Shaping textile-making as an occupational domain: perspectives, contexts and meanings.

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Abstract:

This ethnography explores textile-making as an occupational domain in the context of a Welsh guild of weavers, spinners and dyers, where I am a member. The guild, an autonomous special interest group, is affiliated to a wider network of guilds and textile organisations. Its members have different backgrounds, interests and experience. As a contemporary craft discipline, textile-making links art and science and incorporates the use of technology, yet its traditional materials, formats and techniques survive from pre-industrial production. As a contribution to occupational science the study explores how people engage in creating textiles by hand individually and collectively, what it means to them in the context of contemporary British (particularly Welsh) and other influential cultures and a technological society together with the significance of textile-making and guild membership to individual and collective identity, and personal and social well-being.

Textile-making is explored through a reflexive, visual and interpretive ethnography using constructivist grounded theory as a methodological approach. The study is informed by symbolic interactionist, phenomenological and hermeneutic perspectives and situates the researcher as an insider. Data was gathered during fieldwork through participant observation; interviews; photography; documentary sources and material culture.

Theoretically the study accounts for how textile-making as an occupational domain is creatively shaped, moving it beyond traditional practices, by individuals who share their skills and experiences. Through becoming and being textile-makers individuals develop a sense of self and a collective sense of self through belonging to a guild. Ultimately, through socio-cultural networking, capital is created for guild members and others to draw on to enhance personal and social well-being. Methodologically it recounts a personal research journey from an initial idea to a final product; highlighting the value of diverse forms of data and the complexity of situating the researcher in reflexive ethnography. The findings imply the need to study occupation as a multi-faceted phenomenon contextually and from different theoretical perspectives.

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Chapter one:

Introduction

This ethnographic study explores textile-making by hand as a form of occupation in the context of a Welsh guild of weavers, spinners and dyers, where I am a member. The guild is an autonomous special interest group of people with varied backgrounds, interests and levels of experience in making textiles. As a study of a particular form of occupational engagement it contributes to the field of occupational science, where occupation is the central concept (Hocking 2000a).

1: *Occupation and occupational science*

The founders of the discipline of occupational science defined occupation as 'chunks of culturally and personally meaningful activity in which humans engage' (Clarke, Parham, Carlson, Frank, Pierce, Wolfe and Zemke 1991: 301). Occupation can be perceived as purposeful and goal-directed doing, it is historically and socio-culturally situated (McLaughlin Gray 1997, Wilcock 1998, Clarke, Wood and Larson 1998). More recently occupation has been conceptualised as a 'multivariate phenomenon' (Polatajko 2004: 30) involving thoughts, actions and interactions in a particular context and time (Jarman 2004: 50). As a field of study occupation encompasses individual and collective engagement and its historical, social and cultural contexts (Dickie 2003a, Humphry 2005).

As the overarching discipline for the study of human occupation, occupational science can be broadly understood as a 'science of doing' (Fidler 2000: 100). Drawing on a wide range of interdisciplinary fields, occupational science focuses on the complexity and centrality of occupation to humans by addressing the form, function and meaning of occupation (University of Southern California 2009). It incorporates the diverse range of activities or pursuits that humans engage in and has a strong relationship with heath and well-being (Wilcock 2006).

Occupational science is a relatively new and still emerging academic discipline; founded in 1989 at the University of Southern California, originally as a theoretical

foundation for occupational therapy, its history now spans two decades (Zemke and Clarke 1996). As such its research base is embryonic and there is a need for further study of the nature, meaning and experience of occupation as a complex and dynamic entity, together with how and why individuals and groups engage in it (Fidler 2000, Hocking 2000a, Jonsson 2008). This study focuses naturalistically on the fundamental elements of textile-making as occupation: its complex nature; environmental, social-cultural and historical contexts; subjective and collective meanings.

1.1: *A justification for this study*

My justification for undertaking this study is two-fold: firstly it brings together a personal, practical interest in craft and textile-making and an academic interest in the theory of creative, skilled forms of occupation; secondly it incorporates a methodological interest in reflexive qualitative research and a desire to explore this in greater depth.

My personal interest in craft and skills as a textile-maker developed from childhood and has flourished during adulthood in the context of the guild. Craft is synonymous with making, pre-dominantly by hand (Metcalf 1997) and with 'being engaged' (Sennett 2008: 20), a fundamental component of occupation. Being engaged with textile materials and hands-on making holds importance for me as a craftsperson and, from general observations at local, nation and international textile events it appears important to others too.

1.2: *Textile craft*

As a craft discipline, textile-making can be perceived as multi-media and amongst the most hybrid of contemporary crafts. Its traditional materials, formats and techniques survive from pre-industrial production (Colchester 1991, Metcalf 1997, Gale and Kaur 2002). In Western cultures, individuals who engage in such crafts have consciously chosen to express themselves through a set of established practices and traditional principles, which are historically constructed (Greenhalgh, 2002a). There is, however, a further and interesting aspect of contemporary textile-making that

concerns its relationship with technology. Dormer (1997a: 168) describes 'a fluidity in the practice, design and art of woven textiles that enables textiles to fit easily with contemporary technology', something which requires consideration in relation to hands-on making. From an occupational science perspective people produce crafts to meet personal and social needs (Dickie and Frank 1996). Textiles for instance are produced for pleasure, personal expression and for economic reasons (Gale and Kaur 2002).

1.3: *Occupational science and textile-making*

In occupational science, textile-making as a form creative self-expression has been researched by Reynolds (1997, 2004) and Reynolds and Prior (2003a and b) in their phenomenological studies of women with chronic illnesses. Dickie (2003a), in an ethnography of American quilting guilds focused on the centrality of learning the craft in the context of a guild and in a later paper the importance of creativity as a part of the process of making (Dickie, 2004). Together with the work of Howell and Pierce (2000), who explored the restorative value of quilting, these authors offer considerable insight into the dimensions of textile-making as meaningful occupation and its relationship with well-being. By concentrating on textile-making as hand-craft, with a particular emphasis on weaving, spinning and dyeing as core activities of the guild, this study seeks to develop and extend this body of knowledge.

1.4: *Initial research question and aim*

Taking into account definitions of craft, my own experience as a textile-maker and the existing body of knowledge relating to textile-making as occupation, I initially questioned why people create textiles by hand, drawing on traditional and pre-industrial formats in the context of a post-industrial and technological society. The study evolves from an initial overall aim, exploring how people engage in creating and making textiles by hand individually and collectively, what it means to them in the context of contemporary British (particularly Welsh) and other influential cultures and a technological society and how this contributes to their quality of life, and personal and social well-being. The following section outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.5: *Thesis structure*

Through an inductive, iterative and reflexive approach to the thesis as a whole, I started in preparation for fieldwork with a broad exploration of the key concepts encompassed in the overall aim relating to occupation, its relationship with health and wellbeing, and the nature of craft and textiles from socio-cultural and historical perspectives. This leads in chapter two to some initial foreshadowing ideas. In chapter three through a critical analysis of existing theories of occupation, I examine the occupational elements of the foreshadowing ideas in more detail and identify some key philosophical perspectives. In chapter four I offer a justification for reflexive visual ethnography as an overarching research strategy and construct the methodological framework incorporating the use of constructivist grounded theory. Here I consider my role as a reflexive insider and complete member researcher and potential ethical issues together with how trustworthiness and quality are addressed. Chapter five details the nature of ethnographic data gathered during fieldwork and processes of analysis.

In chapters six to eleven I concentrate on the study's findings and in keeping with a grounded theory approach structure these around emerging categories and themes, drawing on existing theory and literature contextually. I begin with a description of the guild and its members as a socio-cultural group and the key influences on its development. This provides a foundation for constructing a theory of how textile-making is shaped by individuals with similar attributes who come together to share personal experiences and skills in a group such as the guild and how, through sustained occupational engagement and wider networking this can create capital for others to draw on as a means of enhancing quality of life and well-being. The concluding chapters draw together methodological and theoretical reflections and conclusions offering recommendations for further study.

Chapter two:

Contextualising occupation, craft and textiles

2: Introduction

In this chapter I consider the wider context in which the study is located, within the fields of occupational science and textile crafts. My intention here is to introduce the key issues and debates that may affect engagement in the crafts as a form of occupation in contemporary society rather than offer an exhaustive review of the literature. Taking an iterative approach to the study as a whole, I explore issues further as they emerge from fieldwork.

In part one I broadly explore occupational science terminology, the human need for occupational engagement from different perspectives and in relation to health and well-being. In part two, I consider the nature of creative handcrafts and the key influences, from historical and social perspectives, that have affected its status in contemporary society. In part three, I focus specifically on textile crafts, the occupational area for this study, and explore its cultural and social significance, considering the main issues that have affected the development of textile making as a form of occupation. Finally I establish some foreshadowing ideas that emerge from the literature and my own experience to provide a framework for developing the study's methodology and an initial guide for fieldwork.

Part one:

2.1: A human need for occupation

In her seminal lecture to the American Association of Occupational Therapists in 1961, Mary Reilly referred to man's vital need for occupation: it is the core component of occupational therapy and the focus of the more recent discipline of occupational science (Reilly 1962, Yerxa 1993). Occupation is the mechanism through which people fulfil basic human needs in order to survive and adapt to environmental change. It also provides the means for developing and exercising

human capacities and skills in order to maintain health. Individuals demonstrate their capacities by achievements that are of value to their society (Wilcock 1993, 1998).

There is much debate in the literature regarding meanings of the term *occupation.* In its broadest sense it refers to all purposeful activity in which humans engage, in the context of the family, community, society, culture and time (Yerxa 1993, Wilcock 1998, Keilhofner 2002). Such purposeful action is about 'doing', which conveys a 'sense of performing, producing or causing' (Fidler and Fidler 1978: 305). For Nelson (1988: 633) 'doing', which he refers to as 'occupational performance', can only be understood in terms of the environmental context in which it takes place that is in terms of its 'occupational form': the pre-existing structures that guide and elicit subsequent performance. Nelson describes occupation as 'dynamic', leaving an effect on the environment and performance affects form which in turn affects performance (637). People spend their lives in 'purposeful doing' (Wilcock 1998:22) and such 'doing' is goal-directed, repeatable and meaningful to the individual (McLaughlin Gray 1997).

In contrast to the view of occupation as purposeful activity, Pierce (2001: 139) separates the concept of occupation from activity. She regards occupation as specific to the individual, personally constructed, a non-repeatable experience. 'A person interprets his or her occupations before, during, and after they happen'; whereas activities are more general, descriptive categories with culturally shared, rather than personal meanings. Pierce contends that occupations are observable, but their meanings are individual and subjective. Hasselkus (2002: 17) concurs that occupation and meaning are intertwined, each contributing to the other across the lifespan. It as 'a strong enabler for knowing one's self' and knowing one's 'being'. However, it can also be 'the catalyst that enhances connection between people' (Hasselkus: 96). Hasselkus proposes that by focusing primarily on the 'doing' aspects of occupation, the occupational experience that contributes to the nurturing of well-being and development may be missed.

Moving beyond occupation as individual and subjective, it can be conceptualised as a socio-cultural phenomena. Virginia Dickie's work, for example, on craft-related occupations (Dickie 1996, 1998, 2003a and b) places more emphasis on the socio-

cultural and economic contexts of occupation. Drawing on Csikszentmihalyi (1996), Dickie (2003a: 121) uses the concept of a 'domain' to encompass 'the knowledge, actions and culture' of quilting as a form of occupation. This accounts for the historical influences and shared values amongst quilt-makers and could have relevance to this study where textile-making is explored in the context of a group of like-minded people. Frank (1996a) also takes a contextual view, pointing to the political use of craft and its cultural survival in post-industrial economies. Similarly Dickie and Frank (1996: 53) emphasise the personal, social and economic value of occupation, which can 'provide a voice for oppressed and dominated people and cultures'.

In summary occupation can be conceptualised as an individual phenomena where the emphasis is on personal experience or from a broader contextual perspective. There is a general consensus in the literature that engaging in occupation influences health and well-being.

2.1.2: *Occupational engagement: a contribution to health and well-being*

Occupational engagement can influence health and well-being both positively and negatively. Clarke, Wood and Larson (1998) point out that whereas some occupations are health promoting, others compromise health. An individual's experience of engagement in occupation influences their satisfaction with performance and intrinsic motivation (Yerxa 1993), consequently affecting their quality of life and perceptions of well-being. In proposing an occupational theory of human nature, based on the belief that humans have an innate need to engage in purposeful occupation related to health and survival, Ann Wilcock puts forward the following concepts:

- People engage in complex and self-initiated occupational behaviour because of a unique combination of biological features
- Engagement in occupation is essential to survival, as well an integral part of complex mechanisms for health maintenance (Wilcock 1993, 1998).

The World Health Organization's (WHO) broad definitions of health are commonly referred to in the literature on health promotion and occupational science. In 1948 they defined health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity' and in 1986 the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion described health as 'a resource for everyday life', not the objective of living. 'Health is a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities' (WHO 1986: 1, Seedhouse 2003). Despite such definitions, concepts of health and well-being appear to be somewhat elusive, defying a shared meaning, but depending on one's personal or theoretical perspectives. Crawford (1993: 142) argues that health is symbolic, giving expression to concepts of individual and social well-being, it can be seen as a metaphor for 'generalised well-being'

In putting forward a foundations theory for health, Seedhouse (2001: 103) takes an optimistic view, based on the assumption that people can change and improve themselves, their environments and consequently their quality of life. Seedhouse proposes that health cannot be isolated from what people do; a perspective that fits closely with occupational science, in that health and well-being are intimately linked with doing and with occupation. This fundamental belief is encompassed in the hypothesis:

> 'That man, through the use of his hands as they are energised by mind and will, can influence the state of his own health' (Reilly 1962: 88).

More recent theory of the human need for occupation proposes that the innate need for purposeful occupational engagement is related to health and survival (Wilcock 1993). Health, in Wilcock's (1998) view is a balance of physical, mental and social well-being that can be attained through individually meaningful and socially valued occupation. Individuals require opportunities to strive for potential and enhance their physical and mental capacities. For Wilcock, the health benefits of occupation are based on natural biological, rather than socio-culturally derived needs (Wilcock 1998, 1999, 2006).

Whilst Wilcock emphasises the biological connection between occupation, health and well-being, others place more emphasis on satisfaction and meaning derived from occupational engagement and its relationship with well-being (Nelson 1988, Yerxa 1998, Hasselkus 2002). Well-being is also related to a sense of identity through occupation (Christiansen 1999, Reynolds 1997). Indeed the subjective relationship between occupational engagement, identity and well-being appears pertinent to this study, which is concerned with textile-making as a chosen occupation, its individual and collective meanings.

A personal sense of well-being also comes from the excitement of challenge and the satisfaction of achievement (Fidler and Fidler 1978), and health comes from the ability to employ a 'repertoire of skills' in order to achieve personal purposes (Yerxa 1994: 587). Skills are an essential human capacity and a vital component of occupation (Yerxa 1993). From my personal experience, textile-making is a highly skilled form of occupation and requires mastery.

2.1.3: *Occupational mastery*

Mary Reilly's hypothesis (stated above) implies that 'man, through the use of his hands, can creatively deploy his thinking, feelings and purposes' (Reilly 1962: 87). This requires skill acquisition and problem-solving ability together with the development of mastery and competence through occupational engagement that in turn leads to an enhanced quality of life (Cynkin and Robinson 1990, Clarke et al 1998). A sense of competence comes from achieving an end product and having accomplished it from personal resources (Fidler and Fidler 1978).

In terms of Reilly's hypothesis skill capacities are intimately linked with the use of hands, 'finely tuned instruments for the reception of stimuli, for expression and communication, and for skilled performance' (Cynkin and Robinson 1990: 5). Hand dexterity and the human capacity to use hands as tools in their own right is a biological characteristic (Wilcock 1998) which, it can be argued, is fundamental to skilled craftsmanship.

2.1.4: *Section summary*

So far in this chapter I have broadly explored occupation from different theoretical perspectives and have considered the links between health and well-being, occupational engagement and occupational mastery. From this initial exploration of occupational science literature, it is possible to draw out some underlying themes concerning the nature of occupation:

- That occupation is about purposeful and goal-directed *doing* in the context of an individual's cultural and social environments
- That occupation in terms of *doing* is observable; its meanings are individual and subjective
- Occupation is embedded in historical and socio-cultural contexts
- That engagement in meaningful occupation influences individuals' perceptions of their own identity, well-being and consequently their quality of life
- Skill capacities are a vital component of occupation and a sense of achievement and well-being comes from mastery of a repertoire of skills.

In part two, I focus on creative handcrafts as a broad occupational domain and consider its meaning in the context of British contemporary society, drawing on the social and historical influences that have shaped the development of craft.

Part two:

2.2: What is meant by *craft*?

The word *craft* in contemporary society has multiple meanings. In his recent work *thinking through craft,* Adamson (2007: 4) conceives it as a process, 'a way of doing things' that exists in motion and incorporates a set of interrelated principles. In the context of late modern culture, Greehalgh (2002b: 1) describes the crafts as a 'consortium of genres' that make sense collectively for artistic, economic and institutional reasons. He defines the genre as 'a way of working; an established way

of making particular products using a set of technologies, processes and materials' (Greenhalgh 2002a: 18). Today, individuals who engage in 'genre-based' activities such as making ceramics, tapestry or glass have consciously chosen to express themselves through a set of established practices and traditional principles, which are historically constructed (Greenhalgh 2002b: 19). For the individual, working in the context of the genre, 'a craft is always exercised upon something, and aims at the transformation of this into something different' (Collingwood 1938: 16). In other words, there needs to be some form of raw or existing material, for example clay, wood, fibre or metal which is then crafted into something new.

In most craft genres there are rules and procedures to be assimilated regarding how to handle materials or equipment; this involves tacit knowledge and connoisseurship (a part of tacit knowledge) gained through experience that can be demonstrated and passed onto others (Dormer 1997b). The requirement for knowledge, or 'foreknowledge' as Collingwood (1938: 16) puts it, is fundamental. The end result of craftsmanship, Collingwood argues, is preconceived and thought out in advance; it is planned and executed utilising knowledge. The end result takes the form of a 'crafted object', which in Metcalf's (1997: 69) view, has the characteristics of being 'made by hand' through skilful labour, 'utilising the hand itself, hand tools and to some degree power tools' (Metcalf 1997: 70). In the early twenty first century computer technology may also plays a part – an area I will explore in more detail below.

Skilled craftsmanship, a form of occupational mastery, depends on the judgement, dexterity and care exercised by the maker (Pye 1995). In the process of mastering skills craftspeople develop a loyalty to their medium, responding to material in a way that reflects innate and individual capacities and sensitivities (Dormer 1997b, Metcalf 1997). When skills and capacities are exercised and utilised through meaningful occupation, then in Wilcock's (1998) view, there is the potential to maintain health and well-being.

Craft as I have described it so far is intimately bound up with making and making an object, through craft skill and craft labour, and is a deeply meaningful process for the craftsperson. For Dormer (1997c) this is not a trivial issue it offers intellectual, imaginative and sensory pleasure and can be the means through which an obsession or

idea is explored, or an end in itself As meaningful occupation, craft exists in a socio-cultural and historical context. In the following sections I consider the key historical and social influences on the development of craft.

2.2.1: *Key influences on the development of craft*

Craft, according to Lucie-Smith (1981: 11), 'is not only the story of man's increasing skill with materials and increasing power over the natural environment'; it also provides evidence of how society has developed. Craft has evolved through three distinct phases:

1. In pre-historic and early medieval times everything that was made was hand-crafted, whether utilitarian or decorative
2. From the Renaissance onwards there was an intellectual separation between craft and fine art, the latter was considered superior
3. The Industrial Revolution separated the crafted object from those made by machine – the industrial product (Lucie-Smith: 11).

In pre-historic times man's primary drive for survival and the basic needs of food, warmth and shelter shaped his occupations (Wilcock 2001) and consequently the early development of crafts as a means of meeting basic needs. Man developed an ability to craft tools and utilise them to prepare materials from the natural environment (Lucie-Smith 1981, Schoeser 2003). For instance, Schoeser (2003) describes how, as early as 20,000 BC, needles allowed skins and other found objects to be joined together and Walton (1936) refers to the use of animal sinews, flax, reeds and wool to make rudimentary shelters, baskets and nets.

Primitive crafts were part of a system of customs, ideas and beliefs, shaped by the societies in which they developed. There was also a division of labour according to sex (Lucie-Smith 1981), a topic I explore in more detail in part three of this chapter, with specific reference to textile production. The growth of cities, however, had the biggest impact on the development of craft. It was in the large communities that specialised hand-craftsmen could develop and organise themselves into guilds and fraternities (Lucie-Smith 1981).

2.2.2: *The development of craft guilds*

Craft communities and craft guilds can be traced back to the Roman Empire. As Durkheim (1957:17) puts it: 'the craft guild has been with us from the time that crafts first began and industry ceased to be purely agricultural'. The guilds appeared because crafts could not remain a domestic family affair; it became necessary to trade, supervise quality and pass on skills. The guilds were a group of producers with common interests and a shared commitment to their craft. Coming originally from religious and social fraternities, each guild had its own cohesiveness with its members sharing interests, knowledge and assumptions about their work and lives. Although the guilds were in practice hierarchical and gaps existed between rich and poor guildsmen, membership of a craft community gave a craftsman dignity and standing (Lewis 1978, Rosenband 2001).

Guilds began to flourish from the thirteenth century onwards, developing a professional character with regulating methods, apprenticeships, exclusive rights and acquiring funds to develop industry. Their association gave them powers to safeguard common interests (Durkheim 1957, Lewis 1978). Durkheim (1957: 21) describes a sense of 'brotherhood', where members looked after one another, communing together and sharing moral aims.

In Britain, as society became more literate, the establishment of academies and the rise of city corporations, as well as industry, diminished guild authority and by the early nineteenth century they had only nominal powers. By the end of the century these powers had been undermined in practice and the guilds' inability to transform led to their demise. This was the beginning of a new era for craft (Durkheim 1957, Fukuyama 1995, Schoeser 2003).

2.2.3: *The influence of industry*

The industrial revolution, Lucie-Smith (1981) argues, is often represented as a conflict between industry and craft, that is, the desire for quantity and uniformity over quality and individuality. It is also represents a radical change in ways of working, characterised by the division of labour. Greenhalgh (1997) points out that work and

the belief that the way people work, the conditions they work under and the way they make things is fundamental to societal well-being. This was a key area of political and economic debate in the nineteenth century. The debate hinged on the ideas of Victorian thinkers such as Thomas Carlyle, Karl Marx and where British Arts and crafts were concerned, John Ruskin, whose ideas were taken forward by William Morris with his vision of a better society through the need to engage in creative work (Greenhalgh 1997, Lucie-Smith 1981). From an occupational science perspective, the ideas of these nineteenth century social activists touch closely on the occupational nature of humans (Wilcock 2001).

2.2.4: *The Arts and Crafts Movement*

John Ruskin believed that art and society were inseparable; his ideas had a far reaching influence on the foundations of twentieth century culture (Birch 1999). Ruskin wanted individual workmen to have the position, independence and pleasures of the pre-industrial romantic artist. He raised questions about the enjoyment and pride of the craftsman in his work, something which, in his view had disappeared with the industrial revolution. His work, which emphasised communal responsibility, the dignity of labour and quality of life, shaped twentieth century conceptions, not only of the status of the craftsman, but also of education and leisure activity (Landow 1985).

Ruskin's view that architecture and craftsmanship should be judged according to the amount of freedom of expression allowed to the workman, strongly influenced William Morris (Naylor 2000), 'the greatest artist-craftsman of his period' (McCarthy 1994: vii), whose ideas and work inspired the Arts and Crafts Movement and the revival of rural craft (Wilcock 2001).

The theoretical basis of Morris's ideas stemmed from a 'hatred for mechanical civilisation' (Stansky 1983: 341). He held the humanistic view that the individual counted, both as a maker and as a user of objects (Stansky 1983). According to McCarthy (1994: vii) 'he was concerned with proper human occupation, whether going under the name of work or play'. He also saw the need for occupation to be health enhancing (Wilcock 2001). These sentiments are encompassed in his own words, spoken at a lecture on the 'lesser arts' to the Trade Guild of Learning in 1877:

> 'Nothing can be a work of art that is not useful; that is to say, which does not minister to the body when under command of the mind, or which does not amuse, soothe, or elevate the mind in a healthy state' (Morris 1877: 206)

Stansky (1983: 367) argues that Morris could clearly see the gap between work and life and his way of bridging that gap was to 'infuse production with a commitment to art' In fact the need for work to be pleasurable rather than a duty or a curse was central to Morris's thinking (McCarthy 1994). His vision of a better society was channelled through the need to engage in creative work, which in his view would 'improve the environment, lead to an equitable system of the distribution of wealth and generate psychologically fulfilled peoples' (Greenhalgh 1997: 34).

However, Morris's genius is, for Compton-Rickett (1912), in his own craftsmanship. It was during the 1870s that Morris became absorbed in textiles as a subject and his close involvement with materials and processes during this period gave him a 'new lease of creativity' (McCarthy 1994: 357). Morris clearly believed in a hands-on approach; McCarthy (1994) describes Morris's obsession with natural dyeing and his excitement about the process. As Lucie-Smith (1981: 210) puts it: 'Morris plunged with a will into the actual business of craftsmanship'. He firmly believed that the designer should not separate himself from the process of making, something he made clear to the Royal Commission on technical instruction: 'I think it is desirable that the artist and what is technically called the designer should practically be one' (Morris 1882: 212). From his letters to Andreas Scheu, co-founder (with Morris) of the Socialist League, it is clear that learning the theory and practice of weaving, dyeing and textile printing gave him a deep sense of satisfaction and enjoyment (Morris 1883).

Despite the success of Morris's firm, the Arts and Crafts Movement did not gather impetus until the 1880s through the work of a second wave of pioneers such as Arthur Mackmurdo and Robert Ashbee. Mackmurdo established the Century Guild, and Ashbee founded the Guild and School of Handicraft. Both were attempts to establish crafts in their own right and rival the fine arts, one of the distinguishing marks of the new movement (Lucie-Smith 1981, Cumming and Kaplan 1991).

The Arts and Crafts Movement in the early twentieth century also led to a revival of rural skills. Country workshops offered 'a reservoir of skills which often seemed to have been forgotten in town' (Lucie-Smith 1981: 214). Rural crafts represented the vernacular, 'the unselfconscious and collective products of a social group, unpolluted by outside influence' and as such were of symbolic importance to the founders of the Arts and Crafts Movement (Greehalgh 1997: 31). The movement's influence spread into Europe and America and its philosophy remained strong until the First World War (Lucie-Smith 1981, Greehalgh 1997), when the 'initial crusading spirit' lost momentum (Cumming and Kaplan 1991: 206). Although the movement did not achieve its aim of cultural regeneration, 'it provided a framework for recognising the contribution of the individual in an increasingly mass society' (Cumming and Kaplan: 207).

2.2.5: *Craft in the twentieth century*

Remnants of the Arts and Crafts philosophy survived in Britain in the inter-war years, notably amongst studio-craftspeople such as Bernard Leach, a potter, and Ethel Mairet, a handloom weaver (Lucie-Smith 1981, Greenhalgh 1997). Mairet considered hand-weaving at the time as a 'rediscovered craft' (Mairet 1939:12). She was concerned about the separation of art from craft and the consequences of the split, which was destroying the unity of the whole. Mairet describes how the Bauhaus in Germany had sought to remedy this by bringing together and co-ordinating arts and crafts with the ultimate goal of a 'composite but inseperable work of art' and students were encouraged to master not only their professional skills, but also themselves and their relationships with each other (Mairet 1939: 110). Although the Bauhaus was craft-orientated in its early period, with workshops led by distinguished artists / designer / craftsmen such as Joseph Albers and Paul Klee in stained glass and Anni Albers in tapestry, the emphasis lay on the political and ideological aspects of craft and design prototypes for production, moving away from hand-making (Lucie-Smith 1981, Greenhalgh 1997, Troy 1999).

During the early twentieth century, crafts, according to Greenhalgh (1997), were simultaneously expanding, fragmenting and fractionalising. The term *craft* entered common usage, but with different meanings, for instance the Bauhaus saw no

difference between the artist and craftsman, while the Woodcraft Folk Movement, introduced into Britain in 1925 by Ernest Thompson Seton, had a craft ethic with little use for art. The women's institutes promoted amateur craft as a skilled pastime with an emphasis on the preservation of rural and domestic craft (Greenhalgh 1997). In addition there was a development in studio craft, an attempt to rival the fine arts for the luxury and elite market: 'things done by hand because quality not quantity was the aim, and because only handwork could produce the results a wealthy and sophisticated elite demanded' (Lucie-Smith 1981: 258).

By the 1920s the traditional crafts were seen as things to be protected and fostered. There was a government sponsored Rural Industries Bureau and a developing network of craft guilds and societies, whose role was to promote and preserve craft skills (Lucie-Smith 1981). These guilds were also 'proof of the way in which handicrafts had been pushed to the margin in little more than a century' (Lucie-Smith 1981: 256). I will return to the role of craft guilds and specifically the Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers (AGWS&D) as the organisational context for this study in chapter six.

During the 1970s there was resurgence in the crafts. Mass consumerism became unattractive and there was concern for the effect of industrial processes on the environment together with a need to re-engage with raw materials (Lucie-Smith (1981: 274). Lucie-Smith describes two approaches to craft at the time in terms of class: artisans, who worked for a middle and upper-class clientele and country-based craftsmen, who had consciously elected rural craft as an alternative lifestyle: a response to a disillusionment with science and technology and the uncontrolled advance of industrialism (Greenhalgh 1997).

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries technology led to the re-distribution of human skills through machines, production and information systems. In the late twentieth, and now early twenty first centuries however, computer technology has taken this a step further (Dormer 1997d).

2.2.6: *Computer technology*

A debate concerning the interface between hand-craft skills and technology is present in contemporary craft literature. As Dormer (1997d: 103) put it:

> 'The computer, without in any way having to be intelligent, offers a means for mimicking the appearances of things we thought uniquely human, including the mark of the hand. This goes to the very heart of craft's justification for itself in the twentieth century'.

In Dormer's view computer technology offers a serious philosophical and practical challenge to craft, although it does not remove the importance of hands-on-making. Livingstone (2002: 37) describes a twentieth century obsession with 'the mark of the hand' and 'the relationship of the maker to the materials and the made object'. He argues that attitudes to craftsmanship should change in the twenty first century to embrace new technologies combined with or informed by traditional practices. Livingstone refers to the work of Japanese craftsmen and textile designers such as Issey Miyake and Minagawa who have utilised technology to created fabrics which re-interpret traditional Japanese techniques and keep traditions alive.

In the late twentieth century in textile crafts particularly, differences in work by hand and machine were becoming harder to distinguish and woven textiles became a natural candidate for computerisation (Dormer 1997c). From Dormer's interview with Ann Sutton, weaver, textile designer and textile artist, it is possible to see how the experience and knowledge that comes from making things by hand can be combined with the benefits of computer technology. Sutton has a 'personal-know-how' of craft experience that comes from hands-on-making which she has combined effectively with computerised distributed knowledge (Dormer 1997c: 145).

For Dormer, the pleasure that comes from making things and the complexities of know-how that comes from craft-making will continue in the face of technology (Dormer 1997c). Indeed the debate surrounding the use of technology in the crafts world is arguably one which engages professional designers and makers. However, an advantage of the machine and technological age is that most people enjoy more leisure time and as a result many people engage in craft making at an amateur level, a

further issue of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century (Lucie-Smith 1981, Greenhalgh 2002b).

2.2.7: *Amateurism*

The amateur sphere of crafts has, in Greenhalgh's (2002b: 6) view, come to symbolise the whole. Crafts have become imaged as 'a pleasurable way of filling time' or 'a subsistence practice done alongside other things'. He suggests that the reasons for this can be traced back to the nineteenth century, and Ruskin's ideas of a humane society, where a sense of being could be achieved through the process of making.

Amateur crafts gained strength in the 1970s and 1980s during the 'second arts and crafts movement' (Lucie-Smith 1981: 274). For the amateur, craft making can be seen as a leisure pursuit, or an additional means of earning money. Pye (1995: 136) describes the 'true amateur' as a part-time professional whose concerns are with quality of workmanship, which he distinguishes from the amateurish practices of 'do-it-yourelf'. Pye makes the point that the continuance of craft culture will depend on the true amateur, 'if the crafts survive, their work will be done for love more than for money, by men with more leisure to cultivate the arts' (Pye 1995: 138).

From the arguments put forward by David Pye and more recently Paul Greenhalgh, it would seem there is a continuum of craft making practices moving from amateurish work such as do-it-yourself and the use of recipes and kits, through the need for process over product to the striving for quality in workmanship pursued by the 'true amateur', and on to the continual search for new forms of practice that are the concern of the contemporary professional designer / maker. The extent to which crafts are creative could depend partly on where their practice is placed on this continuum.

2.2.8: *Creativity and the crafts*

The separation of craft from art and design, that is the 'theoretical division between the intellect who worked with his head and the artisan who worked with his hands' has its roots in the Renaissance (Lucie-Smith 1981: 163) and has led to the evolution of social attitudes that still prevail in contemporary western culture. The separation of

having ideas from making objects has led to the view, in the visual arts world, that craft can get in the way of creativity (Dormer 1997b). So when is craft creative?

Creativity is about seeing beyond the immediate situation, being able to redefine problems and ultimately produce something new in response to an open-ended task (Kneller 1966, Sternberg 1988). In terms of the classic analytical framework, the creative process involves preparation and immersion in problematic issues that arouse curiosity; incubation, or churning around ideas; insight – the 'aha' moment when ideas fit together; evaluation or decisions about whether the idea is worth pursuing, and finally elaboration, that is, putting it together and making it work (Wallas 1926, Kneller 1966, Csiksentmihalyi 1996). This iterative process is particularly important in the design stage of a project where, if something new is to emerge, pre-planning is essential (Sutton and Sheehan 1989). However, if craft making is considered as a separate entity from art and design, a means to an end through utilising technical skill and craft knowledge (Collingwood 1938, Dormer 1997b), then arguably it is not always creative.

As well as the presence of a process of creativity, Csiksentmihalyi (1996: 6) proposes that creativity results from an interactive system composed of three elements: 'a culture that contains symbolic rules, a person who brings novelty into the symbolic domain and a field of experts who recognise and validate the innovation'. In the case of hand-woven textiles, for example, by rigorously applying the rules of weaving a weaver can produce a technically sound, but serviceable cloth, or through re-considering rules, lateral thinking and imagination a magical and innovative cloth can result (Sutton and Sheehan 1989). Only the latter might be considered creative. The field of experts who judge whether or not the cloth is innovative might include textile connoisseurs, collectors, academics, makers and designers.

In summary, craftsmanship can, in the traditional sense, be considered technical and skill-based, a separate entity from art and design. Or, craft, art and design can be seen as blending together, with creativity arising from lateral thinking, rule breaking and imagination. Therefore creative craftsmanship will depend to a large extent on personal potential which for most people requires 'incubation, education, diligence, nurturing and opportunity' (Wilcock 1998: 61). In contemporary society however,

Greenhalgh (2002c) argues that the coming together of lateral and vertical modes of creativity will lead to further interaction in the visual arts and crafts.

2.2.9: *A contemporary view of craft*

Interdisciplinary approaches to craft are, in Greenhalgh's (2002c) view, the key to the next phase of modernity. The possibility for blending art with science allows contemporary craftspeople to freely mix and match different processes in accordance with their 'artistic vision' (Gale and Kaur 2002: 66). Although the roles of designer, maker and artist are becoming blurred, Gale and Kaur point out that the perceived differences between art and craft is still an issue and the word *craft* still carries a stigma in some circles. They describe the craftsperson's work as arising from an affinity with materials and process-based practice, whereas the textile artist, for instance, is more conceptually based, producing work comparable with fine art. In their view, 'craftspeople carry a high level of unspoken, implicit knowledge', which is being utilised to break down the barriers between art and craft (Gale and Kaur 2002: 67). As Dormer (1997a: 175) puts it, textile practitioners in particular now 'explore and exploit craft as a means of making art'.

2.2.10: *Section summary*

In part two I have explored the ways in which the meaning of crafts as genre-based activities in contemporary society have been shaped by historical and social events. The rapid development of industry and technology in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries led not only to the re-distribution of craft knowledge and skills, but also a growth in the amateur crafts as a consequence of increasing amounts of leisure time. In the twenty first century, technology now offers opportunities for blending art and science for the creative, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural development of craft.

As a form of meaningful occupation, engagement in the crafts involves the development and mastery of skills. In addition crafts can be highly creative, but the degree of creativity involved will depend on individual potential. In the following sections I will concentrate on one area of craft, textile-making, the occupational focus for this study.

Part Three:

2.3: Textile Crafts

The term *textile* originates from the latin verb *texere,* meaning to weave or to plait. The products of textile craft have, throughout history, catered for the human need for protection, clothing, and decoration (Geijer 1979, Colchester 1991). In order to illustrate the fundamental importance of textiles in fulfilling every human need from basic survival to spirituality, Gale and Kaur (2002) refer to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1968). In their words:

> 'Textiles provide fundamentals such as warmth and protection; they help us to identify with one another and can signal social status and role. For those who work in textiles, it is possible to develop pride in one's craft and to explore a world of endless material opportunities, to create something of stunning beauty. Finally, for textiles professionals their work can become their vocation, their identity inseparable from their practice'. (Gale and Kaur 2002: 3).

As a craft discipline, textiles incorporates techniques such as embroidery, knitting, weaving, spinning, felting, dyeing and basketry (Colchester 1991, Gale and Kaur 2002). Textile making, for Schoeser (2003: 7) is both complex and 'revealing of human ingenuity'. As Schoeser points out it can involve the creation of the 'ingredients', that is, the creation of yarn from raw fibre or natural dye from plants as well as utilising natural materials such as willow for basket making and wool for felting. In fact throughout history few materials have escaped inclusion in making textiles; Lewis (1978) describes how skin, wood and even human hair was used in ancient times. Originally fabrics were a by-product of agriculture and in medieval English households, wool from a flock of sheep was spun into yarn and woven into fabric for domestic use. In this way textile crafts have an intimate relationship with the environment and nature (Walton 1936). Today this relationship also extends to science and industry through the use of materials such as rubber, polyester, aluminium and fibre optics (Hoggard 2004). The late artist weaver Theo Moorman wrote towards the end of her life: 'there must be few, if any, crafts in which so much inspiration lies in the very beauty and diversity of the raw materials at our disposal' (Moorman 1990: 30).

Textiles have 'almost limitless potential for communication' and the expression of issues such as poverty, opulence, social status and sexuality (Schneider and Weiner 1988: 1). They also have a strong relationship with language, with terms such as 'weave' and 'spin' being used in literature as metaphor and allegory, and in descriptive prose (Koslin 2002). Ligon (2004: 8) points out that 'we use weaving and spinning as metaphors for life because weaving and spinning connect us to a rich past ... because weaving and spinning connect our brains to our very own hands...weaving and spinning connect us to each other'. Indeed, textile metaphors appear in a diverse range of literature with, for example, society being described as a 'fabric' and social relations as 'threads' (Schneider and Weiner 1988: 2). I found an interesting and somewhat apt example in Deegan's (2001: 13) discussion of the of the Chicago School of Ethnography, where the students of Robert Park and Ernest Burgess '*wove* a *theoretical tapestry* in which *patterns* emerged and reinforced each other for more than four decades' (my italics). Early differentiations in skilled occupation in the textile industry can also be traced in English surnames, for instance Shearer, Webster, Weaver (Walton 1936); a strong indication that textiles are, from many perspectives, an integral part of our heritage and of human culture.

2.3.1: *Textiles and culture*

Textile crafts along with agriculture can be traced back to the beginning of any civilisation (Mairet 1939). Textiles had a place in every society they became one of the earliest tradable commodities and textile craft skills were widely shared and communicated. In fact throughout history textiles have provided 'a perfect vehicle' for establishing, expressing and maintaining cultural identity (Gale and Kaur 2002: 91) and, as an aspect of cultural production, textiles reflect the attitudes and beliefs of the societies that produce them. Indeed fabric has remained central to human culture, holding its position at the forefront of technological and artistic development (Colchester 1991). As the master Japanese weaver, Junichi Arai (1989: 8) puts it: 'mankind has throughout history been deeply concerned with fabric, from the cloth we are wrapped in at birth to the cloth we are wrapped in at death'. In between birth and death the clothes we wear, as well as reflecting our culture and arguably our social status, are a projection of the self – 'an integral part of the way we view

ourselves and project our personality, taste or simply our mood on a certain day.' (Colchester 1991:141).

In contemporary culture the creation of textiles is an extension of the desire to decorate not only the body, but also the home (Graves 2002). Textiles have a central place in differentiating and personalising space and creating a sense of place fulfils both psychological and spiritual needs as well as physical requirements for comfort and protection. Larsen (1989) argued that furnishing fabrics gained importance in contemporary society because many aspects of life were conformist and mass-produced, including housing. In considering the importance of textiles in contemporary culture, Dormer (1997a: 173) points out that it is important not to overlook the use of textiles in the domestic environment by amateurs: 'with the exception of do-it-yourself no other craft has such a widespread domestic presence'. Here, Dormer is referring to the use of manufactured cloth for home sewing and dressmaking rather than the creation of cloth by craftspeople, but it illustrates the broad interest in textiles as a whole. Textile making, textile products and their utilisation will also have different cultural, social and individual meanings.

2.3.2: *Textiles and meaning*

All humans have an ordinary and familiar relationship with cloth (Gale and Kaur 2002) and the individual's cultural and social domains will influence the meaning of that relationship (Schneider and Weiner 1988). Indeed cloth and its decoration have symbolic meaning in the context of the culture in which it is produced and used. It can represent authority, wealth, birth and death (Schneider and Weiner 1988). As Gale and Kaur (2002: 10) put it: 'Textiles reach the senses, they provoke and draw on memories'. Where textiles are concerned, the senses of touch and smell are as important as seeing in evoking memories and meanings.

Textiles are also produced for pleasure, as a hobby and for personal self-expression (Gale and Kaur 2002). Dormer (1997a: 175) also points out that more women than men tend to take an interest in textiles, and 'they form an audience of connoisseurs'.

2.3.3: *Gender*

In many societies 'cloth is more closely connected with women than with men' (Schneider and Weiner 1988: 20). This stems from the traditions established in primitive societies where a particular craft generally remained the province of one sex. Domestic crafts were carried out by women whereas; if a craft became a means of earning a living for the family it was a male pursuit (Lucie-Smith 1981). In pre-industrial societies women developed roles in and around the home taking up categories of work appropriate to the domestic environment and compatible with the simultaneous demands of childcare (Brown 1970). Textile related crafts suited the domestic environment and women could spin and sew because these activities did not suffer unduly from being interrupted, could be resumed at any point and were, like the preparation of food, relatively child-safe. Most of a woman's day was spent on textile-related activities; wool preparation and spinning, an occupation which could be carried out in almost any circumstances, kept most of the working-class women in British society busy throughout the year (Lucie-Smith 1981, Wayland Barber 1994, Valenze 1995, Gale and Kaur 2002). By the eighteenth century, however, following the introduction of the Saxony spinning wheel, spinning became a common occupation for women of all ages and classes (Pinchbeck 1930), 'whether for practical purposes or simply in the cultivation of virtue' (Valenze 1995: 68).

The sexual division of labour characterised most forms of domestic textile production before industrialisation, with the husband/father as head of the household leading the domestic economy as weaver and his wife carrying out the preparatory processes. Consequently, women and girls were traditionally identified with preparing and spinning fibres and yarns in wool, cotton and silk manufacture and men were established as master weavers (Dibb 1945, Lown 1990, Valenze 1995). However, this is not to say that women did not weave, many women in the eighteenth century assisted their husbands where two workers were needed to weave household linen and flannel and by the end of the century there were a growing number of women apprentices and journeymen, although mostly working under male supervision (Pinchbeck 1930).

Industrialisation in the late eighteenth century eventually led to the replacement of spinning and handloom weaving as cottage industries by mill manufacture. Where spinning was concerned, an occupation identified with women, mechanisation led to production managed, supervised and carried out largely by men in the early industrial period, with women being employed to carry out the less skilled preparatory work (Valenze 1995). As Pinchbeck (1930: 147) points out the transition from hand to machine happened first in the cotton industry where the spinning jenny was introduced in the mid to late eighteenth century: 'within the space of one generation, what had been women's hereditary occupation was radically changed, and the only class of women spinners left were the unskilled workers in the new factories'.

By the mid-nineteenth century, although most women in paid employment were occupied in domestic service, agriculture and garment-making, almost a quarter of all occupied women were concerned with textile production and with the introduction of the power loom in the late nineteenth century, weaving increasingly became a women's trade (Pinchbeck 1930, Lown 1990, Valenze 1995).

Industrialisation did not lead to the total collapse of domestic skills. Lucie-Smith (1981) points out that handcrafts were still widely practiced in the home, mostly by women, out of necessity in the lower economic classes, but as a pastime in higher social circles. He argues that because educated women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were denied the same intellectual satisfactions as men through engagement in business or politics, craftwork provided an outlet for their creative energies.

In contrast then to women's involvement in textile production for economic and functional reasons, in the socially influential circles, needlework and embroidery became acceptable occupations for more privileged and educated women. Embroidery in particular is not concerned with function but with embellishment and was therefore an indication of wealth and status: 'the pursuit of embroidery or tapestry was seen to be ladylike, dignified and a sign of virtuous womanhood' (Gale and Kaur 2002: 8). Such occupation offered proof of gentility and man's ability 'to support a leisured woman' (Parker and Pollock 1981: 61)

Textiles have largely retained their reputation as a feminine craft (Gale and Kaur (2002). In the 1970s a growth in feminism led to a re-assessment of and revival in the domestic crafts, particularly quilting and embroidery, which were seen by some women as political media because both crafts were unsullied by men. 'The skill-based techniques indicated the degree of care involved in these crafts, whilst the collaboration between women expressed a selflessness at odds with the competitive, egocentric individuality of male artists' (Colchester 1991: 106). Today, according to Gale and Kaur (2002: 10), the majority of textile design courses are populated by women. They argue that the reason is primarily one of social construction: 'a familiar and accepted belief'.

