from an educational institution. Being part of this framework, I pondered over the subjects, theories and names that were included in the curriculum and those that were not, and why – apart from the obvious reason of it being impossible to include everything into one fleeting institutional moment. As well as being reintroduced to an educational locale, I had also returned to reside in the cultural environment of Finland, where the public discourse does not contain a plurality of voices.
260 Barad 2000, 15.
261 "Crucially, knowing is not a matter of mere differential responsiveness in the sense of simply having different responses to different stimuli. Knowing requires differential accountability to what matters and is excluded from mattering." Barad 2007, 380.

The work (and life) of David Wojnarowicz spoke against the societal normatisation, of a life lived according to categories. They found art as their apparatus for working out their own truth:

> I had always believed that the content of paintings were always some denial of history – images preserved by and for a particular class of people. So it was in them that I reached for images of chaos – images that weren't used in paintings – maybe obscure books detailing the human efforts of power structures – also in growing up in a world without role models where all institutions relegated homosexual matters to snide johns or things to be exterminated. … I had always believed that change came down to personal action – not just language but the idea of self truth.[262]

'Images preserved by and for a particular class of people' – the elitism of history (and art history) is what Minna Henriksson is also processing in their work. The elitism resulting from 'dead time' being a possibility only for a certain class of people – as noted by Jacques Rancière. Social inequality thus results in unaesthetic, technocratic societies where the deprivation of the sensuous causes a general flatness of being that contains no trace of an agency. A condition of lethargic consumption instead of Arendt's *vita activa*.
The work of the two political artists in my enquiry actualised the feminist theorisation working towards dissolving inequality and elitism in art, academe, science, and society.

I recall Sara Ahmed's point of the archive as an orientation device giving us directive. When applied in artistic practice, the combination can reassemble things, narratives, matters in ways we did not know was possible, making them into other things, other histories – Haraway's 'diffraction pattern' speaks of this possibility.

> All Western cultural narratives about objectivity are allegories of the ideologies governing the relations of what we call mind and body, distance and responsibility. Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see.[263]

Regarding the researcher as a political agent and never a neutral observer results in sciences taking responsibility for the knowledge that is produced. I lean towards Barad's intra-active entanglement where the researcher and the researched are entwined, knowledges are formed in a dialogue and those knowledges that have been formed, return to us, or to others, in various times and places for a

262 Wojnarowicz cited Carr 2012.
263 Haraway 1988, 583.

reformation, for a further conversation. If we consider the researcher being an agent in the production of knowledge, it calls to bear in mind the connection between agency and accountability. Agency, according to Barad, "is not an attribute but the ongoing reconfigurings of the world. The universe is agential intra-activity in its becoming."[264] Feminist materialist approach to science enables this intra-action and becoming – the becoming of Haraway's "unhomogeneous gendered social space." It enables us to move from hard definitions towards the "sciences and politics of interpretation, translation, stuttering, and the partly understood." Research is not just findings to draw conclusions from, but it is *translation* and as Haraway noted, translation is interpretative, critical and partial.[265]

The multitude of considerations within this thesis speak of self-reflexivity, of "processes turning back on themselves to act on themselves."[266] By opening up to nonconformist methodologies, by checking our positions, by questioning claims of objectivity and by blurring the lines of art, life and knowledge we are moving towards situated sciences and historywriting which are truly objective.

264 Barad 2007, 141.
265 Haraway 1988, 589.
266 Clough 2007, 3.

I'm aware that all this may sound like words, mere words. But I wouldn't take that as an insult. We've heard so many speakers pass their words off as more than words, as passwords enabling us to enter a new life. We've seen so many spectacles boasting of being no mere spectacles but ceremonials of community. … Knowing that words are only words and spectacles only spectacles, may help us better understand how words, stories, and performances can help us change something in the world we live in.

– Jacques Rancière[267]

267 Rancière 2007.

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