2.3.4: *Contemporary textiles*

Textiles share, in common with other craft genres, an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach to design and making in contemporary society (Greenhalgh 2002a, Gale and Kaur 2002), in Japan for instance, where there is a rich textile tradition, craft is held in high esteem (Colchester 1991, Imai 2002). The world-renowned Japanese Nuno Corporation is an example of how designers /artists / craftspeople draw on traditional practices, science and technology to produce highly creative cloths for a global market (Colchester 1991, Schoeser 2003).

In Britain, the work of textile designer / maker Ann Sutton is evidence of how orthodox boundaries between disciplines have been successfully challenged. Sutton has, throughout her fifty year career, utilised textile techniques to produce highly creative and innovative work (Sheehan 2003). However, the continual blurring of boundaries, mixing media and skills makes it difficult for some designer / makers to identify firmly with a particular genre. Sharon Marston's work is a case in point. Marston, like Sutton, has a sensibility for textiles but studied jewellery and now designs lighting using textile techniques to create innovative three-dimensional effects (Jackson 2004).

The examples I have used so far, illustrate trends in professional textile practice today, but it is important to remember that textile practice as a whole incorporates many different levels and varieties of work (Gale and Kaur 2002). For instance, a

body of craftspeople exist whose main interests are the practice and preservation of traditional textile craft skills and who strive for quality. Their work is evident through the activities of the guilds, whose membership includes people with a diverse range and level of skills and who form the main focus of this study (Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers 2004).

2.4: Conclusion

Textiles have, throughout history, had a deep association with the fulfilment of human needs from warmth and protection to the need for decoration, expression of cultural identity and an individual's status in society. Textiles also have a strong relationship with the natural environment and with agriculture through the use of a variety of raw materials in their making. Throughout a rich and varied history, textile-making has been strongly associated with domesticity and with women and my personal observations at conferences, workshops and guild events, together with a review of the current literature, indicate that this is still the case. Particular craft skills also have a relationship to class, for instance spinning in pre-industrial times, because of the functional need for thread, developed as a working class occupation whereas embroidery, which was associated with embellishment rather than function became a middle and upper class leisure pursuit. Textiles also offer a means of communication and have a strong relationship with language. Their meanings are culturally, socially and temporally constructed.

Textiles as a craft genre, has, in the same way as other genres, developed in response to societal and cultural change. Textile-making and particularly the domestic crafts of spinning and weaving, were amongst the first to be mechanised as a result of the industrial revolution and now, in the twenty first century, science, engineering and computer technology have opened up extensive possibilities for creative and innovative textile production for individual artist / designer / craftsperson as well as for industry.

Engagement in the textile crafts as a form of occupation requires, in common with other crafts, the mastery of skills and development of knowledge, which can be achieved through practice, education or, for people who belong to a guild by engaging

with like-minded others. But it also requires a certain sensibility, an affinity for materials such as fibre and yarn.

The relationship between occupational engagement in textile-related crafts and health and well-being has changed over time. In pre-industrial societies engagement in spinning and weaving meant long hours of work in poor conditions for working class people and in early industrial societies conditions in the mills were hazardous to health. In contemporary society, where individuals choose to engage in the crafts, this relationship is likely to have personally constructed meanings.

From my initial exploration of the literature on the human need for occupation; the social and historical influences that have shaped craft in contemporary society and the key issues that influence textile crafts as meaningful occupation together with my own experience of textile-making, I have identified the following foreshadowing ideas (Delamont 2004) that will provide a framework for developing the methodology and an initial, flexible guide for fieldwork:

- Engagement in textile-making as a form of occupation is concerned with purposeful and goal-directed doing that involves the mastery of skills and the development of specific knowledge. It is a tangible and visible form of occupation that might be carried out alone or with others and in different environments
- Active participatory membership of a group such as a guild could influence how individual skills are developed and mastered.
- The choice to make textiles appears to be related to one's sensibility and affinity for handling materials
- Textile-making has individual and subjective meanings that are socially, culturally and temporally constructed
- There are issues around gender and textile-making that are evident from its history and appear significant today
- Choosing to engage in textile-making as a purposeful and meaningful occupation, individually and collectively may influence one's sense of identity, well-being and quality of life.

Finally, my own knowledge and experience of textile-making cannot be separated from this study. I am a guild member and as Adler and Adler (1987: 66) put it: an insider, 'a complete member'. I intend to utilise my experience and my participation in a transparent and reflexive way rather than attempt to put it to one side. I will discuss these issues further in chapters three and four.

Chapter three:

Deconstructing occupation: a foundation for research design

3: Introduction

In chapter two, through an initial exploration of the literature concerning the nature of occupation, craft and textile making in British society, I identified that engagement in textile crafts as individual or shared occupation requires knowledge, skills and sensitivity to materials. I discussed the gendered nature of textile making; the historical and social impact of the mechanisation and industrialisation on textile crafts and the possibilities now arising from engineering, science and computer technology. I concluded that textiles as a craft genre have responded and adapted to societal and cultural change. Consequently the relationship between engagement in textile crafts and health and well-being has also changed over time. Finally I established some emerging and foreshadowing ideas (chapter two 2: 4).

The occupational aspects of the foreshadowing ideas are broadly in keeping with Hocking's (2000a) analysis of trends and focuses in occupational science research, in that occupation is culturally embedded, has social and personal meanings, is performed, controlled and has a temporal nature. It may also be influenced by gender and contributes to a sense of identity and well-being. With reference to studies carried out by Dickie and Frank 1996, and Gilbert 1996, Hocking also points out that traditional craft work is recognised as expressing and preserving cultural identity.

The overall aim of this study is to explore how people engage in creating and making textiles by hand individually and collectively, what it means to them in the context of contemporary British (particularly Welsh) and other influential cultures and a technological society and how this contributes to their quality of life, sense of identity, and personal and social well-being. In this chapter, through a process of deconstructing the literature (Denzin 2001) relating to existing theories of occupation and my experience of textile-making prior to fieldwork, I analyse in more detail the following key elements from the foreshadowing ideas that influence the study's design: occupational engagement; skill development and mastery; occupation and its

subjective meanings; the social, cultural, temporal and historical aspects of occupation and the influence of gender on occupation.

3.1: *Exploring occupational engagement*

The theory of the human need for occupation proposed by Ann Wilcock (1993, 1998, 2006) is based on a belief that humans have an innate need to engage in purposeful occupation and that this is related to health and survival. Occupational engagement also enables humans to develop and hone their skills and capacities and respond flexibly to new situations (Wilcock 1998). Occupation is described in chapter two as purposeful and goal-directed *doing* (Fidler and Fidler 1978, Nelson 1988); taking this further Persson and Erlandsson (2002: 97) argue that in occupational science 'doing is conceived as an existential prerequisite for being human'. Humans' ability to choose, and to selectively engage in particular occupations also defines them as individuals with a sense of self (Harvey and Pentland 2004, Christiansen and Townsend 2004). Such occupational choices are, according to Davis and Polatajko (2004: 93) influenced by individuals' innate cognitive, affective, and physical abilities as well as by their preferences, values, and lifestyles, and in addition by the physical, cultural, social and institutional environments where occupational engagement takes place.

3.2: *Occupational form and performance*

The directly observable aspects of occupation are referred to by Clarke et al (1998) as occupational form: that is the 'pre-existing structure that elicits, guides, or structures subsequent human performance' (Nelson 1988: 633). Nelson, according to Wu and Lin (1999), attempted to address the multi-dimensional nature of occupation by describing it as the relationship between form and performance. Clark et al (1998) argue that occupational performance, which consists of 'the human actions taken in response to an occupational form' (Nelson 1988: 633), is also observable and therefore part of it. For Clarke et al (1998: 16) studies in occupational form are concerned with 'what people do and the circumstances under which they do it in relation to time, space, and performance'. This study is indeed concerned with the multi-dimensional nature of textile-making and consequently the relationship between, as Nelson describes it, occupational form and performance. An important

aspect of this concerns the development and mastery of skills in varying environmental contexts.

3.3: *Exploring skill development and mastery*

Occupational engagement, according to Yerxa et al (1990), is about taking control. Having control 'over the occupation, its materials, equipment and processes' is implicit in the concept of mastery; this includes the 'capacity for expert knowledge and skill, the development and maintenance of expertise, and excellence in performance' (Westhorp 1994:38). Full mastery over one's self and the environment represents the highest level, achievement, on a continuum of occupational function from exploration through competence to achievement (Mŭnoz and Keilhofner 1995:346). At this level individuals must strive to maintain and enhance identifiable standards of excellence in occupational performance. Such a level of self-mastery also depends on understanding and knowing oneself (Westhorp 1994: 39) and can be developed in a particular occupation, for instance by master craftspeople.

Craft can be considered as 'the mastery of material' (Constantine and Larsen 1985: 8). Where textile-making is concerned, and from my own experience of the crafts of spinning and weaving particularly, there is a high degree of control through the development and mastery of skills and craft knowledge that take time to acquire (Sutton 1982, Metcalf 1997, Gale and Kaur 2002).

3.4: *Occupational performance skills*

Skills develop and improve with experience and can be conceptualised as 'a feature of what one does' (Fisher and Keilhofner 1995: 113). Here Fisher and Keilhofner refer to observable performance skills consisting of 'discrete behavioural elements'(Fisher and Keilhofner 1995: 113). It is also important to remember that the individual will assess his / her own perceived degree of skill in relation to an occupational challenge and will attach meaning to it (Yerxa et al 1990). Individuals may also strive to fulfil their occupational potential through exercising control and choice over what they do and how it is done (Wicks 2001, Reynolds 2004). For instance where textiles are concerned individual makers may choose to develop and master skills in particular

areas of the craft, or even combine skills in creative and new ways. The biography of textile designer/maker Ann Sutton (Sheehan 2003) and the life and work of Theo Moorman as an artist weaver (Diaper 1992) offer clear examples of this. Developing an understanding of how such skills are acquired and honed requires research into the nature of the learning, problem-solving and creative processes involved (Reilly 1962).

3.5: *Matching occupation with personal characteristics*

A further aspect of occupation which appears pertinent to this study and indeed textile making in general, involves the match between personal characteristics and those of a chosen activity (Fidler 2000: 100). Where this match is optimal, Fidler describes 'person-activity congruence', which appears in keeping with the theory that personal values and interests will depend on one's sensitivities, for instance, the textile craftsperson has a natural affinity for texture and handling fibres and fabric (Metcalf 1997, Gale and Kaur 2002). Fidler extends this concept to group-activities where experiences such as a sense of cohesion, motivation, and excitement emerge when activity interests are shared and focused. This may well apply to a group such as a guild of weavers, spinners and dyers. The potential of this group to promote such experiences and its role in developing individual craft skills is one of the key concerns of this study.

3.6: *Section summary*

From the discussion so far it would seem that the aspects of occupational form, function and performance proposed by Nelson (1988) and reiterated by Clark et al (1998) are inseparable. They add that the nature of occupation cannot be understood without considering its meanings. In other words an understanding of the 'experience' of occupational engagement is required (Yerxa et al 1990: 9) together with the meaning it holds for the individual in the contexts in which it occurs (Yerxa 1994).

3.7: *Occupation and its subjective meanings*

Meanings are personally and socially derived, coming from the individual's personal values, history, community and culture (Hasselkus 2002: 3). The context in which

occupation occurs forms the background that shapes the meanings of individuals' life events (Russel 2001: 10). For Christiansen and Townsend (2004:8) occupations are part of people's life stories and gain meaning over time. In this way occupation helps create our identity (Christiansen 1999, Hasselkus 2002) and research into the meaning of occupation is concerned with 'the significance of occupation within the context of real lives and in the culture' (Clarke et al 1998: 17).

In Nelson's terms meaningfulness relates to the individual's interpretation of occupational form, that is the external circumstances that guide or structure occupational performance. He adds that meaning may not conform to socio-cultural expectations or norms (Nelson 1988: 635). Nelson describes meaning as perceptual and symbolic. He explains perceptual meaning as an active process involving the sensory motor system in interpreting the physical environment, whereas symbolic meaning derives from interpretation of the socio-cultural aspects of the environment. In addition meanings are also an emotional experience (Nelson 1994, Nelson and Jepson-Thomas (2003). In Nelson's view then, 'meaning is a lived, felt experience at a particular time' (Nelson 1994: 22).

3.8: *A phenomenological view of occupation*

Individuals' subjective meanings are generally considered in the occupational science literature from a phenomenological perspective. McLaughlin Gray (1997) points out that a phenomenological method can be useful to investigate the essence of the human experience of meaningful occupation as a vital part of daily life. Reynolds and Prior (2003a), for instance, explored the meaning of textile art for women with chronic illness and disability and the lived experiences of women with multiple sclerosis using interpretive phenomenological enquiry (Reynolds and Prior 2003b). Through the use of in-depth interviewing Reynolds (2004) explored the phenomenological features of textile art and its influences on well-being for people with long-term illnesses.

Michael Barber (2004) offers further insight into the usefulness of phenomenology to occupational science through a discussion of how phenomenologists have contributed to the understanding of occupation, drawing on the works of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Schutz. Through Barber's analysis it is possible to see how phenomenological

theories could be applied to the meaning of textile-making from the perspective of the maker. Husserl's foundation for phenomenology, in Barber's view emphasises the 'first-person point of view' (Barber 2004: 106), the individual's perspective (Zahavi 2003), which occupational science emphasises as important for an understanding of meaningful occupation (Barber 2004).

Alfred Schutz's phenomenological theory of how individuals experience action and what action means to the individual appears relevant to textile-making. For instance, one can observe the complex actions involved when an individual spins or weaves and can place such action in the context of meaning by naming it, but for Schutz the individuals' meaning of that action is its 'corresponding projected act' (Schutz 1967: 61). In simple terms a spinner spins in order to produce a fine thread which may later be woven into cloth, where the thread and the cloth are planned and projected acts. It is rational and goal-oriented action with an intention in mind, known to the actor, but invisible to the observer. The meaning of such action can be elicited through reflection (Schutz 1967).

There is also a level of activity, as Barber (2004: 108) describes it, which is 'beneath the level of intellectual reflection'. Here Barber puts forward Merleau-Ponty's findings on operational intentionality as a way of presenting a participant's experience of action. Barber describes such intentionality as automatic and habitual, using examples from Dickie's (2003a) study of quilters where, after a period of learning, individuals develop hand-eye coordination to use the tools required to make a quilt. The actions are also implemented deliberately for a particular purpose. However, as Barber points out, these activities often operate 'beneath the threshold of deliberate, self-conscious planning' and can be easily overlooked, especially individual's experience of them (Barber 2004: 108). This view of action also appears pertinent to some aspects of textile-making where, in my experience, habitual, repetitive and automatic patterns exist when using equipment such as spinning wheel or weaving loom.

It is evident from the discussion so far that there are aspects of the phenomenological approach that can inform the design of this study, but from an epistemological stance there are also potential contradictions. Schwandt (2003: 300) points out that 'in

interpretive traditions the interpreter objectifies (stands over and against) that which is to be interpreted' and 'remains unaffected by and external to the interpretive process'. In other words there is an emphasis on human subjectivity but without sacrificing the objectivity of knowledge (Schwandt 2003: 298). As an insider researcher I bring my own concepts and questions into the research (Heidegger 1962, Denzin 2001). I am also a participant and consider that interpretations are constructed from my own and others' experiences. As Schwandt (2003: 301) puts it 'understanding is participative', a view commensurate with hermeneutics rather than the pure phenomenological approach to understanding occupation outlined by McLaughlin Gray (1997) and Barber (2004).

3.9: *The potential of Hermeneutics*

Hermeneutics emphasises the relationship between lived experience and the social context by bringing together three elements: the researcher's 'lived experience, objectification and documentation of others' lived experience and the social context in which both originate' (Whincup 2004: 87). As Gadamer (1975: 269) puts it, 'we are always within the situation' and bring ourselves into it in order to understand others. In other words the researcher is part of the hermeneutic circle of understanding alongside the subject (Denzin 2001) and interpretation is a process of 'moving between one's own perspective and the perspective of the other person' (Ezzy 2002: 27). Therefore my pre-existing knowledge, experience and interpretations of textile-making as a form of occupation can be taken into account whilst remaining open to others' meanings (Gadamer 1975).

3.10: *A symbolic interactionist view of occupation*

A further way of considering the meaning of occupation, proposed by Hocking (1997) and Wright-St Clair (2003), is through symbolic interactionist theory. Blumer (1969: 2) describes the nature of symbolic interactionism as coming from three premises: that people act towards things on the basis of the meaning they have for them; that the meaning is derived from or arises from one's social interactions with others and that meanings are modified through an interpretive process. In Wright-St Clair's study of women living with multiple sclerosis the symbolic interactionist process occurred as

people modified their actions in response to illness. Hocking (1997) proposed through a person-object interaction model that objects are given meaning through a process of symbolic interaction and may contribute to the development of occupational roles. Taking Hocking's perspective, symbolic interactionist theory can be considered in relation to textile-making in that the maker, through a process of self-interaction, interacts closely with objects in the form of tools, equipment and materials, which are likely to hold symbolic meanings.

There is however, a further aspect of symbolic interactionism which appears pertinent to this study in that it 'sees meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact' (Blumer 1969: 3). It offers a view of human action that can be applied to collective action by a group or an organisation. This study is concerned with the meaning of textile-making for individuals who also belong to a guild where they share common interests and engage in joint action. Such joint action, whether new or established, arises from a background of participants' previous action, such that there is always a connection and continuity with the past (Blumer 1969: 20). In addition individuals come to that group with their own socio-cultural background and different life experiences which will also have a bearing on collective action and its meaning.

3. 11: *Section summary*

I have briefly explored some key theoretical perspectives used by occupational scientists to explore meaning in relation to occupation. A phenomenological perspective offers a way of uncovering the individual's unique experience of occupation and its subjective meaning; whereas hermeneutics places the researcher and the other within the interpretive circle. From a symbolic interactionist perspective occupation can be understood in terms of its performance, with reference to the objects involved and their meaning to the individual performer (Hocking 1997). It also offers a way of understanding collective action and how occupations are performed and constructed in and by a group. Taking into account Nelson's (1994) view that meaning in relation to occupation is both perceptual and symbolic; it would seem that methodologically each perspective has a place in informing this study,

bearing in mind that an individual's meaning of textile-making is linked to the socio-cultural context in which it takes place.

3.12: *Exploring the historical, temporal and socio-cultural aspects of occupation*

There is a general consensus in the occupational science literature that occupation is shaped by society, culture, history and time (Clarke et al 1998, Christiansen and Townsend 2004, Harvey and Pentland 2004). In Davis and Polatajko's (2004: 102) view humans' physical and social environments are constructed by their historical, temporal and cultural contexts. They argue that 'historical trends and circumstances shape culture and influence the individual's development of values, beliefs, preferences, lifestyles and skills'. In this way occupation can be seen as a socio-cultural phenomenon that has contextually shared beliefs and understandings (Hocking 2000a, Dickie 2003a).

For Nelson (1988: 633) the socio-cultural environment is a dimension of occupational form which precedes occupational performance in time. He argues that the relationship between them is dynamic rather than deterministic and will depend on individual meaning; purposefulness and prior occupational performance. Therefore a dynamic view of occupation must also take into account its temporal aspects.

3.13: *Temporal and historical aspects of occupation*

Time is a crucial dimension of occupation. It occurs in time, over time and in sequence suggesting a longitudinal approach to its study (Harvey and Pentland 2004). Where the crafts are concerned, however, temporal aspects appear complex. Dickie (1996: 70) indicates in her study of craft production in Detroit that modern craft workers can 'portray an idealistic pre-industrial time' whilst engaging in a post-industrial economy. Pre-industrial crafts such as embroidery, quilting, weaving, spinning and basketry for instance, have persisted into the 20th and 21st centuries (Frank 1996a, Metcalf 1997, Schoeser 2003).Their meanings, however, change through the course of time. In pre-industrial societies traditional crafts were utilitarian, a product of human need (Lucie-Smith 1981), whereas in post-industrial societies crafts are produced for many reasons. Frank (1996a) for instance, focuses on

the political use of craft in the late 20th century and Dickie and Frank (1996) found that craft occupations meet both personal and socio-economic needs offering a voice for oppressed people and cultures. There is also potential for traditional crafts to maintain cultural identity (Gilbert 1996).

3.14: *The socio-cultural aspects of occupation*

Ann Wilcock's theory of the human need for occupation identifies occupation as a mechanism for individuals' social interactions, their development and growth in society and the foundation for cultural and national identity (Wilcock 1998: 25). The theory holds that humans can be considered as products of their particular culture and that 'societies are the product of humans acting on their environment' (Wilcock 1998: 35). She proposes that occupation is evolutionary in that methods and tools have been continually refined and developed by humans throughout history opening up new occupational possibilities. In this way different cultures develop occupations to meet their needs and developing societies retain and adapt skills of earlier cultures (Breines 1989: 463). Textiles are a particularly good example of this in that many of the 'materials, techniques and forms used in ancient times remain in use today' (Schoeser 2003: 7). Schoeser also points out that textiles offer insights into a range of cultural developments in technology, agriculture, trade, ritual, language and personal identity. As an aspect of cultural production, textiles also offer insights into the attitudes and beliefs of the societies that produce them (Colchester 1991: 35). Arguably then, textile making offers a sense of continuity with the past and an insight into cultural practices through current possibilities for merging traditional skills with technology (Gale and Kaur 2002) and the development of new forms of occupation in the future. 'Textiles are full of contradictions which actually contribute to the inner nature of the subject and simultaneously slant craft towards technology' (Gale and Kaur 2002: 31).

For occupation to be valued by the individual, Fidler and Fidler (1978: 308) argue that it must be recognised by the socio-cultural group as being relevant to their values. In the twentieth century, in Western societies advances in industry and technology have also led to changing patterns in occupational engagement and consequently its meanings and social values. For instance, Wilcock (1998) refers to a shift from the demarcation of work and leisure in early Western industrial societies to a blurring of

boundaries between these categories in late twentieth century technological society. Such lifestyle changes have, in Gale and Kaur's (2002) view, led to re-definitions of what is meant by home, work, leisure and fashion, issues that impact on textile-making and its meanings in the early 21st century.

3.15: *A global and cross-cultural perspective of occupation*

Today, occupation needs to be considered from a global and cross-cultural perspective. Goldstien (1996) discusses the international influences on occupation which come from travel and trade. The internet and communication technology allows almost instant access to information and other people around the world and the creation of virtual communities for enabling occupation (Christiansen and Townsend 2004), or creating new forms of occupation. Arguably 21st century technology offer crafts people the same opportunities as in other sectors of society in that information about organisations are posted on the internet and it is possible to easily contact like-minded individuals. Travel and tourism also make it possible to see and experience indigenous crafts thus contributing to local economies (Moore 2008). In addition to global communication, computer technology also offers craft serious philosophical and practical challenges which potentially transform the meaning of making (Dormer 1997c). This may be particularly true of textiles where, as Dormer points out 'the differences between hand and machine made are becoming harder to distinguish' (Dormer 1997c: 144) because of the interconnectedness between craft and technology in woven textiles (Colchester 1991).

3.16: *Section summary*

In order to understand what occupational engagement offers the individual and society there is clearly a need for contextual information about the location, others involved, choice and control and the level and match of skill (Harvey and Pentland 2004: 83); but in the case of textile-crafts there is also a need to understand the complexity of temporal dimensions and how these link to history and culture. Additionally the influence of technology on textile-making must be taken into account in terms of how it affects social and cross-cultural connections and the fundamental meaning of making in a post-industrial technological society.

3.17: *Gender and occupation*

Unquestionably gender has an impact on occupation. In Davis and Polatajko's (2004) view, there is still a gender divide in western societies, with home-making occupations in particular remaining the concern of women. I considered gender in relation to the history of textile-making in chapter two (2.3.3 page 25). It is worth reiterating here that textile-making has, throughout its history, had a strong association with domesticity and consequently with women (Lucie-Smith 1981, Colchester 1991, Gale and Kaur 2003). Although in post-industrial societies it is arguably no longer necessary to make textiles by hand for utilitarian purposes in order to clothe the family and provide for the home, the link with domesticity remains in that textile-making in general is still concerned with furnishing and decorating the home and the body (Colchester 1991, Graves 2002).

3.18: *Gender in occupational science*

There are few examples of specifically gender based studies in the occupational science literature. Primeau's study of parents' orchestration of work and play in families for instance, led to an exploration of the parents' gender ideologies and their practices, particularly in relation to housework (Primeau 2000). Indeed gender differences in household management and work-related occupations are favoured topics for study (see Primeau 1992, Frank 1992, Zuzanek and Mannell 1993, Stanley 1995, Whitney, Kusnir and Dixie 2002). Primeau's (2000) study however, is particularly notable from a theoretical and a methodological perspective. Theoretically she demonstrates how interactions between gender ideologies and practices leads to gender strategies in families, but more importantly she highlights that instruments such as questionnaires, frequently used to collect data on this topic, are partial and fail to capture the complexity of issues. She offers a convincing argument for the use of in-depth interviewing and participant observation as two methods that, if used together, give a more complete picture. Consequently any analysis of occupation from a gender perspective needs to be approached on multiple levels (Primeau 2000).

Other studies highlight gender as an issue, although not necessarily as the main focus. Pendelton (1996) for instance, makes reference to the historical link between gender and needlework. Dickie's (1996) study of craft workers in Detroit, predominantly women, found that by working at home crafts-people could balance responsibilities around domestic and caring roles whilst fulfilling their own creative needs. Dickie refers to the images of domesticity and homeliness portrayed by some crafters whilst they engage in a post-industrial economy (Dickie 1996:70). This fits well with the Craft Council's (2004) socio-economic survey of British makers, also predominantly women home workers. The reasons for working at home for the participants in Dickie's study appear pragmatic; they have successfully integrated work with leisure and caring responsibilities achieving a sense of autonomy, satisfaction and choice. Similarly the British crafts people surveyed by the Crafts Council indicate a high level of satisfaction with work-life balance. In Whiteford's (2004: 233) view, however, women's opportunities to exercise choice and participate in leisure and discretionary occupations are eroded through discrepancies in divisions of labour even in technologically advanced countries.

3.19: *Gender and social stereotyping*

Frances Reynolds' work on the meanings of what she calls textile art making for people with long-term illnesses (Reynolds 2004) is a reminder of an under-lying issue concerning the perceived differences between art and craft. She offers a rationale for concentrating on textile art in that it embraces many different activities such as quilting, appliqué and embroidery and has a long history particularly amongst women. It also has social visibility through its well-developed social networks such as guilds and other groups. She adds, however that social stereotyping has led to an undervaluing of the work and experience of female artists (Reynolds 2004: 58). It is interesting to note that Reynolds refers to textile 'art', even though the activities she refers to could be described as craft. The stereotyping and lack of value she refers to appear to be rooted in the hierarchical division of arts and crafts. As feminist art historians Parker and Pollock (1981: 70) point out 'what distinguishes art from craft in the hierarchy is not so much the different methods, practices and objects but also where these things are made, often in the home, and for whom they are made, often for the family'.

3.20: *Section summary*

The relationship between gender and textile-making as a form of occupation as it exists today is clearly embedded in its history and its association with domesticity and consequently with women. This has led to low estimation of domestic crafts in the latter half of the twentieth century. It is also a concern for this study in that the socio-political and cultural status of craft in relation to art has an effect on its meaning as a form of occupation for the individual maker and for society.

3.21: *The status of craft*

The status of craft, that is, 'the separation of craft from art and design' is a late twentieth century phenomenon in Western culture that has led to 'the separation of 'having ideas' from 'making objects and the idea that creativity precedes or is divorced from making things' (Dormer 1997b: 18). As a textile-maker I am aware that the language I use to describe what I do, being a crafts-person or a hand-weaver, has an impact on my social identity and status both within the world of art and craft and outside it. For instance Ann Sutton who is renowned in the world of textiles, described herself as working in the technique of weaving, 'sometimes as an artist, sometimes as a designer, sometimes as a craftsperson' (Sutton 1986 in Clark 2003: 8) reflecting the diversity of her work and its meanings in different contexts.

The creative occupations engaged in by participants in Dickie's and Reynolds' studies have many similarities, but Dickie refers to 'craft' and Reynolds to 'art' (Dickie 2004, Reynolds 2004). From a social constructionist perspective the terms used to describe such concepts as 'art' or 'craft' offer a framework for meaning that is historically and culturally specific (Burr 2003). For Parker and Pollock (1981: 78) for instance, the terms 'art' and 'craft' represented an underlying value system.

Brown (2004: 9) considers that in today's society crafts are stronger than thirty years ago, 'traditions are being revitalised, transformed'. The debate has moved away from the differences between art and craft towards interdisciplinarity and integration (Greenhalgh 2002b). From these perspectives it would seem that the issues around

hierarchy and status are now less important in the 21st Century and the terms 'art' and 'craft' both have a place in relation to the same occupation, it depends on how it is defined by the individual and society. As a hand-weaver I can relate to Mitchell's (2004: 13) view of craft as 'a work of transformation, through which natural material takes on form and meaning in the human world, but without loosing its essence' for instance as wool, cotton or silk. In this way I consider myself as a crafts-person, whilst aspects of my work incorporate art and design. I recognise however, that others may define themselves differently. Hitherto I have used the general term 'textile-maker' when referring to individuals who engage in a range of textile-related practices. It implies a need to conceptualise textile-making in a way that accounts for its complexities, contexts and meanings, as a domain or field.

3.22: *Textile-making as an occupational domain*

In my experience textile-making encompasses a set of inter-related practices which, from an occupational science perspective appear to share common elements that are socially, culturally and historically constructed. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu, in the context of the guild and its networks and in relation to craft, textiles can be broadly conceptualised as a field, a social and intellectual space with its own distinctive features and internal mechanisms (Bourdieu 1971, 1986a, Swartz 1997). Whilst the field is 'a structured system of social positions' (Jenkins 2002: 85), which can account for the broad range of socio-cultural and historical factors that influence textile-making in a particular cultural context (Swartz 1997), a study of textile-making as occupation needs to account explicitly for human action. In chapter two (2.1: page 3) I referred to Dickie's concept of an 'occupational domain' (Dickie 2003a: 121). The term 'domain' denotes a sphere of action (Little, Fowler and Coulston 1983: 593) in a socio-cultural and historical context or field. In the following chapters I use the term occupational domain to encompass the complexity and breadth of textile-making as occupation.

3.23: Conclusion

The occupational science literature emphasises the multi-faceted temporal nature of occupation and its inseparability from its socio-cultural and historical contexts. It is

also influenced by gender and has subjective and symbolic meanings. Through an initial deconstruction of this complex phenomenon, as it relates to textile-making, and an analysis of the key occupational elements emerging from the foreshadowing ideas, I have explored and critiqued some of the ways in which these aspects of occupation have been researched in Occupational Science. This has led to conceptualising textile-making as an occupational domain and a foundation for constructing a methodology for this study, the focus of chapter four.

Chapter four:

Constructing a reflexive ethnography

4: Introduction

The sheer complexity and multi-dimensionality of occupation as I have described it so far indicates the need for a methodological framework that can allow for a naturalistic exploration of textile-making as it happens in a socio-cultural context, taking into account its temporal, visual nature and its subjective, symbolic and collective meanings. Ethnography can be justified as the overarching strategy for this study in that it offers a way of researching occupational engagement and its meanings through firsthand experience, in that the ethnographer lives through events with the participants (Tedlock 2000).

4.1: *Exploring occupation through ethnography*

Virginia Dickie's study of American craft workers, conducted over a period of three years in the 1990s, concentrates on the organisation of craft work, marketing and worker identity through exploring the work of crafts people selling at Detroit craft fairs. Her work is a key example of the use of ethnography in occupational science (Dickie 1996, 2003b). Dickie explores the paradox of what appears to be a pre-industrial form of production and marketing in an American post-industrial economy (Dickie 2003b), emphasising the need to explore occupation in its widest sense, placing events and happenings in a meaningful context (Tedlock 2000).

As an occupational scientist my initial questions about textile making as a form of occupation came from a similar premise to Dickie's, in that textile crafts and particularly weaving, spinning and dyeing were transformed through the industrial revolution from cottage industries to mass production and yet they survive in an identifiably pre-industrial form in today's technological society (Lucie-Smith 1981, Dormer 1997c). Through a reflexive ethnography I explore how people engage in creating and making textiles by hand individually and collectively, what it means to them in the context of contemporary British (particularly Welsh) and other influential

cultures and a technological society and how this contributes to their quality of life, sense of identity, and personal and social well-being. Drawing on my initial foreshadowing ideas I aim to:

- Develop an understanding of the nature of textile-making as an occupational domain in the context of a Welsh guild of weavers, spinners and dyers.
- Identify how membership of a guild influences occupational development and engagement
- Explore the socio-cultural, historical, temporal and gendered influences on creating hand-made textiles in contemporary British society
- Explore the meanings of creating textiles by hand to individual makers.
- Identify how engaging in such occupation contributes to a sense of identity, quality of life and personal and social well-being
- Explore the factors that might enhance or inhibit individual's engagement in such occupation

Part one of this chapter details the methodological framework for the study and my role as an insider researcher; part two explores ethical issues concerned with insider research and part three considers quality and trustworthiness.

Part one:

4.1.1: Constructing a methodological framework

In contemporary society some people choose to create textiles by hand using traditional materials and equipment, something I do myself as a hand-weaver and dyer; but as an occupational scientist I recognise that the underlying meanings are complex and must be understood from different perspectives. I have discussed phenomenology and symbolic interactionism as two possible ways of considering meaning in relation to occupation and the potential of hermeneutics in emphasising the relationship between my own and others' lived experience in a socio-cultural context. These influencing perspectives are compatible with ethnography in that they 'all emphasise the interweaving of theory and data' (Ezzy 2002: 63). I draw on them

and other theories contextually 'to understand how people enact and construct meaning' (Denzin 1999: 510). In constructing a reflexive, visual ethnography that offers a holistic picture of contemporary textile-making in the context of the guild, I also draw on the principles of grounded theory (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001).

4.1.2: *A constructivist grounded theory approach*

In using a constructivist grounded theory approach to simultaneous gathering and analysing data, I take the view that the nature and meanings of engaging in textile-making as a form of occupation are constructed from participants' and my own shared understandings and experiences. The researcher is a part of the process, bringing in past interactions and current interests (Charmaz 2005, 2006, Schwandt 2000, Crotty 2003, Alvesson and Skőldberg 2000).

The process of constructing knowledge and theory is 'interactive'; it emerges from an integrated process of gathering and analysing data through making comparisons, developing categories and theoretical sampling (Charmaz 2005: 510). I made use of the strategies and techniques associated with grounded theory (described in more detail in chapter five). I have not followed them slavishly. I have, for instance, broadly reviewed the literature. Grounded theorists traditionally advocated delaying this process until the analysis is complete to avoid theory being imposed on the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Whilst I concur with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) view that an exhaustive literature review is unnecessary prior to data gathering and analysis, I reasoned that for this study an overview of the literature and theory relating to occupation, textile craft and textile making was needed as a starting point to orientate the study, identify foreshadowing ideas and give it a direction.

Additionally grounded theorists aim to develop theoretical sensitivity in order to 'conceptualise and formulate theory as it emerges from the data' (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 46). Taking into account Pidgeon and Henwood's (2004: 628) view that the use of theoretical sensitivity involves researchers in 'hermeneutic and constructivist practices', my intention was to acknowledge and build on prior knowledge rather than set it aside when interpreting data and constructing theory (Charmaz 2006). In constructing a methodological framework I also accounted for textile-making's visual nature.

4.1.3: *Constructing a visual ethnography*

Meaning patterns can be elicited through participating, interviewing and listening during the process of ethnographic fieldwork (Denzin 2001), but engagement in textile-making and the end-product are tangible and visible and can potentially be explored through the use of visual media and material culture. Pink (2001) outlines an analytical approach that explores the relationship between visual and other forms of knowledge, including verbal accounts. Pink, an anthropologist, explored cloth weaving in Guinea Bissau through the use of multiple media including photography and field notes (Pink 1999). Through a reflexive and interpretive approach she moves beyond the recording of weaving as a technical process, an observable reality that the use of photography might initially suggest, to an understanding of how technology is used and 'embedded in cultural practices and social relationships' (Pink 1999: 169). I used photography in the course of field work as a means of capturing different aspects of textile-making in a way that is complementary to field notes, interviews, objects and materials. As Pink (2001: 96) puts it: 'different media can be used to represent the story in different ways'. The diverse nature of the data and its implications for research are considered in detail in chapter five.

My role as an 'insider' and a 'complete member' of the guild (Adler and Adler 1998: 85) however is central to the research process and from this perspective the study incorporates autoethnography, drawing on elements of personal experience (Ellis and Boschner 2000). I reflect on the impact of being an insider and how this shaped and developed roles during fieldwork in the concluding chapters, the methodological implications are considered below.

4.1.4: *Being an insider: a reflexive approach*

I have already mentioned the guild as the socio-cultural context and field for this study. Its development and membership, together with the issues that impact on this are considered in detail in chapter six. As a full and active member of the guild, my role as an insider was integral to field work and to the project as a whole.

Ethnographers bring to the field different self-identities shaped by their professional, educational and cultural backgrounds and in the course of fieldwork these change and develop as new identities are constructed. These 'selves', Reinharz (1997: 3) proposes are research-based, brought and situationally created. In her words 'we both *bring* the self to the field and *create* the self in the field'. Where the ethnographer is an insider there are, arguably, *known* selves, familiar and already present in the setting. As a textile-maker and guild member with a professional interest in occupational science I bring different aspects of myself into the research process and see myself as a part of it. I have been an active member of the guild since I began weaving in the 1980s and my knowledge of textile-making has developed in this context. I have served on the guild committee and represented them at national conferences and events as well as taking part in meetings, workshops, courses and exhibitions. I also have friendships with other members; we share aspects of our personal lives. In this way my emergent self as a researcher was shaped by my complete membership of and commitment to the group in that I share their experiences, knowledge base, skills and values about the crafts and have a trusting and reciprocal relationship with other members (Adler and Adler 1987, Harrison, Mac Gibbon and Morton 2001).

From a methodological perspective there are advantages and disadvantages in being an insider. Coming from a position of acceptance within the group can offer the possibility of greater access and deeper understanding through subjective insight and cultural interpretation (Adler and Adler 1987, Labaree 2002). There is, however, also the possibility that over-familiarity with the field and the people in it may lead to taken-for-granted assumptions particularly about everyday ordinary activity (Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont 2003) thus loosing the opportunity to see its important analytical features (Adler and Adler 1987: 23). Schutz (1967: 74) explains that 'the taken-for-granted is always that particular level of experience which presents itself as not in need of further analysis' coming from one's pragmatic interest. Labaree (2002) argues that there is a need to actively question such familiarity in order to find new perspectives. This suggests a reflexive approach to the research process as a whole using insights about the self to assist in understanding others (Krieger 1985: 179) through a 'critical, analytical and self-conscious awareness' (Coffey 1999: 32). Being a reflexive insider researcher however, has identifiable ethical issues.

Part two:

4.2: Ethical issues

Being an insider and reflexively weaving one's own experiences and interpretations into fieldwork and into the text, together with the use of visual images, carries with it potential ethical problems. Whilst as a researcher I aspire to the ethical principles of non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy and justice (Beauchamp and Childress 1994, Murphy and Dingwall 2001), I recognise that the issues in reflexive and visual ethnography are not straight forward. In the following sections I detail the key ethical issues that required consideration before and during fieldwork relating to access, informed consent, relationships, confidentiality and representation in the text. I consider ethics in relation to visual images in further detail in chapter five.

4.2.1: *Gaining access*

Gaining access to the setting is a pre-requisite for field research (Burgess 1984); it is 'a defining activity of ethnography' Harrington (2003: 594). It is concerned with negotiating for information and gaining access to participants in the field. In the first instance it is a process of formal negations and gaining consent from gatekeepers is a necessary part of proceedings even where the researcher is familiar with and known in the setting (Adler and Adler 1998, Davies 1999, Labaree 2002). Being an insider, as Labaree (2002) points out, this has its advantages in that it can facilitate access at the start of research and my experience bears this out. Knowing who to contact and being able to build on existing trusting relationships (Adler and Adler 1998) can assist in making the process less problematic. Others, Coffey (1993) for instance, describe a frustrating and protracted process of gaining access to organisations, but as a long-standing guild member I was aware at the outset who I should initially approach and could quickly ascertain when the committee would meet (this does not follow a defined pattern), I could therefore focus and time my negotiations appropriately.

4.2.2: *Negotiations*

In June 2004 I sent a letter to the chairman of the guild committee with an outline of the research, requesting permission for fieldwork to take place during the next guild calendar year and to make contact with individual guild members to explain the purpose of the research (see appendix 1). Following written approval from the committee I sent a letter and information sheet to all guild members explaining how the research would be conducted, offering ethical assurances and inviting questions or comments (appendix 1). I received several informal messages of approval and encouragement from members and some general questions about the research, but no adverse comments.

In July 2004, the chairman mentioned the research in her newsletter and I was invited to speak to the guild briefly about it at the next meeting. This served as a reminder that fieldwork, followed by interviews, would begin in September and what this would entail. This was the beginning of the process, but as several authors note, access is a process of constant renegotiation as fieldwork progresses (Burgess 1984, Adler and Adler 1998, Davies 1999, Harrison et al 2001, Labaree 2002, Harrington 2003). Although guild membership remained constant during fieldwork and renegotiation was unnecessary on the grounds of new people entering the field, I was aware that members were comfortable with my researcher presence, as a friend and fellow guild member, on the face of it nothing had changed for them. My note taking in meetings and photography in workshops were not particularly unusual activities, others do this too. In a similar way to Roseneil (1993), who conducted insider research around events at Greenham Common, I felt the need to raise their awareness of my role as a researcher. I did this at intervals through informal conversations and reports in the guild newsletter rather than allowing the research to become a taken-for-granted and largely un-obtrusive activity, thus leading to ill-informed consent. As Geer (1964: 331) puts it: we can 'underestimate people's trust in our neutrality, their lack of interest, perhaps, if we appear to be doing no harm'.

4.2.3: *Informed consent*

Much of the debate around negotiating access appears to hinge on informed consent. I have already discussed informing guild members about the research as it proceeds but ethnography is complicated by its nature and the researcher has no influence on who enters or leaves the field. As a guild we are concerned with promoting the crafts and advertise our meetings to the public. Consequently we do, from time to time attract visitors to meetings and workshops. We also have outside speakers, particularly for evening meetings, who come and talk about their own work as textile-makers and artists or about their travel experiences. I knew it would be impossible to predict when visitors might attend; and felt that the most appropriate way of approaching this problem would be to focus on my participation with other guild members as key informants in the study rather than involving visitors. In this way, I felt they could remain as non-participants.

Where outside speakers were concerned I reasoned that because the meetings were advertised publicly, the content of talks was in the public domain. I draw on the content where it informs the discussion in the same way as I draw material from external conferences and talks, but not the actions of speakers as if they were participants. As a researcher I compromised by focusing on guild members as informed participants rather than on the actions of the visitors or speakers who attended meetings and events during fieldwork. As an insider researcher however, my relationships with members posed a further potential issue.

4.2.4: *Relationships*

Prolonged engagement in the field inevitably contributes to the complexity of relationships leading to a process of ongoing renegotiations between researcher and participants, particularly when researching one's own community where the self has a central role (Lawlor and Mattingly 2001, Labaree 2002, Atkinson et al 2003). Prior friendships, according to Labaree (2002: 112) require 'an upfront and clearly stated agenda in order to avoid any ambiguity regarding the intent of the insider-researcher'. Problems can arise from taking sides and offering opinions (Atkinson et al 2003) and friendships can lead to deferring to members' expectations (Charmaz and Mitchell

1997). I could not avoid friendships, they existed already and as Coffey (1999: 47) argues it would be simplistic to try and do so in that 'good ethnographic practice, data collection and analyses rely upon genuine empathy, trust and participation'. Throughout fieldwork I strived to maintain trusting and reciprocal relationships through an open and transparent approach to research, ongoing reflection, sharing interpretations and visual images. My post-fieldwork reflections on the impact of relationships, roles, balancing commitments and closure form a part of chapter twelve.

4.2.5: *Confidentiality and anonymity*

Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity can pose a problem for reflexive ethnographers. These issues become more complicated however, 'when ethnographers are members of the collectivity they are researching' (Davies 1999: 189). Murphy and Dingwall (2001: 341) point out some of the potential difficulties in that it is rarely possible to give 'absolute guarantees' that the anonymity of the setting and the participants can be maintained and even where this is achieved through the use of pseudonyms, participants may be identifiable to themselves. Furthermore, the use of photography in field work and images in the text must be a process of on-going negotiation and need to be considered in context (Banks 2001). I have used pseudonyms in the text and attempted as far as possible to maintain anonymity in photographs, discussing potential problems with participants. Additionally, writing oneself into the text may lead to a greater possibility of exposing the setting and participants' identities. As an additional safe-guard I asked a long-standing and trusted guild member to comment on the final product bearing confidentiality and anonymity in mind. She found it un-contentious and felt that the issues of confidentiality and anonymity were addressed in both the text and photographs.

4.2.6: *Representation in the text*

The problem of how much information to disclose about one's self in the text without 'being over self-indulgent' requires careful consideration (Hertz 1997: xvi). It is, as Atkinson et al (2003: 66) point out 'a question of balance', recognising that the self is a part of the study, but not the sole focus. The principle of justice, Murphy and Dingwall (2001) argue, involves an even-handed approach to all participants. I see

myself as a part of the events and processes that Atkinson et al refer to and weave my personal experiences into the ethnography reflexively rather than offer a separate autobiography, which others, for example Dickie (1997) and Crepeau (1997) have done. Separating reflection from analysis can, as DeVault (1997: 219) argues, 'give the impression that personal elements of the research story are inessential to the core'. To ensure authenticity it is necessary to bring multiple voices into the text, allowing one's own voice to be heard whilst telling the participants' story (Halstead 2001, Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2001) and reflexively 'unravelling instances where the researcher and participants share understandings and where they diverge' (Finlay 2002a: 537). As a researcher I strived for a reflexive and sensitive approach to fieldwork and data analysis (Smith 2003, Hesse-Biber and Leckenby 2004), using reflexivity to examine the impact of my presence in the field and the perspectives I bring as well as a tool for evaluating the process, method and outcomes (Finlay 2002b, Guba and Lincoln 2005).

Part three:

4.3: Establishing trustworthiness

An open, transparent and reflexive approach to the study as a whole is an essential part of establishing trustworthiness. Drawing on concepts introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985), elaborated by Guba and Lincoln (1989) and reconsidered by the authors in 2000 and 2005, the term trustworthiness is used here rather than validity and reliability to address the quality of this study thus reflecting its qualitative and interpretive nature. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed the following criteria for establishing trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, introducing authenticity in 1989 to reflect a constructionist viewpoint. I have used these criteria in the following ways in attempt to address quality and facilitate critical evaluation:

- Credibility and dependability: through prolonged engagement in the field is a process of 'crystallisation' (Janesick 2000: 392,) and the development of a deeper understanding by drawing on multiple forms of data to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of textile-making as occupation (see chapter five). I

used member checking as a means of ensuring that participants could comment on analysis and interpretations; I also sought different representations (see chapter five).

- Transferability: through offering a 'thick description' (Lincoln and Guba 1985: 316) to allow the reader to judge the transferability of findings to other comparable situations.
- Confirmability: through a transparent description of methodological procedures and the decision making process (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Seale 1999); the use of reflexivity (Finlay 2002a) and openness concerning my role as an insider researcher.
- Authenticity: through a balanced representation of different meanings and realities in the text (Guba and Lincoln 1989, 2005).

4.4: Conclusions

The study concentrates on textile-making in the context of a guild, an autonomous self-regulating group of people with a special interest in weaving, spinning and dyeing. With reference to Virginia Dickie's studies of American craft workers, such forms of hand-craft can be seen, paradoxically, as a pre-industrial form of occupation carried out in a post-industrial society. As such, it is part of a wider inter-disciplinary debate concerning the meaning of art and craft in contemporary British society. From the literature and from my personal knowledge and experience, I conceptualise textile-making as a creative and gendered occupation that is historically, socially and culturally situated and has subjective and symbolic meanings. Its multi-dimensional nature indicates a need for an exploratory research design and the use of naturalistic methods that capture its complexity.

I have justified ethnography as a way of exploring textile-making as it happens in a socio-cultural context together with the individual subjective and collective meanings of those who engage in it. I have indicated that I do not take a single paradigmatic or theoretical stance in designing the methodology, but as Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggest, draw on complimentary philosophical and theoretical perspectives, in this instance constructivism, hermeneutics, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and

grounded theory in constructing a reflexive, visual and interpretive ethnography. This is generally in keeping with Denzin's (2001) view of interpretive interactionism, an emic and idiographic approach, emphasising unique and subjective experiences in a particular situation where the researcher's selves and the participants' selves are historically and locally situated in the process studied. I see the research process as dynamic and myself as a flexible and reflexive researcher, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 4) describe it a 'bricoleur', who adapts and responds to complex situations by using different strategies and methods as new questions arise in order to piece together a set of representations, a 'bricolage' (Lévi-Strauss 1962).

In addition this chapter has detailed the ethical issues arising from reflexive ethnography in relation to this study. I have considered how my role as an insider, a full and active member of the guild facilitated access to fieldwork and eased negotiations. My emergent role as a researcher was shaped by my complete membership and ongoing commitment to the group together with the friendships and reciprocal relationships I have with other members. I have emphasised the need for openness in order to maintain trust and informed consent through a reflexive and reflective approach to fieldwork, writing and the use of visual images. The next chapter details the methods of data gathering and processes involved in analysing data.

Chapter five:

The nature of the data and processes of analysis

5: Introduction

The overall goal of naturalistic fieldwork is to collect 'the richest possible data', through interaction with participants, familiarity with the setting and drawing on a broad range of sources (Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland 2006:15). The setting or 'field' for this study included anywhere that guild activities took place, including meetings, workshops, outings, exhibitions and fringe events I attended with other guild members, including a study tour of Japan and a course on complex computerised weaving. Fieldwork commenced at the beginning of the guild calendar year in September 2004 and continued until the autumn of 2005.

I discuss the nature of the data, methods of collection and recording in part one of this chapter and the components of analysis in part two. In keeping with a grounded theory approach, however, the process was intentionally integrated and iterative in that the analyses from fieldwork and interview sessions informed and directed further data gathering through a process of theoretical sampling.

Part one:

5.1: The nature of the data

Data was gathered during fieldwork through participant observation; the use of still photography; collecting documentation, objects and materials; in-depth interviews and the ongoing generation of reflexive and methodological memos. In the following sections I discuss the nature of the data and processes involved in its collection. Methods of recording, sampling, ethics and ensuring quality are discussed in context.

5.1.1: Participant Observation

Participant observation is a core activity in ethnographic fieldwork (Tedlock 2000) and its epistemology 'rests on the principle of interaction' (Atkinson and Hammersley 1998: 126). Theoretically it is strongly associated with the symbolic interactionist perspective and its value lies in the opportunity for the researcher to collect detailed data through prolonged personal involvement in a particular setting (Burgess 1984, Adler and Adler 1998, Davies 1999, Atkinson et al 2003). Therefore, developing a holistic understanding of the nature and complexity of textile-making as a multi-faceted form of occupation in the context of a guild implied the use of participant observation as a primary method of data gathering.

Participant observation has several key elements: living in the context for a period of time; knowing and using the language; actively participating; informally observing; recording observations in field notes and using tacit and explicit information in analysis and writing (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002: 4). Living in the context meant a continuing commitment to the guild and participation in all meetings, workshops and fringe events during the designated fieldwork period. Textile-making has its own technical language and as a practising textile-maker I have a ready knowledge of this, it is a part of my familiarity with the craft and the setting. At the start of fieldwork whilst establishing a researcher role I needed to consciously consider the balance between actively participating in guild activities, carrying out my own projects, observing and interacting with others.

5.1.2: *Balancing participation and observation*

Davies (1999) suggests that participating and observing cannot be done simultaneously; a balance depends on the role of the researcher in the setting. Because of my insider status, fieldwork developed as a delicate balance between being a participant and continuing to take part in guild activity, and observing and interacting with others.

Observation is about explicitly and self-consciously attending to specific events and people in a context (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002). It involves all the senses and requires a

systematic approach, focusing on different participants at varying times and in different environments (Delamont 2004). Attention to detail means an appreciation of the ordinary and unremarkable activities that contribute (Atkinson 2004), in the case of textile-making, to the final creation. I started with a wide-angle approach, taking in a broad spectrum of information (Spradley 1980), initially detailing all actions and interactions even if they seemed obvious or possibly irrelevant to the research questions. Dewalt and Dewalt (2002: 77) refer to the importance of studying the 'story line' and identifying the components of action in order to sort out the non-varying actions from the differences and exceptions. In guild meetings for instance there was a definable pattern which involved mundane activities such as setting up the room, making tea and giving out notices. Such actions were obvious and familiar to me as a guild member, but through attending closely to them in the first instance I began to appreciate how they contributed to the cohesion of the group and the part this played in textile-making as a multi-faceted occupational domain.

5.1.3: *Moving towards theoretical saturation*

As fieldwork progressed and definable patterns began to emerge I concentrated on specific aspects of action and interaction, informed by my initial foreshadowing ideas, overall aims and emerging questions. Adler and Adler (1998) describe a shift from more general to focused and selective observations, where the ethnographer attends to detail concentrating on smaller units of experience (Spradley (1980). This approach is commensurate with grounded theory in that data gathering and analysis continues until a category is theoretical saturated, in other words no new insights are coming from the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Adler and Adler 1998, Charmaz 2006).

I describe how categories were generated as a part of an ongoing analytical process in part two of this chapter, but it is important to note that not all categories were theoretically saturated through participant observation within the guild. For instance, I explored the use of technology and its influence on hand-weaving through attending a computerised weaving course with a fellow guild member, drawing on our personal experiences of using such equipment. I was able to identify some of the wider cultural influences on textile design and making through the trip to Japan. Other categories

relating to personal meanings and influences on textile-making for individuals were explored further during the interviews.

5.1.4: *Generating and recording field notes*

The data gathered from participant observation was recorded in the form of field notes. As 'a product constructed by the researcher' in effect these are simultaneous data and analysis (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002: 142). They filter rather than mirror what actually happens (Adler and Adler 1998). As an insider and reflexive researcher my field notes not only described and recorded observed action, but incorporated my own experiences and feelings. They offered ongoing thoughts on methodology and analysis and generated new questions and insights that informed subsequent phases of fieldwork. They also reflected knowledge and experience from outside fieldwork, something which Tedlock (2000: 467) argues should be brought into ethnography in order to demonstrate how 'ideas matter'.

I made rough hand-written notes during meetings, workshops and other guild-related events as a means of instantly recording actions, aspects of informal conversations and the content of talks from visiting speakers. These notes were essentially descriptive summaries comprising key words or phrases which could be elaborated after the event. Because good field notes rely on memory, I transferred the rough notes on to the computer to extend and elaborate them within twenty four hours of the event (Lareau 1996) and incorporated photographs where relevant. In order to systematically manage the volume of data, I recorded notes chronologically, numbering and dating each event and added line numbers to assist with data retrieval. At this point I added my preliminary interpretations in the form of codes (see section 5.2.9), personal and methodological reflections and generated further questions. An extract from my field notes and reflections on the silk spinning workshop can be found in appendix 2.

5.1.5: *Section summary*

Participant observation was used as a means of developing a holistic understanding of textile-making as it happened in the context of the guild. The delicate balance

between participating and observing was shaped by my insider status and required a heightened reflexive awareness of the more familiar aspects of textile-making and guild activity. Recording took the form of field notes which incorporate details of observed action together with my personal experiences and methodological insights. Through employing an inductive and iterative approach to data gathering, recording and ongoing analysis, patterns emerged from the data as fieldwork progressed. Observations became more focused as developing analytic categories began to theoretically saturate.

In addition to participant observations I also purposefully constructed visual images in the form of photographs and collected texts such as magazines, leaflets and pamphlets, postcards and photographs which form a part of the material culture of the guild and textile-making generally. These forms of data are discussed in the following sections.

5.1.6: Constructed visual images

Because textiles and textile-making are tangible and visible and one can learn a great deal about it through looking and seeing, I decided that photography could offer a valuable means of gathering data during fieldwork and would contribute to certain aspects of the study's aims, particularly:

- An understanding of the nature of textile-making as an occupational domain in the context of the guild and related socio-cultural contexts.
- An understanding of individual and collective engagement in textile-making.

I chose to take photographs rather than film events for several reasons. In the first place the cultural appropriateness of visual technology must be carefully considered in terms of how others might feel about it (Collier and Collier 1986, Pink 2007). Taking photographs is a common occurrence at guild events, whereas video recorders are rarely used, therefore still photography seemed the least intrusive and most acceptable method of recording. In addition, as a textile-maker I have consistently taken photographs at exhibitions, in workshops and at other events as a record, as art-

works and as sources of inspiration for my own textiles. I had skills as a photographer, but needed to consider photography differently and be clear about what it could and could not offer the research. As Harper (2000: 724) puts it: 'becoming a visual ethnographer means becoming conscious of the potential to make visual statements but knowing how the camera interprets social reality'.

In the initial stages of fieldwork photography became a useful means of documenting action in workshops offering a way of recording the spatial relationships created between participants and their use of space together with temporal flow: the changing patterns and development of occupational behaviour over time (Collier and Collier 1986). Initially this meant taking a purposeful approach and photographing at intervals as events unfolded. Images 1 to 4 illustrate a sequence of events in the guild shibori workshop where we began by preparing cloth for dyeing by tying and folding it to form a resist pattern (image 1). We then dyed the cloth (image 2), dried it outside on a make-shift line (image 3) and then removed the ties to reveal the pattern (image 4):



1: *preparing cloth for dyeing*



2: *dyeing cloth*



3: *drying cloth after dyeing*



4: *the finished cloth after untying*

I used a digital camera and decided not to discard or manipulate images in the first instance so that I could carefully reconsider the scene as a part of the analysis. Where possible I took a range of wide angle shots and close ups in order to capture group and individual action and the complexity of making. I transferred images to the computer as soon as possible after the event and printed copies so that I could incorporate them into my written field notes to give a more holistic picture.

So far I have described a somewhat pragmatic 'realist' approach to photography, documenting and recording events systematically, drawing on the ability of the camera to capture a precise moment in time (Mirzoeff 1999, Knowles and Sweetman 2004). This was, to an extent the starting point, but the relationship between photography and reality is more complex. Howells (2003: 161) argues that 'the eventual photograph is a result of creative choices made by the photographer'. In other words it is a construction of reality.

5.1.7: *Photographs as representations*

Howells (2003) suggests that photographs capture reality and representation at the same time. Aspects of reality are however, arbitrarily selected: 'the visual qualities which appear for a moment and from one sole viewpoint' (Bourdieu 1990: 73). Whilst I acknowledge that photography can legitimise events (Banks 2001), it was not my

intention to use photographs merely as evidence of systematic observation, they represent textile-making as a cultural practice which has meaning in a specific context. Drawing on the work of visual ethnographer Sarah Pink (1999, 2001, 2007), I developed a more reflexive approach to the production of visual images and a conscious awareness of my part in their creation. As fieldwork progressed I concentrated more on the detailed actions of participants in workshops taking close-ups as a fine thread was drawn from silk fibre in the spinning workshop for instance and capturing the experience of traditional indigo dyeing in Japan (image 5). Such 'expressive photography' encourages a reflexive approach to viewing and interpreting (Pink 2001: 129).



5: *indigo dyeing in traditional dye vats*

A mix of realist and expressive approaches to photography during fieldwork can work together (Pink 2001). When the camera is used as an instrument for gathering information using a grounded theory approach, then the photographs assist in the construction of theory by 'concretising observations' (Harper 2000: 729). A more creative and expressive form of photography however, captures the experience of occupational engagement for the photographer and participant.

5.1.8: *Purpose*

Throughout fieldwork I found it was important to consider and re-consider the purpose and meaning of photographs for me in a dual role of researcher/photographer and participant/photographer. In May 2005 for example, I travelled to Japan with a friend, also a guild member, for the International Shibori Symposium and textile tour (shibori, the art of shaping and forming patterns on cloth is described in more detail in chapter 7). During this sixteen day trip photography played a key part; I kept a journal of my experiences incorporating photographs alongside written text and collections of postcards, leaflets and other materials to draw on as ethnographic data. The photographs serve as a means of documenting events and capture meaningful and memorable experiences such as the magic of dyeing with natural indigo in the workshop of a master dyer and shibori artist (see chapter 9.1.7: images 45 and 46). The photographs from Japan also formed the basis of a talk to the guild and an article for the Journal of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers (Riley 2005); some of them are now sources of inspiration for textile designs. In other words photographs serve multiple purposes and hold multiple meanings. Photographs taken in workshops, for instance, were also used by the guild at public events as a means of illustrating what we do.

5.1.9: *Issues impacting on analysis*

Image content cannot be isolated from its context or from the meanings for the individuals involved (Pink 2001). Photographic images were collected and analysed as part of an iterative and ongoing interpretive process and their meanings considered in relation to other forms of data. I discuss different forms of meaning and the mechanics of analysis in part two; there are however, some impacting issues relating to visual images and the medium of photography that require consideration here. These include control of the photographic process and ethics.

5.1.10: *Control of the process*

The degree of control the photographer has over the process (Banks 2001) is an important part of understanding 'what has been made visible and why' (Radley and

Taylor 2003: 79). Photographs are 'a selective account of reality' because the photographer plays a major role in their production (Emmison and Smith 2000: 39).

Control over the process was twofold. From the outset I made choices about what to photograph, how to focus and what to include in the frame. These subjective decisions were, in some instances based on an attempt to record what happened and sometimes reflected my focus of attention and aesthetic preferences (Grady 2004). At other times decisions were made arbitrarily because of the speed of events and inevitably impacted on analysis and interpretation. As fieldwork progressed I also made choices during digital processing about whether or not to enhance an image through brightness or contrast, or to focus on a particular action by cropping. Decisions concerning image manipulation were made in the context of purpose, stage in the ethnographic process and reasons for production.

5.1.11: *Ethics*

A further crucial issue concerned the ethics of producing and using visual images in research. Pink (2007) points out that ethics in this context is bound up with epistemology, one's own beliefs and reflexivity. My initial and perhaps naive desire to remain fairly un-obtrusive when photographing and not disrupt events was not entirely commensurate with an ethical approach to photography. Collier and Collier (1986: 25) discuss the importance of 'letting people know you are there' and giving them time to object to being photographed. I made a point of telling people, informally, at the beginning of workshops why I wanted to photograph and that they were entitled to stop me, but this can affect the production. I wanted the images to be as natural as possible and to capture the action, but knowingly being photographed leads to 'active transformation' through posing for the camera (Barthes 2000: 10), at least initially. I found that openness and clarity about the purpose of photography, particularly in the early stages of fieldwork and taking the images back to participants, led naturally to a more relaxed and collaborative approach. As a result, some of the images began to serve a purpose for the guild, as a form of information and publicity, and this for me, as photographer/researcher, felt less exploitative (Pink 2007).

5.1.12: *Section summary*

Still photography was used as a culturally appropriate means of capturing the tangible and visible aspects of textile-making. The use of photography developed during fieldwork as a construction of reality, a form of representation and creative expression. The interpretive and reflexive analysis of the photographs, which were incorporated into the field notes, developed as an iterative process taking into account my role in their construction, their purpose and the socio-cultural context of production. From an ethical perspective I developed an open and collaborative approach through discussing their purpose, and added to their credibility by taking them back to participants and sharing them for use within the guild.

5.1.13: Material culture

Material culture can be defined as 'any humanly produced artefact' (Tilley 2001: 258). Materials can be touched, smelt and seen and their cultural origins determines the ways in which they are made, used and shared (Dant 1999). Such artefacts endure over time and can be considered as evidence of what people do (Hodder 1998). In other words they are products of human occupation. From a hermeneutic perspective they link humans to their social world and to their past (Moore 1990). In the context of textile-making and the guild artefacts include textual materials such as magazines, newsletters and pamphlets; visual images including postcards, pictures and photographs; tangible objects such as equipment, fibres and cloth and the created product – the outcome of textile-making as human action.

Throughout the duration of this study, before, during and after fieldwork I collected a range of artefacts in order to add depth and richness to the project as a whole. In the same way as the photographs, these were not considered as just another source of information, or secondary data (Prior 2004, Atkinson and Coffey 2004), but as an integral part of the ethnographic data, a further means of understanding the occupational domain of textile-making.

Before describing artefacts in more detail, there are some general points concerning their use in research that require consideration. In the first place material culture must

be considered in relation to its socio-cultural context, its production and use. Because material evidence 'endures physically' it can be separated from its producer and user and removed from its original context and this has implications for how it is both used and analysed ((Hodder 1998:110). Scott (1990: 2-3) points to two contrasting relationships between the observer and artefacts, which are helpful in establishing their position in relation to other forms of data. These are concerned with *proximate* and *mediate* access.

5.1.14: *Proximate access*

Proximate or direct access exists in situations where the researcher and source material are 'contemporaneous and co-present' (Scott 1990: 2). In all aspects of field work, and in most of the interviews, artefacts of various kinds played an important part. The experiential and hands-on nature of guild workshops for example meant that raw materials and equipment were integral to doing and to making and producing textiles. As a maker and a participant observer I had a direct experience of using materials and the opportunity to observe others doing the same.

5.1.15: *Mediate access*

Mediate or indirect access refers to situations where the actions of the maker must be inferred from material traces, in other words the visible signs from the past (Scott 1990: 3). In meetings and workshops for instance, speakers or facilitators usually illustrated their talk with material examples of a particular technique or design. Such artefacts were produced in a different socio-cultural context, in some instances by the speaker, in which case it was possible to ascertain their intentions and actions in producing them; or they were part of a collection and this information was not directly accessible and needed to be 'read' (Scott 1990: 4).

During the textile tour of Japan I collected numerous pieces of cloth as examples of shibori. Although I had observed Japanese shibori artisans at work, tying and shaping the cloth ready for dyeing and through personal experience developed an understanding of the craft, my collection of examples had already been removed for

its origins allowing me an indirect and retrospective access to the art of Japanese shibori.

5.1.16: *Collecting and sampling*

The collection of artefacts was in some instances purposeful or theoretical and in others opportunistic. As a textile maker I collect textile artefacts as a matter of course for aesthetic reasons, as design sources, for information and as examples of others' work. Methodologically I needed to re-consider their value in terms of their contribution to the project as a whole (Markham 2005). In order to consider their significance in more detail I will separate them into the following categories: texts, material objects, collected visual images (as distinct from the researcher-constructed images described in section 5.1.6) and, in addition, internet sources.

5.1.17: *Texts*

In order to establish the relevance of texts or written documents as data they must be considered in relation to both their authorship and readership (Atkinson and Coffey 2004). An important document originating from within the guild for instance is its newsletter. Produced by and for the guild, usually on a quarterly basis, it relies on members' voluntarily contributions; consequently its content can vary. It offers up-dates on current and forthcoming events together with news of guild activities, topics of interest and information sent from the AGWS&D. As such, the newsletter is an important means of internal communication and links the guild to a wider network of guilds in Britain. As data the newsletter offered insights into the activities and interests of the guild, its members and their networks.

Throughout the project I also collected a range of textile magazines. These were purposefully selected as sources that would offer insights into the world of textiles beyond the guild. Perhaps the most significant of these is the quarterly *Journal for Weavers, Spinners and Dyers*. The journal has been in production for over fifty years (Hansford 2005) and provides a wealth of information and instruction on the crafts of weaving, spinning and dyeing together with up-to-date information from the AGWS&D, guild news, forthcoming events, discussion forums and advertisements. In

addition *Crafts Magazine* produced by the Crafts Council offers a wider and somewhat more critical view of contemporary craft as an art form. Lastly, *Selvedge*, a relatively new textile magazine takes a broad view of textiles from aesthetic, cultural, social and historical perspectives, as well as offering discussions on design and profiles of individual artists and makers.

Leaflets, pamphlets and catalogues were accumulated opportunistically, occasionally from visiting speakers or events such as trade fairs, workshops, conferences and seminars. They informed the project in different ways, depending on the reasons for their production, context and intended audience (Hodder 1998, Atkinson and Coffey 2004). Some offer factual information on how to carry out a technique, or insights into a method of production, others provide details of a particular project, the profile of a maker or advertise a specialist supplier. Initially these were catalogued in date order and cross-referenced to field notes so that they could become integral to the analysis of data as a whole.

5.1.18: *Material objects*

The outcome of textile making as a meaningful occupation is generally some form of material product or object. This might be anything from a thread to length of cloth or an intricately woven tapestry. Additionally the process of making is carried out through the use of a range of simple and complex equipment and raw materials. In the course of fieldwork such objects became central to my understanding of events and to my interpretation of occupational engagement and its meaning within and outside the guild. Their significance as data was two-fold and can be interpreted in relation to their 'situated context of production' and use (Hodder 1998:115).

In the first place the experiential nature of participant observation allowed for the development of understanding in the immediate context of production; in other words through 'first-hand experience' (Hodder 1998: 111). Through personal use of equipment and materials and through observation of others it was possible to refine and add depth to my understanding of the significance of material objects to the process of textile-making. An important aspect of textile objects and materials for

instance is their perceptual function: they have visual and tactile qualities that extend beyond the words used to describe them (Tilley 2001).

Secondly, in the course of fieldwork I opportunistically collected numerous textile products such as cloth, clothing, and art works together with samples of techniques in the form of braids, woven samples and thread. Such products were acquired from specialist suppliers, exhibitions or from the maker. In contrast to the equipment and materials described above these artefacts were removed from their original context and were therefore temporally and culturally distant from their production requiring re-interpretation in a new context (Hodder 1998). For instance, the textile artefacts collected in Japan were acquired to enhance my understanding as a socio-cultural outsider, of traditional shibori techniques, as well as for their design and innovative use of materials.

5.1.19: *Collected visual images*

Collected visual images took the form of postcards, pictures and photographs in magazines and catalogues. In the same way as other material artefacts they exist in time and need to be considered in terms of production and presentation (Edwards and Hart 2004: 2). As data they offer visual representations of contemporary and historical aspects of textile making that transcend social and cultural boundaries and at the point of collection they may have been already removed from the context of production. In this way they differ from the researcher constructed images described in section 5.1.6. where the context and reasons for production and presentation were part of my conscious decision making process as a photographer/researcher. Where collected photographic images are concerned the issues of representation and credibility are more difficult to ascertain; they are a 'selective account of reality' in that a photographer played a part in their production (Emmison and Smith 2000: 39), but in some instances the context remains the subject of speculation.

So far I have discussed material culture in terms of tangible objects that can be collected and handled. The internet however, offers a further means of access to the world of textile making.

5.1.20: *Internet sources*

In contemporary society the internet is an interactive tool, offering a way of communicating information and networking fairly instantly within and across cultures and provides a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas (Markham 2004, Helde, McGrew, Goldbatt and Perraton 2001). As a form of data internet websites are multi-dimensional and in relation to textiles they use both visual images (still and moving) and text in order to communicate information, ideas, designs and products to a global audience. However, the nature of the information posted by individuals and organisations often differs from textual formats. They generally put up information they wish to highlight (Ó Dochartaigh 2002), which in the case of organisations such as the AGWS&D includes a diary of events, association news and details of forthcoming exhibitions and summer schools (AGWS&D 2004, 2008a). Website content is subject to change and the rate of change is in the hands of the producer. Because of this I gathered information from organisational and individual makers' websites using theoretical sampling, in other words where the information contributed to the development and refinement of emerging analytical categories and themes (Glaser and Stauss 1967, Charmaz 2006).

The evaluation of website information is not dissimilar to that of images, texts and artefacts in that quality should be considered in terms of their production and consumption (Atkinson and Coffey 2004).

5.1.21: *The quality of material and internet data*

Although referring to documentary sources, which he defines generally as written texts, Scott (1990) proposes a set of criteria for assessing quality that can be extended to other types of artefacts, images and the internet namely: authenticity or genuineness; credibility, which involves an assessment of sincerity and accuracy; representativeness or typicality, which is also linked to availability and, in addition, their meaning. Scott refers to the hermeneutic notion of a dialogue between the researcher and the author/creator and the need to know as much as possible about the conditions of production. Further to this is the issue of consumption, how artefacts are used and how they function in different social settings and environments. As Prior

(2003: 26) puts it one needs to bear in mind 'the dynamic involved in the relationships between production, consumption and content'. Such criteria were kept in mind in relation to collecting and sampling and during analysis.

5.1.22: *Section summary*

Material culture in the form of textile related artefacts are both the products of human occupation and a part of it. As such they are an integral part of the ethnographic data and contribute to a deeper understanding of nature, form and meaning of textile-making as a whole. Artefacts endure over time and can be removed from their point of origin, therefore they require a contextual understanding. In addition to artefacts in the form of tangible objects and materials the internet offers a further form of visual and textual data relating to textile-making. Material culture in all its forms and the internet requires evaluation in terms of both its production and consumption in order to make sense of its contribution as data.

5.1.23: Interviews

Interviews took place during the summer and autumn of 2005 as fieldwork drew to a close. As a form of data gathering they were designed to complement participant observation, visual methods and the use of material culture, rather than as an alternative (Atkinson and Coffey 2002). The process was essentially collaborative, an active partnership between interviewer and participant, with the intention of actively constructing knowledge (Holstein and Gubrium (2004). The following sections detail the decision making process, justifications, purposes and interview procedures.

5.1.24: *Balancing interviews with participant observation*

In designing the project my original intention was to conduct interviews alongside participant observation using one method to inform the other in an integrated way. In practice, due to time constraints this was not possible. In the event this did not compromise the quality of the data. At the time of fieldwork guild membership was static; we had all belonged to the guild for several years. Consequently I knew all the members and was able to find out more about them and explore certain issues with

them informally during workshops and meetings. It was therefore un-necessary to conduct any formal preliminary or exploratory interviews. As fieldwork progressed, it also became clear methodologically that I needed to clarify the emerging issues and where there were gaps in addressing the study's aims in order to explore them further with key individuals. For these reasons I decided to wait until fieldwork was drawing to a close before embarking on the interview process. Consequently, in a similar way to Adler and Adler (1997: 24) the interviews 'flowed out of and built on the participant observation'.

5.1.25: *Purpose and justification*

The main purpose of the interviews was to elaborate on the already emerging themes and questions from fieldwork and, with a focus on individual meanings, explore aspects of the study's aims that proved difficult to research in sufficient depth through participant observation, general discussions and the material culture alone; namely:

- The impact of personal space and environmental and temporal factors, and how these affect textile making for the individual
- Personal meanings of guild membership and the importance of belonging
- Individuals' perceptions of what influences making and creating
- How individuals have developed their knowledge and skills
- Personal interests and preferences
- Inspirations and meanings
- What enhances and inhibits textile-making for individuals
- Individuals' perceptions of the benefits, or not, of creative textile making in terms of quality of life and well-being

The intention was to construct meaning through generating rich, thick and detailed description that would assist in theoretically saturating already developing categories and emerging themes from fieldwork (Warren 2002, Geerz 1973, Glaser and Strauss 1967, Rubin and Rubin 1995).

5.1.26: *Participant selection*

Guild members were purposefully selected and approached one at a time for in-depth interviews based on my knowledge of them as individuals, their experience and potential to inform on the key issues emerging from fieldwork (Johnson 2002, Spradley 1979). When fieldwork took place in 2004 to 2005, the guild was made up of committed textile-makers, professionals and serious amateurs who were also long-standing members. There were no beginners or new members, and all of them were known to me as a fellow guild member. Interview participants were selected because of their different backgrounds, career trajectories, textile-making interests and experience of this and/or other guilds rather than on the basis of their length of experience or level of skill. The iterative nature of the process and ongoing analysis meant that the number of interviews was not decided on in advance, they continued until theoretical saturation was reached (Holstein and Gubruim 1995, Glaser and Strauss 1967). This became evident after seven interviews, and at this point I decided to stop gathering data and continue analysing and writing with a view to continuing at a later date only if specific questions remained un-answered and there were gaps in understanding (Rubin and Rubin 2005).

5.1.27: *Access and consent*

The guild members were aware, from the information sheet sent to them in July 2004 and from subsequent communications in Guild newsletters that I intended to approach some of them for interviews. I made initial contact with individuals by telephone or e mail to ask their informal permission and if this was forthcoming to arrange a suitable time and place for the interview. I then followed this up with a formal letter, information sheet and consent form (see appendix 1).

5.1.28: *The interview process*

The in-depth interviews of approximately one and a half hours duration took the form of a guided conversation (Rubin and Rubin 2005, Kvale 1996) based on a loosely structured format drawn from the topic areas listed above (see appendix 3). This was used to guide, rather than direct the interview (Stroh 2000). Questions were open-

ended using probing, prompting and follow up questions where necessary to gain further depth (Rubin and Rubin 1995). I also gave the participants opportunity to raise any issues they felt were important. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim within a few days of the event.

Interviews began with the participant's own story prompted by a question about their background and how they became interested in textile making. This biographical account became an important feature of all of the interviews and led naturally into other topic areas. In this part of the interview I took an active listening role, intervening only to maintain flow and gain further depth (Johnson 2002). These stories, where participants re-constructed past events, contextualised the meaning of textile-making as occupation from their point of view (Holstein and Gubrium 1995).

As the interviews progressed they became more interactive, constructive and conversational in nature (Holstein and Gubrium 2004, Mishler 1986, Denzin 2001). Through knowing the participants I found that my views were expected, particularly where general topics were discussed such as external influences on textile-making and the nature and future of the guild. As Miller and Glassner (2004: 133) put it, knowledge emerged through 'achievement of inter-subjective depth and mutual understanding'. In order to maintain a reflexive stance and acknowledge how my part in the interview had contributed to the construction of knowledge and its interpretation (Mishler 1986), I reflected personally and methodologically after each one, actively questioning my part in the process. These reflections were used to inform the interviewing process and ongoing data analysis.

5.1.29: *Interviewing as a collaborative process*

The interviews were a collaborative process, where knowledge was actively constructed in the context of a trusting and reciprocal relationship (Holstein and Gubrium 2004, Miller and Glassner 2004). We had shared ideas during the interview, but I also felt it necessary to share my analyses and interpretations. Following each interview I returned the verbatim transcript together with my initial interpretations to participants, inviting further discussion or comment. This generally took place informally at the next meeting or workshop. No one challenged my interpretations,

but this process did, in some instances, prompt further thoughts from them regarding issues they had not mentioned and these were added to the data.

5.1.30: *Section summary*

The interviews, designed to complement other forms of data gathering, were an active, collaborative and reciprocal partnership with the aim of constructing knowledge and understanding. Their purpose was to elaborate on already emerging themes, eliciting individuals' understandings and personal meanings of events through the generation of rich and detailed description. The process of data gathering and analysis was essentially iterative, continuing until theoretical saturation of the main categories and themes was reached. In line with other methods of data gathering, reflexivity was maintained through ongoing personal and methodological reflection and actively questioning my own part in the process. Part two of this chapter details the process of data analysis

Part two:

5.2: Data analysis

Analysis required sensitivity to the diverse nature of the data, in that the different forms: textual, visual and material offer different but complementary perspectives on textile-making as occupation. The process was informed by constructivist grounded theory, symbolic interactionist, phenomenological and hermeneutic perspectives (Crotty 2003, Denzin 2001, Blumer 1969, Gadamer 1975, Charmaz 2006).

Personal reflection on my own lived experience and pre-understandings as researcher and participant were central to the analysis and the development of a reflexive interpretation (Alvesson and Skőldberg 2000). Drawing on Alvesson and Skőldberg's levels of interpretation, analysis incorporated four inter-connecting layers, beginning with tentative and preliminary interpretations of the underlying meanings inherent in the data. Secondly through a deeper and more integrated level of interpretation as fieldwork progressed, categories and themes were developed, establishing directions, patterns and relationships in the data. Analysis also took into account the different

layers of meaning embedded in the visual and material data together with narratives and personal histories inherent in the interview data. Thirdly, because events unfold over time and are grounded in traditional socio-cultural practices, their temporal and historical significances were important for contextual understanding (Denzin 2001, Clarke 2005). Finally, through raising the analysis to a meta-level, the significance of gender, politics, technology and cross-cultural relationships were considered in order to interpret the meaning of textile-making as a socio-culturally constructed occupation.

The following sections consider the different forms of meaning elicited through analysis and interpretation in relation to the key methodological approaches and different types of data. Finally I explain the analytical layers and the technical procedures used in the process.

5.2.1: Forms of meaning

Through a reflexive approach to ethnographic interpretation, the key aim of analysis was to elicit the different forms of meaning embedded in the process in order to develop a holistic understanding of textile-making as occupation. In relation to this study meaning can be considered as subjective and emotional, constructed, negotiated and symbolic and although not mutually exclusive, for clarity I will consider them separately.

5.2.2: *Subjective and emotional meanings*

In chapter three I broadly discussed meaning as a subjective and emotional experience in relation to an individual's experience of occupation (Nelson 1988, 1994, Hasselkus 2002). I also considered phenomenology in relation to occupational science and its importance in understanding the meaningful occupation from an individual's perspective (McLaughlin Gray 1997, Barber 2004, Zahavi 2003).

One of the key reasons for interviewing for instance was to explore textile-making in further depth from the individual's point of view and elicit personal meanings for making and creating together with meanings for belonging to the guild. Analysis of

interview and fieldwork data revealed that individuals engage in textile-making on sensual, creative and constructive levels and that its meanings also have a spiritual and emotional connectedness with the past. Interview analysis also emphasised personal preferences for different media, equipment and ways of working together with the meanings related to engaging in different aspects of textile-making.

During interviews, some of which took place in participants' own studios, artefacts such as equipment, finished work and work in progress, design note books, post cards and photographs were often used by the participants to illustrate particular points in the conversation. Analytically artefacts can be considered as a point of reference, a projection of the individual's world of textile-making and in terms of their subjective and emotional meanings (Moore 1990, Prior 2003). Through being in Charlotte's studio for instance, where I had an opportunity to see her designs, finished tapestries and equipment as we discussed her life as a weaver, I gained a deeper understanding of how and why she creates and makes. In these instances artefacts acted as a mediator (Dant 1999), providing a way of eliciting subjecting meanings.

Denzin (2001) emphasises the importance of biographical and narrative accounts to ascertaining individual meanings and to exploring how events and processes unfold over time. Asking participants about their background naturally led to a narrative of the events and influences that had shaped their individual occupational choices and 'careers' (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 68) as textile-makers. Whilst recognising that people engage in constructing accounts of their experiences through language (Alvesson and Skőldberg 2000), these were analysed primarily in terms of key events, catalysts and significant influencing factors (Coffey and Atkinson 1996), rather than concentrating on discourse and the ways in which stories were told (Mishler 1986).

In earlier sections of this chapter I discussed the different purposes of constructed photographs and how they not only document events, but also creatively capture meaningful and memorable experience. From a phenomenological perspective they 'express the artistic, emotional, or experiential intent of the photographer' (Harper 2000: 727), an important aspect of reflexive interpretation and analysis.

5.2.3: *Constructed meanings*

In chapter four I described a constructivist grounded theory approach to gathering and analysing data and a view that meanings are constructed from shared understandings and experiences. A constructivist approach 'assumes that both data and analyses are social constructions that reflect what their production entailed' (Charmaz 2006: 131). It leads to an exploration and interpretation of implicit statements and actions, embedding them in wider socio-cultural networks and situations; it also embraces reflexivity (Charmaz 2006).

In constructing an understanding of the nature and purpose of the guild and the impact of membership on occupational engagement, for instance, initially through participant observation in meetings and workshops and later by exploring categories further in interviews and material culture; it emerged that the guild was much more than an occupational group of like-minded individuals with a common interest in textiles. It fosters a culture of trust and reciprocity amongst members leading to collective action and craft promotion.

5.2.4: *Negotiated meanings*

From a hermeneutic perspective understanding is interpretation, taking into account one's own pre-conceptions, standpoints and traditions. It is 'participative, conversational and dialogic', seeing meaning as not just constructed, but negotiated (Schwandt 2000:195). During fieldwork and interviews understanding of particular aspects of textile-making came about through interaction with participants and through engaging in the crafts whilst questioning meaning in the light of pre-understanding and initial assumptions (Heidegger 1962, Moran 2000).

As a textile-maker and guild member I came to the research with tacit knowledge and experience. This was the starting point for entering the hermeneutic circle of understanding, a frame of reference and connection with textile-making and its traditions (Scott 1990). Although traditionally applied to text and language (Gadamer 1976), Whincup (2004) suggests that hermeneutics also offers a framework for analysing visual images. The image brings 'something to mind' and in hermeneutic

thought this is connected to being able to see beyond and behind the immediately visible (Davey 1999: 11). Image 6 for example taken at the guild spinning workshop captures the skill in drawing out fine silk fibres and to an extent the speed of the rotating wheel, but it also brings to mind the rhythm and flow that can be achieved by the spinner through bodily interaction with equipment and materials and engaging with traditional spinning practices.



6: *skill, rhythm and flow in spinning*

Through engaging in a spiralling process of analysis (Moran 2000), and considering data as a whole, hermeneutics allowed for moving between the analytical layers to achieve a deeper and more holistic understanding of the social, cultural and historical contexts that underlie what is immediately seen, heard or read.

5.2.5: *Symbolic meanings*

The search for symbolic meaning might be considered as a part of the spiralling process by connecting what is visible or experienced in terms of actions, materials and objects with a social, cultural and historical context. Symbolic meaning is inherent in our understandings of each other's actions (Blumer 1969). The meaning of that action or experience at a surface level, however, does not always concur with meaning at a deeper more symbolic level, it involves 'thick interpretation' and uncovering meanings that 'inform and structure' individuals' experience (Denzin 2001: 52). Hand-spinning for instance, when observed and experienced in a guild workshop,

symbolises the quest for control and mastery of raw material and the creation of yarn. On a deeper level it also symbolises a sense of engaging with tradition, a connection with the past.

Symbolic meanings are also inherent in individuals' relationships with objects and come from the way in which they are defined through interaction; meanings differ for individuals and change according to social contexts (Blumer 1969). Spinning wheels as objects symbolised work and domesticity in pre-industrial society, for guild members today they can symbolise relaxation and leisure, but they also have a symbolic connection with the past as heirlooms with an aesthetic value.

Whincup (2004: 89) contends that there is the potential for symbolic attribution in everything that is seen and the symbolic meaning uncovered in an image is related to the context in which it is constructed and viewed. I interviewed Carys for example in her home studio, where she showed me postcards of her past work to explain the symbolic meanings of her tapestries and how her inspirations are culturally embedded in the past. Photographs taken in the spinning workshop, of participants working a spinning wheel and teasing out fibre to spin into thread can be considered occupationally as a symbolic re-engagement with pre-industrial craft traditions. When considered in relation to field notes and interview transcripts these images symbolise on one hand occupational mastery and on another relaxation and flow that comes from engagement with the process (Csikszentmihayli 1990).

Where artefacts are concerned, meanings are contextual. In Japan for instance, where I collected cloth, materials and equipment I was able to begin making sense of their function, conditions of production, signification and aesthetic meanings (Scott 1990, Dant 1999) through observing and occasionally experiencing textile production. Once removed from their cultural context these artefacts held different meanings, symbolising the long textile traditions fused with contemporary innovations for which Japan is renowned (Kawashima 1999).

5.2.6: *Summary*

In the sections above meaning has been considered as:

- Subjective and emotional: drawing on phenomenology and the use of expressive visual data and biographical accounts to elicit individual and personal meanings.
- Constructed: emphasising the construction of shared understanding and experiences.
- Negotiated: where the researcher is a part of the interpretive process, questioning meaning in the light of pre-understanding, prior assumptions and traditions
- Symbolic: a part of the spiralling process of analysis, connecting actions, experience and individual's relationships with objects to socio-cultural and historical contexts

As fieldwork progressed and during the process of writing, explicit recognition of the different forms of meaning and the influence of key methodological approaches assisted a fluid movement within and between the analytical layers described in the following sections.

5.2.7: Layers of analysis

The integrated and inter-connecting layers of analysis, constructed and developed as fieldwork progressed in a spiralling rather than a linear fashion, comprised of:

1. Preliminary interpretations of data in the form of field notes, interview transcripts, memos, photographs and materials
2. Developing patterns, directions and relationships through deeper and more integrated interpretations
3. Establishing socio-cultural contexts, temporal and historical significances

4. A meta-analysis establishing the significance of the first three layers in relation to wider socio-political issues such as gender, cross-cultural practices and technology.

An emphasis on reflexive interpretation involved continually moving between layers making connections and re-connections (Alvesson and Skőldberg 2000: 254); establishing the relationships between the different elements of data and the emerging patterns (Spradley 1980). On-going reflection was a crucial part of the process, initially to establish the impact of my insiderness on the construction of interpretation and understanding, and, further to this, in considering how initial interpretations could be developed and enhanced in the light of existing theories.

5.2.8: *Constructing layers one and two*

A fundamental aspect of analysis was the construction of a framework (layer one) by coding data and re-organising it into categories and themes (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002, Charmaz 2006). In order to rigorously manage the volume of diverse data, link it together and construct a framework that could be developed through an on-going process of data gathering and analysis it was, in the first instance, catalogued, dated, cross-referenced and line-numbered. This process ensured that all relevant aspects of the data were accounted for in developing categories and allowed for the retrieval of segments of data during analysis and writing. As field work progressed and new coded information was added to the framework, developing categories began to saturate and the key themes and patterns emerged (layer two). The techniques involved in developing layers one and two are detailed in the following sections.

5.2.9: *Coding for the development of categories*

Coding is typically described as the first essential step in analysing qualitative data (Lofland et al 2006, Charmaz 2006, Strauss and Corbin 1998). Analysis began with open coding, a process of deconstructing data and attaching labels to segments to define what it is about (Clarke 2005, Charmaz 2006, Charmaz and Mitchell 2001). This process assisted in organising and managing the data so that meaningful parts could be retrieved (Coffey and Atkinson 1996). In addition, coding began the process

of unifying ideas (Charmaz (2006). Open coding continued as new data, in the form of notes, photographs, documents, transcripts and materials accumulated during field work and interviews. The extract from field notes in appendix 2 illustrates how these were coded. Interview transcripts and other written materials were coded in the same way. Similarly, photographs were initially coded to establish meanings. The codes from photographs taken in the silk spinning workshop for instance began to establish not only the tangible aspects of spinning such as the diversity of equipment and materials, but the concentration and co-ordination required to establish a bodily rhythm (see appendix 2 for examples). As part of an on-going process, the codes from different data, photographs, field notes, interviews and other material were drawn together to develop categories, or concepts with commonalities (Miles and Huberman 1994). During this stage I considered how the different forms of data were situated in relation to each other and the particular attributes of each in order to make initial sense of the whole (Harper 2000, Collier and Collier 1986).

In developing the second layer of analysis categories were gradually elaborated as the patterns, relationships and themes inherent in the data began to emerge. At this point coding became more focused or selective, with the aim of developing key categories and themes more fully (Lofland et al 2006, Charmaz 2006). During this process I continually looked for variations, by comparing incidents and actions occurring at different stages of fieldwork and during interviews (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Maintaining a reflexive stance was an essential part of this, challenging pre-conceptions and taken-for-granted assumptions and raising further questions (Charmaz 2006). For instance, through participating in workshops and discussions within the guild and from my personal experience of the satisfaction gained from creative production through repetitive action during spinning and weaving, I began to develop the concept of rhythm and repetition, which appeared akin to 'flow' (Csikszentimihilayi 1990). This was visible in workshops and partially captured through photography. By taking this further during interviews it emerged that although this was an intense experience for some, others found continuous and repetitive action boring and their challenge and satisfaction came from creating through the detailed and intricate actions involved in fine weaving and tapestry (see chapter 10.1.13).

5.2.10: *Memos*

Writing memos was an integral part of the study. In the design stages they helped me to clarify and justify decisions. Following fieldwork sessions and interviews I reflected on the findings and the process including my own pre-conceptions, feelings about, and interpretations of issues and events. As Clarke (2005: 84) puts it, memos are a means of 'getting assumptions and pre-conceptions out on the table' and making them clear. I found that memos served several purposes: they facilitated a reflexive approach to analysis, taking account of the influence of my relationship with participants (Finlay 2002a), experience and knowledge; they generated further questions, new ideas, concepts and relationships; they assisted in identifying gaps in the data and led to the abstraction of ideas (Charmaz 2006). Memo writing continued after fieldwork assisting in the refinement of the analytical framework and the development of theory.

5.2.11: *Theoretical sampling*

I discuss theoretical sampling here, rather than in part one because of its integral relationship with analysis. As Dey (2004: 84) puts it, 'the boundaries merge and blur'. It is a process of collecting data that elaborates and refines categories in order to develop theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Charmaz 2006). In other words the emerging analysis guides data gathering (Ezzy 2002). I used this technique throughout fieldwork by drawing on a range of data sources from within and outside the guild in order to develop concepts, answer emerging questions and fill identified gaps within categories and to saturate categories (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001). The initial decisions about where to theoretically sample were based on general perspectives or problem areas. During fieldwork for instance, through conversations within the guild, at study days and through reading specialist journals and magazines, it was evident that computer technology was being used more frequently by contemporary hand-weavers and there appeared to be mixed views about this. I had little experience of this field and in order to develop this category further, I decided to accompany one of the guild members on a computerised weaving and design course. Together we learned how technology can interface with hand-weaving, how it shapes, transforms

and develops contemporary weaving as occupation. These concepts were explored further during subsequent fieldwork sessions and interviews.

5.2.12: *Theoretical saturation*

Theoretical saturation is discussed in part one (5.1.3) of this chapter in relation to ethnographic fieldwork. To reiterate, the aim is to saturate a wide range of categories in relation to the socio-cultural, organisational and historical context (Charmaz and Mitchell 2001). Saturation is concerned with the relationship between codes and the emerging theory. It is reached when coding 'adequately supports and fills out the emerging theory' (Ezzy 2002: 93). I found for instance, by looking closely at the procedures during guild meetings early in fieldwork that these followed a defined pattern, involving certain *etiquette*, *formal acknowledgements* and *collective action*, which varied little from meeting to meeting and contributed to members' sense of belonging. These categories saturated fairly quickly and it was possible to make some comparisons with other guilds by asking participants who belonged to more than one group or visited guilds as outside speakers about the pattern of meetings there.

In contrast, categories that evolved over time were more difficult to saturate in that new data, collected at different points during fieldwork, often produced new attributes or properties (Strauss and Corbin 1998). When exploring the resources that guild members use for learning about the crafts such as networking with others for example, the use of the internet emerged fairly late in fieldwork and more strongly during the interviews. As fieldwork came to a close the guild began realising the potential of a webpage for publicity and information giving, a strand that could be explored and developed further.

5.2.13: *The third and fourth layers of analysis*

The third layer of analysis builds on the categories and themes developed in the first and second layers. It establishes the relationships and connections between the meanings of occupational engagement in textile-making for guild members and the socio-cultural networks, history and tradition that has shaped and influenced the construction of such meanings.

The fourth and final layer aims to develop a more critical understanding of emerging issues in terms of wider socio-cultural and contemporary textile-making practices, the influence of technology, cross-cultural networks, gender and ecology for instance. Alvesson and Skőldberg (2000) stress the importance of reflecting how one's work is situated in relation to wider issues. This involved moving back and forth between the layers reflecting on the participants and my own interpretations of events and how these relate to contemporary textile-making practices. It is also a question of moving between a 'concern for process and the analysis of the specific lives of individuals who live the process being studied' (Denzin 2001: 61).

5.2.14: *Maps and diagrams*

The generation of visual maps or diagrams during the different stages of analysis assisted my understanding of the relationships between categories (Hunter, Lusardi, Zucker, Jacelon and Chandler 2002). Maps were also useful in making comparisons across data sources (Clarke 2005), and establishing the connections between the different layers of analysis in order to make sense of the whole. Drawing on Clarke's (2005) concept of situational maps, I generated a series of analytical maps (see appendix 4) to illustrate how research questions led to the construction of key categories and themes from the data:

- Five maps (appendix 4 maps 1 to 5) represent the first layer of analysis, relating to the process of making and constructing textiles; the knowledge and understanding required; the attributes and abilities of individual makers and the factors that influence occupational engagement; together with the nature of the guild and the impact of guild membership on textile-making as occupation.

- The second layer map (map 6) illustrates how the individual can shape textile-making as an occupational domain and how guild membership contributes to this and a sense of well-being.

- The third layer map (map 7) links these themes with contextual socio-cultural and historical influences that shape textile-making as occupation for individuals and in the context of the guild.

- The fourth layer map (map 8) relates textile-making to wider socio-cultural concerns such as gender, changing social trends, global connections and political issues.

- A final map (map 9) illustrates the emerging theory and how individuals as a part of the guild, a socio-cultural and occupational group, shape textile-making and how capitalising on this can enhance quality of life and well-being.

5.2.15: Conclusion

This chapter describes the diverse nature of the data gathered during fieldwork together with processes of analysis. The rationale for collecting a range of complementary data stems from my initial pre-conceptions of textile-making as a complex and multi-faceted occupational domain that requires understanding from different perspectives. Methodologically the aim was to bring different kinds of data together in a convergent way (Atkinson et al 2003), in order to develop a more holistic and reflexive understanding of textile-making as occupation in the context of contemporary British society.

The layered approach to analysis, influenced by constructivist grounded theory, phenomenological, hermeneutic and symbolic interactionist perspectives was an integrated, iterative and reflexive process. Informed by complementary methodological approaches, meanings of textile-making are considered to be subjective and emotional, constructed, negotiated and symbolic. In constructing the four interconnecting layers of interpretation I utilised grounded theory techniques through coding for the development of categories, writing memos, theoretical sampling and aiming for theoretical saturation. This approach to analysis built a holistic picture of the textile-making process engaged in by individuals in the context of the guild whilst accounting for the wider socio-cultural, environmental and

temporal influences that shape textile-making as an occupational domain. Appendix 4 includes the maps that illustrate how research questions and the development of codes and categories within each analytical layer led to the following key themes:

- The traditional nature of textile-making as occupation
- Developing textile knowledge and skills
- Individual and collective contributions to the shape of textile-making
- Creating a sense of self, a collective sense of self and a sense of well-being
- Capitalising on textile-making as occupation

These themes structure chapters seven to eleven which develop the emerging theory through a synthesis of the study's findings with existing theories and literature. In order to provide a context, chapter six offers an introduction to the guild as an occupational group and its members as individual textile-makers. Pseudonyms are used when referring to guild members and other participants, and direct quotes from fieldwork and interview data are italicised. Photographic images are integrated into the text and technical textile-related terms explained in context.

Chapter six:

Our guild as an occupational group

6: Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a foundation and context for subsequent chapters through an introduction to our guild and its members as a socio-cultural and occupational group. In the first instance I build on the brief history of guilds outlined in chapter two and consider their purpose and development in contemporary society taking into account the role of the Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers (AGWS&D) as the organisational context and its links with wider textile networks. Drawing on field notes, interviews and documentary evidence I consider the origins, development and purpose of our guild placing it in a socio-cultural context. I provide a profile the members, introduce the key participants interviewed at the close of fieldwork and consider some of the wider influences on guild membership today. Finally I describe our guild's structure and organisation, its programme and meeting procedures and consider how it differs from other guilds.

6.1: The development of guilds in contemporary British society

In chapter two (2.2.2) I briefly outlined the development of craft guilds in pre-industrial society as groups of producers with common interests and shared commitments to their craft. The guilds as powerful, professional trading fraternities died out in the late nineteenth century (Durkheim 1957). The craft guilds that originated in the twentieth century, including the individual guilds who laid the foundations for the AGWS&D drew inspiration from the Arts and Crafts Movement and its belief in the preservation of rural craft skills (Greensted 2005). In chapter two (2.2.4) I referred to the work of the later generation of the Movement's pioneers, Mackmurdo and Ashbee, who, through establishing the Century Guilds and the Guild and School of Handicraft, in the late nineteenth century, created a pattern for the twentieth century artist craftsman (Lucie-Smith 1981: 212).

The Arts and Crafts Movement remained active in rural Britain until 1914. It changed direction after the 1st World War when new ways of preserving rural crafts were developed (Greensted 2005), particularly the government sponsored Rural Industries Bureau, whose purpose was to maintain standards and enable country craftsmen to compete and survive (Lucie-Smith 1981, Mairet 1939). It was during this inter-war period that the first guilds of weavers, spinners and dyers came into existence and formed a council of guild representatives with a small committee to produce a quarterly journal. It was not until 1954 however, that a resolution to form an Association of guilds in Britain with its own constitution was passed by the council (Hansford 2005). The Association, comprising ten founder guilds came into being in 1955 and aimed to:

> 'encourage and maintain integrity and excellence of craftsmanship; foster a sense of beauty of material, texture, colour and design; provide opportunities for interchange of information, for enlarging knowledge at holiday schools, for demonstrations, lectures and library facilities; co-operate with other guilds who have like-minded aims'
> (Hansford 2005: 6).

Today the Association, which has one hundred and twelve affiliated guilds, maintains similar objectives, namely:

- To encourage and maintain integrity and excellence of craftsmanship
- To encourage a sense of beauty of material, texture, colour and design
- To foster these aims for individuals through the certificate of achievement
- To promote opportunities for exchange of information through lectures, library facilities, conferences and exhibitions, both locally and nationally
- To further co-operation between member guilds and liaise with other guilds and societies with like-minded aims.

(AGWS&D 2008b: 49)

In order to fulfil its objectives; the association, through an elected organising committee, co-ordinates events such as a summer school, national exhibition, conference and annual general meeting. It also represents the guilds at national events

and makes links with other organisations, national and international, with an interest in the arts and crafts (Hannaford 2008, AGWS&D 2008a)

6.2: Origins of our guild

Our guild was originally founded in Wales in 1953 with support from the Welsh Guild of Rural Craftsmen and was open to 'all interested in the art of weaving' (minutes of committee meeting held on 25th March 1953). The guild had an initial membership of twenty one women. According to recorded minutes, membership, although active and enthusiastic, fluctuated during the 1960s and the guild closed down in 1969. The reasons for this are unclear, but it would appear from the minutes that some of the core members were no longer able to continue supporting the guild and there were considerable problems finding suitable venues for meetings, something that continues to be a problem for the re-formed guild today.

6.3: Our guild re-formed

It was during the 1970s when there was a resurgence of interest in rural crafts that guilds in Britain began to flourish. At the time, the Weavers Journal editorials regularly referred to the increasing popularity of textile crafts which in 1972 an editorial linked to peoples' general sense of dissatisfaction with their quality of life in a 'pre-packaged environment' where creativity was stifled (Barker 1972: 1592). The following year Halsey (1973: 1691) commented that textiles had 'come out in the most spectacular way' and was sharing the limelight with other popular crafts such as pottery. This trend continued throughout the decade. Lucie-Smith (1981: 273) described this period as a 'second arts and crafts movement', when there was 'a hunger for physical virtuosity in handling materials' and a strong interest in the crafts by amateurs (Lucie-Smith 1981: 274). It was during this hey day for crafts that our guild re-formed in 1978.

6.4: The development of our guild

The guild as it exists today as an autonomous and self-regulating group, with an affiliation to the AGWS&D, has continued to develop as a cohesive group of people with a particular interest in the textile crafts of weaving, spinning and dyeing.

6.4.1: *Guild purpose*

Our guild's constitution echoes the objectives of the AGWS&D, stating that

> 'the object of the guild shall be to foster and facilitate the work of persons interested in textile crafts, to maintain and develop the hand crafts of spinning, weaving , dyeing and other forms of textile construction, and to work together with kindred bodies'

The guild has a role in developing and maintaining textile craft skills through providing access to information and practical learning opportunities for its members and the programme is designed to fulfil this. In addition the guild provided resources for members to use in the form of books, portable equipment and access to materials. Information is shared on a formal level through talks and workshops and informally through sharing experiences, knowledge and ideas amongst individual members.

The guild encourages creative development and acknowledges members' achievements. During the summer of 2004 for instance, several members had work accepted for the AGWS&D national exhibition, and two members gained City and Guilds certificates in felt making. Individual progress and innovation is formally acknowledged annually through awarding a guild trophy to the member who has made most progress in the crafts, based on work produced for our summer exhibition.

Through its annual exhibition and public events the guild provides a show case for members' work and promotes the crafts of spinning weaving and dyeing to the public through craft demonstrations and information about guild activities. In May 2004 and 2005 for instance, the guild held open days at a local museum where the public could try spinning and weaving with help from guild members. This was part of the Association's national spinning and weaving week where guilds are encouraged to stage local events to publicise the crafts (Turner 2003a, 2004a). These events were particularly popular with children, who readily came to try out equipment and learn a skill, and from this perspective it did achieve the Association's aim for craft promotion (Turner 2003b); however, it did not result in a growth in membership. It made us realise as a guild that despite advanced publicity, at the museum the public were not necessarily seeking us out, but coming across us by chance.

Typically at these events families with children stopped to see what we were doing, some ask questions, a few tried out the crafts and others simply passed by. We were, in some senses part of the exhibits, the entertainment for the day. This made us re-assess how and where we would promote ourselves and our crafts in future. The following year we concentrated our efforts on taking part in organised public events aimed at people with a general interest in textile crafts, particularly knitting, which is enjoying a renewed popularity (Grainger 2005). Knitters, we felt, might want to know more about spinning and dyeing particularly and as a result, since 2006 more visitors have attended our meetings and we have achieved a small growth in membership.

6.4.2: *Networking*

The guild also has an important role to play in providing its members with opportunities for networking. This happens internally at meetings and workshops where speakers, tutors and visitors bring different knowledge and experience to the group. Additionally, some members also belong to other textile groups and can provide links with these. As a Welsh guild we also have strong links with other guilds in Wales and join with them biennially to hold an all Wales event. Our opportunities for networking are extended further through our affiliation to the AGWS&D. Through regular newsletters, the internet and through the Journal we are informed of national and international textile events, courses, conferences, exhibitions and travel opportunities. Several of our members regularly attend such events and have developed a wider network of contacts which they can then share within the guild.

6.4.3: *Membership profile*

Following an inaugural meeting in 1978, the re-formed guild attracted thirty new members, and by 1980 this had risen to fifty. One of the original members, Eleanor, who joined the guild in 1979, attributed this to the publicity that spinning, weaving and dyeing received at that time from the BBC television programme 'The Craft of the Weaver', first broadcast in 1980 (Sutton, Colingwood and St Aubyn Hubbard 1982). In my interview with Eleanor she recalled that:

'almost immediately after that we had this flare up of members..... the members in the guilds, everywhere, grew.. the Association membership went up to about 5,000'.

In terms of numbers, the membership of our guild remained relatively high during the mid 1980s, falling to thirty four in 1990 (minutes of the annual general meeting, June 1990). By 2004 when field work took place, membership had fallen gradually to twenty one. Interestingly, the documented minutes from guild committee meetings from 1978 to the present day reveal that the stability and continuance of the guild relies on a strong commitment from a core group of people, some of whom have belonged to our guild since it was re-formed.

6.4.4: *Current membership*

At the time of fieldwork the guild had a committed group of members, all women, with the exception of two men and including me. Our ages range from late forties to mid eighties, the majority of members are in their sixties and have retired from work un-related to textiles. Most of us have belonged to this or other guilds for over ten years. Although the guild is situated in Wales, only around half of our members are Welsh; I discuss the influence this had on the nature of our work in subsequent chapters. In terms of textile-making we are a mix of professional (people who make textiles for a living and have some formal training), semi-professional (people who have some training and occasionally sell and exhibit their work outside the guild, but not exclusively) and amateur makers (people who have no formal training and rarely exhibit outside the guild).

In the course of fieldwork, through informal conversation and through active listening, I tried to capture members' views and opinions on a variety of topics relating to the crafts. I also formally interviewed the following key people, selected for their knowledge of the crafts, different interests and experience of this and other guilds (pseudonyms are used):

- Eleanor, a weaver, spinner and dyer who teaches the crafts and also sells her work, is now in her seventies and an active and long-standing member of the

guild. She has served on the committee on several occasions and has also been a member of the AGWS&D committee.

- Kate is just sixty, she weaves, spins and dyes and has taught the crafts for a number of years. She is a founder member of the guild and continues to be active, as a committee member and through assisting at guild events. She also works part-time in a local gallery.

- David, in his late forties, is one of the two male members of the guild. He has a degree in textile-making and balances his love of weaving with his work as a parish priest. He has experience of making a living through craft and teaching; he belongs to this and other guilds.

- Carys, in her mid-seventies, now a tapestry weaver, was a school teacher until her retirement. She first joined the guild in the 1950s, but rarely attended meetings and then left to pursue her teaching career. She joined the guild again in early retirement and now weaves full-time, exhibiting and selling her work.

- Carole, in her late fifties, is a professional weaver who works to commission; she is a long-standing member of the guild and makes a living from weaving.

- Charlotte, also a professional tapestry weaver, has recently retired from sixth form teaching to weave full-time. She is also a founder member of the guild, although no longer involved organisationally. She exhibits and sells her work widely.

- Lucy, is just fifty and balances her love of textile crafts with a demanding job and family life. She has belonged to several guilds before joining this one in the early 1990s.

6.4.5: *Joining: becoming a member*

Several of our members first joined this or other guilds in early adulthood, usually after being introduced to the crafts elsewhere. Kate and Charlotte were founder members of the guild when it re-formed in 1978. At the time, both were then in their thirties with young families. Kate was introduced to textile-making, particularly collage and embroidery during her teacher training and learnt to weave through adult education in the early 1970s, when she finished teaching following the birth of her first child. The class was taught by a member of the original guild and Kate recalls how the guild was re-formed:

> *'In the class there were a few of us and we met anyway in peoples' houses to spin and chat and probably it was* [the teacher] *who suggested how about re-forming the Guild and we called this meeting at the* [local] *hotel and loads of people came and we decided it was worth forming'.*

Carole, one of the first members of the guild, began spinning in the mid 1970s, also learnt skills through adult education and *'just got hooked on it'.* She attended a guild dyeing workshop with a friend and joined the guild in 1979; she has been an active member ever since. During the 1970s and 1980s when several of the core members of the guild first joined, adult education craft classes flourished (Kelly 1992) and through these individuals were introduced to the guilds. As David put it:

> *'..when there was good adult education and adult education was cheap or free ..... people got involved; so many of our members started weaving through an adult education class'.*

Lucy also recalls attending adult education classes around this time and how *'the person who taught us told us about the guild and I joined the guild in* [England]*... I think at that time they had about 250 members'.* Like Kate, Carole and Lucy I was also introduced to the guild through adult education. I was taught by Eleanor during the early 1980s and through her, first joined the guild in 1984.

Eleanor had briefly joined a guild whilst working full-time as a hospital administrator in the south of England and actively *'hunted out'* our guild when she moved to Wales

in 1978. David on the other hand has belonged to a guild for most of his life: *'from the age of eleven I was a member of* [an English] *guild of dyers, spinners and weavers'*. He now has experience of being a member of several different guilds in England and Wales.

For many of us, joining the guild in young adulthood was a part of our development as spinners, weavers and dyers at a time when the crafts were becoming increasingly popular. In David's experience *'very few have ever come to the guilds to learn, they've usually learnt elsewhere and then joined the guilds'*. Certainly everyone I talked to had some knowledge of and interest in the crafts before joining and most of us, with the exception of Eleanor, Lucy and David, who had belonged to other guilds, were introduced to our guild by an existing member, in most cases our class teacher. At the time our reasons for joining a guild were primarily concerned with meeting like-minded people, the desire to learn more and develop our skills.

6.4.6: *A decline in membership*

The popularity of textile crafts and consequently guild membership slowly declined in the 1990s and by 2003 the membership of the AGWS&D had fallen to around 3,500 (Dean 2003). The president of the AGWS&D, Enid Russ, pointed to 'warning signals' in 1996, in that some higher education textile courses were 'loosing their hand-craft basis or being closed' (Russ 1996: 13). Drawing on the findings from an Association survey, the editor of the Journal of WS&D pointed out in 1997 that guild membership had declined during the previous ten years and that 88% of the membership were over the age of forty (Brown 1997). This is reflected in our membership profile which has changed very little in the first decade of the twenty first century.

6.4.7: *A lack of younger members*

Kate, our guild secretary, pointed out that now *'young people aren't joining'*, and from her visits to other guilds to give talks and workshops she observed that this was a trend in other guilds too. It remains an issue that the Association seek to address through liaison with textile colleges (Dean 2004). David, who has experience of a

wide range of textile crafts and belonging to different groups considered that *'it's not just weaving, spinning and dyeing that's the problem it's right the way across, every single organisation'*. One of the reasons for this, David feels is that a key area for recruiting new guild members, adult education craft classes, no longer exists.

6.4.8: *The rise and fall of adult education classes*

The pattern for post-war adult education was set by the 1944 Education Act and made provision for leisure occupations and recreational activities such as spinning, weaving and dyeing through local authority classes (Kelly 1992). The members who taught such classes in the 1970s and 80s all experienced their demise in the 1990s. Gorard (1997) reported a general decline in adult education since the 1980s and drop in local education authority (LEA) provision particularly from 1991.

Charlotte recalled the time when she and others were running LEA classes in the 1980s: *'Four people in our immediate circle ..... who had a little coterie of people who would then become members, but that's not happening now'*. The system ultimately changed following the implementation of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act and a drive for accreditation. This had a particularly adverse effect on leisure or hobby-based classes where students were not looking for certification or linking their learning to work; their primary interest was in learning for its own sake (Gorard, Fevre, Rees, Furlong and Reynold 1998).

Carole, for instance, who learnt to weave through adult education remembers how it was an ideal way of *'finding out if it was something that grabbed you or not;* she recalled that *a lot of people didn't carry on with it but quite a lot of people got hooked on it'*. The problem now is not that craftspeople such as Carole, David, Kate and Charlotte are unwilling to teach, but that they do not have the resources to do so and there is also the problem of public liability. As Carole points out:

> *'I can't afford as a tutor to have a load of looms, either money wise or space wise, so what do you do? The people either have to have their own equipment, but if they want to come and try it out as a possibility, 'do I like it, don't I like it', somebody's got to have some equipment somewhere'.*

This could be where guilds have a role to play, in offering people opportunities to try out the crafts and develop potential interests and skills. This is problematic for our guild; we hire venues for meetings and workshops and because of our city location, spiralling costs mean that we are constantly moving and do not have dedicated space for equipment or opportunities to run regular classes. The most we can offer are occasional tasters at public events, workshops and exhibitions. There are two further issues that impact on guild membership. The first concerns age and gender and the second changing lifestyles.

6.4.9: *The influence of age and gender*

I have already indicated that we are an ageing guild, in fact, in the absence of an influx of new and younger members we are growing old together. In addition, we are mostly women. There are similar observable trends in other guilds too (Brown 1997), evident from my attendance at a range of local, national and international events during the course of fieldwork. The reasons for this are complex and embedded in our personal and social histories, meanings for making and the importance of belonging. In chapter two I considered the relationship between textile crafts and gender, their historical development as domestic forms of occupation and later association with leisure and feminity.

Textile-making is, in Gale and Kaur's (2002: 7) view a 'feminine art'. The Crafts Council's survey of professional makers during 2002 and 2003 confirmed that women within the crafts generally outnumbered men by over 50% and in textiles by some 75%. Interestingly the survey identified that the younger the maker the more likely they were to be female. They state that 'one possible interpretation of this finding is that crafts offer young female makers with children the opportunity to combine working with child rearing' (Crafts Council 2004b:5). The survey showed that most makers were self-employed and worked from home adding strength to the link between craft, domesticity and gender. There is also an identifiable relationship between age, gender and group membership.

Putman (2000: 247) in his seminal work on social capital, 'Bowling Alone', pointed out that 'middle-aged and older people are more active in organisations than younger people' and that generational change is a powerful contributory factor in decline in organisational and civic engagement in America. In contrast Johnson and Jowell (2001) could not find evidence to suggest a similar trend from surveys of British social attitudes in the late 1990s; they suggest however, that young people in Britain do appear to be less likely than their elders to be joiners, but that they revert to type when older.

A study of voluntary group participation in Australia found that joining groups was influenced by age and gender and that women were more likely to join craft groups. Such groups were particularly attractive to the 'young-old' (50 – 59 age group) and making friends, meeting like-minded people and intellectual stimulation emerged as common reasons for joining (Mayhew and Swindell 1996:39). Certainly our guild and others share these characteristics and such findings together with Putman's theory assists in explaining the nature of our declining membership.

In their critique of models of community organisation, Stall and Stoecker (1998: 740) describe a women-centred model which emphasises the importance of maintaining and developing personal connections through groups that provide a 'safe environment for people to develop, change and grow'. Our guild has developed as a caring group, helping each other in times of need, acknowledging each other's development and contributions to the crafts as well as sharing skills, something which might be seen as a positive aspect of our genderedness.

6.4.10: *The impact of changing lifestyles*

The trend in falling guild membership is also related to changes in lifestyles and the need for paid work that will support the demands of a modern family. As the only member of the guild with a young child, and a priest who meets other families, David appreciates this:

> *'There isn't the physical time to fit it* (the crafts) *in and when there is the physical time, people often don't have the money and equipment has got harder to come by. The spaces we live in have got smaller'.*

The skills required for spinning and weaving are time-consuming to learn and equipment tends to be bulky and require dedicated space that is not always compatible with modern lifestyles. David observed that very often *'it's not until people retire that they suddenly discover that they've actually, possibly got some time';* something that is reflected in the make-up of our guild.

Interestingly, of all the guilds that make up the AGWS&D the on-line guild seems to have flourished the most within the last decade. Through conversations with members of this guild at Association events it is apparent that it offers the sense of belonging to a group of like-minded people with specialist interests whilst taking account of pressured lifestyles or in some instances people's remoteness from other guilds. Lucy, who belongs to an on-line guild points out that it's *'a different dynamic... there is a choice of whether to join in or not'.* In other words people can dip in and out of virtual meetings; if the topic isn't of interest then members do not have to take part.

6.4.11: *A way forward for guilds*

A possible way forward for guilds, one that has provoked a great deal of discussion at a national as well as a local level, is to try and recruit textile students. In 2004, the president of the Association, Professor Maureen Wayman recounted her attempts to raise the profile of the guilds amongst art and textile colleges by emphasising the skills that guilds have to offer (Dean 2004). However, in our experience, guilds and students are not entirely compatible. Carys recalled her contact with a local university:

> *'I remember Dot and I, when Dot was chairman, thinking that there was such an opportunity for getting youngsters into the guild if we made contact with* [the local university] *and the weaving there, and they were very helpful and we went there, but what they're doing is so far removed from what we're doing. I think they realised that we didn't have much to offer them and they didn't have much to offer us ... '.*

David feels this might be a way of getting new members, but thinks that if it happens, then *'the way guilds work will change dramatically'.* The reason for this, he suggests, is that textile students today are trained in design rather than the textile skills and techniques he learnt as part of his textile degree over twenty years ago. Indeed,

Adamson (2008: 40) in his critique of 'sloppy craft' refers to a 'post-disciplinary art environment' where there is less and less investment in acquiring skills. The guilds on the other hand invest a great deal in acquiring skill and may well, in Wayman's view, have something to offer students; but it remains questionable whether they will choose to join an organisation with a different value system from their own.

A further problem for guilds, apart from recruiting new people, is retaining existing members. Lucy, for instance finds it difficult to get to meetings, she works full-time, does not drive and needs to be strongly inspired to make the effort to attend:

> *'...certainly as membership is due I was thinking well actually ... I might join the on-line guild, and then it did make me think well actually if I join the on-line guild do I need to join the local guild because I'm not getting to many meetings, I may as well go as a guest and tap into it where I can, which I won't because I want to support it and I hate to see it dwindling'.*

The loyalty that Lucy expresses is a strong feature of our guild, we share a common bond and through this we have maintained a strong core membership with a range of expertise and skills. This is a key reason for David, who now lives a considerable distance away from the guild, to retain his membership:

> *'I mean one of the reasons ..... I come to* [our guild] *is that there are a number of semi-professionals who maintain, I mean the level of lecture that we're looking for, the level of work that's coming out is of a very high standard and challenging'.*

In this sense our guild achieves the AGWS&D aim of maintaining a high standard of craftsmanship, but for the guild to flourish in the future we need to accommodate a range of skills and interests and perhaps have a greater willingness to change. The guild's current existence and stability however, depends on the loyal core group of members who give their time to its organisation.

6.4.12: *Structure and organisation*

The organisational structure of the guild has changed little since it was re-formed in 1978. When the guild was first set up it had an elected committee with a chairman, secretary, treasurer and publicity officer (minutes of 3rd committee meeting, June

1978), who dedicated time, voluntarily, to the smooth running of the guild. The same committee structure remains in place today and because at least half of the small membership has belonged to the guild for over ten years, most members have served on the committee and some on more than one occasion.

The committee meets when required, usually three or four times a year to arrange the programme of lectures and workshops, book speakers, ensure suitable venues, discuss future events and publicity, make links with other guilds, textile groups and the Association.

Members of the guild pay an annual subscription, which entitles them to attend lectures and workshops for a discretionary fee and to exhibit work at the guild's annual exhibition. Part of the subscription goes towards the guild's affiliation fee for membership of the AGWS&D, which entitles guild members to attend national events such as conferences, seminars, summer school and enter work for the association's national exhibition, again for a discretionary fee. Guild lectures and workshops are also open to non-members who pay a higher fee to attend. Guild funds depend almost entirely on subscriptions and a small amount of income from sales at events and exhibitions. Members also donate items such as equipment, materials and books for sale within the guild. The size of our income is therefore proportionate to the size of the membership and during the year of fieldwork funds became a problem as Carys, a committee member at the time, pointed out:

> *'.. well we were balancing the books the other day at a committee meeting and wondering just what we could afford, we couldn't afford a lot of things that we would have wanted in the way of lecturers, which is a shame'.*

The cost of speakers and tutors for workshops varies tremendously in that individuals set their own rates. When funds are low it is necessary for the guild to draw on their own members to give talks and lead workshops, which can lead to a lack of variety in the programme.

Being small also has an impact on the guild's ability to stage public events. The annual exhibition, for instance, requires sufficient items to make it an interesting

show and a rota of volunteers to man it; an increasing problem when members are few and have other commitments. In 2005 we managed this by inviting a neighbouring guild to join us. Our size also impacts on our location and environment.

6.4.13: *A place to meet*

Finding and keeping venues that meet the guild's requirements and budget is a continual problem. In its early days the original guild met in the city centre, but clearly struggled to retain suitable accommodation for workshops and meetings (minutes of committee meeting 5th December 1953). Eleanor recalled similar problems for the re-formed guild in the 1970s and 80s:

> *'Everything took place in the centre of the city. The evenings were always in these funny little places up lots of stairs, all with difficulty in parking, or something of the sort.. The workshops used to be in schools. I think we could hire a room much more easily for an evening than we could for a Saturday... '*

Because of the cost of hiring suitable rooms, the guild has traditionally held its monthly meetings on weekday evenings and occasional workshops on Saturdays.

The city centre has always been considered the most central and accessible place for the guild to meet. The majority of members live within the city conurbation, although a few travel in from neighbouring towns and villages. During the year of fieldwork the guild faced the dilemma of moving yet again. In 2004 the guild held evening meetings at a craft gallery near the city centre; three of our members exhibit and sell work there. Although as a venue it was prestigious and offered the opportunity for members to see new exhibitions and contemporary work, it did not have all the facilities we required; Lucy particularly felt it wasn't very welcoming for visitors:

> *'... in one way it's very inviting to be able to go and catch up with what other people are making and see the exhibition and so on. But that's if you're part of the group already....So the location could have attracted people in because of where it was, but actually getting there and feeling welcomed that's quite hard and .....without that social bit at the end where you can have a cup of coffee and just, you know, just link up with people'.*

Socialising is an important aspect of meetings, this tends to happen over refreshments, something the guild could not provide at the gallery. As a venue, it was also expensive to hire.

At the annual general meeting in 2004, the treasurer reported that the guild was facing financial difficulties. There was a decision to raise subscription fees and to consider moving venues (minutes of the annual general meeting, March 2004). In a subsequent letter to guild members the chairman announced that the guild would move to a new location, a small and less expensive church hall on the outskirts of the city, later in the year.

Although the new venue proved convenient for several members, who live on that side of the city, it was not the case for all. For Charlotte, who had moved outside the area just *'the thought of driving to* [the new venue] *in the evening'* was enough to stop her attending meetings, whereas she had managed to get to the gallery. Lucy also thought that the new location was less than ideal:

> *'I think it's a big mistake to be located where they are. I mean* [the village] *is one thing, but in a hall no-one can remember how to find and it's very difficult to advertise and tell people where it is'.*

However, the majority of members got used to the change and a core group of ten to twelve members regularly attended meetings during 2004 to 2005. Others came when a speaker was of particular interest and visitors attended occasionally.

6.4.14: *Programme*

As a guild we are predominantly weavers and dyers. Kate points out that *'we've got very few pure spinners'*, although several people enjoy spinning, at least occasionally, and Eleanor thinks *'that perhaps now we've become a tapestry weaving group'*, and judging from items submitted to our annual exhibition, this seemed to be the trend. Naturally the interests of existing members and their needs are reflected in the programme.

A great deal of effort, throughout the guilds' history has been invested, by the committee, in putting together a programme of outside speakers, workshops, outings and the guild's annual exhibition. The guild has always held evening meetings once a month and additional workshops at weekends three to four times per year. This, Eleanor reflected *'is the way it started'*, a part of the guild's tradition, whereas other guilds in Wales and particularly in rural areas where the population is dispersed tend to meet at weekends for a day and, according to Eleanor, Kate and David who visit other guilds, are more hands-on. In Kate's opinion in our guild *'even the retired people don't seem to make it on a Saturday for a guild meeting'*, whereas more people will commit to an evening, a reflection perhaps of the differences in lifestyle between urban and rural populations and the influence of geographical location.

In the early days the programme was rich and varied. In 1979 for instance, it included several well-known speakers, covering a range of topics relating to weaving spinning and dyeing; hands-on workshops and outings to places of interest such as textile craft centres, studios and museums. Members also got together during the day to spin (minutes of the 9th committee meeting, February 1979). Charlotte recalled this nostalgically:

> *'We used to have spinning mornings quite regularly when we first started the guild. You know we actually had time to just put your spinning wheel in the boot and go to somebody's house and sit there for a morning spinning and chatting and having coffee. Well I don't think anybody could do that now, could they?'*

This was a time when several members had child-care commitments and fewer were working. There was time to get together with others in purposeful doing. Spinning, traditionally a domestic occupation that throughout its history, was carried out by women in the home; it can be interrupted, picked up and put down without unduly spoiling the end result; it lends itself to social activity (Wayland Barber 1994).

This aspect of our guild has now changed. Members will commit to attending workshops, meetings and manning public events, but because of a lack of support, social activities such as spinning mornings or organised outings no longer feature as a part of the guild programme. From September 2004 to December 2005 when

fieldwork took place, the programme comprised six lectures on topics ranging over contemporary tapestry weaving, textile history, travel and dyeing; three workshops, covering batik, spinning and shibori; a Christmas social; a spinning and weaving open day; the annual guild exhibition and general meeting.

6.4.15: *Meeting procedures*

Evening meetings follow a particular pattern or format with little variation. Because we hire the venue, we are responsible for collecting keys and returning them at the end of the session. When fieldwork took place this task fell to Colin and Eileen, who lived near the hall. They arrived first and began setting up the room, moving chairs and tables and making it fit for our purpose. Colin was the guild librarian and brought a suitcase of books which members could borrow. His wife Eileen, the guild treasurer, had responsibility for collecting fees and keeping a record of attendance. People generally arrived between 7 and 7.30pm when the meeting was scheduled to start; members helped arrange chairs and two members took responsibility for making tea and coffee. This is done on a rota and we all took turns.

Kate, as guild secretary brought the notice board, copies of the Weaver's Journal, which members subscribe to through the guild and the newsletter, compiled by Lucy and distributed three or four times a year. Carys, as publicity officer, brought copies of 'Crefft', the Arts Council for Wales free newsletter. Kate also brought the guild's slide projector and I took the screen, when required. Visiting speakers usually arrived with several bags and boxes of textile items for members to look at, examine and occasionally purchase and members readily helped them to display these.

At 7.30pm the meeting was formally opened by our chairperson, Eleanor, who welcomed people and gave out notices of forthcoming events such as exhibitions and workshops and information from the AGWS&D. She then introduced the speaker for the evening. Following the talk one of the members gave a formal vote of thanks and the audience were invited to look at the textile items on display whilst refreshments were served. At this point in the evening there was an opportunity to ask informal questions and socialise. Members often discussed their current textile projects, or plans for forthcoming events. They also talked to visitors or new members, taking an

opportunity to get to know them and make them feel included. Meetings generally finished around 9.30pm when people began to leave. Helped by committee members, the speaker packed away any samples and slides whilst others cleared up.

The pattern for evening meetings with outside speakers remains consistent. However, where the meeting had a more practical or hands-on element, there was less formality and more opportunity to talk to each other whilst working. This was the case in workshops too.

6.4.16: *Workshops*

Our Saturday workshops took place in a neighbouring and bigger hall that had more space for equipment and facilities for wet work. Workshops also followed a common pattern. They generally took place between 10am and 4pm, led by an invited tutor with experience in a particular technique or skill, who usually brought the materials required for the session. Guild members were informed in advance about the equipment and tools they needed to bring and arrived ready to set up the room as required by the tutor. If necessary committee members covered the floor and tables with protective sheeting to prevent stains from dyes or other materials (see image 7).



7: *Preparing the room for a batik workshop*

Workshops began after a cup of coffee; the tutor was introduced by a committee member and usually began with an introductory talk and some instructions about how to begin the task. After this participants started work and the tutor circulated, helping individuals as required, and introducing the next stage in the process when necessary. At workshops guild members also contributed a plate of food to be shared for lunch, this was a time to give out notices, but also to relax, converse informally and share ideas and plans. During the afternoon the task continued with an effort to finish making samples before clearing up. Clearing the room generally took longer than at evening meetings; it was always a communal effort, members working together to get the task done.

6.4.17: *Differences from other guilds*

The balance in favour of lectures rather than hands-on workshops makes our guild different from others. This appears to be due to our size and income, location and the interests of members. Lucy remembered a much larger and more rural guild she belonged to in the 1980s:

> *'They used to have a morning which were sort of mini workshops, so there'd be people sitting round doing something, so you could join if you wanted to, you didn't have to book to do them. They had a library, a sales table and then in the afternoon there would be a speaker and sometimes that speaker would do a workshop on the Sunday, so it was quite a package that you went along to.*
>
> *....then we changed locations and it split off, so those who wanted to just natter and mix with people and get on with their work were in one room, where the speaker was in the other room'.*

David recalled a similar pattern:

> *'The guild that I grew up with had the morning which was, usually degenerated into a few people sitting round with their spinning wheels and chatting and occasionally a few inkle looms, but it was basically a social morning and then a lecture in the afternoon, but because of the lectures in the afternoon we focused on and then for some workshops we'd bring somebody really good in to give a really good workshop'.*

These guilds, because of their size and venue were able to cater for a range of interests, for people who wanted to expand their knowledge and learn more skills and those who preferred to socialise through engagement in the crafts.

In some senses our historical relationship with rural and domestic craft continues to have an impact on our image today. Kate told me of how, in her role as guild secretary, a potential member had contacted her for information about the guild. The person concerned had visited neighbouring guilds *'and they were just sitting around spinning and having a chat'* whereas she had wanted more stimuli from meetings. Kate reflected that *'perhaps that's how people do think of us ... as very provincial and rural'* whereas members like David and Lucy want to continue developing their skills and actively look for guilds that stimulate that.

6.4.18: *A way forward for our guild*

At the time of fieldwork there was a feeling amongst some members that the guild was stagnating and needed new life. There were, however, some differences of opinion regarding the best way forward. Kate felt that we seem *'to need the stimulus of outside speakers, which other guilds don't seem to need so much of... '* and good speakers are a reason why David still belongs to our guild. Eleanor and Carole both felt that there should be *'more hands-on than evenings'*, although there was a general feeling that this should take the form of workshops rather than social events. As Carys put it, *'we've had some excellent workshops, so you've got to find your mid way'*.

Since fieldwork took place the guild has moved towards a more equal balance between lectures and workshops and membership grew to twenty six in 2008. We also attract more visitors to meetings and workshops. This could be due, in part to our efforts to publicise the guild strategically and a renewed fashion for textile crafts such as knitting (Gschwandtner 2007).

6.5: Conclusion

The guild as a self-regulating and autonomous group of textile-makers is affiliated to the AGWS&D whose origins can be traced back to the early twentieth century and a move to preserve the rural crafts. As it exists today the guild maintains a link with the rural crafts in that it aims to foster, maintain and develop hand craft skills in weaving, spinning and dyeing and work with other like-minded groups and organisations. Our guild comprises a small, but cohesive and loyal group of members, who support the guild by committing time to its organisation. Its growth and development has been influenced by changing trends in adult education and lifestyles and by its location. The guild recognises the need for change in order to attract new and younger members whilst retaining its purpose in maintaining and developing hand-craft skills.

With particular reference to the guild and its members and by drawing on fieldwork experiences in Britain and Japan, interviews, material culture and documentary sources, the next five chapters concentrate on textile-making as an occupational domain: its nature, form, traditions and processes; the skills involved in textile production; how textile-making is shaped individually and collectively; the sense of self and sense of well-being that can come from becoming and being a textile maker; the collective sense of self that comes from belonging to a guild and finally how making textiles can generate capital and social well-being for private, common and public good.

Chapter seven:

The traditional nature of textile making as occupation

7: Introduction

In chapter two I introduced the concept of occupation as purposeful 'doing', which Nelson (1988) referred to as occupational performance. Nelson argued that this can only be understood in terms of its form, that is, the pre-existing structures that guide performance. Textile-making incorporates particular forms in that it has a unique set of patterns, processes and habitual practices in which individuals engage. Such practices can be considered as tradition in that they are accepted patterns of human action that are transmissible to others (Shils 1981). I have attempted to identify the transmissible elements of textile-making through an analysis of what textile-makers do in the process of making, drawing on individual, my own and collective experiences, taking into account the environment, socio-cultural and historical contexts. By taking a contextual view, I concur with Dickie (2003a) that such forms or patterns of action are encompassed in textile-making as an occupational domain which also incorporates symbolic rules and procedures, specific skills and knowledge (Csikszentmihalyi 1996).

This chapter concentrates on the traditional nature of textile-making with particular reference to the crafts of weaving, spinning and dyeing as the core activities of guild members. It is pre-requisite to a deeper consideration of skill and knowledge in chapter eight, how it is shaped (chapter nine), and the meanings of making in chapter ten. In the following sections I explore the material culture i.e. the equipment and materials commonly used in textile-making together with the traditional principles, practices and processes encompassed in making and the resulting end product. Because the examples drawn from fieldwork in this and subsequent chapters relate to textile-making in the context of the guild in Wales and my experience of shibori in Japan, I will first consider the influence of cultural traditions on textile practice and production.

7.1: Textiles as a cultural production

In Wales where our guild is located, a textile tradition was built from wool production. The woollen industry and production of flannel cloth and blankets flourished across Wales, growing from a domestic industry before the fourteenth century to mill manufacturing, which then thrived until the early twentieth century. The industry declined following the First World War when it failed to meet market demands (Jenkins 2005a, Sutton 1987 Jenkins 2005b). Today only a few working mills remain, mostly in tourist areas. Only one or two are concerned with all the processes of wool production, others import yarn for weaving (Jenkins 2005a). Attempts were made to revitalise it during the 1980s when Ann Sutton, textile designer and weaver was appointed by the Wales Craft Council to report on the industry as a whole, including hand-weavers and knitters and recommend a way forward. The project was frozen in 1985 when funding was withdrawn (Sutton 1987). As Jenkins (2005a: 78) puts it: 'only the remnants of a once important industry remain'.

During our visit to Japan, Kate and I concentrated on shibori, the art of shaping and forming resist patterns on cloth by tying, folding or stitching it to prevent dye from penetrating selected areas. In Japan we found that in contrast to Wales textile traditions remain strong and it was possible to see how traditional practices had passed from one generation to another. Shibori is thought to have originated in China and has been part of Japanese textile culture since the eighth century where it has grown and developed. In the town of Arimatsu for example, the art of shibori has been practiced since the 17th century (Wada, Rice and Barton 1983). In Arimatsu shibori traditions are kept alive through thriving family businesses and shibori products are still a major feature of the shops and galleries. In the back streets along the river we found small dye works where the stitch resist and shaped cloth prepared by local shibori artists, some using family-based traditions in the art of shibori that are several centuries old, is dyed ready to be made into products for a connoisseur and tourist market.

Shibori is a good example of how traditions inform contemporary practice; it has recognisable essential elements which are the starting point for new patterns of action

(Shils 1981). 'The new and innovative textiles of Japan clearly have antecedents in Japanese craft traditions that have been evolving for centuries' (McCarty 1999: 14). The influence of culture on contemporary textile-making practices and processes, however, is not entirely straight forward particularly in a country such as Wales where textile traditions are now fragmented.

Giddens (2002) points out that tradition will always persist because it gives continuity and form and in the guild it is possible to see how traces of the local traditions of spinning and weaving have filtered through into contemporary craft practice. The impact of globalisation has meant that we are being 'opened up from the hold of tradition' (Giddens 2002: 42) and characteristically we now draw on an eclectic range of techniques and cultural practices that we learn about through travel, courses, the internet, journals, magazines and books. These are then incorporated into the process of making. Carole's work for instance incorporates Navajo techniques and David draws on his cloth weaving experience in Ireland. Charlotte, Carole and Carys all produce tapestries, which in terms of technique and product have a multi-cultural history. Kate makes tassels and braids using techniques developed in Europe and South America; Eleanor also makes tapestries and weaves fine cashmere stoles. I now produce woven shibori cloth, influenced by my experience of Japan and using techniques developed by weavers in Australia and the United States.

When considering contemporary textile-making as a form of occupation then, it is important to bear in mind that traditional practices and processes are informed by complex cultural patterns of human action, they serve as a 'normative guide' for current and future action (Thompson 1996: 91). The following sections consider the traditional components and patterns of action incorporated in the textile-making process.

7.2: Textile-making as a process

I described textiles in chapters one and two as multi-media, incorporating a diverse range of techniques and practices. As tangible, useable and decorative objects textiles require structure, and as a form of occupation, constructing and making them is a process. It involves the maker in moving through, often in a cyclical rather than a

linear fashion, various stages from first idea to end-product utilising a variety of materials, fibres and equipment to construct thread, fabric or cloth and in some instances adding or subtracting colour in the form of dye. These processes incorporate preparation, planning and a set of procedures which vary depending on the design, the intended end product, the nature of the materials and equipment utilised in the process of making. Through engaging in the process, makers draw on traditional and socio-culturally situated principles and practices (Adamson 2007); they also bring aspects of themselves, their own ideas and creativity (the focus of chapter 9). Textile-making also requires considerable skill and situated knowledge (Dormer 1997e, Adamson 2007), which I detail in chapter eight. Because materials, equipment and a space to work are key components of making, I will consider these first before describing the overall process.

7.2.1: *The nature of textile materials*

Crafts always involve engaging with materials (Adamson 2007), which have a specific nature and set of properties that can be utilised in the process of making (Pye 1995). Participation in workshops; attending talks, lectures, courses and conferences; visiting galleries and museums; engaging in making and considering the range of textiles that are part of our everyday lives, highlighted for me the sheer diversity of materials that can be used to make textiles. Emery (1980: 4) in her classification of fabric structures describes the 'ultimate constituents' as fibres and filaments coming from a range of sources both natural and man-made. The creative and multi-media nature of textiles today reveals that the material constituents can be wide ranging (Dormer 1997b), but the choice of materials will depend on availability, the purpose of the textile product, the preferences of the maker or in some instances commissioning clients (see chapter 9.3.1).

Carole, who works to commissions, mostly for tapestries and rugs, from an English landowner who has a flock of rare breed sheep, referred to the whole process of growing, preparing and utilising wool fibres in her work:

> *'...they keep sheep for the wool and it's turning the wool from their sheep into these rugs... they say that sheep live for ever... you're using the fleece off the same animal year after year, because probably in that stair carpet*

I'm doing now, I mean some of the fleeces go back several years and it's probably got 3 or 4 fleeces off the same sheep in it'.

While wool features strongly as a traditional material, particularly in the work of spinners and tapestry weavers in the guild, we make use of other natural fibres too. Carys showed me how she was incorporating raffia and jute into her work and an eminent tapestry weaver who came to talk to the guild described his interest in a diverse range of natural materials including linen and hemp as well as jute and wool. In the guild spinning workshop we concentrated on using silk, a filament fibre available in a variety of forms and quality, an important issue when choosing and selecting materials. Eleanor, our spinning workshop tutor, emphasised the need to consider their purpose and Carole felt that it is only worth using *'the best materials'*, because as she said, the process of making takes a considerable amount of *'effort and time'*.

Whereas the use of natural fibres and materials predominates within the guild, man-made materials now feature strongly in contemporary textiles. The samples of work brought to the guild by speakers revealed the use of materials as diverse as foil from sweet wrappers, steel and re-cycled plastic for creating special and three-dimensional effects. I have used polyester, stainless steel and paper yarns in weaving; in fact anything that can be interlaced to form a structure or attached to the finished fabric for embellishment can be used. At the cutting edge of contemporary textiles, artists such as Rachel Wingfield use fibre optics to infuse light into her textiles (AGWS&D seminar, Manchester Metropolitan University 2005, Pritchard 2005). Additionally, a variety of materials can be used to alter the structure and colour of fabric and fibres at virtually any stage in the process. Chemicals can be used to burn out fibres or extract colour and texture for instance (Brackman 2006).

Shibori requires the use of materials such as strong thread, cord and twine to stitch, bind and tie the cloth (Wada et al 1983). In Japan where shibori is an art, traditional craft and also an industry, I learnt that such materials were manufactured for this purpose. Image 8 shows a master of the art of shibori binding cloth using a strong linen cord.



8: *binding cloth using linen cord*

In our guild workshop however, we used any strong material to hand to bind the cloth before applying dye. In image 9 a workshop participant, who brought a wide range of materials to use, binds glass marbles into the cloth using rubber bands to secure them.



9: *binding found objects into cloth before dyeing to form a resist pattern*

As well as shaping and forming a resist on cloth for dyeing, several guild members regularly dye their own yarns. David says this is *'mainly because it would be difficult*

to get all the colours and it sort of delays things too'; it can take time to source materials and obtain them from specialist suppliers. Carole uses only natural dyes in her commissioned work. Her client insists on vegetable dyes: *'The dyes I tend to use for them are indigo, madder for the red... weld, which I grow here'.* Again there is a traditional link between the natural source of material i.e. where it is grown, the process and the product. This was evident too in the 'engineered quilts' made by Yoshiko Jinzenji, which I found exhibited in Nagoya, Japan in 2005. Jinzenji uses hand-woven and naturally dyed fabrics, using bamboo grown outside her studio in Bali (Jinzenji 2002). While textile makers, particularly in Western societies can choose to use a wide range of materials, providing they are available and accessible, in indigenous craft communities and particularly where crafts are regulated e.g. Alaska native art, there is drive from sponsors to use only locally sourced natural materials to ensure authenticity (Moore 2008).

In the paragraphs above I have discussed how materials can be 'grown' in plant form for dyeing or spinning, such as flax for the production of linen and from animals, for example wool from sheep's fleece. Carole is able to use fleece from her client's sheep, farmed in the south of England and plant dyes from her own garden in Wales, but the range is limited by geographical location and climate. More exotic fibres such as silk and dyes such as indigo are imported and only available in Britain from specialist suppliers, this can impact on the choice of materials available to individual makers (see chapter 9.3.1).

7.2.2: *The nature of equipment*

To prepare materials and ultimately make them into threads or cloth also requires use of a diverse range of equipment. Depending on its purpose, equipment varies in complexity, versatility, portability, size, cost and availability. In the course of fieldwork I had opportunities to explore the nature and use of automated and semi-automated equipment used in small industrial workshops as well as equipment used by hand-weavers, spinners, dyers and other textile-makers. Here I will concentrate mainly on equipment that is used by individual makers in their home, studio or workshop environment. The equipment utilised for weaving, spinning and dyeing falls broadly into two categories namely: equipment designed, made and sold for a

particular purpose and equipment that is adapted or home made for a specific aspect of making.

7.2.3: *Equipment designed for purpose*

All guild members have invested in specialist equipment that is fit for purpose enabling them to engage in the process of constructing and making yarn from fibres or fabric from yarns and other materials and embellishing these with dye. Investing in and owning equipment symbolises our commitment to textile crafts and our intention to sustain engagement in textile making (see chapter 10.1.8).

The majority of guild members own spinning wheels, mostly purchased in kit form to assemble for use. The guild spinning workshop revealed a variety of different designs but all serve the same purpose i.e. adding twist to fibre to make a useable yarn (images 10, 11 and 12).



10: *self- assembly wheel*



11: *travelling wheel*



12: *traditional wheel*

Similarly looms come in a range of designs and sizes. What they have in common is that a set of 'warp' threads are placed in one direction under tension to structure the cloth and a 'weft' thread is woven through them to form a pattern and create the cloth itself.

In some instances equipment is acquired second-hand, particularly first pieces when the maker is in the early stages of learning skills and most of us started in small and

simple ways. Carys recalls that her *'first loom was a rug loom and quite a few tapestries were woven on that...'* Carole *'got a little table loom to start with'* and David acquired his first spinning wheel and loom in childhood through the guild. I found my first small table loom on a rubbish skip and restored it for use. I then acquired a rug loom from a local hospital and later a second-hand floor loom. On the other hand Charlotte, who studied textile-making through higher education decided to *'buy a loom and all the equipment and set up weaving'* when she left college in the 1960s and continued weaving on the same loom throughout her weaving career.

Some of us have continued collecting equipment over the years. David, who has several looms stacked in his garage, waiting for the day when he can set up a workshop, bought himself an *'Irish 72-inch wide Donegal loom'* and Carys, after many years of weaving on home-made and second-hand equipment, has recently purchased a new tapestry loom which saves her considerable time and effort in weaving.

Carole and I have both recently bought new and more complex looms that extend our weaving possibilities. New hand-weaving and spinning equipment is available through a limited range of specialist suppliers and is rarely manufactured in the United Kingdom. Both our looms were imported from Europe. The type of equipment we use is influenced by accessibility but it is also embedded in tradition. In Britain we have used the horizontal floor loom with shafts, heddles and foot pedals since the fifteenth century. This became popular in Wales when the domestic woollen industry moved towards an international rather than purely local market (Jenkins 2005a). Recent visits to trade fairs together with catalogues, articles and advertisements in textile magazines reveal that modern looms used by contemporary craftsmen in western societies are still based on this traditional design.

7.2.4: *Equipment and technology*

Through attending the complex weaving workshop, held in a university textile-department where much of the equipment was computerised, Carole and I had an opportunity to try computer driven looms where the design is made in a software programme and then transferred to the loom (image 13).



13: *working the computerised loom*

Warp threads are lifted automatically in sequence to form a shed (space between warp threads) and the pattern emerges as the weaver throws the shuttle to place the weft. The woven cloth advances every time the foot pedal is pressed. Because there are fewer operations for each pattern sequence, complex weaving becomes faster and despite being a serious investment, this type of equipment is increasingly used by hand-weavers and several of the workshop participants owned computerised looms.

In Japan Kate and I were able to explore the interface between technology, mechanisation and equipment worked by hand to produce cutting-edge cloth in local workshops for an international market. In Hachiouji we visited a small family run weaving company using traditional power looms, very similar to those found in the few remaining Welsh mills, to produce complexly constructed cloth for the fashion industry. Looms of this sort allow cloth to be produced quickly and in marketable quantities, but because of their size, complexity and maintenance requirements they are rarely used in a home or studio environment. Stacey Harvey-Brown is perhaps the exception. Stacey, a silk hand-weaver who works at home, acquired a jacquard power loom from Scotland and with considerable difficulty set it up for use in her studio in Staffordshire (Harvey-Brown 2004).

In Arimatsu, we attended a workshop organised by the owners of a small company producing shibori cloth, where we had an opportunity to use traditional semi-automated winding machines that bind the cloth to form a resist pattern (image 14).



14: *binding cloth using a semi-automated machine*

The machine allows for even binding and is quicker than working entirely by hand. Guild members also make use of automated equipment. Carole for instance found that when she took a commission that involved spinning large amounts of wool for weaving, she needed to find efficient ways of working:

> *'.. so I bought an electric spinner... I also bought a power carder, I mean you can appreciate spinning 25lb of hand-spun yarn for a stair carpet takes an awful lot of carding..'*

The crafts of spinning, weaving and dyeing also require the use of subsidiary equipment such as carders to remove debris and align fibres in preparation for spinning (see image 26: 7.4.1); warping mills to evenly wind warp threads for the loom; scales for weighing dye and vessels for mixing it in. All are available from specialist suppliers but in some instances it is possible to adapt more readily available and cheaper equipment, or even make your own.

7.2.5: *Adapted and home-made equipment*

Several members of the guild and other textile-makers I met during the course of field work had either made or adapted equipment at some point. Carys for instance, who

has concentrated on tapestry as her chosen medium felt it unnecessary to spend a lot of money on special equipment; *'with tapestry weaving you can make do'.* When I interviewed Carys in her home studio she explained how, in her early days she had made a frame *'something like a black board easel, something very basic, that you could weave tapestries on'.* Later, when Carys wanted to weave on a bigger scale she put up a scaffolding frame, which is still in place in her studio although no longer in use. Carys pointed out that it had given her *'a tremendous range'* in terms of height and width.

As well as making equipment for a specific purpose as Carys had done, it is not unusual to adapt existing equipment for personal requirements or to extend its range of possibilities (Sutton and Sheehan 1989). Peter Collinwood a renowned rug weaver devised an adaptation to allow complex patterns to be woven on a simple loom (Collingwood 1968). Charlotte told me about her visit to the studio of a Welsh ecclesiastical weaver who had also adapted his loom to expand its traditional possibilities:

> *'.. the loom's just stunning because it was his father's loom which has been extended. What was the phrase he used? 'Scarfed', so the outside bits were the original and then this extra bit had been put in the middle to widen it and it's all held together with bits of string and leather and odd bits of wood, but when you looked at, it's got a flying shuttle and it was all sort of caked with years and years of oil from the yarn'.*

In some instances innovative and original effects are only possible from using hand-made equipment. In Japan Kate and I visited the workshop of a well-known dyer who had made three-dimensional wooden blocks to form clamps that produced resist dye patterns on pleated cloth for use in the fashion industry (image 15).



15: *cherry wood blocks for clamp resisting dye on cloth*

Similarly, in guild workshops we often adapt existing tools and equipment in order to achieve the effects we want. In the shibori workshop for instance we wrapped silk cloth around plastic drainpipe in order to bind and pleat it before dyeing (image 16).



16: *binding silk cloth onto plastic pipe*

In David's view *'modern weavers want to be versatile'*; there is a need for equipment, whether designed for purpose, home-made or adapted to be flexible enough to allow for innovation and development (see chapter 9 part 2) and these then become part of the tradition (Shils 1981). The makers I met and talked to during fieldwork had mostly acquired equipment over years, investing in bulky or costly pieces at

significant points in their textile careers. Space is often a significant factor when deciding on equipment.

7.2.6: *Space*

I have already said that members of the guild mostly make textiles in their own homes. A few particularly Carys, Charlotte, Carole, David, Eleanor, Kate and myself have rooms or studios that are dedicated to textile-making. Others, like Lucy do not have such a space and this can influence the type of equipment they use. Because of limited space, several members of the guild have invested in compact collapsible spinning wheels that can be stored and easily transported to workshops and other places (see images 10 and 11 section 7.2.3). In David's view space can be a *'big draw back'*. In our conversation he reflected that:

> *'...spinning is fine, because a spinning wheel will go into most rooms somewhere...but a floor loom is much harder, and a table loom is even worse because it takes up a table. If you're going into computers then of course the computerised looms take up even more space..*

Eleanor and David both felt that this could be a reason why tapestry weaving had grown in popularity amongst guild members. Small tapestries can be woven on a portable frame. Eleanor pointed out that *'tapestry weaving you can carry around with you';* as David put it *'you can weave a tapestry almost anywhere';* along with spinning it is perhaps one of the most portable of our crafts. For Lucy, who needs to store equipment when it is not in use, its portability is an important factor.

Spinning can be done on a small drop spindle and David often carries one around with him to use whenever he has a few moments to spare. Carys told me about an American woman she met during a visit to mid-Wales: *'she had two spindles in her pocket and she was spinning just like* [David] *does'*. Spindle spinning has endured since pre-historic times and although it is a time-consuming way to spin, it is entirely portable (Wayland Barber 1994). Today this makes spinning accessible almost anywhere (image 17).



17: *using a drop spindle*

During fieldwork I observed people using spindles whilst taking part in conferences and seminars, when listening to talks and when waiting for things to happen in workshops (I explore the meaning of this in chapter 10.1.12).

In guild workshops we usually bring our own equipment and this restricts the nature of the crafts we can explore in this setting. Although the equipment needed for spinning and dyeing is usually portable, weaving is generally confined to tapestry or braids using equipment that we can easily transport from home (see images 18 and 19)



18: *setting up a stand to make Japanese braid*

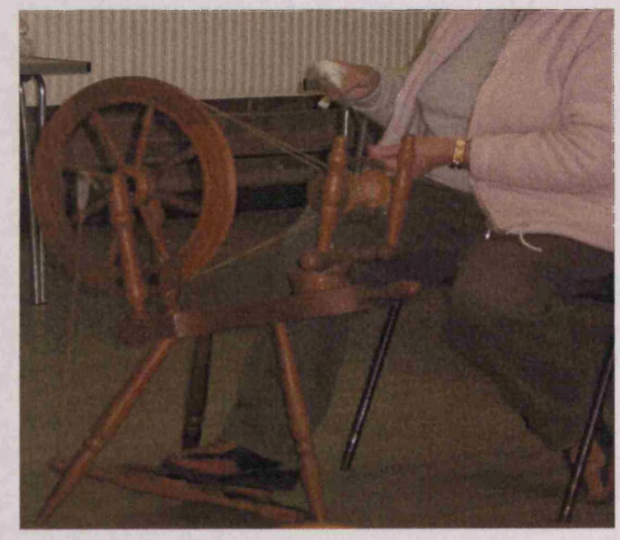


19: *Using a braid loom*

The amount of space equipment takes, together with its complexity and the length of time a maker needs to invest in learning how to use it can affect its second-hand value. Eleanor, who has bought and sold equipment many times in her career as a weaver pointed out that *'the cost of purchasing a floor loom now is nil, they're being given away'*. Second-hand traditional looms tend to be heavy, bulky and time-consuming to set up, a reason why some of us, where we can afford it, have invested in new, compact and more efficient looms that suit modern working requirements and space. Kate has a folding loom for instance and Carole has recently bought a small dobby loom so that she can easily change patterns in the process of weaving. In this way the traditional form and use of equipment is dynamically changing to adapt to modern lifestyles (Luke 1996). Additionally, because of the time spent during the process of making, wherever equipment is placed it must also be comfortable to use.

7.2.7: *Comfort and fitness for purpose*

Spinning and weaving particularly, because of the sustained engagement with equipment and generally repetitive actions can be the most problematic of textile crafts. Posture and seating are particularly important in order to use equipment comfortably and without strain or tiredness. A spinner for example, needs to sit at a comfortable distance from the wheel to allow for a relaxed posture and even treadling (image 20).



20: *a comfortable position for treadling the wheel*

Spinners often find themselves working in different situations. In workshops and when demonstrating for instance we often have to make do with inappropriate tables or seating. At home, however, makers must find the most appropriate and comfortable way of working for them. David and I discussed the differences between using a table loom and a floor loom:

> **David:** *At least a floor loom is much more comfortable to work on, though not necessarily as easy in the fact that you can't change shafts, you know, change pattern so easily, but it's much easier to weave on physically because the whole body is engaged. If you put a table loom on to a frame or a stand then invariably one bit of it digs into you somewhere.*
>
> **Me:** *They're awkward things, I think, table looms ...*
>
> **David:** ***...****they're much more awkward and the beat isn't as easy, because the beater isn't as long*
>
> **Me:** *No, the height's not right either I find*
>
> **David:** *No, very rarely and if you sit on a higher stool then you're knees catch on the table that it's on*

Whereas spinning and weaving may cause problems where comfort and posture are concerned (I discuss this further in relation to health and well-being in chapter 10.3.1), dyeing and the use of dye vats, not to mention the dyes themselves present a challenge to health and safety.

7.2.8: *Safety*

In guild workshops where we set up our own equipment, we must ensure that it is used as safely as possible. Although the AGWS&D has public and product liability to cover affiliated guilds at public events; it is the guild's responsibility to reduce risk to an acceptable level (Lewis 2007). This is not an easy task; in our dye workshop we covered the floor with plastic sheeting and used cold dyes in plastic buckets (images 21 and 22).



21: *preparing dye*



22: *dyeing cloth at the guild workshop*

Our workshop tutor, Eleanor prepared the dye vats in advance and gave participants instructions on how to use them safely. Dyes can be toxic and cause problems if inhaled, ingested or brought into contact with skin. It is necessary to ensure that equipment is fit for purpose and used appropriately to ensure health and safety. At home we follow similar procedures making sure that dyeing is done with dedicated equipment and if possible away from food. Carys, who lives in a large Victorian house, has a dedicated dye room:

> *'I think it had been a box room or a maid's room or something. It's very small, but it did have a sink in there and we had used it for a brewery, we had used it for a dark room... and* [husband] *decided he would clean it up and we'd think of a use for it and I suddenly thought hang on, water ...complete independence, right! So then it became my dye room and it's ideal, it's very small, but it means that I don't have to clear up after myself'.*

Most of our members do not have the luxury of dedicated space for dyeing and use the kitchen or prepare dye outside. This can restrict when dyeing takes place. Eleanor, Kate, Lucy and I enjoy indigo dyeing and usually wait until summer to dye batches of yarn or cloth outside. Our geographical location, environment and personal space has a strong influence on when and how we engage in certain aspects of textile-making and in turn influences planning and preparation, a part of the process of making.

7.3: The process of making

Making textiles as a form of occupation involves engaging in a process. It incorporates planning, preparation and following certain procedures, traditional principles and practices all of which will vary depending on the nature of the desired end-product, together with the environmental and socio-cultural context in which making takes place. The process as a whole is not linear, for instance makers engage in planning and preparation at various stages in constructing textiles and practices also develop and change as textile-making is shaped and reformed by individual makers. In this section I will concentrate on some of the fundamental aspects of the process.

7.3.1: *Planning*

Planning is incorporated into different stages of making and starts even before a project begins. It is not necessarily formal, but involves the maker thinking through how a project will unfold from its conception to finished product. Individual makers might engage in long-term planning to map when projects will be carried out in the course of time; specific projects require individual plans and working together in a workshop situation must also be planned.

7.3.2: *Long-term planning*

The textile-makers I met during fieldwork often plan projects around specific events. For guild members particularly, this might be the annual guild exhibition or the AGWS&D national exhibition, which until the year 2000 had taken place biennially. This had given members an important event to work towards; bearing in mind that making an exhibition item can take considerable time and sometimes several attempts. Following the AGWS&D millennium exhibition in 2000 no national exhibitions took place until 2004 and this was not publicised until late 2003. Eleanor felt that

> *'people didn't have time to really give two years thought to what they were going to do, which is what we were used to... it's such a long and protracted sort of craft to pursue that you've got to have warning'.*

This is particularly important for many of the guild members who balance textile-making with other forms of occupation and for whom the national exhibition is the most prestigious event they can aim for.

For professional makers such as Carole and Charlotte, who exhibit more widely and work to commissions, longer-term planning is also important. They both produce work for galleries and need to keep up supplies. Carole for instance makes and sells scarves and to do this economically she must plan ahead:

> *'I want my scarves to be individual.... I mean to tend to do about five* [on the same warp] *and then I'll think of ways to make each one different in the weft ...'*

Clearly forward planning is important for the professional maker who needs to be innovative, creative and continually productive to make a living and sustain a business. On a different level, workshops and courses also require advanced planning, by tutors and participants.

7.3.3: *Workshop planning*

Planning a successful workshop can be complex. Our October guild workshop was led by Eleanor and we discussed the logistics of using three different types of dye during a meeting before the workshop took place. In workshops we aim to achieve tangible and worthwhile results in a relatively short time frame. As a group, drawing on Eleanor's expertise, we set about planning what we could realistically achieve in a few hours bearing in mind that the cloth had to dry between each dye application. We decided to confine ourselves to two dyes and prepare the dye baths and cloth in advance to save time so that we could then concentrate on process rather than preparation.

When planning for workshops it is essential to know participants' requirements and their level of expertise. Charlotte told me about her plans to teach a tapestry weaving course:

'I've just had 10 weavers from Ireland who want to come over for a course... they've done quite a bit of tapestry weaving so they want sort of advanced techniques... so I'll probably have to do a bit of extra work beforehand preparing for that... they'll want something a bit more special I think

Similarly in the weeks leading up to the complex weaving course I attended with Carole, our tutor contacted all participants to find out their level of experience and expectations. She then prepared a threading draft (pattern) for each of us to work from. Our tutor's careful planning meant that we could then make the necessary preparations for the course and begin to plan our own samples in advance. Individual projects also require advanced and contextual planning.

7.3.4: *Project planning*

Design is an integral part of planning an individual project. I discuss how makers collect design ideas from personal sources of inspiration in chapter nine (part 1), but designing requires a vision of the end product and planning with this in mind is essential (Sutton and Sheehan 1989). In addition Eleanor is adamant that purpose is also important:

'I mean I was always taught to spin with a purpose, so before you even start spinning, know what you're going to use that yarn for, because if you're going to spin it properly you should spin it differently'.

In other words a textile product should be designed for a purpose and the materials used to produce it are then prepared accordingly. Although these are sound principles, not everyone approaches design and planning in this way, at least not all the time. In workshops we often take an experimental approach rather than making a plan (see chapter 9.2.3). This was particularly the case in our batik workshop where we decided to 'see what happened' when we tried different techniques. Our tutor, David, however, pointed out that a batik project does require careful planning in order to work from light to darker colours on the cloth. Similarly when resist dyeing using shibori techniques planning is necessary to achieve patterns or shaping on the cloth and plans may change and develop at different points in the process.

When weaving most of the decisions can be made during the planning and preparation stage and this is one of the reasons why Charlotte does not like weaving cloth, because *'you've made all the decisions about the colours in the warp, the colours in the weft beforehand'* and prefers landscape tapestry where the decisions about colour, texture and design can change during the weaving process. Carole on the other hand plans her tapestries and rugs meticulously in advance: *'because they're straight line abstracts, geometrics, I put it all down on graph paper; so with the rugs every square on the graph paper represents an inch of weaving'*. This careful plan then becomes a template for weaving.

7.3.5: *Section summary*

Planning in all its forms can be the starting point for a project or woven into the process. Drawing on traditional principles it can be detailed and intricate or arbitrary, depending on the purpose and intended outcome. The process of making textiles, however always involves some form of preparation.

7.4: Preparation

In Carole's words *'the secret of anything is in the preparation'* and the success of an individual or collaborative project, or a workshop depends on careful preparation. The steps involved will vary depending on the nature of the end product and the context of production, but the crafts of weaving spinning and dyeing commonly involve preparation of materials and equipment as a part of the process of making.

7.4.1: *Material preparation*

In the first part of this chapter I discussed the diverse nature of materials that can be utilised in making textiles. The craft of making involves transforming raw or manufactured materials into a new form (Mitchell 2004) and this often involves preparation. In our spinning workshop for instance, we spun three types of silk fibre each requiring a different preparation. The fibres from the bell shaped silk cap originating from China, are very long and require pulling out into a roving (a thin continuous length of aligned fibres) prior to spinning. The hands are placed inside the

cap and pulled firmly apart (image 23). Fibres are then pulled out and aligned to make a roving (image 24). The roving is then wound around a core to keep it in place during spinning (image 25).



23: *Pulling fibres forcibly apart*



24: *Aligning fibres to make a roving*



25: *winding the roving prior to spinning*

In contrast silk noil fibres are extremely short and needed to be teased out by hand during the process of spinning. Some workshop participants chose to mix the silk noil with other fibres when carding (image 26).



26: *mixing fibres during carding*

For experienced spinners such as Eleanor and Carole fibre preparation is vital. As Carole put it:

> *'I mean if you don't scrape the old paint off the wall before you paint over you're going to get lumps and chips coming through and it's the same with spinning. If you don't prepare your fibres smoothly you're going to get lumps coming through'.*

Preparing for dyeing is also a time-consuming process and because achieving a fast colour on fibre or cloth involves chemicals there is a need to follow instructions carefully in order for it to work effectively. Several members of the guild enjoy using natural dyes; David and Carole for instance use a locally grown dye-plant, weld, which must be soaked and then boiled and simmered in order to extract dye. Kate, Eleanor, Lucy, Cerys and I also use indigo, a plant which is native to Japan, but available through specialist suppliers in powder form. Preparing an indigo vat is a complex fermentation process and requires knowing when to add ingredients to keep it alive. Balfour-Paul (2006: 126) likens it to making bread or beer, she describes the process as being 'temperamental and difficult to handle'. Its success for us is in the art as much as the science of making.

In addition to preparing the dye ingredients and making a dye bath or vat, the cloth or materials must also be prepared in advance. Before the guild shibori workshop we prepared our cloth samples for resist dyeing by binding, tying, folding, stitching or pleating the cloth first (image 27).



27: *binding the cloth using a pattern for guidance*

Preparing materials for weaving can incorporate both spinning and dyeing; Carole for instance, first spins and dyes the wool she uses to weave tapestries and rugs for commission. Charlotte explained the importance of advanced preparation for her:

> '*Whenever you're doing a tapestry, you've got a whole range of colour. I mean obviously you run out, so I'll do a session where I just dye greys or blues, or whatever but I do try and keep a good selection because there's nothing worse that if you've got to start everything from scratch, it's very off putting isn't it, whereas I can sit down now and just start a tapestry and the colours are there and off I go'.*

Once the yarn is ready, weaving requires a sequence of material preparation, including winding the yarn and making a warp in readiness for the loom. In preparation for the complex weaving course Carole and I did this in advance and arrived at the workshop ready to prepare the loom for weaving.

7.4.2: *Preparing equipment*

The loom, and similarly the spinning wheel, are instrumental in the process of making and like musical instruments must be fine tuned and adjusted, not just in the preparatory stages, but throughout the process of making. When spinning this involves oiling the mechanisms and adjusting the drive band according to the amount of twist required in the yarn (image 28).



28: *tensioning the drive band*

The complexity of tasks involved in preparing for weaving varies depending on the initial design and plan and the equipment used. Carys explained to me how she put the warp onto her new tapestry loom:

> *'You tie on the bottom and then you just revolve the whole thing, it goes round and round and round...and I can put a warp up on that in 20 minutes and to tension it's those two horizontal bars at the top and there's 2 screw things on either side, you just screw that and it parts the thing and takes up your tension, so it's very, very quick'.*

In contrast, the looms that Carole and I used at the complex weaving workshop took considerable time to prepare. Dressing the loom is the process of putting the prepared warp onto the loom: tying it to the back beam, spacing it out, rolling it onto the beam under tension and threading it in pattern sequence (following the prepared draft) through the heddles (image 29) and then threading it through the reed. The reed maintains the width and set of the warp and is mounted in the cloth beater (image 30).



29: *Threading the warp through the heddles.*



30: *threading warp ends through the reed.*

The next stage involved putting plastic pegs into the lags, wooden bars that are then linked together in a pattern sequence (image 31). This meant carefully examining the pattern draft and working out where pattern repeats began and ended.



31: *Preparing and pegging the lags*

Finally the lags are made into a chain containing all the pattern repeats that will then lift the shafts on the loom in the correct sequence when the foot pedal is pressed. Once this process was complete the chain was transferred to the loom (image 32).



32: *The chain in place on the loom*

For the computerised looms this process is unnecessary; the computer programme drives the loom. The final part of the preparatory process involves tying the warp to

the front beam and carefully checking the pattern and tension before the process of weaving and constructing cloth begins.

7.5: The making process

In general terms the process of making textiles is a construction. Spinning involves constructing yarn or thread from raw fibres; weaving is concerned with constructing fabric or cloth by interweaving or interlacing threads, and dyeing, through a process of putting together the right ingredients, embellishes fabric or thread by adding colour. It is also a process of de-construction, working back from a vision of the end product and overall design and putting it together from the bottom up. As David pointed out in our batik workshop *'you need to think it through'*, de-construct the final design and work out how to re-construct it as a textile.

7.5.1: *The construction process*

Tapestry weaving is a good illustration of the complexities of textile construction. The tapestry weavers who came to talk to the guild during fieldwork, both showed slides illustrating how sometimes a tapestry is woven on its side for structural reasons, rather from the bottom up. It is important in the first instance to understand the principles of construction before deciding how to proceed; in the following excerpt from my conversation with Carys whilst looking at her work, we discuss the difficulties of achieving a vertical slit when weaving a tapestry:

> **Carys:** *Another thing I'm doing at the moment, which is working, and that's instead of inter-leaving, inter-locking, if you're doing a vertical change like that. I used to do that every now and again or perhaps every time, but this time I've got some tough cord, no tough cotton behind and every so often bringing forward and doing a knot on the one and a knot on the other one and just keeping them together like that, so you do get a fairly clean edge*
>
> **Me:** *They're not easy vertical ones are they? Because you can loose the tensions on the different sections and that makes them part. It's happened with mine anyway!*
>
> **Carys:** *Yes, I've lost the tension on that. I've never used raffia before and I didn't realise how inflexible it is and that has pulled the edges in a bit*

and now I'm going back to wool again in that white thing. I'm able to get them back where they should have been, but that's something I didn't realise was going to happen. Well, if you pull that you can get a little bit of a stretch, but nothing like you get in wool

Our conversation illustrates that achieving the desired effect in the process of constructing also involves an understanding of different materials and how they will behave in particular circumstances. The crafts of weaving, spinning and dyeing all have certain rules or procedures, as Carole puts it, *'a few certain basics that you've got to adhere to'.*

7.5.2: *Construction as a logical and rule-based process*

As Dormer (1997b: 171) points out, 'woven structures and woven designs are based on rule-directed processes'. In a sense these denote the traditional patterns of action that guide future action (Shils 1981). I have already described the process of preparing the loom through a sequence of procedures, and the warp must be put onto the loom first before the weft can be added to construct the cloth. Carole described how constructing a complex design through weaving follows a logical process:

'... if you're doing diamonds, you've still got to get across in a regular way. I mean you need to go 3 picks [rows] *up before you go over one warp end, otherwise if you do it sort of a bit haphazard it doesn't look right. You sort of end up getting curves and waves and I think if its going to be a diagonal line it's got to be a diagonal line, not a wavy line! ... so you need to know that when you've finished that inch or half inch, this colour's going to move over to there and that colour's going to move over to there and then you get up to the next inch and that colour's going to move over to there and that colour's going to move over to there and away you go'.*

In the first place Carole de-constructs her design on graph paper, working out how many rows she needs to weave before changing direction in order to achieve the pattern she wants. For Carole it is a mathematical process.

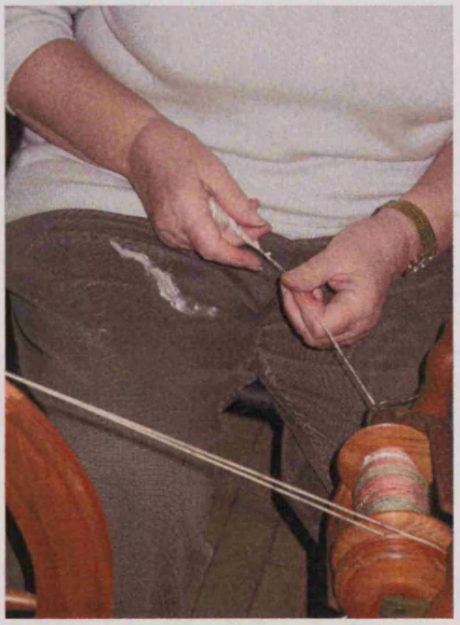
Preparing dyes requires the same logic in that the ingredients must be added in the right order and proportions. In our dye workshop Eleanor prepared a dye bath using ferrous sulphate, which then required caustic soda to fix the dye and produce a rusty yellow colour on cloth. In this workshop, where we wanted to achieve resist patterns

on cloth, it was a case of working through various stages in the process. After first dyeing the prepared cloth we dried it, untied it and put in the next layer of resist by re-tying or folding it and then over-dyed it with a different colour in order to build up a pattern.

Similarly spinning is also logical in that fibres need to be prepared in a way that allows the spinner to achieve desired results. In the spinning workshop Eleanor demonstrated the process of spinning bombyx, a high quality smooth silk that can be spun into a fine, strong and lustrous yarn. The fibres are long and can be spun from the tip of the finger (the fibres are arranged in parallel and looped over the finger and then drawn off the fingertip (image 33) or end on, holding the fibres parallel between the thumb and forefinger carefully drawing them into a twisted yarn (image 34).



33: *drawing the fibre from the tip of a finger*



34: *drawing out parallel fibres*

Again it is a question of understanding how the materials will react when manipulated. Understanding the logic of construction and the procedural rules is a component of textile making, but over-adherence to procedures can sometimes get in the way of creativity and innovation and there is a need to adapt processes and experiment with new materials in order to produce innovative results (Sutton and Sheehan 1989), a focus of chapter nine (part 2).

7.5.3: *Section summary*

The procedures involved in constructing textiles I have described so far come first from a process of de-constructing the design and then logically re-constructing it using equipment and materials into a textile. There are some basic traditional rules that must be adhered to for this to work, although there is room for adaptation once the process of construction is understood. The extent to which rules and procedures are applied or adapted however, will depend on the nature of the end-product.

7.6: The end-product

The textile product is a culmination of the process of making and can be a work of art, an object in its own right designed for decoration, appreciation and pleasure or it can have a specific purpose, and in many instances it is or becomes all of these. Through a durable material object the past can live on in the present (Shils 1981) as a symbol of a cultural tradition. American textile artist and designer, Holly Hotchner (2005), in her keynote speech at the Shibori Symposium in Japan made the point that the object outlives the man who made it and then becomes important for its own sake, in other words it can transcend its original purpose. Arguably the purpose of a textile object can change as soon as it is divorced from its maker, whose original intentions for it may differ from its use by the eventual owner. Whilst recognising that its meaning may change over time, here, I will concentrate on the intended purpose of the product for the maker as an outcome of the process of making.

7.6.1: *Purpose and product*

Woven tapestries, as works of art, may or may not be designed with a particular space or purpose in mind. A tapestry weaver who came to talk to the guild described his work as having a purpose in adding colour and atmosphere to a public space. Carole and Charlotte both work to commission, sometimes designing their work for a particular space or place according to their client's specifications. Charlotte and I discussed how tapestries can serve more that one purpose and how this changes over time:

Charlotte: *...they're like curtains aren't they in a way, they're like furnishings*

Me: *That's right, that's what they were made for originally wasn't it? To keep the warmth in and hide the cracks in the walls and things*

Charlotte: *Yes and absorb sound and all that sort of thing*

Carole and Charlotte, like Carys, David, Eleanor and others also produce textiles for sale through galleries, exhibitions or craft fairs where the product might be influenced by the potential market. On the other hand the end-product is also the outcome of a maker's engagement with a particular aspect of the process or materials and it ultimately becomes a source of inspiration or the basis of a further product. It is in effect a means of transmitting traditional practices and processes. David, Charlotte and Eleanor agree in principle that the process should lead to a product. Spinning, for instance can result in a product in the form of yarn, but for Charlotte *'that's only part of the process isn't it? You've actually got to do something else with it'.* The final product then is something to aim for, the goal for making, it gives purpose to the process. Lucy explained how her spinning became more focused:

> *'I know some people like to sit and spin for the sake of spinning, but I like to have something in mind, I like to know I'm making something for a particular reason'.*

Engaging in the process of making serves a purpose too and I will discuss the meanings that makers draw from the process of making in chapter ten. The purpose of the end-product, however, can also be considered from a collaborative perspective.

7.6.2: *A collaborative product*

In a sense the guild's annual exhibition or show is a product in itself. Although guild members work throughout the year to produce individual textile end products; putting these together as a show for the public also involves design, planning and preparation in order to display individual products to their best advantage and as a coherent and eye-catching whole; something that will attract, interest and inform the public. Putting the exhibition together is a task for a small team of guild members. In 2005 the team comprised Kate, Charlotte, Eleanor, Colin and me. Having collected and sorted individual submissions and transported them to the museum, we worked for a day to

create the exhibition in the museum's entrance hall, a public thoroughfare to other galleries. It was not an easy task, the lighting was poor and we had to work around objects such as lockers and display boards, hiding them where we could behind screens. Eventually we felt satisfied that we had created a product that did justice to members' work and had a coherence of its own.

In Japan I experienced a collaborative production of a different nature. At the close of the shibori symposium, the university's textile and music students performed *'the voice of sky, rain of time'*, the culmination of a joint project exploring man's close relationship with textiles. The performance brought together individual products in the form of hand-produced shibori costumes, music and dance to symbolise man's connection through textiles with his environment and culture and the fragility of this relationship. In a sense this performance symbolised the essence of textile making as man's connection with the environment and as a form of cultural expression. Through making textiles, traditionally we have used resources found in our natural environment, the materials of our craft, and through the use of equipment and developing the processes of making, have put these together as products of our culture.

7.7: Conclusion

In this chapter I have concentrated on the traditional elements, principles and practices inherent in textile-making drawing on Nelson's (1988) concept of occupational form as a component of the domain with particular reference to the crafts on weaving, spinning and dyeing. Because traditional patterns of practice come from human action in the first instance, an understanding of this was only possible through an analysis of what textile-makers do in the process of making and its material culture; taking into account the influence of cultural traditions on contemporary practice. In the context of this study eliciting the common components and elements that are unique to textile-making came from an interpretation and contextual understanding of individual, my own and collective experiences.

Making textiles as a form of occupation involves engaging in a process. It involves the use of a diverse range of materials and equipment and incorporates planning,

preparation, following certain procedures, traditional principles and practices all of which can vary depending on the nature of the desired end product, together with the environmental, geographical and socio-cultural context in which making takes place.

Textile-making is a constructive process; it utilises rules and procedures and culminates in a tangible end product, a useable and/or decorative object as the outcome of the maker's engagement in the process. The end-product may be the result of an individual project or collaboration between makers. Characteristically makers can now draw in an eclectic range of textile techniques and cultural traditions and incorporate these into the process of making; ultimately, however, using textile techniques requires specialist knowledge and skill, a further and essential component of textile-making, and the focus of chapter eight.

Chapter eight:

Developing textile knowledge and skills

8: Introduction

By its very nature and as a process of construction, engaging in textile-making through bodily interaction with equipment and materials; the maker requires a particular kind of knowledge and skill. This chapter concentrates on the nature of knowledge required; understanding the process; the use of technology; textile-making skills and their mastery; the application and transferability of skills; formal and informal ways of learning and disseminating knowledge and skills.

8.1: The nature of textile-making knowledge

In chapter seven I described the occupational components of textile-making, its equipment and materials together with the principles, practices and processes encompassed in making. The craft disciplines of weaving, spinning and dyeing as forms of textile-making each require unique knowledge and understanding, although there are commonalities across disciplines. The knowledge required to make textiles is primarily technical and practical in nature; conceptual understanding of the components and processes is embedded in this. In other words it is a combination of 'knowing how' through applying practical knowledge to the task of making and 'knowing that', through understanding what happens in a given situation (Dreyfus and Dreyfus: 19). Such ways of knowing are accumulated through knowledge of the discipline, its rules and processes (Farrar and Trorey 2008). I pointed out in chapter seven that the crafts of weaving, spinning and dyeing engage the maker in an interaction with equipment and materials; in common with other crafts such as pottery and wood carving for example, knowledge is gained through bodily engagement, observing and experiencing (Smith 2004). Because equipment and materials are fundamental to textile-making, I will first consider the nature of knowledge in relation to these and to the process of making.

8.1.1: *Knowledge and understanding of equipment and materials*

I have already described the diverse range of equipment and materials that can be utilised in the process of making textiles. Like other hand-crafts, textile-making is concerned with control of materials (Greenhalgh 2002b, Smith 2004). It also requires the use of a range of tools and equipment. Developing a knowledge and understanding of equipment and materials is a cumulative process. For the maker it builds up over time as skills develop and is gained formally through courses, workshops and training and informally through personal and collective experience. Knowledge is constantly made and re-made through active engagement in making (Marchand 2008), it accumulates through practice.

8.1.2: *Equipment*

In a sense the equipment and tools used in the process of making become an extension of the maker and sustained practice results in 'a co-ordinated integration of mind, body and tool' (Marchand 2008). Chapter seven (7.2.2 – 7.2.5) detailed the complexity of equipment used to make textiles and the maker requires some understanding of its components and how to operate it in order to use it in a co-ordinated and integrated way. Spinning for example requires at least a rudimentary understanding of how the spinning wheel works in order to be able to maintain it effectively and get the best results from it. Different fibres require different levels of tension on the drive-band depending on the amount of twist required to make a yarn. In the guild workshop we concentrated on silk and this required a high twist and a slow feed onto the bobbin and therefore less tension than other fibres.

Similarly, weaving requires knowledge of how a loom works before it can be used to produce cloth. If the weaver owns a loom, this includes knowing how to put it together in the first place. Carole recounted her experience of teaching someone who had bought a new loom, but had no knowledge of weaving or its equipment: '... *she didn't realise how involved it was. I think the first two lessons were taken up putting the loom together!'* Because of their size, bulk and complexity new looms, and particularly floor looms, are purchased and delivered as a kit for self-assembly. When I acquired a new complex floor loom a few years ago, I spent several days assembling

it in situ using the manufacturer's instructions for guidance. Without prior knowledge of looms, weaving and its terminology I could not have done this un-aided. Putting the loom together and knowing how it is constructed is a part of understanding how it works (Sennett 2008). This understanding has helped me to diagnose and solve mechanical problems that arise during the process of weaving.

On the complex weaving course I attended with Carole we used mechanical and computerised looms that were new to both of us. The basic structure felt familiar, in that the process of preparing the loom (described in chapter 7.4.2) was the same as for other looms, but the operational method differed and required new understanding. Once the loom was set up and we knew how to operate it, we could then weave by drawing and building on our existing knowledge of the process. Because of our lack of experience in using such looms, the mechanical problems that arose during the course remained beyond our ability to solve quickly and we required technical help. Marchand (2008) describes how a heightened sense of control over the task comes through working intensively with tools over a period of time. A week's experience of using an unfamiliar complex loom was clearly insufficient for us to gain a sense of control. The kind of technical and practical knowledge, or tacit knowledge as Polanyi (1958) describes it; required to use equipment proficiently and without consciously thinking about it comes from lengthy experience. Knowledge and understanding of the properties of different materials and how they interact with each other builds in a similar way.

8.1.3: *Materials*

For Sennett (2008: 119) 'material consciousness', a 'curiosity about the material', in other words a willingness to explore, is a part of the quality of craftsmanship. Carys for instance, showed me a tapestry she was in the process of making and explained how she was exploring fibres and their properties:

> *'... at the moment what I'm doing is having a look to see what natural yarns can do for me and I'm just weaving a panel of plain jute, plain raffia, seeing what the contrasts are between mill-spun yarns and my own hand-spun, so I've got two lots of wools un-coloured and then there's*

going to be a little bit of... oh and I thought I'd put some cotton in, some warp and see what all the different textures and colours can do for me'.

Through experimenting with different fibres and yarns over the years Carys has built up knowledge and understanding of how materials behave under different conditions and how they interact with each other.

Whereas knowledge of the fibres and materials used in spinning and weaving can, to a large extent be developed experientially, the ingredients for dyeing should be treated more cautiously. There is room for experimentation, but in view of the risk to health and safety (see chapter 7.2.8) there is a need for prior understanding of the nature of ingredients and how they will react in combination. In general guild members have acquired knowledge and understanding of dye materials through supervised practice and instruction in workshops and through use of reliable recipes. It is a question of understanding the rules in the first instance, learning how to use ingredients safely, in the right proportions and combinations to achieve worthwhile results. As Dormer (1997f: 221) puts it, these 'how to' rules keep the maker on track for an intended goal. Through assimilating the rules and building a bank of knowledge and understanding of how to achieve a range of colours from different dye ingredients, it is possible to extend the range through combining them in different proportions.

For individual makers knowledge and understanding of equipment and materials is acquired through doing, through actively engaging in the process of making. It cannot be reduced to simply applying rules (Farrar and Trorey 2008); these are a starting point, but once understood and assimilated become part of a craftsperson's tacit knowledge or personal knowing (Dormer 1997f, Polanyi 1958).

8.1.4: *Understanding the process*

In chapter seven (7.5) I described the process of spinning, weaving and dyeing as a construction of yarn from fibre, cloth through interlacing threads and colour through combining ingredients to make dye. It is possible as a beginner to learn the mechanics of the process, in other words the rules for making, with a basic knowledge of equipment and materials. However, Farrar and Trorey (2008) found in their study of

dry stone wallers that understanding develops through practice. Eleanor for instance acquired a basic understanding of the processes of spinning, weaving and dyeing from two professional studio weavers:

> *'Now they taught me the basics. I can hear* [weaver] *saying 'it's no good looking at these fancy weaves..... unless you can weave a good tabby* [plain weave] *you might as well not even start!'*
>
> *So my first few years of weaving actually, well the first six years, I did very little except tabby weaving..'*

Eleanor's comment indicates the length of time it takes to practice a craft and move from being a novice and acquiring the rules of the process, through competency to proficiency where tasks are intuitively organised and understood. Ultimately, at expert level, skills and knowledge of the process is internalised and there is room for critical reflection and deliberation (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986). With a thorough knowledge and understanding of the process and assimilation of the rules, expert weavers such as Carole can work out a design, de-construct and translate it to make an end product. Carole explained this in relation to tapestry weaving:

> *'I measure how many picks per inch I do, so I, I jot it down as I go along, each part I will mark... and then so I virtually know if it's say 13 picks* [rows] *to the inch, I'll know where I am for the half inch the quarter inch and if you're doing diamonds you can work out how many* [warp] *ends you've got to go over'*

Carole describes the process as logical and mathematical, she has assimilated the rules of weaving, she also has an intuitive understanding of the properties of yarn and how to use them to achieve her design. Carole's expertise is such that she has developed what Schön (1988:25) describes as 'knowing-in-action', the ability to analyse and adjust her actions in the process of weaving; it is revealed in her skilful execution of complex tapestries.

8.1.5: *Understanding the use of technology*

In chapter seven (7.2.2) I described the nature of equipment used for hand-weaving and spinning and how it can be operated entirely by the maker, be semi-automated,

automated or interfaced with computer technology. The majority of guild members use un-automated equipment, but not all. Carole, for instance, because of the amount of wool she needs to spin to make commissioned tapestries and rugs, uses an electric spinner. In her view:

> *'It doesn't make the spinning any different, I'm still drawing threads out, the fibres out in exactly the same way, the only thing I'm not doing is treadling, I'm flicking a switch instead, but everything else is done exactly the same'*

As Betjemann (2008: 188) puts it, 'the more reducible the action, the more likely it is to be taken over by machine'. The electric spinner speeds up the spinning process by automating a labour intensive part of it, in this case foot treadling the wheel, but it does not remove the skill and control required to draw out and manipulate the fibres into a yarn.

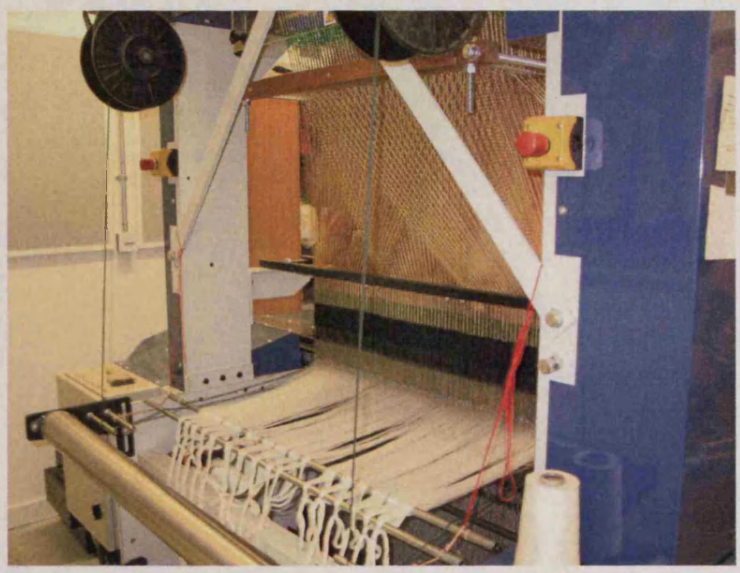
Similarly when Carole and I used the computerised looms during the complex weaving course, we found that the computer did not remove the need for the knowledge and skills required to produce good quality cloth. It was still necessary to maintain warp tension, throw the shuttle to place the weft, beat the cloth evenly, and control the width of the cloth during weaving. Before the process of weaving could even begin we had designed our cloth using a software programme, which was then interfaced with the loom. Without an understanding of cloth structure and pattern repeats, this design programme would be impossible to follow; it is a question of understanding the rules before the computer can be used as a tool to help one achieve a complex design. Dormer (1997c: 145) points out that 'you get the best out of the computer and its software if you are able to drive the tool rather than being driven by it'.

Here I have described the use of technology as part of the craft process, where it can help the maker move through the design and production stage more quickly and efficiently, but its effective use requires knowledge of equipment, materials and the process of making. The maker needs to make sound judgements about the use of technology and machinery in practice and use it to his/her advantage (Sennett 2008,

Dormer 1997d); as Dormer puts it, technology can empower the maker, but it does not necessarily remove the need for skill and mastery of the process.

8.1.6: *Technical interest*

During the complex weave course, held in a university textile department, we had an opportunity to find out more about computerised textile equipment. The department, which offered its students opportunities to explore their artistic potential through hand-work, also prepares them for work in industry and has a computerised jacquard loom (image 35).



35: *the computerised jacquard loom*

Seeing the designs that students had produced and woven into samples on this loom and talking to their graduate students gave Carole and me an appreciation of a range of different technical skills that textile graduates require to work in industry.

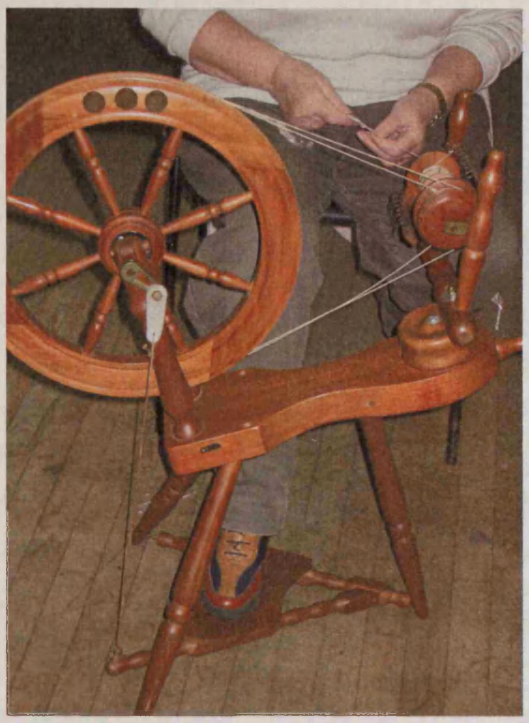
Ismini Samanidou, a textile graduate who has recently set up her own business, described her interests in digital design and skills in using the computerised jacquard loom in an interview for the Weaver's Journal. Digital technology allows her greater freedom to realise complex designs, although she likes to introduce elements of hand-work into the process (Delmas 2007a). For guild members and other textile-makers

who produce one-off textiles at home or in a studio however, the emphasis remains on the skills incorporated in working by hand.

8.2: Developing skills

In chapter seven I described the fundamental aspects of the process of making textiles, the need for planning, preparation and the rule-based nature of the construction process. Mastery of the process and engaging in making requires the maker to develop a bank of practical skills. The specific skills required vary according to the nature of the process and the end product. There is, however. a consensus in the literature that craft skills relies on tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1958, Drefus and Dreyfus 1986, Dormer 1994, 1997c, Sennett 2008). Tacit knowledge is acquired through 'doing', as Farrar and Trorey (2008: 42) put it, 'doing without having to think about it'. The skills required to make textiles, in common with other craft skills develop through repetition and sustained practice (Sennett 2008, Marchand 2008).

Mastering craft skills is a lengthy process. Sennett refers to ten thousand hours of practice and where skills are mastered the individual has control and power over a task (Davis and Polatajko 2004). Once skills are mastered the process of making can also be lengthy. For example, spinning twenty nine grams (one ounce) of fine worsted yarn averaging one hundred and fifty meters in length takes an expert spinner four and a half hours (Kennett 2008). Mastering craft skills is about developing a complex repertoire of procedures into a co-ordinated whole (Sennett 2008). Where spinning and weaving are concerned, specific actions are required to work the equipment and manipulate materials; through bodily engagement and sustained repetition these come together into a smooth and skilful operation. When spinning for example, the wheel is treadled consistently and the spinner concentrates on drawing out the fibres to the desired thickness by hand, with the right amount of twist. One hand teases out the fibres whilst the other controls the twist and tension of the thread as it winds onto the bobbin. Whilst the hands are working the foot continuously treadles the wheel to maintain an even rhythm and speed (image 36).



36: *teasing out fibres whilst treadling the wheel*

The skills encapsulated in this process take time and patience to master. As Carole puts it , *'you need to become comfortable with what you're doing, practice enough and then it doesn't become a chore'.* David likened it to his experience of learning Tai Chi:

> *'Learning the forms is a real struggle because you are having to think where is my body going now, what's happening, it doesn't happen automatically, but once you've got it and it suddenly clicks and it flows and spinning and weaving are very, very similar'*

Expert spinners such as Eleanor, David, Carole and Kate can spin through co-ordinated bodily movements that have become second-nature; it becomes a smooth, automatic and rhythmical process. For the expert, skills become an 'unconscious part of the individual' (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986: 30). For less competent spinners who have not reached this point the process is frustrating. Because they are consciously aware of treadling the wheel at the same time as teasing out fibres, the yarn can feed on to the bobbin too quickly, making it too thick, lumpy, or break. This is because attention is switched from the focus of controlling the amount of twist in the yarn to a subsidiary awareness of the movements involved in operating the wheel. Focused and subsidiary awareness are not mutually exclusive (Polanyi 1958), but the switch in

attention from one to the other results in a clumsy rather than smooth and rhythmical performance. Once skills reach a higher level, there is a 'constant interplay between tacit knowledge and self-conscious awareness' (Sennett 2008: 50). Mastering control of the wheel, fibres and the process means that the spinner can become consciously aware of the nature of the yarn, make necessary adjustments and work to a design rather than the result being left to chance.

Successful spinning relies on well developed and co-ordinated bodily movement to control equipment and manipulate fibres simultaneously. On the other hand, it is possible to weave a fabric at the same time as learning how to operate a loom, although the process is likely to be stilted and protracted. Additionally the quality of the cloth and the experience for the weaver may be compromised. Becoming a competent weaver requires the development of intuitive skills, so that the loom can be worked efficiently without too much concentration on the task, allowing the weaver to concentrate on the quality and complexity of the fabric. Although I consider myself to be a fairly proficient weaver, with the intuitive skills to understand, organise and analyse the process (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986), working the dobby loom during the complex weave course was new to me and required a new set of skills. In the first place I needed to familiarise myself with the two foot controls, which were different from my own floor loom. The back bar required a heel click to move the lags into the right position and the front bar was depressed by the other foot in order to open the shed (part the warp threads). With time and practice I began to master this sequence and did not have to concentrate heavily on how to work the loom, which meant that I could concentrate more on weaving the cloth. Once the skills for operating equipment and manipulating materials are mastered and the process is no longer laboured (image 37), it possible to think more deeply about process and product (Sennett 2008) and through reflection make judgements in action.



37: *mastering control of a dobby loom*

8.2.1: *Reflection and judgements in action*

Weaving, spinning and dyeing involve the maker in a process of continual reflection-in-action (Schön 1988) and in making judgements and changes during the active process of making. A skilled spinner for instance continually makes subtle adjustments by changing the pressure between the thumb and forefinger that grip the fibres in one hand and the thumb and forefinger of the other hand controlling the amount of twist that travels up the yarn from the wheel. This kind of active decision making becomes possible once practical skills and techniques are mastered and the maker has control of the process.

Although dyeing does not require the same kind of co-ordinated, rhythmical bodily engagement as spinning and weaving, it is still necessary to master the process, actively engage with equipment and ingredients and develop the skills to make judgements during the dyeing process. Rather like cooking, there is a skill in knowing

when and how to add ingredients in order to change colour or develop subtle shades of the same colour. Schön (1988: 26) describes this as 'knowing-in-action'. In chapter seven (7.5.2) I described how, in the guild workshop, we made resist patterns on cloth; to achieve the desired result it was necessary to judge when and how to apply dye. Making judgements in this way requires 'refection-in-action', looking back and re-considering how knowing-in-action might have contributed to the outcome. As Schön puts it 'reflection gives rise to on-the-spot experiment', trying new actions to explore the new phenomena and testing our understanding of them' (Schön 1988: 28).

Once skills are mastered and competency achieved, experienced makers such as Charlotte, through reflection on her own work and abilities, feel the need to move on:

> *'..and having been doing it so long, you know you do get fairly competent at it, so people copying you and trying to imitate you generally aren't that competent at it, so you don't have to fear very much, but it does sometimes, it's a good wake up call and you think well right, people are catching up I need to take a step forward and do something different...'*

Moving forward and doing something different may require new skills or the ability to transfer skills and apply them in new and different ways.

8.2.2: *Applying and transferring knowledge and skills*

Guild members tend to develop and hone a core set of skills in order to spin, weave or use dye and apply these in a variety of ways within the same discipline or combine or transfer skills learnt in one discipline to another to create a textile product. Once the basic skills for spinning are mastered for instance, and this is combined with knowledge of fibres and how they behave during the spinning process it becomes possible to adapt skills and spin fibres differently. With reference to Dreyfus and Dreyfus's (1986) stages of skill acquisition, this ability to adapt and apply skills discriminately occurs when the spinner has become competent. During the guild silk spinning workshop, where the majority of participants were competent spinners with experience of spinning a range of fibres, we learnt how to spin different kinds of silk, each requiring a different approach. The first, bombyx (described in chapter 7.5.2)

had very long fibres that needed to be firmly drawn out and then twisted into a fine thread (image 38)



38: *drawing out bombyx silk fibres*

In contrast the second fibre, a form of silk waste, was lumpy in texture. These short fibres needed to be carefully teased out before spinning for the best results. The teasing out process continued during spinning and required a high degree of control to prevent the yarn from breaking (image 39).



39: *teasing out short silk waste fibres*

Within the guild where the development of textile crafts skills are highly valued, discipline-based skills are often the starting point and the skills learnt in one area can be transferred to another. For example, David explained to me how the skills he had learnt in other disciplines had helped him to understand weaving:

> *'weaving was totally logical to me ..... You know yarns going up and down and side ways just sort of is obvious! I mean very quickly I gathered that and the same with lace-making, I mean lace-making was pattern, it was physical pattern in 3 dimensions and I've done a lot of rope work and knotting and things like that as well, because they're all inter-connected'.*

David has an ability to see the structural similarities in different types of textiles and work out how the skills and knowledge he has acquired in one area might be applied elsewhere. Similarly Charlotte, an artist and tapestry weaver has been able to transfer her knowledge of colour from art into weaving:

> *'I mean I always like doing the stitch bit because that's where you can mix the colours and see the way they react to each other... I think having taught art as well for so long, you get to understand about colours and we taught art history in quite a lot of detail, so you're analysing the way that other artists have used colour and the purpose of colour and what it does and that sort of thing, so I think that all helps as well..'*

This level of analysis, sophisticated understanding and ability to utilise skills across disciplines by making associations is the mark of an expert (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986). The extent to which individual makers transfer or combine knowledge and skills in this way varies, not just with their level of expertise and ability, but depending on personal preferences, motivations for making, creativity and meanings (these influences on making are discussed in detail in chapters 9 and 10). Weavers such as Charlotte and David consciously extend, transfer and re-apply their knowledge and skills in order to move forward and extend the boundaries of their work, whereas other guild members are content to continue honing their skills in one discipline area of textile craft; spinning yarn to make garments or concentrating on weaving tapestries for instance.

8.2.3: *Section summary*

So far I have described the nature of knowledge and understanding required to make textiles through bodily engagement with equipment and materials. The development of tacit knowledge and understanding of the process, the rules for making, materials and equipment is acquired through active doing. The skills required to make textiles are developed through sustained practice. Once skills are mastered and the rules assimilated, the maker, through a process of reflection can adapt, apply and transfer knowledge and skill to shape and extend their practice. In the following sections I will consider various ways of learning and how guild members have built up their knowledge and skills.

8.3: Ways of learning

For guild members, understanding textile construction and learning the skills to make textiles occurs through a mix of informal and more formal opportunities. Because of the tacit nature of knowledge and the acknowledged difficulties in verbally explaining the components of skilled performance, learning occurs primarily through observation, repetition and active doing (Dormer 1994, Smith 2004, Marchand 2008, Sennett 2008). Sustained practice is a key element of learning; knowledge and skills are acquired by individual makers in various ways over a life time (Adam 2002). As Carys put it:

> *'It's a very long learning process. Every time you think well 'I know it all now' you learn something else. I think I shall go on learning until the end of my days'.*

The following sections detail the ways in which guild members have acquired knowledge and skill.

8.3.1: *Learning in childhood*

Several guild members could recall being introduced to textile-making in childhood and how this was the time when they learnt some of the basic skills, particularly how to sew and knit. Lucy recalled her childhood in the early 1960s in a household where

most of the family's clothes were made at home by her mother. She described an environment where *'it was just something that was ever present'* and how she was making her own clothes from a young age:

> *'I suppose I did quite a lot, I was certainly making clothes by the end of junior school, I can remember making a blouse, very traditional needlework classes at school.... I don't remember when I started to learn to knit, but I do remember my Nan being the one to be picking up the stitches and getting it back on track again'.*

In Lucy's household there was *'just an acceptance that it could be done, so it was just a case of getting on and doing it'.* Making textiles for the home and family for economic reasons or as a creative leisure pursuit was popular amongst women in post-war Western societies. As a consequence they acquired a variety of skills (Burman 1999, Schofield-Tomschin 1999). In common with Lucy, Kate and Eleanor, who were also children in the war and post-war years could recall similar experiences of being taught to knit and sew by family members and at school. Adam (2002) in her study of how textile makers acquire their skills also found that many of the older women learnt skills from the family and that within the home making things by hand was expected and encouraged. David also grew up in a household where making textiles was common practice. His older sister was at Art College studying fashion and millinery. David told me how he was introduced to making textiles in his early childhood:

> *'When I was very young I had a baby-sitter who always knitted, so from the age of about 3 I was encouraged to learn to knit and started sewing, things like that. Then at the age of 9 I was given my first lace pillow and started working in, attempting to learn lace from books, from the local library, and from the age of 11 I went to a coffee morning and met a weaver who was giving a whole lot of Indian family pieces, she was the last of the line, to the local history society, but they persuaded her to take along ...an inkle* [braid] *loom as well and I sat all morning and played on her inkle loom'.*

The same textile-maker taught David in her studio: *'I was there every single weekend learning to weave, doing table mats first of all and then a length of fabric'.* David acknowledges that, as a boy, his interest in textiles was unusual amongst his peers, but through meeting someone who was inspiring and willing to share their skills, David had the opportunity to actively engage in the crafts. Similarly Eleanor, as a young

adult, had an opportunity to spend time with two studio weavers who taught her some basic skills and inspired her to get started:

> *'I watched them spinning and I thought now, I'd really like to have a go at that, so* [he] *taught me to spin and eventually, I mean I was there on and off for about four weeks, and in that time I suppose I did the whole gambit of it... '*

Being introduced to textile-making in childhood or early adulthood and the opportunity to learn some basic skills from family, friends, at school or from other textile craftsmen can be a catalyst for further learning. I have already emphasised the importance of continual practice; for guild members, in common with other craftspeople who are continually developing tacit knowledge and acquiring skills, practical learning is key.

8.3.2: *Learning through practice*

Textile-makers learn the techniques necessary to spin and weave mostly from more experienced makers in workshops or on courses and to a lesser extent from books, magazines, recipes and instructions. Betjemann (2008: 190) points out that 'craft is not learned from magazines', although several guild members referred to using them as resources for learning, for reference and for ideas. Ultimately however, skill comes from continual practice; learning is grounded in experience (Hutton 1989, Kolb 1984). Charlotte emphasised this in relation to her own learning experience:

> *'I think by keeping on doing it (a), and (b) well going on courses, that sort of thing, but I think mainly it's the experience of weaving for years and years and years and you learn very often, you learn by doing it wrong'.*

Through continual practice the craftsperson learns to make sense of mistakes and move forward (Sennett 2008). Carys has also learnt through trial and error:

> *'The first tapestry I ever designed, I'd never tried before, I'd no idea that you had to, that there was a relationship between the spacing of a warp and the thickness of* [the weft], *and it was an absolute disaster, I couldn't get it to pack down, so..... the only thing I could do as all the warps were separate I could take out every other one, so I took out every other one and it worked then'.*

For Carys and Charlotte learning through experience has led them to expose problems and through reflection-in-action find their own solutions as they arise. Sennett (2008: 20) points out that as skill develops it becomes more 'problem-attuned', the craftsperson establishes a relationship between 'problem-finding' and 'problem-solving' (Sennett 2008: 9). As Carys put it: *'if you own up to your mistakes then you won't do them again and you're making mistakes all the time'.* Carys went on to tell me about her attempt to weave a scene from the Mabinogion:

> *'I can remember one of the horsemen had a sword in his hand and I didn't realise that the more you beat down, the more that* [the weft is compacted] *... and his sword comes out from his hand like that and then it sort of flops over..'*

Through an attempt to weave figures into a tapestry, Carys had learnt the skills to achieve the shapes she wanted through problem-finding and problem-solving. Practical learning of this nature occurs through personal engagement in making, but it can also come from collective opportunities for learning.

8.3.3: *Practical learning in workshops*

Workshops offer a further opportunity for practical learning, for mentoring and sharing information face-to-face (Sennett 2008). In guild workshops there is usually some tuition and guidance on hand, but learning skills ultimately comes through the opportunity to experiment and try out new techniques or equipment rather than from verbal instruction. Carole felt that workshops were also a means of building confidence. In the guild batik workshop for instance, few of us had the skills necessary to use a tjanting to apply hot wax to cloth without a trail of drips (image 40), but here we had an opportunity to practice and through trial and error made different designs. We could also learn from each other's mistakes and shared tips on how to solve common problems.



40: *Practicing application of wax to cloth using a tjanting*

Guild workshops provide an opportunity to try something new. Charlotte found them a way of *'widening horizons'*; Lucy described them as a *'taster'*, an introduction to a new area of textile-making or a new skill. Lucy told me how in a guild she belonged to some years ago members set themselves challenges *'using different fibres and any thing we fancied doing we'd play around so we'd do felting or some natural dyeing'*. This was a way of extending knowledge and skills collectively through experiencing new materials, playing and experimenting. Understanding comes from mentorship, working with and watching others. Learning collectively in workshops also allows for 'enculturation', gaining knowledge based on a set of social skills through engaging with others in the field (Collins 1985: 57). Although our skills are acquired and developed primarily through opportunities to try things out, learning is enhanced through analysing and examining a wide range of existing textiles, in other words by finding out how they are made.

8.3.4: *Analysing and examining*

Textiles as artefacts, a part of material culture, are in themselves an important source of knowledge (Smith 2004). Analysing and examining textiles is a part of learning about materials, textures, fabric and its construction as well as design, culture and traditions. At guild meetings and workshops speakers often bring a selection of textiles to illustrate a talk and members are usually given the opportunity to handle,

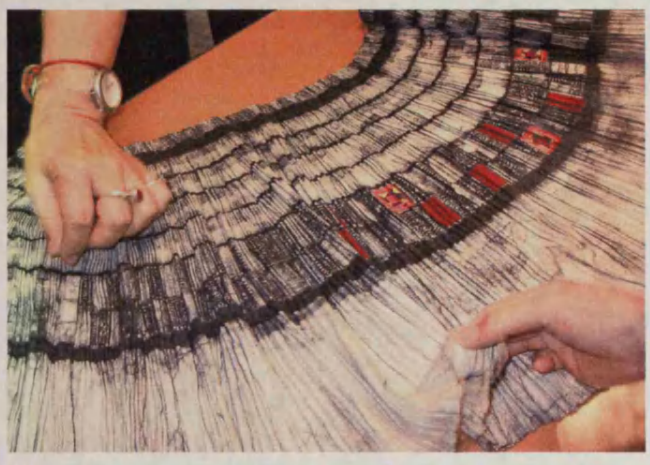
examine and analyse textile items; something which guild members value. As Kate explained:

> *'When you've seen it and then you look closely at it you can actually then see the colours in it, how it's made and how it's produced'.*

Adam (2002) found that looking at other's work was a way of developing and improving skills. As textile makers we are interested in materials, textures, construction, pattern and colour as well as the purpose of specific textiles and seek out opportunities to find out more. For instance, Kate and I, along with other guild members, often visit textile exhibitions, specialist shops and craft fairs where we can learn about textile construction and design by analysing and examining others' work. Sometimes it is necessary to do this in order to work out how to achieve a particular effect as Carys explains:

> *'All those ones* [tapestries] *I did with the chequerboard squares, they were follow-ons and then I thought back to a photograph I'd seen of one of* [another tapestry weaver] *years ago, I never saw the original one... but I was intrigued to see how she'd got one panel to seem to be recessed and then I worked it out that she must have used double warp threads and then just overlapped when she wanted it to..'*

Handling and examining textiles was also common amongst the textile-makers of different nationalities I met at seminars, conferences and exhibitions during fieldwork. In Japan Kate and I had many opportunities to examine traditional and indigenous textiles, as well as a range of contemporary shibori textiles made by international artists/craftspeople who brought their work to the symposium (images 41 and 42).



41: *analysing a shibori pleated skirt from China*



42: *Examining contemporary textiles*

In workshops and on courses time is usually made for analysing textiles as a part of the learning process. At the end of the complex weave course for instance, we came together to show and explained our woven samples to each other. This gave us an opportunity to discuss and examine each other's work, feel the weight and texture of the different cloths and weaves and consider the designs we might pursue and those we would reject (image 43).



43: *sharing samples – complex weaving course*

Learning about textiles, understanding their construction and developing the skills to make them comes from making the most of a range of opportunities and actively pursuing particular areas of interest. Dormer (1997g) points out that pursuing a craft in any depth and acquiring specialist knowledge can take years. Formal education in the crafts is, for some, an important part of this process.

8.3.5: *Formal, structured learning*

For some guild members the foundation for further learning came from formal courses in textile making. David and Charlotte both began their careers in textiles through higher education and Eleanor, Carole, Kate and I completed a distance learning course that lead to a recognised diploma in handloom weaving. Others have completed the AGWS&D certificate of achievement and city and guilds courses in felt making.

Completing a more formal or structured course such as a certificate or diploma can help organise learning as well as lay the foundation for future learning. Kate and I first completed the AGWS&D certificate of achievement in handloom weaving and then went on to do a diploma. Kate felt that *'doing the certificate of achievement ... started to structure what we were doing'*. More organised and structured learning came from following a syllabus and covering the wide range of techniques required to

produce a portfolio. For Carole, the diploma in handloom weaving opened up new opportunities:

> *'That got me going in different directions again and when I finished the course I got this commission that I'm still doing now'.*

The certificate of achievement and the diploma in handloom weaving were, in the 1980s and 1990s when guild members took them, aimed at developing knowledge and skills in the processes of weaving and experience of a wide range of materials with perhaps less emphasis at the time on design. Charlotte and David however, both studied textiles as part of their formal higher education and had opportunities to develop skills in drawing and the use of colour, which for Charlotte particularly, strongly influenced her woven landscape tapestries. Similarly a tapestry weaver who came to talk to the guild referred to the value of drawing to him. Like Charlotte he used sketch books, drawing and painting as a means of developing ideas and designs. David on the other hand had a phobia about drawing, having been told at school: *'oh you can't draw'*, but through higher education developed an understanding of his abilities *'to feel round shapes and feel round a three dimensional object, rather than trying to draw to the edge of things'.*

More formal education and the opportunity to immerse oneself in a subject area can help uncover and develop strengths as well as improving knowledge and skill. It allows for the discovery of one's personal philosophy and creativity (Gale and Kaur 2002). For Kate, structured courses led her to a greater understanding of her own abilities and interests:

> *'I now want to do what I want to do..... I can now choose .....I now, perhaps I know more about what I can do and what I can't do'.*

Knowing one's strengths and weaknesses can then lead to an ability to make informed choices about future directions in textile-making. This can lead to taking more specific courses that develop further understanding, knowledge and skills.

8.3.6: *Developing specific skills*

Deeper learning and developing specific areas of skill comes through building on experience and through intensive courses, often with a master in that particular area of textile-making. An appreciation of the benefits of building and refining knowledge and skills comes with experience (Adam 2002). Eleanor, now an experienced spinner attended courses with a master spinner to improve and develop her skills in specific areas:

> *'I went to* [spinner] *to learn to spin flax..... but if you went to her you didn't go for a day you went for a whole week's course. I did the same thing for silk and I did three weeks, three separate years, a week a year, for silk spinning'.*

In between courses Eleanor continued to hone and develop her spinning skills through continual engagement and practice. Similarly Carys told me how attending AGWS&D summer school courses with master craftsmen had developed her skills:

> *'I thoroughly enjoyed* [spinner], *she did teach me to spin. I wasn't allowed to do anything until I'd mastered the art of long-draw, which seemed a bit optimistic! Anyway, I went along and my spinning did improve with her and then I did the dyeing red course with the* [dyers] *and I thoroughly enjoyed that and then I went on to* [tapestry weaver] *and he's a great exponent of textures, so I learnt a lot from him and this year I went on another dyeing one, natural dyes and that was very interesting and we came away with a folder, that he had provided, we had to contribute towards it, but he worked us so hard and we got so many colours and the recipes with it...'*

In a short, but concentrated period, intensive courses such as the summer schools, or courses offered by individual craftsmen provide opportunities not only for deeper learning and building resources for the future in the form of samples, notes, recipes and instructions; but perhaps more importantly they are opportunities to learn from a master. As Lucy put it:

> *'.....I think having different teachers as well, everyone works differently or has a slightly different take on it, so if you've got the opportunity to learn from a range of people..... I've been down to* [tapestry weaver] *three times now, I've done a couple of* [dyeing] *workshops, there was the weekend with* [indigo dyer], *so it's really being able to access real*

expertise and I like that feeling of the continuity of the knowledge and the skill and the understanding because you're, I mean certainly with [tapestry weaver] *and* [dyer] *you're talking about women who are now well into their 70s'.*

For Lucy, the sense of continuity and passing knowledge and skills on from one generation of master textile-makers to another is hugely important:

'.....because with a lot of these people, they'd learnt directly from someone else who's learnt from someone else. Thinking of Jenny Balfour-Paul, I mean she learned her craft from Susan Bosence and Susan Bosence learnt from Barron and Larcher and you think this is your direct tap to back in the twenties and so on when they were trying to revive dyeing crafts, so I love that feeling of continuity …'

Continuity and passing on skills from one to another is key to building cultural traditions and practices. Polanyi (1958) pointed out that skills are passed on by example and craftsmanship survives in local traditions. Today, travel and the internet has also made it possible to learn or appreciate skills and practices from other cultures. In Japan Kate and I had the opportunity to learn some of the traditional methods that Japanese shibori artisans use to bind and shape cloth to form a resist prior to dyeing (image 44). We can now develop these techniques and incorporate them into our own work.



44: *A Japanese master of shibori techniques demonstrating a traditional method of binding cloth.*

Similarly Carole has learnt some of her tapestry weaving skills from Navajo weavers and now applies these to her work.

By drawing on skills and utilising knowledge from diverse sources we are continually shaping and re-shaping textile-making as occupation. Continual personal development of knowledge, skills and understanding in specific areas of textile-making comes from practical engagement, intensive courses and understanding and learning from specific people, masters of textile-making who are willing and able to impart knowledge and pass on skills to others.

8.3.7: *Passing on skills and knowledge*

For traditional practices, or patterns of action (Shils 1981) to survive and new forms develop, it is essential that skills and knowledge are passed on from one to another. As a guild we share knowledge and understanding informally and learn from each other in meetings and workshops; several guild members also share their knowledge and skills more formally through teaching classes and workshops within and outside the guild. In fact several guild members are also trained teachers. David told me about the wide range of textile techniques he has taught over the years:

> *'I spent a year lecturing on embroidery..... and then drifted into adult education, teaching spinning, weaving, lace-making and I also taught for two years the City and Guilds textile course. I was the sole tutor on that, I taught the whole complete textile range, which included knitting, knotting, sprang. You name it we had to do it. Any construction technique had to be covered'.*

Over the past forty years Charlotte has also taught textile-making in different situations and across different age groups from school children and students to adults. I mentioned in chapter six (6.4.8) that Charlotte, Eleanor, Carole and Kate had taught spinning and weaving in adult education classes during the 1980s. Eleanor thought these classes were important not just as a means of passing on knowledge and skill, but also in *'encouraging people'* to take up and continue textile-making. Kate particularly enjoys teaching children and as a trained primary school teacher, will take opportunities to do so whenever they arise. She told me about the time, a few years

ago, when she taught groups of children during their visit to a local Roman amphitheatre:

> *'We had these kids for an hour, talking about spinning and weaving in Roman times and they had an hour of having a go at drop spindle spinning and having a go on the rigid heddle loom and they absolutely loved it ... ... I mean if I got one child leaving that room that could look at sheep with a different eye I was pleased, it just made them look again and look differently'.*

Kate and Lucy both felt that children no longer have the opportunity to engage with hands-on crafts such as textile-making at an early age in the way that we did as children. From her own children's experience of being in school during the 1990s, Lucy recalled that:

> *'There wasn't the fundamental teaching of the basics of how to, they've never been taught how to sew, what direction to sew in, you know, how to start and how to finish, there's none of that any more'.*

Consequently if skills were not taught at home either, children had very few opportunities to learn. Adam (2002) for instance, found that relatively few of the eighteen year old participants in her study (who were art and textile design students) had opportunities to gain skills in constructed textile techniques such as weaving, crochet or knitting, either at home or school.

Guild members tend to see passing on skills as a responsibility that is in keeping with the guild's philosophy of craft preservation. As Dormer (1997c: 148) points out, if knowledgeable people fail to pass on tacit knowledge it will disappear – it is 'institutional and communal knowledge' and the guilds are important part of this process. Carys, a long-standing guild member, has taken the opportunity to pass on her skills even whilst on holiday where she often sits outside her caravan spinning, as she said:

> *'.....it takes a lot of nerve to do that, you're in a totally alien, but people do stop and talk and a mother with two children was talking to me when I went last June and I had a couple of spindles with me and I taught these two children to spin..... they said they would do some more when they*

got home and I gave them a few addresses of where to get spindles or how to make them, so hopefully..'

David also felt that the guilds and indeed textile-makers in general have a role to play in closing an educational gap and helping people understand textiles as part of a chain; that is, from growing the raw materials through to producing a finished product and all the processes in between. For this to happen he thinks that textile-makers and other crafts people need to be more prominent publicly, as artists in residence for instance.

In chapter six (6.4.11) I referred to the move from within the AGWS&D to encourage guilds to link up with local textile colleges and become a resource for students, who now tend to learn skills on a need-to-know basis (Adamson 2008). This could be because today 'skills in making things take too much time to acquire through practice' (Rowley 1999: 14) and do not fit comfortably into a three year curriculum where the educational emphasis is on design rather than making. The guilds have a key role to play in continuing to promote and share textile-craft skills. This was endorsed by the President of the AGWS&D (a Professor of textile fashion and education) in referring to the 'tremendous bank of knowledge and skills' possessed by the guilds in her address to a seminar in 2005 and how this could be used to inform and develop future practice.

8.4: Conclusion

Textile-making as a process of construction engages the maker in bodily and skilled interaction with equipment and materials. Mastering skills and developing knowledge of equipment, materials and processes is protracted and cumulative, developed by the maker over a considerable period of time. The skills required to make textiles and particularly to weave, spin and use dyes are acquired through practical experiential learning, that is through doing, by experimenting and learning from mistakes. Knowledge and understanding can be acquired formally through courses, talks and workshops and informally through personal experience, practice and from other makers. Accumulating knowledge, skill and understanding comes from an exposure to textile crafts and from making the most of opportunities as they arise. Guild members

have a key role to play in providing opportunities for others to engage in textile-making by passing on their skills through teaching others, networking and sharing ideas within and outside the guild. In this way the textile-making skills and its traditional patterns are preserved and textile-making as an occupational domain is continually shaped, re-shaped and extended.

Chapter nine:

Individual and collective contributions to the shape of textile-making

9: Introduction

In previous chapters I have described textile-making in the context of the crafts of weaving, spinning and dyeing as a complex form of construction that involves the maker in highly skilled bodily interaction with equipment and materials. The skills and tacit knowledge required to make a hand-crafted textile are acquired through doing, through engaging in a process and assimilating the rules of making. Chapter eight detailed the nature of textile knowledge and skills, how this is acquired by individuals and the role of the guild and others in the process. The first two parts of this chapter concentrate on how individuals shape textile-making as occupation through their inspirations and creativity. The final sections consider the influences of personal preferences, tastes and interests.

Part one:

9.1: Inspiration

We all get our ideas for making from somewhere and inspiration can be the motivation, catalyst or the spark for creative making; it can provide the subject for our work, it is also inherent in the process. As Dormer (1994: 93) puts it, 'subjects matter as much as good skills and materials'. The sources of inspiration cited by guild members were wide and varied, it can be personally or collectively derived, in other words coming from a personal attraction to a phenomenon or event, or it can come through working with others.

9.1: 1: Personal sources of inspiration

Inspiration and ideas for making, design, texture, pattern and colour can come from almost anywhere. Here I will concentrate on sources of inspiration that guild members and other textile makers have referred to in the course of fieldwork or documented in magazines, catalogues and newsletters. The concept of inspiration is, however, less

straight forward than it first appears. Whilst individual makers could identify a range of things that most attracted and inspired them, these were sometimes difficult to separate in relation to their work. This could be because inspiration is absorbed from different sources over time.

9.1.2: *Absorbing inspiration*

Lucy felt that inspiration is tenuous, it is absorbed and internalised:

> *'You absorb things around you and you start to do things and it's only by the doing of them that you realise that you're picking up on things you like and I think that's how it really works'.*

Creative action, for which inspiration is a catalyst, involves symbolic relationships with the environment (Dalton 2004). The environment includes traditional materials, objects and the local surroundings (Dewey 1934). The maker's relationship with the environment is constant and fluid. Inspiration is absorbed both from the environment, emotions and from experiences. Integrating experiences into one's work makes it unique, a creative act (Ellis 2005). The textile-makers I met and talked to during fieldwork typically absorbed inspiration from nature and the landscape, objects and artefacts, memories; culture; other textile-makers, artists and master craftsmen and events such as courses, workshops, guild meetings and exhibitions.

9.1.3: *Nature and the landscape*

Nature and the landscape offer endless sources of inspiration for textile-makers. Numerous articles in textile magazines and journals cite the natural environment as a primary source of inspiration (for example: Miers 2001, Jones 2003, Lentier 2003a, Riley 2007, Jordan 2008). David, Kate, Eleanor, Carole and Charlotte all felt that the landscape was one of their key sources of inspiration and particularly its colours and textures. Eleanor told me that when she was weaving cloth she *'used to look particularly at things like heathers and put those colours into tweed, for instance'.* When I interviewed Charlotte in her home studio she vividly described the colours in the surrounding landscape that inspire her work:

'The first thing I see really is the colour here, every morning you look out of the window and its all different colours. I mean this morning the sun had just come up over the hill here and the sky over there was completely pink, so you had the light on the trees across there, because the autumn leaves are still on some of the trees and all these lovely orangey colours lit up by the sun, fresh new sun just popped up and this pink sort of pinky, well it wasn't completely pink it was sort of orangey grey sky up above and the bright green grass, I mean if you did a tapestry people wouldn't believe you I don't think. They'd think you'd changed the colours, but it's amazing, and the day when it snowed and we didn't have very much snow and the frost, you know we had a week with all those frosty mornings and with all the autumn colours and these frosts there's hardly any colour really, but all these wonderful shades of sort of pinks and greys and pale browns and sort of mauvey colours are just stunning'.

For Charlotte the landscape is a catalyst, the motivation to get her started and sparks ideas. Charlotte told me that whenever she feels:

''Oh I don't know what to do'; I go for a walk I take my camera, my sketch book and I'm back in half an hour with a load of stuff'.

Charlotte takes photographs and sketches to record the changing colours from the country landscape where she lives and uses these to inform her work rather than as a way of trying to reproduce what is there at a particular point in time. She absorbs what is around her and incorporates different elements into her work. David is also inspired by *'colour in the countryside and texture'*, he absorbs ideas, visualises a design and then moves *'straight from nature to yarn'*. Lucy felt her inspirations were more integrated:

'I think I probably function on different levels really. There are classic things like working from nature and very much drawing inspiration from Bobbie's woven water series, but also looking at that technique and seeing how to apply it differently and then you start to look at other sources of, you know that are around you in nature, like the patterns on shells or flowers or something like that and you start to see the pattern of weaves within those and that can take you back and that's something I've worked on'.

Absorbing inspiration from nature and the landscape is not just about being inspired by a particular view, flower or tree, it is linked with an ability to visualise and 'see' colour, texture and pattern as textile. Shibori patterns and the shapes and folds imprinted in cloth for instance, closely resemble those found in the landscape (Wada

2002). It is about integrating this with other sources, existing textiles or artefacts for example, which can then spark further ideas and new ways of working.

9.1.4: *Objects and artefacts*

Material culture in the form of existing textiles, fibres and materials, artworks, books, magazines, photographs and sketches all provide further sources of inspiration. Lucy and Carys both draw inspiration from Bobbie Cox's tapestries for instance. Lucy was particularly inspired by her woven water series, which Cox (1999: 7) describes as having its 'origins in threads of past influences' and the continual presence of water in her life. Through her journeys to India, Cox found inspiration in the sacred symbolism of water, she also drew inspiration from the ikat textiles she found there, which led to a shift in her work. Ikat is a technique for tying the warp and/or weft and dyeing it prior to weaving. Once woven it produces striking resist patterns in the cloth. Cox began to look more closely at the movement of water 'through the eyes of an ikat weaver' (Cox 1999: 10). Like the textiles she found in India, Cox's inspirations, expressed and objectified in her tapestries are now a part of a material culture that others can draw on. Carys particularly, got *'very interested in seeing what she was doing with just colour and texture'*, which in turn has influenced her own work. Carys has also woven fragments of broken china, material traces of the past found in local derelict buildings into her tapestries:

> *'I can remember where I got the idea of putting little bits of china on things. Something that you did years ago with little green stones, flat pieces of, they were worn slate I think, were they?'*

Other's work may inspire a new direction for individual makers, but meanings are contextual. For Carys fragments of china were symbols of the past, the material traces of people who had once lived in her locality. My use of worn slate and stones in weaving were inspired by my love of the Welsh coastline. Textiles and materials are integral to people's lives, social and cultural communities (McCarty 1999), as I pointed out in chapter seven (7.6) their meanings will change with time and across space and culture (Hodder 1998). Because inspiration is absorbed from experiences as well as from things, it has a meaning for the maker that is not necessarily transmitted through the created textile to others who look at it in a different context. The textiles

and materials that speakers bring to the guild for instance, come from different historical, social and cultural contexts and inspire us in different ways. Eleanor finds fibres particularly inspiring: *'just a cop of yarn, a cop of silk yarn, makes me want to get going with it and use it'*. Charlotte was inspired by colour and others by patterns, shapes and structure.

David collects magazines for inspiration and ideas, Lucy, Charlotte and Carole all take photographs and gain inspiration from others' photography. Charlotte also uses her own sketches as a form of self-motivation and inspiration:

> *'Sometimes you're not in the mood and you know you've got something to refer to, you can go and, if it's a sort of awful day and you're tired and whatever, you can go and look and it'll get the old creative juices going again'*.

Books and collected textile artefacts can serve a similar purpose. During our trip to Japan Kate and I had an opportunity absorb inspiration from a variety of sources. In addition to the symposium, textile tours and exhibitions, we visited cities and towns, shops, restaurants, markets, gardens and temples. As well as taking photographs and making notes to record our ideas and experiences, we also collected a range of textile objects and artefacts such as books, cards, catalogues, leaflets, fabrics and clothing that we now use to inspire our own work and also show to others. Removing objects from their origins in this way can lead to re-interpreting them in a different context (Hodder 1998). I have found for instance, that some of my collection is less inspiring outside its place of origin and other pieces, on reflection, have inspired me in new ways. Objects and artefacts are rich inspirational resources, something you can refer back to, to spark or explore an idea; they also become part of our history a link to memorable past experiences.

9.1.5: *Memories and past events*

We assimilate meaning from past experiences, from what is 'embedded in the self from the past' (Dewey 1934: 71). Carys particularly draws inspiration from *'memories of things'* in her childhood. Carys explained to me how she had used her

memory of past events to inspire an abstract tapestry she was exhibiting in a touring exhibition:

> *'I don't know if you can remember a plain white tapestry called '47'?..... In 1947 there was a very heavy snowfall that paralysed practically the whole country.. ...and when, I mean I've lived all my life in* [place] *which was a village then surrounded by fields and things and we didn't have any milk because nobody could get through with it, so I decided to go down to the, across the fields to pick up the milk and I can remember it being, oh it was really exciting. I think I went with a friend of mine, I think we must have been about, well I could work it out, about 12 or 13, I don't know, anyway it was all white there was hardly any colour anywhere, but I can remember having a red knitted pixie hat, I think you'd call them, that my mother had made ..... and then when we got to the farm all the cattle were in, there was a nice warm glow there .. ..so that's where I get those two colours from* [referring to a postcard of the tapestry] *and that surround was actually, I was thinking of all the sacks of food for the animals, so that's where that one came from..'*

From Carys's recollection of the winter of 1947, it was possible for me to appreciate how memorable and meaningful events – the white landscape, glow from the cattle, wearing a red pixie hat and the sacks of food had inspired the shapes and colours in her tapestry. Carys has produced several other tapestries inspired in a similar way, including a series based on Capel Celyn, the Welsh village, drowned in the 1950s to make way for a reservoir.

9.1.6: *Culture*

Bourdieu (1971: 108) puts forward the idea that 'the artist's own culture is unwittingly introduced into his work', in other words our culture becomes a part of our work whether or not it is introduced consciously. We draw on cultural traditions and processes that offer an underlying pattern for our work; we also absorb inspiration from what is around us. Charlotte and Carys, for example, draw inspiration from their own country and culture. Charlotte's inspiration comes from the Welsh landscape and Carys's from her Welsh heritage and her memories of the past. Carys told me:

> *'I think of it, of my work as being Welsh in origin, but possibly international in appeal. Especially in a country, talking of Wales now, that is bilingual. I don't speak Welsh, my great Grandparents did, they came from* [place] *and moved on so I lost that, so I missed out on a lot of*

written work, but art is something that doesn't need language, so that can be appreciated by anybody in the world that doesn't speak English'

The idea that art does not need language to be appreciated can be extended to art and textiles as sources of inspiration. For instance Kate and I could appreciate and feel inspired by the work of Japanese textile artists despite a language barrier. However, Carys's story of events in 1947, told in relation to her tapestry shows that sometimes the story behind a particular textile can enhance its value and meaning for others.

Carole is inspired by Navajo textiles and has visited New Mexico on several occasions. She is particularly attracted to geometric designs: *'I mean the Navajo crafts as a whole are all very geometric, the pottery and the baskets'.* Craftspeople tend to be drawn to cultures where handwork is still central and this can lead to eclecticism where ideas are borrowed and shared (Dormer 1994). Peter Collingwood's work for example, inspired by textiles found during his travels, offers a symbolic interpretation of the different cultural traditions (Lentier 2003b, Collingwood 1987). Today, opportunities for travel, instant global communication and a growth in cross-disciplinary practice are leading to 'cultural intermingling' where 'cultural difference is leading to convergence' (Prichard 2005: 154). The collaboration between British and Japanese textile artists during the 'through the surface' project is a good example of how inspiration is absorbed cross-culturally to shape textile making in new ways (Turner 2004b: 21). It is also an example of how makers draw inspiration from each other.

9.1.7: *Inspiration from others*

Inspiration is absorbed from other textile-makers, designers and master craftsmen on different levels. They can inspire individuals to take up textile crafts in the first place, to move forward and develop new skills, change direction and ways of working or inspire particular aspects of our work. Eleanor was inspired to take up spinning and weaving through spending time with two studio weavers who introduced her to textile crafts. Similarly, as a boy David was initially inspired to take up weaving through working with a local weaver and later on:

'Between O levels and A levels I went to Northern Ireland and worked with ..... a tweed weaver ..... whose colour sense was stunning. Very, very simple tweeds, fairly loose, fairly open with interesting yarns put in and stunning colours, she was really a colourist and six weeks working for her learning how to use looms, you know fly shuttle looms that I hadn't experienced before and production weaving..'

For David this experience not only influenced his sense of design and colour, but the opportunity to learn from her how to use different looms inspired him to change direction and work in different ways. During her career as a weaver Eleanor, who has done courses with several master craftsmen felt that *'the two that come to mind mostly ..... are people like Peter Collingwood and Theo Moorman'*. I have already referred to Peter Collingwood, a master weaver, teacher and author who gave lectures and workshops worldwide. Theo Moorman was also a master weaver and artist who developed her own innovative technique for weaving inlay (Moorman 1975, Chadwick 2003). David felt privileged to have done a workshop with Theo, he explained how, in the workshop:

'we actually talked through the technique and saw her working and those things will stick with me for ever and will always inspire me..... and I keep heading back to her techniques having done quite a lot of ecclesiastical work as commissions'.

The work of Collingwood and Moorman lives on in material form and through their writing to provide inspiration for new generations of textile-makers. Through makers such as Eleanor and David who have learned directly from them skills are passed from one generation of textile-makers to another. In chapter eight (8.3.6) I described how Lucy had felt that learning from master craftsmen who had learnt their skills from a previous generation gave her a sense of continuity, a link with tradition and its principles. Lucy for instance draws inspiration from the natural dye process and values the traditional principles and practices underlying this:

'I think that certainly in recent years there has been the historical take on things, to see how things were done in the past and not trying to necessarily recreate them, but to gain something from that and then put my own interpretation on it'.

Traditional principles and practices are a valuable source of inspiration in themselves, particularly when there is an opportunity to appreciate them first hand. During our visit to Japan, Kate and I joined a group of textile makers and artists to visit Hiroyuki Shindo, a master indigo dyer and textile artist who lives and works in the hills above Kyoto where indigo plants are cultivated. Koumis (1999: 10) describes Shindo as representing 'the last bastion of traditional indigo-dye techniques'. His home incorporates a workshop, gallery and a small indigo museum housing his personal collection of indigo textiles. During the afternoon of our visit Shindo provided each of us with a meter of cloth, poles, clamps and cord for tying and pleating using traditional shibori techniques . We were able to dye our cloth in the traditional indigo vats which were set into the workshop floor (images 45 and 46).



45: *traditional Japanese indigo vats*

Balfour-Paul (2006) describes how such vats are grouped together so that a fire can be lit between them and under the floor to warm the dye.



46: *dyeing clamped resist cloth using indigo in Japan*

Shindo's workshop and studio serve as an interface between the traditional and contemporary textile practice (Koumis 1999). Experiencing traditional methods of dyeing with indigo and meeting a master of shibori and indigo dyeing techniques was a memorable and inspiring experience for both of us. In a sense, our opportunity to visit Japan and find new sources of inspiration came about through our membership of the guild. In fact the guild itself has a role to play in providing access to different sources of inspiration.

9.1.8: *The role of the guild*

Opportunities to meet and hear about other textile-makers, their cultures and traditions can come from within the guild. David felt that speakers at guild meetings:

> *'Inspire you with ideas and then you spark from that.* He went on to say that *over the years it's been incredibly useful. If I get stuck in the doldrums when I don't do any work for a period of time, if you go to a guild meeting you come home and you want to, I'm one of these people that go to something and see something being done and come home and want to have a go'.*

Meetings, workshops and lectures not only spark ideas, but can also inspire members to get started on a project again and engage in making. Kate has found AGWS&D conferences, seminars and summer schools valuable:

> *'Because you're talking and meeting with other people over the years, it makes you look and see where your own work is going and inspiration I suppose, it inspires you to do other things'.*

Meeting other makers in workshops and on courses can work in a similar way. For instance, the complex weave course did not in itself inspire me to continue weaving highly patterned cloth, but through talking to other participants and seeing what they were doing, I felt inspired to explore some of the other possibilities that complex weave can offer. In workshops and on courses participants usually work alongside each other and inspiration is absorbed individually and in different ways. However, where makers work together inspirations for a theme are derived collectively.

9.1.9: *Collective inspiration*

On occasions guild members work together towards a theme for a special event. 2005 was the year of the AGWS&D golden jubilee and guild members were invited to design and create a small piece of work relating to a golden theme using any textile medium or technique/s in gold, yellows or reds. In this instance the theme was broadly prescribed and individuals found inspiration from within that to produce unique pieces of work that were brought together to complement each other. Overall the guilds produced a range of different textiles incorporating a variety of textile techniques (Johnson 2005). Such an event can inspire individuals and encourage creativity within parameters and the context of a supportive community (Dickie 2004). Where makers collaborate and work towards an event such as an exhibition however, finding a theme that inspires all members of the group can be challenging. Carys had worked with another guild member, Dot and a local artist, Sian, to produce work for a touring exhibition. Carys recalled that they had decided that the exhibition needed an overall theme and went to a museum to find inspiration:

'We started off in the museum and we walked through and I thought I can talk them into a Mari Llwyd, I've done that before it won't be much work, it didn't appeal to them at all! What did Dot fancy? Can't remember, but that didn't appeal to the others. Sian fancied some lace work, but I said well my eyesight isn't good enough for anything fine like that. I rather fancied the organs, the organ pipes and things I thought lovely texture in those, but it didn't appeal to anyone else and it was in the very last case that you came to when you come out of the upper gallery and you start coming down that we saw these branding irons and we suddenly said 'branding irons, yes, go for it!'

The overall theme of animal branding irons, that inspired them all, led them to find further personal sources of inspiration relating to this. To maintain originality they worked separately:

'We purposely didn't want to see each others work, we wanted to work on our own. I was afraid of being over influenced by what the others were doing, I'd rather sort it out myself and I think both the others were the same and I think what we've come up with is 3 very different versions...'

As textile-makers and artists in their own right who works in different media (tapestry, felt and metal), each member of the group needed space to find personal inspiration and be innovative and creative in relation to the theme.

9.1.10: *Section summary*

Inspiration can be a catalyst, the motivation to start making, it also sparks new ideas. As a concept, inspiration is complex and inspiration drawn from different sources tends to become integrated, absorbed and internalised by individual makers over time. Personal inspiration for textile-making can come from nature, artefacts, memories, culture, other makers and artists, courses, workshops, guild meetings and exhibitions. Absorbing inspiration from nature, the landscape and objects is linked with the ability to visualise what is seen as a textile. Collected objects and artefacts become inspirational resources, points of reference that are part of our history and connect the maker with culture, past events and experiences. A sense of continuity, a link with traditional principles and practices can come from being inspired by master craftsmen and other textile makers. The guild has a role to play in providing its members with opportunities to meet and network with other makers and access courses, workshops

and events that offer the individual further sources of inspiration. Where makers work together inspiration can be derived from a common theme, this must allow the individual to find personal inspiration, open up ideas and spark creativity. Inspiration can also be seen as a catalyst for creative making, for shaping and re-shaping textile-making as occupation. The following section details the creative components encompassed in making.

Part two:

9.2: Creative making

In chapter two (2.2.8) I discussed the iterative nature of the creative process and questioned creativity in relation to design, craft and skill. Arguably the ability to produce a textile through the execution of highly skilled craftsmanship is not enough to extend textile-making, move it beyond habitual traditional practices and re-shape it. Traditional patterns and processes are a starting point (Shils 1981), but shaping and re-shaping textile-making requires the maker to go further than the rules that define it (Dormer 1994). As Dewey (1934: 50) puts it: 'If the artist does not perfect a new vision in the process of doing, he acts mechanically and repeats some old model fixed like a blueprint in his mind'. Lucy and I discussed this in relation to the AGWS&D national exhibition, a forum for members of affiliated guilds to submit their work for selection. The exhibition attracts a range of hand-woven, spun and dyed items that fit the association's criteria and generally includes a number of fine hand-spun and knitted traditional shawls. In Lucy's opinion:

> *'There are only so many wedding shawls that you can see and you can wonder at them; the skill in that is fabulous and that should carry on ..... in their own right they're beautiful pieces of work and they're well crafted, but there doesn't seem to be the excitement or the thrill ... '*

Here, Lucy is referring to the excitement or thrill that comes from something innovative or creative that pushes the boundaries of traditional practice. Textile artist Theo Moorman considered that although skills are 'a gateway to freedom' (Moorman1990: 34) makers need 'to push out a little into the deep' (Moorman1990: 39) to utilise them in innovative ways and extend traditional practice. Creativity and

innovation comes from an ability to visualise, openness to experience; a willingness to try new things and taking risks through experimenting and exploring; thinking laterally and seeing new possibilities.

9.2.1: *Visualisation*

I have described textile making in previous chapters as a construction and that designing and making a textile product engages the maker in a process of de-construction. This, together with realising one's inspirations and moving from design to product, requires an ability to visualise. In other words the maker 'must be able to imagine what the results should look like' (Dormer 1994: 91). The process starts from an initial idea and several guild members said that they could visualise what they saw around them as textiles. Eleanor said that since she became interested in spinning and weaving, she sees *'things outside in a totally different light'*. Carole said she could *'look at leaves and think now I could turn that into a design that could be twill'*. David would *'look at the countryside and not see it as the countryside, but see it as a fabric'*, for example he can *'look at a patch of gorse and see that as an Irish tweed'*. The ability to transform one element to another in this way is a part of spatial intelligence (Gardner 1993). Initial ideas, however, must be recorded and realised (Sutton and Sheehan 1989). Charlotte captures what she sees through photography, but felt the need to then translate this on paper before weaving:

> *'Well you can sort of clarify it all because anything that you're translating from three dimensions to two dimensions is difficult isn't it? Doing it as a drawing is one stage, you're doing one thing, but doing it as a tapestry is another step really and sometimes the drawing in between can be very helpful. Particularly if it's, well things perhaps that you haven't done before, like sort of water, or trees or, something that looks a bit different, then you've sorted things out in your mind a bit by doing a drawing'.*

Carole on the other hand did not use drawing as a way of moving from visualising to design:

> *'I'm not into putting everything down on paper first and work out your design and to start with something and then work your design round it, like they do in Art School, because I've never been taught that way to do*

it, ... I actually find it a chore, very often something will pop into my mind and I'll work on it in my mind and then put it down on paper'.

Translating visual information graphically is a further aspect of spatial intelligence (Gardner 1993). For David, the process of translating an idea from three dimensions to two dimensions was exceptionally difficult. He explained to me how he has *'a three dimensional thought process..... everything is in three dimensions'.* When he tried to put it on paper he said *'the proportions were always wrong, because I wasn't seeing it flattened'.* Following his art foundation and three year textile course he *'eventually began to see what everybody else was talking about',* but before that he said *'it was a language that I couldn't understand at all'.*

The makers I talked to shared an ability to visualise their surroundings as textiles, although they approached the process of translating this into a design in different ways. The ability to visualise and work from an idea, translating this into a two dimensional design and then into a textile is an integral part of creative textile-making, but creativity also comes from being open to different experiences.

9.2.2: *Openness to experience*

Being open to experiences and opportunities can stimulate fresh ideas and lead to different ways of doing things (Sennett 2008). David's opportunity to work with a master weaver in Northern Ireland and his experience of learning how to use a fly shuttle loom led to his interest in production weaving and to approaching cloth design in new ways. For Carys, a series of workshops with a well-known tapestry weaver opened up possibilities for new ways of working with colour and texture:

'...and not even shapes really, she doesn't seem to have many shapes.. So I think she was a big influence on me and I went on to doing just non-figurative work'.

Being open is not necessarily just about making the most of outside opportunities; it is about re-assessing and reflecting on one's own work and experience. As Charlotte pointed out: *'you've got to move on and do it a bit differently..... because you can get complacent otherwise'* and being complacent can 'strike death at the heart of

creativity' (Moorman 1990: 39). In a sense success can lead to complacency and a temptation to continue doing things in the same way, in other words working in a habitual and traditional pattern.

At the International Shibori Symposium in Japan I listened to a talk by Carter Smith, an American textile artist and designer. He described a forty year relationship with shibori, taught by his mother, starting with simple techniques and a few colours. He described how his ideas and techniques had developed and changed over time and how in the 1980s he began deconstructing designs and putting them back together. He went on to say that as his designs gained popularity he became limited by his own success and needed to move in new directions.

Moving in new directions and doing things differently means creatively re-structuring action (Joas 1996); pushing your own and ultimately traditional boundaries. The renowned Japanese shibori artist and craftsman Kaei Hayakawa, who spoke to the Shibori Symposium, described his underlying philosophy as doing *'something no-one else is doing'*, being innovative whilst preserving the tradition and, in the process, adding something to the tradition - a new mode of action (Joas 1996). Being innovative, moving forward and doing things differently comes from a willingness to experiment, explore and try things out.

9.2.3: *Experimenting and exploring*

Experimenting is about seeing what happens if materials are combined, or techniques are applied differently and trying out new or unfamiliar materials and techniques. It opens up new fields of experience, seeing habitual practices in a new way and sometimes improving them (Dewey 1934, Dalton 2004). Weaver Charlotte Grierson in an interview for the Weaver's Journal described the experimental process as cyclical, trying out new techniques and materials and combining them in different ways then feeding ideas back into new designs (Delmas 2007b). In chapter eight (8.3.3) I referred to how this can lead to extending knowledge and developing skills, it can also lead to new ideas, unexpected results, different and new ways of working. Dormer (1994) refers to experimenting as one of the skills a maker needs to improve discrimination. It is a part of the creative process, requiring a personal commitment of

time and energy without necessarily being rewarded with a pleasing finished product. For Lucy experimenting is about risk-taking: *'taking things on'*, a willingness to *have a go* and open oneself up to a new experience, *'because there's a growth and a freedom that actually can produce wonderful stuff if that freedom is allowed'.*

Risk taking is a necessary part of innovation, as Sutton and Sheehan (1989: 22) put it: 'playing safe has never produced exciting cloth'. In Charlotte's studio we discussed some of her new work:

> **Charlotte**: *Yes, this is a new departure* [looking at woven picture]
>
> **Me:** *Oh yes, that's rather nice, it has similarities with the paper weaving*
>
> **Charlotte:** *Isn't it, yes, so again I was asked to put work in an exhibition and it had to be specific and a bit different, so I had to think of something to do and actually what I did was I just cut up some old photographs of tapestries and stuck them together and that's what came out and I've done several and they seem to be quite popular, so I'm quite pleased.*

In this instance working towards an exhibition motivated Charlotte to experiment and try out new techniques and materials in order to produce something new. This meant that Charlotte had to move outside her normal comfort zone of woven and stitched landscape tapestries and take on a new challenge.

For guild members, workshops offer an ideal opportunity to experiment and try out new things. In the guild shibori workshop, for instance, we experimented with tying and binding different objects such as stones, shells, screws and paper clips into cloth to form a resist for dye. Unwrapping cloth and taking out the ties after dyeing was an exciting part of the process. By re-tying and over dyeing with a darker colour the patterns on cloth were refined and developed (images 47 and 48).



47: *Un-wrapping cloth after dyeing*



48: *Shibori cloth drying after dyeing*

Results can sometimes be surprising, but the unexpected is part of creative nature of this particular technique.

At the Shibori Symposium, Ana Lisa Hedstrom, a Californian textile artist described the combination of accident and skill that comes from hand-dyeing textiles and how it can lead to innovative results. The shibori process is 'serendipitous' and unforeseen events are part of its appeal (Fauntleroy 2007). Wada et al (1983: 7) describe chance and accident as giving 'life to the shibori process', its 'special magic and strongest characteristic'. Sometimes however, results are disappointing. In the guild shibori workshop one of our dyes did not yield the desired colour; it was important for us to reflect on why it did not work and then make adjustments.

Reflection-in-action (Schőn 1988) is part of the process of moving forward and being innovative, if experimentation is to be worthwhile, as Dormer (1994: 50) put it, 'more than messing about', processes must be recorded and samples kept. A tapestry weaver who visited the guild referred to the importance of sampling to research new ideas, materials and techniques. Through sampling a maker can experiment freely and use extraordinary combinations (Sutton and Sheehan 1989) without compromising a final product. Carole had used sampling as a way of exploring the possibilities her

new dobby loom had to offer and Carys had been experimenting with different materials, combining them in different ways. Workshops are a further means of producing samples and if combined with notes to document what happens, they provide a useful resource for future projects.

In summary, experimenting is a necessary part of innovation; it involves a willingness to do things differently, try out new ways of using techniques and materials, take risks and push the boundaries of habitual traditional practice. Innovation can come from a combination of accident and skill, but moving forward and making use of this requires the maker to reflect on and record results as a resource for further creative thinking.

9.2.4: *Creative lateral thinking*

A textile artist who visited the guild told us how she had traced the development of textile art through successive Lausanne biennales. She pointed out that *'creativity doesn't stand still',* there is a constant need to move on. This requires individual artists and makers to build on existing practice, think creatively and laterally to move beyond tradition. Dalton (2004: 620) describes creativity as emerging 'from the nature of routine activity itself', in other words the starting point is habitual action and working within traditional rules and constraints and then thinking about these differently. Dickie (2004: 52) in her study of American quilt makers describes how rules are broken initially by changing traditional designs and patterns, 'being creative inside the blocks'. Whereas creativity emphasises an escape from traditional patterns, 'lateral thinking involves re-structuring, escape and the provocation of new patterns' (De Bono 1970: 11).

Vassilis Zidianakis, a Greek costume curator, in his presentation to the Shibori Symposium referred to *'seeing things we are taught to accept in an alternative way'.* Charlotte, for example, made use of media such as photographs and printed paper by weaving it into her tapestries. Carys used china fragments and animal bones in her designs and in the guild workshop we used a variety of found objects to form a resist on cloth. Similarly a costume designer from an international opera company told the guild about how she used a range of products such as car spray, glue and bleach in

combination to distress or embellish costumes to give the impression of ageing or heavy wear.

Lateral thinking can also lead to alternative uses of tools or equipment. Sennett (2008: 209) describes a craftsman's capacity to make intuitive leaps by provoking a tool's untested possibilities. On a simple level for example, in the spinning workshop Eleanor showed us how to extract raw silk fibres from cocoons by gently heating them in a pan to break down the gum and then draw off the fibres using a vegetable brush to take them up in parallel (images 49 and 50).



49 and 50: *Drawing silk fibres from cocoons using a vegetable brush*

On a bigger scale Peter Collingwood, during his career as a weaver, through lateral thinking, invented innovative weaving techniques that remain in use today as a part of traditional practice (Collingwood 1968, 1998, Collingwood 2001). In these instances makers have thought beyond the original purpose of things seeing them in new ways and with different possibilities.

More extensively, in Japan Kate and I saw how the art of shibori had been expanded from its use with fabric to other materials such as porcelain clay shaped on a pole, concrete, glass and aluminium for use in the urban landscape as a result of creative lateral thinking by artists such as Hayakawa (see Wada 2002). At the symposium we heard from textile artist/designer Patricia Black, who uses shibori in fabrics for performance art, in the theatre and in un-conventional spaces. She experiments with different fabrics – silk organza for light and shadow and velvet for depth and weight.

Thinking about textiles in relation to technology brings about yet more innovative possibilities. In chapter seven (7.2.1) I referred to the work of textile artist Rachel Wingfield, she has experimented with luminosity and electronic circuits to explore fabric as a light source. Inspired by nature and plant growth, she places circuits on fabric in a design that will 'grow' in reaction to light (Pritchard 2005).

In the context of the guild and as individual makers creative lateral thinking can lead to innovation through different ways of thinking about everyday objects, materials and tools. It can lead us to re-consider our traditional textile-making practices, and by doing things differently re-shape them, albeit in small ways. This not only leads to a sense of personal satisfaction through creative making (something I consider in more detail in chapter 10), it can also mean that our products are appreciated by others and can make them marketable. Where textile designers and makers interface with industry and technology however, there are possibilities for innovation on a wider scale by using textile design to enhance the landscape, architectural space or in performance art. In the case of Wingfield's work, light in textiles has become a source of light therapy for treating seasonal affective disorder (Pritchard 2005).

9.2.5: *Section summary*

Creativity and innovation in textile-making extends it beyond traditional practice. The maker can creatively shape and re-shape textile making as a form of occupation through being open to new experiences, experimenting with materials and ways of working, taking risks and by thinking laterally and seeing new possibilities. Moving forward and doing things differently through being open to experiences involves a process of reflection, a re-assessment of one's own work and traditional practices. A

willingness to experiment and try out new things requires a personal investment of time, energy and the intrinsic motivation to work without necessarily reaping an instant reward. It involves the maker in moving outside their comfort zone, taking risks and rising to challenge. The scale on which textile-making is re-shaped can depend on context. For guild members and other individual makers for instance, re-shaping textile-making may happen in relatively small ways, whereas textile designers/makers who work with technology and industry can push textile boundaries in highly innovative directions. In the final sections of this chapter I look at how personal preferences and interests impact on the shape of textile-making.

Part three:

9.3: Personal preferences, tastes and interests

Whilst textile–making is shaped and re-shaped by individual's creativity, the process and outcomes of making are influenced by makers' personal preferences, tastes and interests. As Bourdieu (1971: 180) points out, the individual makes intellectual and artistic choices based on his/her own culture and taste, which are themselves socially and culturally constructed. Individual makers differ in their preferred ways of working, use of equipment and materials. Their tastes for colour, design and different products also varies together with their interests in textiles as a whole.

9.3.1: *Personal preferences*

The preference for working by hand was common among the textile-makers I met during fieldwork. Dormer (1997c:137) refers to it as 'a basic fundamental preference'. A renowned tapestry weaver who came to talk to the guild described his affinity for materials and being *'hands-on'*. Similarly Kate emphasised the importance of *'the hands-on bit'* for her, something which she felt went back to her childhood. In fact hands-on working also remains important for textile designers and makers who increasingly use digital technology (Treadaway 2004).

Individual makers also had preferences for particular ways of working. David told me how he prefers *'simple weaving'* particularly for tweeds where he uses *'lots of*

different fibres and yarns mixed together' in the warp. As he said, *'I like one weft, but my warp can be as crazy as you like'.* As a cloth weaver, he also prefers weaving long lengths and *'rarely makes a warp less than fifteen yards'.* From Bourdeiu's (1986a) perspective, David's weaving preferences derive from his cultural, educational and social background. His time spent learning from a master weaver in Northern Ireland for instance is a strong influence on his work and preferences for ways of working. Furthermore, David does not like working from drawings or sketches, which he finds daunting as a result of his problems with drawing at school, as he put it: *'I much prefer to have a heap of yarn in front of me and try and decide what colours go with what'.*

David's preference for weaving long lengths of cloth and designing his warps directly from the yarns in front of him sharply contrasts with Charlotte and Cary's preference for weaving smaller things and particularly tapestry, where they can make changes in texture and colour during the process of weaving. Charlotte told me that she finds cloth weaving

> *'...really dull..... because you've made all the decisions about the colours in the warp, the colours in the weft, unless it's stripes and things and it just bores me so I can't do that.* She went on to say that *whatever I do it's very much a one off thing, even cushions you know with the floats, you're changing, making decisions about what you're doing, changing the colours as you going, no two are ever the same'.*

Carole also prefers tapestry weaving in abstract geometric designs and works these out mathematically on graph paper. Charlotte, however, weaves landscapes and translates her inspirations into a design through photography or sketching rather than through an exact calculation like Carole, or working directly from nature to yarn as David does. Carys also has her own personal formula for designing:

> *'I'm happier drawing, doing fairly small drawings that seems to fit my style, I'm not much good at doing anything big, so painting isn't an option for me, but trying to design something small and then you blow it up in this fairly crazy system that I've got that works for me'.*

Becoming aware of one's own preferences and way of working, in turn influences the decisions made about materials and equipment. Carys had found, through trial and error in the first instance, her preferred method of dyeing:

'I didn't like the colours of the tops [fibres] *they were selling very much and I didn't seem very good at mixing them, so I decided to go the whole hog and start dyeing and it sounded in the book easier to dye with chemical dyes, but there again I found I wasn't very good at mixing colours and was ending up with very brash colours..*
I wondered how people were getting such nice colours and then I realised that the colours I was responding to mostly were natural dyes'.

Carys now uses only natural dyes in her work, as does Carole, partly because of her own preferences and because of her clients, who commission her to work entirely from natural and mostly indigenous materials. Access to sources of material fit for purpose can pose a problem for individual makers who use relatively small quantities. David refers to the problems of finding weaving yarns when small family-run suppliers are dwindling: *'there's no easy source and to weave properly you can't use stuff that you can go and buy from the local knitting shop'.* We discussed how this leads to collecting and hoarding:

David: *..it's an essential part of weaving I think to have a big stash..*
Me...*of yarn somewhere*
David: *Yes, which you need, otherwise you can't keep yourself going*
Me: *..buy when you see..*
David:...*buy when you see and put it on the shelf in case!*

Building a stash of materials allows for choice in the process of making. Where equipment is concerned however, makers are partly influenced by preference, but also by their ability to afford often expensive equipment. In some instances it is possible to balance aesthetics with practicality; the range of different spinning wheels owned by guild members reflects this, although it is not always possible. Carole, David and I are the only members of the guild who have used computerised equipment and we all now use computer software as a design tool, but none of us can afford a computerised loom.

Preferences for different ways of working are also influenced by space and sometimes physical ability. I have already mentioned that Carys used to weave her tapestries on scaffolding. This is a preferred method for tapestry weaving for weavers who like to

see the whole design as it emerges rather than rolling the first part of it onto a roller in order to continue weaving at the same level. Carys had described climbing a step ladder to get up to the top of the scaffolding frame and a weaver who visited the guild showed us slides of his studio – a high ceiling schoolroom where he wove a large tapestries, several feet high, on scaffolding. He was perched on a chair, balanced on a table, which in turn was balanced on a plinth. Carys had reached a stage where she was no longer physically able to climb up and down the height of her scaffolding frame and to continue weaving had to adapt by purchasing equipment that suited her changing needs.

I have already pointed out by drawing on Bourdieu (1986a) that preferences for ways of working are socially and culturally influenced. The Nepalese nettle project, which has involved a group of British researchers, makers and designers in helping Nepalese people to realise the economic potential of the nettle plant through a series of workshops (Dunsmore 2002, Delmas and Dunsmore 2004), highlighted the influence of culture and social needs on working preferences. The women had been introduced to spinning wheels, but had rejected them because of they required freedom to move around; 'spinning and knitting is part of their lifestyle and everywhere women can be seen walking with their knitting needles or drop spindles' (Dibble 2008: 25).

9.3.2: *Personal taste*

The ways in which makers continually shape textile-making is also influenced by personal tastes for colour, texture and design. Bourdieu (1986a: 99) refers to the dual meaning of the word 'taste' as being elementary, for example food flavours and elaborate taste for refined objects, both are cultivated and influenced by social class and lifestyle. Taste as a whole manifests itself in the products of our making, in our different approaches to making and personal preferences for ways of working. Eleanor has a taste for silk and enjoys working with silk fibre and fabrics, Carys and David for wool and texture in wool. A taste for different textures, fibres and colours could be linked to our sensibilities, sense of touch and visual preferences. It is also influenced by our cultural and social backgrounds. Charlotte has a passion for mixing colours *'to see the way they react to each other'*, that is manifested in her woven and

stitched landscape tapestries. Her choice of colour reflects her taste for the subtle shades and hues found in her natural and cultural environment.

The differences in our personal tastes together with our preferences for different ways of working and our interests add to the infinite richness and variation in textiles that is apparent within and across cultures. Like Charlotte, Carole's *'first love'* is for tapestry weaving, but she has an aesthetic taste for *'geometric abstract designs'*, inspired by her passion for Navajo weaving. Kate and I have found that our tastes for shibori designs on cloth were shaped and refined by our visit to Japan and our exposure through the symposium to an international community of shibori artists as well as to traditional Japanese shibori practices. In Japan we were consumers rather than makers or producers. Dewey (1934: 47) points out that taste 'denotes the consumer's rather than the producer's standpoint'. Personal taste is also influenced by collective taste, expressed in fashion, 'a product of social interactions and experiences' (Dant 1999: 90). The art of shibori has become increasingly fashionable amongst contemporary textile-makers and much of this appears due to the opportunities for cross-fertilising and sharing ideas facilitated by the International Shibori Network (ISN).

9.3.3: *Personal interest*

As our textile-making knowledge, skill and creative ability develops, we also refine our interests in textiles and in different aspects making. The guild is instrumental in enabling its members to develop their interests through meeting and listening to a range of different textile makers and connoisseurs who have specialist interests themselves. Access to a range of workshops, courses, conferences and seminars also give members opportunity to refine and develop their own interests over time. Several guild members attend AGWS&D summer schools and our choice of courses for example, reflects our interests in different aspects of making, which in turn is influenced by our tastes and preferences. Lucy has an interest in the dyeing process; Carys in natural dyes and tapestry weaving, Kate in tassels and braids, two other members have a particular interest in felt. Personal interests develop not just from courses and activities within the guild, but from visiting galleries, exhibitions and textile related events. Many of us do this on a regular basis.

In Japan, our interests were refined and developed through exposure to another culture and travelling with a group of people whose own interests ranged from fashion design, print, quilt-making, weaving and dyeing to collecting indigenous textiles and museum curating. Being open to other's special interests can help to extend one's own. Lucy explained to me how she became interested in historical tapestries through looking at them with a tapestry weaver who had also researched them:

> *'I mean some of them* [tapestries] *... were pretending to be paintings, but the ones we saw had a naivety about them ..... I guess it was trying to look like some sort of painting because that was the purpose of having the tapestries in a room, to give you a feel of the outside, but they weren't trying to artificially structure it, they were working within the structure of the weave for their design and it was just, it's not something that you would've necessarily picked up yourself, but someone who's researched into it so closely and is a practitioner herself could then interpret that for us and what's more there were a group of people looking into these tapestries and we were seeing things that she hadn't seen as a single person, so there's the sharing as well, not just historically, but the cross-fertilisation when you're mixing with people with common interests'.*

For Lucy sharing the experience of interpreting, analysing and examining historical textiles with others led to a deeper understanding, appreciation and interest in historical tapestries. By mixing and networking with others who have a common interest in textiles, but who have developed different tastes, preferences and other interests within that domain can enrich one's personal development and creative ability as a maker.

9.4: Conclusion

Inspiration is the catalyst for creative making; it comes from many sources and is absorbed, integrated and internalised by individuals over time. It can also be derived collectively through working with others on a common theme. As an inspirational resource, material culture provides a point of reference, historical and cultural connections. Inspiration from other craftspeople and artists offers a sense of continuity and a link to traditional practices.

Creativity extends textile-making beyond traditional and habitual practices. Through openness to experience, experimenting, taking risks and thinking laterally, makers can

develop new ways of working that re-shape textile-making as occupation. The extent of this depends on context. For guild members this happens on a small scale, but where designer/makers interface with technology and industry occupational boundaries are pushed in highly innovative directions.

Individual's personal preferences, tastes and interests, together with collective tastes in the form of fashion influence the shape of textile-making as occupation. Preferences, tastes and interests are socially and culturally constructed and networking with others who have different tastes and interests can enrich creativity and shape of occupation. The guild has an important role to play in opening up opportunities for individual makers to share new practices and innovations through networking, courses, seminars and events.

This chapter has concentrated on how individuals' inspirations, creativity, tastes, preferences and interests contribute to the shape and form of textile-making. Through active engagement in making however, individuals develop an identity, a sense of self from becoming and being a maker. These aspects of making and their contribution to a sense of well-being are the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter ten:

Creating a sense of well-being: a sense of self and a collective sense of self

10: Introduction

The personal qualities and attributes that individuals bring to textile-making and develop in the process continually shape and re-shape it as a purposeful, creative and skilful form of occupation. With reference to Wilcock (2006) such active doing, in this instance engaging in making contributes to *becoming* a textile-maker through mastering skills and processes; it is intimately connected with *being* – a sense of self and who we are – our identity as a weaver, spinner, dyer or a fibre artist for instance. Mixing with others who have similar interests contributes to a sense of *belonging* (my italics). The first two parts of this chapter concentrate on how individuals develop a sense of self through becoming and being textile-makers and a collective sense of self through belonging to a guild. The concluding part considers how an enhanced sense of self and collective sense of self contributes to a sense of well-being.

Part one:

10.1: Developing a sense of self

For Dormer (1994) craft knowledge is intrinsic to the individual and becomes a part of the self. Symbolic interactionists see the self as 'a process of reflexive and communicative activity' and an individual's sense of self is 'inextricably linked to their relationships with others' (Sandstrom, Martin and Fine 2006: 93). A sense of self develops through becoming and ultimately being a textile-maker. From the experiences of makers I met during fieldwork, the people I interviewed in depth and from my own development as a maker, becoming and being are inseparable from doing, and the intrinsic drive to make textiles that is related to our sensibilities, affinity for materials and preference for hands-on making.

Becoming and being a skilled and creative textile-maker comes from an intrinsic drive to do something specifically, and do it well for its own sake (Nelson 1994, Dormer 1994, Sennett 2008). For the makers I talked to it appeared to be something that they

must do at various points in their life to a greater or lesser extent. Satisfaction came from engaging with materials and equipment and creating something in the process, in other words through doing as a part of becoming and being a maker.

10.1.1: Becoming a textile-maker

Becoming a textile-maker is an 'exercise in self-clarification' and 'self-exploration' (Dormer 1997f: 219). It is an evolving process, never complete and is concerned with realising one's potential and capacities for being (Wilcock 2006). For the participants in this study becoming a textile-maker through developing skills and realising creative potential is related to our affinity for materials, our sensibilities, particularly touch, personal backgrounds and development. It is influenced by family, significant others, education, career trajectories, by life chances and opportunities.

10.1.2: *Affinity for textiles*

Textile-makers share an affinity for fibres, texture and cloth. These raw materials become a craft medium when an artist/maker interacts with them skilfully and with expression; sensitivity to a particular medium lies at the heart of artistic creation (Dewey 1934:199). Kate and Carys both described being *'drawn'* to textiles, whereas for them, other media did not have the same appeal. Eleanor felt that it was about *'taking fibres and being able to do so much with them'*, they offer endless scope for creative expression. Metcalf (1997:77) describes our response to a particular medium as related to our 'sensibility', a unique set of capacities and sensitivities. Textiles, fibres and raw materials appeal to our senses and particularly to a sense of touch.

10.1.3: *Tactility and a sense of touch*

Where textiles are concerned, the senses of touch and smell are as important as seeing in evoking memories and meanings (Graves 2002, Pajaezkowska 2005). 'Those of us who love materials can never resist touching them' (Graves 2002: 49). In the textile crafts 'the sense of touch can carry a status at least equal to visual aesthetics' (Gale and Kaur 2002: 63) The need to touch, feel, smell and examine fabric and fibre is a common feature of guild meetings, workshops and events (image 51).



51: *examining shibori cloth: Japan 2005*

As the majority of our speakers are textile artists and makers themselves, they appreciate this and willingly pass round examples of their work to feed the senses.

Touching and feeling appears to be a natural instinct amongst textile-makers; a part of our affinity for materials and the need to be 'hands-on'. Carole could recall that even as a child she *'couldn't go into a store and look at rolls of fabric without grabbing hold and feeling it – ' that one feels nicer than that one' '.* For Carole it is the tactile qualities of fibres and textiles that make them appealing. Kate also referred to *'the feel of it';* Kate liked *'the feel of silk and the feel of wool and the feel of the texture'.* Graves (2003) describes a similar passion for materials.

In addition to handling and feeling for pleasure and as a part of analysing textiles, a sophisticated sense of touch develops during the process of making. There is an intimate connection between the maker and material (Dewey 1934). For expert spinners such as Eleanor, Carole, Kate and David the weight, strength and texture of fibre is translated through touch and feel. In the process of becoming, the spinner develops an instinct for how much pressure to apply to control the right amount of twist to make a yarn. As Sennett (2008: 238) puts it 'the hand needs to be sensitised at the fingertip, enabling it to reason about touch'. Once this is achieved, a sophisticated sense of touch becomes part of a spinner's 'knowing-in-action' (Schőn 1988).

The affinity for textile materials and a sophisticated sense of touch that develop in the process of becoming a textile-maker could also be related to our exposure to a particular media, or way of working; in other words it comes from our backgrounds.

10.1.4: *Personal background*

The influence of our personal backgrounds became apparent during a conversation at one of our guild meetings. David and I could both recall family members working in the spinning and weaving trades in the North of England. Lucy remembered her family's connection with lace making:

> *'I've been studying family history too and I found that on my father's side they were all from Buckinghamshire, and looking at various censuses there were a lot of lace-makers and I think well is it something that's in the genes anyway?'*

There are other examples amongst well-known weavers such as the Peter Collingwood and his son Jason, where a love of textiles and an affinity for materials has passed from one generation to another (Collingwood 2001). The majority of guild members began making textiles as children.

Eleanor recalled her childhood memories of her mother as a keen embroiderer and their housekeeper *'who was an excellent knitter....so she got me knitting as well'.* Similarly Kate remembered how she had *'always been interested in sewing'* because her mother *'did a lot of embroidery and particularly knitting. When I was a child she was always knitting'.* Carole also *'learnt to knit and used to do a tremendous amount of knitting'* as a child. I have already discussed the importance of childhood experiences on skill development in chapter eight (8.3.1); Gale and Kaur (2002) consider that this may also explain how textile-makers become attached to materials. Being exposed to textile-making during our formative years led to our development as textile-makers, in other words to becoming makers.

The influence of personal background also prevails in profiles of textile-makers found in textile magazines and exhibition catalogues (for example: Hughes 2005; Draper 2005). The domestic crafts of knitting and sewing were often the starting point for a

developing interest in textiles, affinity with materials and motivation to make (Schofield-Tomschin 1999). Only David could recall learning to spin and weave as a child, other guild members were not introduced to these crafts until adulthood, usually through significant others or education (see chapter 8.3.3-6). Becoming a maker in adulthood was for several guild members influenced by their career pathways and other life events.

10.1.5: *Career pathways*

Only David and Charlotte began their careers as textile-makers in early adulthood. For others becoming a textile-maker was interwoven with other career pathways. Eleanor for instance pursued a career in radiography and later hospital administration. She was introduced to weaving in the 1950s by an Occupational Therapist:

> *'We were frequent visitors to each other's departments....and used to potter in in the evenings and I actually put a warp on and did my first piece of weaving there...so it was in the back of my mind that weaving was something I would quite like to do'.*

Eleanor began weaving again some years later after the death of her first husband when she had the opportunity to work with two professional weavers whilst recuperating from her bereavement.

Eleanor's occupational trajectory indicates that she had an underlying drive to make textiles and she has continued to do so to varying extents, even though at certain points in her life this has been overtaken by her need to earn a living and pursue an alternative career. As she told me about her work in hospital administration she added *'in the course of all of this, my mind just kept going back to weaving'*. Eleanor eventually took up spinning and weaving full-time, selling her work through galleries and teaching the crafts.

Carys began weaving as a young adult following higher education, but then

> *'started teaching and there wasn't an awful lot of time for weaving and then I finally gave up, or thought I'd given up teaching and decided to go into weaving properly. Then I got a rug loom and I started weaving and*

selling reasonably well. I had a couple of outlets with local craft shops and then when [first husband] *was killed I had to go back to teaching and I didn't intend giving up weaving, but teaching just took over'.*

Carys was unable to pursue weaving seriously again until she retired: *'for the last fifteen years it's been practically full time weaving'.* Selecting and engaging in particular occupations shapes our sense of self and identity (Christansen and Townsend 2004) and this can change in the course of a lifetime as social and external pressures come to bear. Due to life events, through choice and sometimes necessity, Eleanor and Carys's career pathways led them in and out of textile-making, although their intrinsic drives to make meant that it remained in the background and both of them took it up seriously as soon as they had an opportunity to do so.

David's intrinsic drive however, appears so strong that for him textile-making could be described as a need. Galtung (2005: 480) describes 'needs' as pointing outside and 'satisfaction depends on the inside-outside interface'. David has never stopped making whatever the circumstances. I have already described how David began making textiles at a very young age (chapter 8.3.1). He went on to gain a degree in textiles and make a living from it before later became a priest. David described his tiny room in theological college where the lack of space for equipment meant that he ended up

'doing a lot of embroidery rather than weaving. So I embroidered my way through theological college doing stoles for people and a bit of tailoring and a lot of sewing and things, which was good fun'.

It will become apparent later in this chapter how David has successfully managed to integrate his occupations; in fact being a priest and making textiles complement each other. For Carys, David and other guild members the drive to make textiles which is rooted in childhood and began to flourish at various points during adulthood is fundamental to becoming and being a textile-maker. Although career pathways and other life events have meant that the meaning of textile-making may have changed with time, through active engagement in making, they have continually mastered skills and developed knowledge; a part of the process of becoming a textile-maker. In his narrative studies of American craft artists, Mishler (1999) identifies similar trajectories. Becoming a textile maker is also influenced by chance and opportunity.

10.1.6: *Using opportunities*

Becoming a textile-maker and establishing a particular identity as weaver, spinner or dyer, textile artist or craftsman is influenced by opportunities to develop specific skills, exhibit, sell work or take up commissions. As Kate put it *'over the years doors have closed and doors have opened'*. Whenever she has been left thinking *'what shall I do now, something else has cropped up, another door has opened'*. Kate has taken opportunities where she can, to develop her skills as a weaver, braid and tassel maker and sell her work through local galleries. For me, the chance to visit Japan opened up opportunities to learn more about the art of shibori and has led me to concentrate on woven shibori and begin re-shaping my identity as a weaver.

In a sense, opportunities are the catalyst for becoming a weaver in the first instance. This was the case for David who had the opportunity to learn to weave as a child through being introduced to a local studio weaver. Eleanor found that the diploma in handloom weaving was *'a tremendous kicking off point'* for her. In other instances opportunities can lead to a change of direction. Charlotte had started out at college in London with an interest in printed textiles and the possibility of pursuing a career in design. Through moving back to Wales she took the opportunity to change direction and become a weaver initially making *'rugs and table mats and really rather ordinary things'*. This led Charlotte over a period of forty years to become a successful tapestry weaver, a part of her identity, sense of self and sense of being.

10.1.7: Being a textile-maker

A sense of being relates to our essence, nature and what is distinctive about us (Wilcock 1999, 2006). Craft raises questions about ontology and the nature of being. Drawing on the work of Heidegger, Adamson, Harrod and Cooke (2008:7) posit that humans cannot be human and know the world around them 'without connecting to the fundamental process of making'. Through being textile-makers we incorporate meaningful aspects of making into ourselves and our identities. Making assumes a more central role (Gale and Kaur 2002). Carole, Charlotte and Carys for instance, have developed identities as tapestry weavers; each has a unique style, influenced by

personal preferences, opportunities for working with others and sources of inspiration absorbed from their environments, travel and material culture. They share with other committed textile-makers a sense of dedication and perseverance. Such qualities are developed through doing and being and are reinvested in textile-making as an ongoing process. Being a textile-maker is a deeply meaningful experience and the makers I talked to and worked with shared a sense dedication and integrity, they cared about quality, gained satisfaction from the process of making, being hands-on and from the rhythm and repetition incorporated in the process. They also attached meaning to the purpose of making.

10.1.8: *A sense of dedication and commitment*

The individual textile-makers I met during the course of fieldwork shared a sense of dedication and commitment to their craft. They shared a passion for textiles and a willingness to invest considerable amounts of time and effort in acquiring expertise and honing skills to create textile products. I have already referred to Eleanor spending her first six years as a textile-maker perfecting plain weave. Sennett (2008: 295) refers to the sense of satisfaction that comes from 'slow craft time', where 'practice beds in, making the skill one's own'. The motivation to continually develop skills and invest time in creating and making is intrinsic rather than extrinsic (Amabile 1996, Hennessey 2000).

The sense of dedication and commitment encompassed in being a maker goes far deeper than satisfying extrinsic needs. Kate for instance, had learned from her experience of staying with a master weaver that *'there's no money in weaving'* and that making a living from it was difficult, and yet for him it was a chosen way of life. A recent textile graduate, Ismini Samanidou, has also found it difficult to make a living from weaving, but perseveres because she has a strong sense of commitment to her craft: 'I am a weaver because I love weaving, not because it's a profession that will bring me money' (Delmas 2007a: 26). A socio-economic survey of crafts activity in England and Wales in 2002-2003 found similar high level of commitment among craftspeople (Crafts Council 2004b) who valued the freedom to develop their creative skills and shape their own careers through a life dedicated to their craft (McAuley and Fillis 2005).

A life dedicated to textile craft was epitomised by the late Peter Collingwood (1922 – 2008), who gave up a career in medicine to become a weaver. In 1952 he set up his a workshop and built his own equipment to weave rugs for retail outlets such as Liberty and Heales in London. Collingwood went on to build a career as an internationally renowned master weaver, author and teacher, known for his experimental and innovative techniques. His obituary describes him as 'one of the few to earn a living as a full-time weaver' (Hardwick 2008).

This sense of dedication, although strong amongst guild members, is for many of us tempered by a need to balance textile-making with other forms of occupation. David, Carole and Charlotte all weave professionally and dedicate a considerable amount of time and energy to their craft, although David is also a priest and Charlotte spent many years teaching art. Carole also teaches to supplement her income. Gale and Kaur (2002) point out that opportunities for a life dedicated to craft are diminishing in modern society; it conflicts with expectations of work and standards of living. Consequently makers such as Eleanor and Carys have waited until retirement to dedicate time to textile making. Lucy and I particularly have balanced our love of textile-making with other forms of productive, paid occupation, but for all of us our sense of commitment comes from the satisfaction gained through engaging in the process of making and producing textiles and because of this we persevere.

10.1.9: *Perseverance*

Commitment and dedication involve persistence and perseverance, a personal investment in the process of making and willingness to continually hone skills and explore new areas (Dormer 1994) in order to move forward and take on new challenges. I have already described the skills for spinning as requiring time and patience to master; similarly it takes patience and perseverance to get through the stages of drafting a design, preparing a warp and dressing a loom to reach the point of weaving. Carys told me how setting up her scaffolding frame to weave a tapestry would take her

'...about 4 days because when you'd finally got it all set up the tension would go and you'd have to re-tie all the knots. For about 3 days you were doing that because it would go on and on ...'

On the complex weave course I found that threading a complicated pattern draft onto the loom required intense concentration and can take considerable time to achieve (image 52).



52: *threading a complex draft*

Once this part of the process is complete, further care and attention is required to check pattern repeats and eliminate errors before weaving can begin. Such perseverance is worthwhile however, for the satisfaction of seeing the pattern emerge, hopefully error free, as the weft is beaten into place.

The willingness to persevere and invest time and care in the preparatory stages of weaving, spinning and dyeing is a necessary part of our quest for quality and a product that represents our best efforts. As Carole put it *'you get what you put in';* a sense of pride and satisfaction is the reward for skill and commitment (Sennett 2008). Through personal investment and 'occupational perseverance', Carlson (1996: 144) argues that individuals can capitalise on experience, acquire special competence and uncover further motives for occupational engagement. For textile-makers with an

interest in textile construction, an ability to de-construct a design and work through the process of re-constructing it in the form of a textile can open up continuing possibilities for occupational perseverance. In Carlson's terms, as a form of occupation textile-making has a 'self-perpetuating' property (Carlson 1996: 144).

10.1.10: *A sense of integrity*

Integrity comes from investing in and taking a pride in workmanship, through caring about the quality of both the process and the product. Sennett (2008: 294) points out that doing a job well and taking a pride in one's work lies at the heart of craftsmanship. When Lucy told me about some of the master craftspeople and textile artists she had met and been taught by she said that

> *'you can see the integrity of their work in the results and I think to be able to pick up on that and see how they apply their skills and the reasons why, it just makes it less trivial, less of a surface thing'.*

Similarly Eleanor had picked up the importance of quality in workmanship and a sense of integrity from the two professional weavers who had taught her early on in her career: *'the stuff they produced was immaculately done, nothing second rate was allowed'.* This led Eleanor to also strive for high quality:

> *'I mean from my very beginning in the craft I tried to do everything to the best of my ability, even though it takes much longer.....I care about straight edges and things...because they taught me to do it'.*

Caring about quality in workmanship requires an investment of time. When I interviewed Carole she was working on a large commission and had been invited to take part in a forthcoming exhibition, which she decided to forego:

> *'I've still got an awful lot of work to do on this commission I haven't had time to think about it, so I might well not take part in the exhibition, because..... it'll be the end of the year before I can really think about doing anything, which will only leave me two or three weeks to produce a piece of work and I think rather than produce a second class piece of work, I'll not bother'.*

Carole's sense of integrity meant that she was unwilling to compromise high quality through a lack of time to fully invest in the process of making. A willingness to invest time and effort into the process can also lead to a sense of satisfaction.

10.1.11: *A sense of satisfaction*

Satisfaction, pleasure and enjoyment come from engaging in the process of making. Charlotte felt it was about the whole process, she said:

> *'I like the sort of discipline of it, because I don't think I'm a very disciplined person naturally..... I mean I'm never fed up about threading up and all that sort of thing, I really quite like it, the working out of everything and deciding what you're going to do and ordering the yarn and all that, I like that and the actual weaving itself, I mean I just love the way it grows...'*

Lucy took the concept of the whole process a step further:

> *'I do like to see things through from start to finish as well, growing plants to then be able to use as a dye stuff..... and just the thrill of taking something from a seed through to a finished item'.*

She went on to tell me how she had explained this to a member of the public whilst demonstrating at the guild exhibition:

> *'..... a chap was really fascinated, you know, I took him through the process and he said to me 'so you've got a product, you've produced something at the end' I said 'yes', he said 'I've never done that, I've never done that in my life''.*

This conversation led Lucy to reflect on the wonder of something she had previously taken for granted:

> *'.....but actually thinking about him and his response I thought well it is remarkable actually to go from ..... maybe from fibre to a garment you can wear, or from a seed to some colour that you can see and gain pleasure from'.*

For Lucy being able to take the process through from seed to finished product meant that she could also integrate her hobbies. Her interest in gardening could be integrated with her interest in natural dyeing and she gained a deep sense of satisfaction from bringing them together into a continuous experience through an interaction with the environment (Dewey 1934). This kind of meaningful and satisfying experience comes from knowing one's own ability, skills and preferences. Charlotte particularly enjoyed the creative aspects of weaving, where she could make full use of colour and texture. She was also clear about aspects of the process she found least satisfying:

> *'The bit I like least is the bit in between where you're just weaving plain weave and not doing anything, I find that very boring, I couldn't weave cloth... I like the creation of whatever I'm doing, so with a rug it's the same, with the cushions I've adapted them I think to suit the way I like working ..... which I think is important because there's no point in doing something that you find tedious is there?'*

Through being a textile-maker Charlotte has developed a sense of self, she knows her own abilities and preferences, and she also knows what makes her creative. Similarly Kate knows she is a braid and tassel maker rather than a spinner:

> *'I mean I enjoy spinning and when I'm teaching spinning I'm thinking this is really good fun, once I've done an ounce or two I'm thinking well actually this is very boring! If you do a whole jumper it's a bit like hard work but then I've moved on to tassels and passementarie* [a French woven braid technique], *which I do enjoy doing'.*

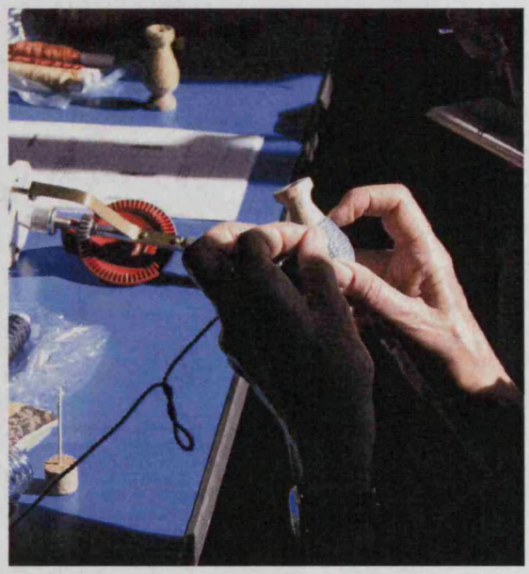
Charlotte and Kate particularly enjoy concentrating on detailed work where the process is constantly changing, others derived intense satisfaction from rhythm and repetition in the process, but all gained satisfaction from physically handling materials and equipment.

10.1.12: *Physical engagement*

Craft is 'intimately tied to labour and the physical handling of material' (Metcalfe 1997: 72). For David being physically engaged is paramount; he told me that he carries a spindle with him *'at all times'*. In chapter seven (7.2.6) I discussed the portability of the drop spindle; it makes spinning accessible for David and others

whenever they choose to do it. I also met several other makers who knit, crochet or sew whilst listening to talks or attending meetings. David described it as a need to be occupied on two levels, listening and doing, a way of calming frustrations. Here, perception and action function together and become mutually transformative (Crossley 1995, Merleau-Ponty 1962).

For textile-makers being hands-on, working with tools, equipment and materials can involve intricacy, dexterity and the use of fine motor skills. Metcalf (1997: 72) describes craft as growing directly from 'the human cognitive potential for fine motor control'. Kate for instance, particularly enjoys *'fiddly work'*. As a braid and tassel maker she has developed a high level of skill in manipulating fine threads by hand to make the intricate cords and braids required to embellish tassels (image 53).



53: *covering a tassel mould with cord*

On the other hand, using larger pieces of equipment, such as a weaving loom requires gross motor actions. For Sennett (2008) bodily self-control enables accurate action and skilled craftspeople can utilise fine and gross movements interchangeably and seamlessly. Gardner (1993) refers to this as bodily-kinetic intelligence where an individual masters alterative ways of using the body to translate intention into highly skilled action which, when applied to the use of equipment evokes a sense of rhythm and repetition.

10.1.13: *Rhythm and repetition*

An intense level of satisfaction, pleasure and enjoyment can come from the sequence and rhythm of working a loom or spinning wheel. During the process of spinning there is a sense of speed and rhythmical movement when the spinner in tune with the wheel. Similarly the process of weaving cloth, particularly where there are continual pattern repeats can, for experienced weavers, become a smooth rhythmical action. David told me that this was one of the reasons he liked weaving lengths of cloth *'because it's a very continuous repetitive action, rather than tapestry weaving that I find quite frustrating because its all little short bits...'* As a spinner and weaver I also find rhythmic and repetitive action satisfying. During the complex weaving course as I mastered the use of the dobby loom I tried to capture this experience in words:

> *'As time progressed I became familiar with the loom and didn't have to concentrate heavily on how to work it, I found a rhythm: clicking down the back bar with my right heel to move the lags forward, pressing the front bar down with my left foot to open the shed, throwing the shuttle, releasing my foot to close the shed and beat in the weft. This goes something like 'click, step, throw shuttle, close shed and beat'. The rhythm can be maintained providing there are no interruptions and the loom works smoothly'.*

In such experiences successive parts of the process flows seamlessly (Dewey 1934). David described it as a *'whole body rhythm,* a *physical action'* that is possible to achieve when *'weaving on a large loom and throwing a shuttle'.* The tool, in this instance the shuttle, is an extension of and follows the rhythm of the body (Mead 1955). David conceptualised rhythm and repetition in the process as *'Zen'.* For David, Zen is a sense of unity with, and a conscious mastery of the process that is possible to achieve through highly skilled repetitive action. This concept of Zen is endorsed by Smart (1969).

Lucy, on the other hand, finds the repetitive process of knitting is a way *'to wind down from intense cerebral activity...I know I need that...it's not something mundane, it can be something routine that you don't have to think about too much'.* When talking about spinning and knitting, she went on to describe *'that element of repetition*

that can be quite comforting, you know a bit like a mantra, or something that, just over and over again, you then relax down into it'.

This rhythmical repetitive process that comes once skills have been mastered leading to a creative end result is a form of flow, where the body is in harmony with the mind, providing an optimal experience that 'adds strength to the self' (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 95). A state of flow brings a sense of transcendence and harmony (Csikszentmihalyi 1993) and it can come from any aspect of making where optimal experience is achieved through a balance between skill and the perceived challenge (Csikszentmihalyi 1988). Whereas David can achieve flow through production weaving, Charlotte, Carys and Kate find it through absorption in the detail of making. Through being absorbed one is no longer self-aware 'we have become the thing on which we are working' (Sennett 2008: 174). Such total absorption has a meditative quality (Howell and Pierce 2000) and for David this form of experience is closely linked to his spiritual well-being.

10.1.14: *Spirituality*

Gale and Kaur (2002: 10) suggest that an 'inner psychological or spiritual experience' is common in textile craft, where making is associated with 'honest work' through which individuals clarify their values and find a sense of coherence (Dormer 1997f: 222). Imay (2002: 137), a Japanese textile artist, describes how finishing a piece of work through a time-consuming process such as weaving is 'not just an externalisation of the self as an object but probably the expression of the internal self'.

David articulated the spiritual importance of textile-making to him:

> *'If I haven't got a piece of craftwork on the go I really get grouchy, I get irritable, it's a very necessary part of my, very much a part of my spirituality ... because it's the creative side of me that come out'.*

As we pursued this concept further, David went on to say

'it is part of my prayer life, to a certain extent weaving. If I don't weave then my prayer life is not good because I need, the rhythm of weaving is much more Zen than me sitting down and repeating mantra'.

In this way the rhythm of weaving is serving a similar purpose to mantra, cleansing and protecting the mind by maintaining a spiritual connection (Snelling 1998). For David weaving is part of his spiritual being and the *'physicality'* of weaving is intensely satisfying for him. There was a general feeling amongst the makers I talked to however that although gaining a sense of satisfaction and pleasure from the process was important, as Kate said *'otherwise you wouldn't do it'*, there also had to be a purpose.

10.1.15: *Purpose and product*

Craft, for Adamson (2007:13) is 'always in motion towards some objective'. In the spinning workshop we agreed that, although there was a sense of satisfaction in being able to produce a yarn from raw fibre and in the rhythmical process of spinning, this was not enough in itself. We wanted to make use of the yarn and create a meaningful product. Eleanor who has been a spinner and weaver for many years felt

'You can't just continue to weave for your own satisfaction; you can't just continue to do it for your own pleasure.....there's got to be a purpose for it'.

Textile making is both process and product orientated (Blanche 2008). In a sense the process becomes yet more meaningful when it is productive and there is a satisfying outcome. Meaning is invested in the purpose of making. Kate told me she liked *'making for other people'*, David also recalled how he gained a similar sense of satisfaction:

'I will make wedding presents for people..... I invest a lot of value into it with very little outlay..... I can give them a rug which I've hand spun and hand woven and that's something that will last a long time'.

Making textiles for presents is common amongst guild members, David felt that *'a lot of people who are working in the guilds are only doing stuff as presents'* for family and friends. It is their main reason for making. Whilst both the process and product

which make up the creative project are intrinsically driven, as Bourdieu (1971: 166) points out there is a meeting and sometimes a conflict of the 'intrinsic necessity' of the work and 'the social pressures that direct the work from outside'. For guild members this might be meeting the requirements for an exhibition or producing work to sell or for a commission. Carole for instance, told me that for her *'weaving's a business as well as a joy'*. She and others who produce work to sell also need to understand the public and social meaning of their work. Charlotte, a landscape tapestry weaver felt that it can be connected with memories: *' people do like to recognise a place'*. She told me about a tapestry she had recently made for a Welsh couple living in England:

> *'...we settled on Worms Head in the end because that was a favourite place they knew well and I'd never done Worms Head before so that might be a whole new – that's another thing about commissions is you're forced into doing something that perhaps you wouldn't immediately choose to do and it can lead to all sorts of other things.'*

Although Charlotte is an established tapestry weaver with a strong awareness of her own tastes and preferences, she is also willing to compromise when taking on commissions, seeing it as a new challenge. Carys on the other hand, felt differently:

> *'I always feel compromised when I work to commission..... I did a commission for somebody who had gone on a botanical trip to one of the distant islands in Scotland and she'd taken loads of photographs and this was about five or six years before she approached me and she said 'would you do something,' she gave me all the photographs, 'something that I can remember'..... So I did, and I have done other commissions, but I'm always happier if somebody comes across a tapestry and says 'oh I like that is it for sale?' and I say 'yes,' and they've taken it away'.*

Carys, who is strongly inspired by her own meaningful memories did not gain the same sense of satisfaction when working from other people's. This could be because making is a means for craftspeople to explore their own obsessions and ideas (Dormer 1997c: 154), and through the completed object communicate this to others (Dewey 1934); something which Carys could do through her abstract tapestries. There is a sense of satisfaction in producing something that someone wants to buy (Moorman 1990) and talking to Carys, Charlotte and Carole about commissions and selling work led me to think about its value. Pricing our work is sometimes a contentious issue

within the guild; it is partly linked to our reasons for making, it is also about our perceived status as amateurs or professionals and how we value ourselves as makers.

10.1.16: *Valuing our work and ourselves*

Handmade objects represent ourselves as makers, our creativity and skills (Gale and Kaur 2002: 73). They also reflect a sense of self and social identity (Hocking 2000b: 148). How we value our work and ourselves as makers is manifested in how we present it and price it. I have already referred to the guild exhibition as a showcase for our work and members can choose to sell their work through it or not. Within the guild there is no unified view of how to price items it is entirely dependent on what individual makers feel it is worth to themselves and the public. Carys told me how she had tried to work out the value of her work following a conversation she had had with another guild member about costing time and workmanship:

> *'.....she'd just come off this City and Guilds course and they'd said 'well think of paying yourself £20 per hour, that's what you're worth', so I came home and I worked out how long, taking the design time, the spinning time, the dyeing time to do something about that size, it came in the thousands and I thought 'come on, don't be ridiculous, you can't possibly think of charging that for yourself''.*

Carys does sell her work and makes a judgement on what she feels her workmanship and creativity is worth to herself and others. As Bourdieu (1971: 173) put it, 'the relationship the creator has with his own work is always mediated by the relationships he has with the public meaning of his work'. As a group of amateur and professional makers we not only have different abilities, our work holds different meanings. David, Charlotte, Carole and Eleanor all see themselves as professionals who have become textile-makers with a sense of self. They identify themselves as being weavers with confidence in their own abilities and in the value of their work. This is legitimised by their success in selling work through galleries and through commissions; it gives them positive feedback on the value of their work (Dickie 1996, Fidler and Fidler 1978).

Others who are still in the process of becoming makers are more reticent about trying to sell. For guild members who work mostly for pleasure and who are not dependent

on their craft for income, selling is a bonus and they are content to cover the cost of materials rather than price it to reflect the time, effort and workmanship. David feels *'the problem is that we all think that we've got to try and get rid of it, and therefore let's under price'*. He felt that by doing this we undervalue ourselves and our work. By pricing it differently we also give out mixed messages to the public, who, from talking to visitors at the exhibition, often think handmade textiles should be cheaper than manufactured ones. The value of ourselves as textile-makers, our identity and the work we produce is clearly influenced by public image.

10.1.17: *Identity and image*

The problems with identity and image relate back to a well-tested argument introduced in chapter two (2.2.7) concerning amateurism and professionalism in craft. At the International Shibori Symposium, Japanese shibori artist Akira Tatehata argued that the word craft has connotations with hobbies and non-professionals, particularly in the west, whereas it should be linked to skills and seriousness about art and design. David felt that craft's identity and image is linked to the idea *'that anybody could do it'*. This challenges the legitimacy of craft, something which Dickie (2003b) also found in her study of American crafters. Charlotte, who was also a member of a group of professional makers recalled that this was one of the reasons why they got together to market their work in the late 1980s:

> *'I think we started really because a lot of us were doing craft fairs and things and you'd roll up at some church hall and the whole thing would have been not terribly well organised..... I mean the organisers seemed to be more concerned with getting their fee for your table rather than actually making it a good thing for the craftspeople and you'd be next door to somebody whose work was pretty poor..... so that was sort of one of the reasons why we decided that if we set up our own thing we could organise our own craft fairs, people would know that the work was of a particular quality'.*

David felt that our image is very much linked to professionalism and maintaining a *'very high professional level'* which comes from a concern about quality, skill and creativity.

In summary, being a textile-maker is a deeply satisfying experience. Individual makers gain a sense of satisfaction from the process, purpose and product of making. However, the people I talked to could identify a number of factors that enhanced or inhibited becoming and being a maker.

10.1.18: Enhancers and inhibitors

Becoming and being a maker is not always a straightforward process. I have already shown that individuals' career pathways or life events can impact on their need to make textiles and become makers with a particular identity. Other factors include personal confidence, encouragement from others, family circumstances and relationships, health and balancing time.

10.1.19: *Personal confidence*

Being a textile-maker requires individuals to have confidence in their own abilities. Kate told me how, during the process of becoming a textile-maker *'lack of confidence'* was a problem that sometimes prevented her from moving forward because she would think *'I can't, or it won't work'* and that made her *'take a few steps back'*. As Sennett (2008: 97) puts it: 'actively pursuing good work and finding you can't do it corrodes one's sense of self'. Charlotte, an established tapestry weaver she told me about a commission she had taken on earlier in her career which had tested her confidence:

> *'I've never felt I did a good job, mainly because it wasn't my thing, you know, and you're doing it for the first time, you haven't had time to sort of hone it some how'.*

It is a question of finding where one's strengths lie through developing skills and trying out different techniques in the process of becoming and being a textile-maker. As Kate said, it's about looking for one's own *'thing'*, knowing one's strengths and building on those. Carys told me how she had found her strengths when she came back into weaving after a career in teaching:

'I did a few rugs and then I thought I wanted to move on from them, so it was tapestry then ..... I haven't done rugs at all now; it is just tapestry, wall-hangings or whatever'

Through becoming and now being textile-makers, Kate, Carys and Charlotte have developed confidence, become aware of their personal strengths and are able to build on them. They and other makers I talked to, felt that encouragement from others had helped them develop and build on their strengths.

10.1.20: *Encouragement from others*

I have already referred to the importance of family background and the influence of significant others on personal skill development and becoming a textile-maker. Being a textile maker who works at home requires partners and family to tolerate bulky equipment and materials and to be supportive of the amount of time spent in pursuing the craft. The need for family support was endorsed in Dickie's (2003b) study of home craft workers. On a wider level, Charlotte felt that public approval and praise was also strongly motivating:

'.....and people saying how nice it all is, is very encouraging, keeps you going and the doing of it ..... I love it. There's nothing nicer'.

This is not always the case however, and makers also need the strength to take criticism and other's judgement of their work.

10.1.21: *Judgement and critique*

The guild exhibition is for many of our members the main arena for public scrutiny. By showing our work, we lay ourselves open to critique from others including fellow guild members, other makers and members of the public. In this way we face, as Bourdieu (1971: 166) describes it, 'the social definition' of our work and the public's view of it can be based on stereotypes and over simplifications. As a guild we do not have a selection process for our own exhibition, but several members also submit work for exhibitions where there is a peer review process. Competitive testing and having one's work assessed by peers against current good practice is a part of being a

serious amateur or professional maker (Dormer 1994). Although there is disappointment when work is rejected, working towards an exhibition can, as Charlotte explained, help one reflect on the process of designing and making:

> *'I think when you're doing things and you're doing it to sell and everything, sometimes you forget that it's important, the process, it is important and it's very good actually to go back to it. I was doing an exhibition and they said.....it would be nice if you could put your sketch book in, I said 'oh golly, I don't think my sketch book's up to being looked at' which forced me actually to think about it ..... I would encourage anybody to do that'.*

Being self-critical with an ability to reflect on one's own work is an important part of being able to move forward. Carys felt that her own work *'is an ongoing influence'*, not just in terms of learning from mistakes, but also as a way of considering future directions.

Working to commission can also leave the maker open to critique. Charlotte felt that *'generally people are willing to trust you, mainly because they know your work'.* However, there are times when things do not work to plan. Charlotte reflected on a time when this happened to her:

> *'A lady commissioned a triptych with three bits and when I was doing the middle one it .....just didn't gel with the whole thing and she took it away and then rang me up in a terrible state because she didn't want to sort of make a fuss and I perfectly understood and I just did a new one and she was quite happy – sold the other one as an individual tapestry, so it was fine'.*

Charlotte was able to consider the situation, work out why her client was not satisfied and move forward. She also demonstrated an ability to negotiate.

10.1.22: *Negotiating with clients*

Both Charlotte and Carole, through working to commission, need to negotiate with clients in order to meet their requirements without compromising their own creativity and ability. External pressures can sometimes get in the way of the desire to do something well for its own sake (Sennett 2008). Carole works mostly on Navajo

designs and her client trusted her to produce what she liked. Carole told me that *'she used to just say to me 'oh, this is the sort of thing I want, you know what I like, just get on and do it''* giving her some room to develop her own ideas. Creating a textile product, like other works of art is 'a process that occurs in relation to past experience, embodied in habits' (Dalton 2004:617). Therefore a commission can be challenging, even for an experienced weaver if it involves a different set of skills and moving outside habitual practice. Charlotte told me about a time she worked for the army:

> *'I mean I kept saying to them ..... this isn't what I do, but 'well we want you to do it' and there was a lot of lettering on it and there were army insignia things and it was really quite, it was quite difficult to do and I was not really happy about it at the end of it, but they were quite happy with it, I think. Anyway, they didn't say they weren't'.*

Although Charlotte had met the challenge and produced a tapestry that met her client's requirements, she did not achieve a sense of personal satisfaction from feeling she had done a good job. Sometimes working for others can involve compromise, something which can be difficult for dedicated artists/craftspeople like Charlotte and Carole.

10.1.23: *Family circumstances and life events*

Being a textile-maker can be affected by family circumstances. Perhaps because we are a group of people who are mostly over fifty several of us have found that bereavements or other life events such as personal illness have affected our being textile-makers. Kate felt that such circumstances and the effect on her mood meant that she could not continue making:

> *'... it was difficult when the parents were so ill because I've also got to be happy to do it. If I'm not happy then I withdraw into myself and I actually can't do anything'.*

Charlotte felt able to continue with her work when her mother died but did not feel in tune with her work, which led her to re-work a commission. For Kate and Charlotte difficult personal circumstances have inhibited their ability to make albeit in different

ways. For others, including myself, textile-making can be a way of coping with difficult life events.

When my father died in the late 1990s after a difficult illness I was in the process of completing a portfolio and assignment for a diploma in handloom weaving. I found that the process of designing and weaving cloth during that time was therapeutic, I could immerse myself in it and become calm, and it was also something concrete to concentrate on. Howell and Pierce (2000) refer to the restorative dimension of such occupation, for me it somehow tempered a physically and emotionally draining situation. Similarly David found that continuing to make was a way of coping with his own serious illness:

> *'I stopped for a while because I physically couldn't do it, but after the operation I got back to working fairly quickly because it helped to get my head straight. I was doing more embroidery at that stage because I'd got a couple of embroidery things that I had to do, which I could do in my lap rather than..... even when I went in for my operation I think I took a spindle in with me'.*

David had been able to prepare for and adapt to his own circumstances and through a strong sense of self was aware of what would help him restore his sense of personal well-being.

Before retirement Charlotte had found trying to balance full-time teaching with weaving commissions stressful and had adapted by learning to prioritise:

> *'It* [teaching] *meant that all the weaving had to be done in the evenings, weekend and holidays, which did get quite stressful..... you have to turn things down basically and say 'no I can't do that'.*

Through prioritising aspects of her occupations that she could control, Charlotte had developed a stronger sense of self and how to preserve her own sense of well-being:

> *'... now I can decide, you know, if I want to do it I can do it and I have made a conscious decision to say no to things. If I really don't want to do them then I'm not going to do them'.*

For Charlotte finding enough time for preferred occupations became a problem in the years leading up to her retirement. Others had also found that time was a particular issue.

10.1.24: *Balancing time*

I have already indicated that the crafts of weaving, spinning and dyeing are by nature protracted and time-consuming to pursue. David felt that setting aside enough time was a problem *'because it's something you tend to want to sit at for a largish chunk of time'*. Because textile-making is so fundamentally important to David, it is a part of his sense of self and well-being he felt that balancing time in such a way that he could continue making was something he had to do *'because if I didn't I would not be good for anybody'*. Wilcock (1998: 85) points out that balance is achieved by listening to 'physiological messages' which must be balanced with extrinsic factors to achieve health and well-being, something which David is attuned to. Others had taken a different approach, stepping in and out of textile-making as time allowed and in a similar way to participants in Dickie's (1996) study, let different things take precedence at different times. Lucy, who also balances textiles with other work and family commitments, told me:

> *'As the years have gone by I've taken on more and more work so I don't actually have that much free time any more, so longer term projects grow stale if I'm not careful because I just haven't got the time to complete them and I think that's where dyeing comes in because you can do it for a couple of hours and achieve a finished something whether it's a finished yarn or some fabric or whatever'.*

Lucy has adapted to a lack of time for making by changing the type of projects she undertakes. Similarly I currently have little time available for making textiles, but feel it is something I need to do and I have adapted my weaving accordingly, concentrating on smaller projects. Such adaptation is a way of orchestrating activity, selecting and organising them to enhance one's quality of life (Frank 1996b) at a particular time. I will probably follow a similar pathway to Carys and Eleanor, who both waited until retirement to pursue textile-making more seriously. Carys for instance told me:

'I mean I didn't realise how hard I was working all my life until kids started growing up and leaving home and then I stopped work and then suddenly to have all this time that I could, that made a tremendous difference to me'.

Carys, who had been widowed as a young adult, had by necessity put textile-making aside to earn a living from teaching and to spend time bringing up her children, becoming a full-time tapestry weaver in retirement. Carole on the other hand, who has earned her living from weaving since the 1980s found that she was balancing time between different projects – the ongoing commission work that she has, forthcoming exhibitions and producing work to sell in galleries and shops.

10.1. 25: ***Section summary***

A sense of self develops from an intrinsic drive to make textiles and from becoming and being a textile-maker. It is related to one's sensibilities and affinity for materials. Becoming a maker is shaped by personal background, childhood experiences, career pathways and opportunities. Being a textile-maker is a deeply meaningful experience; makers share a sense of commitment, dedication and integrity. A sense of satisfaction comes from engaging in the whole process of making, the rhythm, repetition and sense of spirituality incorporated in it, valuing the purpose of making, oneself and the product. Being a maker is also influenced by public perceptions and the image of textile-making.

Becoming and being a textile-maker with a sense of self is enhanced or inhibited by personal confidence, encouragement from others, family circumstances, health and time. Through becoming and being a member of a guild and engaging in other networks however, individual makers also develop a collective sense of self through belonging.

Part two:

10.2: Creating a collective sense of self through belonging

In chapter six I introduced the guild, its purpose and role and the range of opportunities such as access to resources, networking, formal and informal information sharing that belonging to a guild can bring to individual makers. I have described the guild as a cohesive group of people with common interests but from different backgrounds. Through belonging to the guild, members develop a 'collective self' that reflects the group's norms and characteristics (Brewer and Gardner, 1996: 84). Guild members share characteristics such as an affinity for textiles, a sense of commitment and integrity; as a group we co-operate to develop and share information, skills and promote textile crafts. The following sections explore the guild's characteristics as a socio-cultural group and an in-group, and how members work together to develop a collective sense of self through shared occupation.

10.2.1: *The guild as a socio-cultural group*

In socio-cultural terms the guild lies between the two frequently cited organisational forms: *Gemeinschaft,* 'a community based on a shared sense of identity', and a *Gesellschaft,* 'an institution intended to facilitate action and achieve instrumental goals' (Nisbett, 2005, p. 56). Guild members have a shared identity as spinners, weavers and dyers and this fosters a sense of unity and belonging. We have a social responsibility to pass on tacit knowledge and skills, something which is vital to the health of our crafts (Dormer 1997c: 148), the preservation of traditions and the future shape of textile-making as occupation. The guild also facilitates action in that we utilise our skills collectively.

10.2.2: *The guild as an in-group*

The guild can be defined as an 'in-group' that elicits co-operation amongst members. As such, the guild provides 'a frame of reference for self-evaluation at an individual level' (Brewer and Gardner 1996: 85). In chapter six I pointed out that guild members

encourage and support each other, consequently the guild offers a safe environment for becoming a textile-maker and developing a sense of self. Carys for instance felt that the guild and the people she met through it had re-introduced her to weaving, something which is now a strong part of her identity and being. Through belonging to the guild, members gain personal benefits in the form of new skills, access to materials and equipment and opportunities to extend their experience and knowledge of others' work. Charlotte told me that she *'wouldn't have heard people or seen their work but for the guild',* and this was one of its important functions. The opportunity to work with other like-minded people is a further benefit to belonging.

10.2.3: *Working together through shared occupation*

Through belonging to the guild, there is opportunity for sharing expertise, ideas and interests and learning from each other. Reynolds (1997) and Dickie (2003a) both refer to the benefits of belonging to a like-minded group or guild where members can focus on a common interest and enjoy social interaction with others. Howell and Pierce (2000: 70) for instance describe a common understanding between members of a quilter's guild where 'women gather together for a time of socialising, laughter, and creativity'. Through working creatively together as a group in this way a sense of comradeship develops (Jones 2003, Dickie 2004). With reference to her study of disabled women textile-artists Reynolds (1997: 355) describes this as 'access to a healthy participatory identity, which helped to counteract experiences of social exclusion through illnesses'.

I pointed out in chapter six (6.4.1) that we work together for the benefit of the guild and to promote our crafts to the public. The guild's annual exhibition is a good example of this, in that members come together to show and sell their work, the culmination of their individual occupational achievements, but putting on an exhibition is also a shared occupation that contributes to our sense of belonging and ultimately to a social and community contribution through craft promotion.

Staging the exhibition requires a collective commitment and as Blumer (1969) describes it, joint action. In the first place it requires organisation, design and construction and to achieve this we must work as a team, sharing the tasks (see

chapter 7.6.2). Once in place the exhibition requires manning. The venue, a museum, attracts a wide cross-section of the public from international visitors to local school children and exhibiting there gives us an opportunity to demonstrate our crafts, offer information and encourage interest. These are things that Charlotte, a founder member of the guild, feels some members might not otherwise have an opportunity to do.

In a sense, the exhibition is symbolic of our collective achievements and cohesion as a group, bringing together the results of our individual actions. It is also the product of joint action arising from a background of participants' previous action. In this way there is always a connection and continuity with the past (Blumer 1969: 20). Additionally, where group members who share self-defining attributes engage in social action they present an image of what the group stands for (Hogg 2001). I have already mentioned that the guild is concerned with the preservation and promotion of textile crafts, something which can be achieved through collective action at public events.

It is important to remember, however, that each individual comes to the group from a different socio-cultural background and with different life experiences which will also have a bearing on collective action and its meaning. This contributes to a collective sense of self, something that others may have difficulty understanding. As Kate puts it, when talking about her passion for textiles and making:

> *'You can wax lyrical to other friends about sheep and whatever and they think you're absolutely round the bend....you can talk to people at the guild and they understand...and I think that's really important, that they know where you're coming from and you're all in a way...well you're all coming from the same thing'.*

In this way the guild fosters a strong sense of belonging it is the context where, as Hogg (2001: 134) puts it, 'the individual self is framed by the collective self'. Through a collective sense of self and through belonging we come to know who we are and what our purpose is and a sense of belongingness is a strong indicator of health and happiness (Tice and Baumeister 2001). The final sections of this chapter relate textile-making to a sense of well-being.

Part three:

10.3: A sense of well-being

Well-being, according to Ryan and Deci (2001) is complex. It concerns optimal experience and functioning, and is associated with feelings of self-esteem. In chapter two (2.1.2) I considered the concepts of health and well-being in relation to occupation and with reference to Yerxa (1993), how an individual's perception of quality of life and well-being is related to their experience of engaging in particular occupations, which also give them a sense of identity (Christiansen 1999, 2000, 2004). In the first two parts of this chapter I have identified how becoming and being a textile-maker contributes to individual's sense of self and personal identity and how a collective sense of self develops through belonging to a guild. Becoming, being and belonging, which in turn enhance self-esteem and perceptions of well-being (Wilcock 1998, 2006), develop through engaging in meaningful occupation. The following sections consider in further detail how textile-making might contribute to physical, psychological and social well-being.

10.3.1: *Physical well-being*

Undoubtedly working manual equipment such as a floor loom or a spinning wheel takes stamina and its sustained use, as historical accounts show, can cause health problems (Lubelska 2002). Pinchbeck (1930: 180) described the 'toil' of 19th century handloom weavers who often suffered 'injurious effects' from long hours working looms in cramped conditions. Similar problems can occur today. Guild members, Carole, Charlotte and Eleanor for instance, and other makers I met at workshops reported back and hip problems as a result of repeatedly using manual equipment and those who can afford it have invested in computerised or powered equipment in order to extend their craft life. Dormer (1997c: 145) refers to his interview with designer/weaver Ann Sutton, who considered that purchasing a computer-driven dobby loom had given her 'twenty years extra weaving life'.

In a similar way to the participants in Reynolds' (2004) study of women textile artists, the makers I talked to had adapted to physical problems as they arose: Carole had

introduced automated equipment and Eleanor now concentrates more on tapestry and shibori rather than cloth weaving. By exercising choice and adopting strategies to overcome physical problems, individuals can maintain physical well-being and continue *being* textile-makers with a sense of self and personal identity.

10.3.2: *Psychological and emotional well-being*

In the process of becoming and being, makers develop and master skills and exercise intellectual, creative and spiritual capacities that enhance quality of life, psychological and emotional well-being (Wilcock 1998). Traditional approaches to the study of well-being view it as hedonic, emphasising pleasure and happiness or eudaimonic, coming from self-realisation through engagement and fulfilment (Ryan and Deci 2001, Huppert 2005). Individuals who are drawn to textile-making can promote mental well-being from both hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives. I have described the sense of satisfaction and enjoyment that comes from engaging in hands-on textile-making that is associated with an affinity for materials and a sense of touch. The sense of rhythm and repetition in the process of making has the potential to enhance physical, mental and spiritual well-being and is intensely satisfying for some promoting relaxation, although others find this boring and prefer engaging with detail and continual change in the process of making. Flow can be achieved from all aspects of making and the positive feedback from it contributes to self-esteem (Wells 1988). Through becoming and being textile-makers the people I interviewed had developed confidence in their abilities, had self-esteem and were able to prioritise and balance occupations and time, for them textile-making has the potential to promote their mental well-being and quality of life.

10.3.3: *Social well-being*

Wilcock (1998: 104) describes social well-being as coming from satisfying relationships 'within social and cultural parameters'. Social networks are strong predictors of social well-being (Helliwell and Putman 2005). Consequently through belonging to the guild, a cohesive group of like-minded people with common interests, and by extending their social networks, its members can enhance social

well-being. I will develop this idea further in the next chapter where I consider the guild's potential to develop social capital.

In summary, textile-making can promote quality of life and well-being for individuals who find it meaningful; through engaging in making they can develop and enhance skills, intellectual and creative capacities and gain a sense of satisfaction from the process and the products of making. Such individuals also learn to adapt to personal circumstances that might impact on occupational engagement. Through belonging to a guild and networking with others, makers also develop a sense of social well-being.

10.4: Conclusion

Through actively engaging in textile making individual makers develop a sense of self. Becoming a textile-maker developing skills and realising creative potential is related to an affinity for materials and a sense of touch, personal backgrounds, career pathways and opportunities. Through being textile-makers we incorporate meaningful aspects of ourselves into our identities. Being a maker is a deeply meaningful experience and makers share a sense of commitment and dedication to their craft, a sense of integrity, willingness to persevere and gain satisfaction from the process, purpose and products of making. The value of making and the product are influenced by craft's social status and image. Becoming and being a maker can be enhanced or inhibited by personal confidence, encouragement, family circumstances, life events and time. A collective sense of self develops from belonging to a guild and through working together in shared occupation. In the process of becoming, being and belonging, textile-makers develop a sense of physical, mental and social well-being. The final chapter relating to the findings from this study extends the concept of well-being by considering how makers develop capital in the process of making and how the guild promotes social capital.

Chapter eleven:

Capitalising on textile-making as occupation

11: Introduction

This chapter draws together concepts and ideas formulated in previous findings chapters to concentrate on how textile-making as an occupational domain is shaped individually and collectively for private, common and public good. In the first instance I consider different forms of capital and then concentrate on how individuals bring to textile-making personal capital, that is physical, human and cultural capital and how this contributes to traditional patterns of textile-making and shapes it into new forms. I then consider how belonging to a guild which offers collective opportunities for extending skills and craft promotion can generate social capital for the private good of its members and the common good of textile-making generally. Finally I consider how networking between non-proximate groups generates network capital that can extend and shape textile-making for wider communities, social well-being and public good.

11.1: Different forms of capital

'Capital', which for Fine and Green (2000: 81) 'promises a future flow of utility' is now a contested concept. Historically it has been broadly considered as economic personal and social. I will consider these forms first, with particular reference to Bourdieu and Putnam before looking at Urry's (2007) more recent addition of network capital and its capacity to sustain networks in situations where people are not always physically proximate.

Depending on the field in which it functions, Bourdieu (1986b: 47) put forward that capital presents itself in three fundamental forms: economic capital, which is convertible into money and institutionalised in the form of property; cultural capital, which may, under certain conditions be convertible into economic capital and institutionalised in the form of qualifications, and social capital, which is made up of social connections, is convertible into economic capital and institutionalised in the form of titles. Capital in its objectified or embodied forms takes time to accumulate; it

is also symbolic, manifesting itself in the form of prestige or honour (Bourdieu 1986b, Jenkins 2002).

In the following sections I propose that individual makers bring to the art and craft of textile-making personal forms of capital accrued in the course of their life experience. Physical capital is embodied in tools and equipment, human capital is created in the individual through education and training and manifests itself in the form of skills and capabilities (Becker 1993). Cultural capital is embodied in customs and shared values (Grew 2001) and objectified in the form of 'cultural goods', works of art for instance (Bourdieu 1986b: 47). Social capital on the other hand is inherent in the structure of relations between people (Coleman 1988, Fine and Green 2000) and Putnam (2000) emphasises its generation and value within proximate communities and groups similar to the guild. Putnam argues that such groups contribute to 'civic engagement and social capital', providing emotional support and inter-personal ties' (150).

In proposing 'network capital' as 'the capacity to engender and sustain social relations with people who are not necessarily proximate', Urry (2007: 197) argues that this form of capital is neglected by Bourdieu. He also contends that Putnam's concept of social capital is limited by a presumption that it is principally generated in 'propinquitous communities' (Urry 2007: 199). Urry's concept of network capital is based on his theory of multiple mobilities. For Urry the social consequences of these mobilities are key and the ability to sustain non-proximate relationships and networks is increasingly important to social life. Although in one sense the guild is a local and community based group, it also, through some of its members, develops wider networks which are arguably sustained and built through network capital. In the context of this study then, capital incorporates personal, social and network forms; it comes from sustained occupational engagement and builds on individual and collective experiences. In the following sections I will initially concentrate on personal capital and how physical, human and cultural capital shape textile-making as occupation.

11.1.1: *Physical and human capital*

In chapter seven (7.2.1-5) I described the range and complexity of equipment and materials used by weavers, spinners and dyers in the process of making. These tangible, material objects embody physical capital that individual makers can utilise. In the context of the guild individuals own equipment, borrow and share it. Because of its specialist nature however, acquiring it can be difficult and the guild has a role to play in providing opportunities for individuals to access materials and equipment through specialist suppliers, courses and workshops. In 2008 for example, a few members of guilds from across Wales joined together to pilot the purchase and sharing of unusual yarns from a European co-operative, with the aim of making this more widely available in due course.

Whereas physical capital is 'wholly tangible', human capital is less tangible 'being embodied in the skills and knowledge acquired by the individual' (Coleman 1988: 83). Chapter eight detailed how textile-makers built knowledge and skill as a cumulative process. In many instances this happens over a lifetime, starting with the development of basic skills in childhood and acquiring specialist skills in adulthood through courses and workshops and learning from masters in the craft; ultimately however, skills are acquired through doing, through practice and sustained occupational engagement. Physical and human capital is personal to individual makers and evolves throughout life (Fine and Green 2001). It is embedded in traditional textile-craft practices, offers continuity with the past and can be utilised to pass textile-craft knowledge and skill to others. The objectification of craft knowledge in a cultural context however, constitutes cultural capital.

11.1.2: *Cultural Capital*

Like human capital, cultural capital is integral to the individual and requires an investment of time. It is objectified in the form of 'cultural goods' and institutionalised in the form of qualifications (Bourdieu 1986b: 47). The textile product as an objectification and expression of our craft knowledge, skill, creativity and inspirations is socially and culturally situated. It is influenced by our personal

tastes, preferences and interests, which are shaped by our cultural, educational and social backgrounds.

The development of cultural capital by individual guild members is more complex than it first appears. Bourdieu (1986b: 49) points out that because its acquisition and the social conditions for its transmission are disguised it tends to function as symbolic capital. In chapter six (6.4.4) I introduced the guild as Welsh, but with several of its members originating from outside Wales. At the time of fieldwork all members were British and shared similar patterns of education with opportunities to gain qualifications recognised in the same social system, although our backgrounds, career pathways and opportunities differed. Although we share an affinity for textiles and a sense of dedication and commitment to our craft, at various points during our lives we have engaged in making at different levels, intensities and in different ways. We also have different life experiences which have shaped our particular style of making and consequently the final product. David's work for instance is shaped by his experience of living and working in Ireland, England and St Helena as well as Wales; Carole's work is strongly influenced by Navajo culture although the materials she uses are indigenous to Wales and England. Carys and Charlotte's work particularly reflects Welsh culture. My work is currently influenced by my experience of Japanese textiles, although my sense of design and colour, as an American colleague once pointed out, reflects the British landscape and climate. In other words our cultural capital, embodied in our personal backgrounds and transmitted in different ways is manifested through our competencies and objectified in the textile-product, our contributions to the domain. In a sense the development of cultural and human capital are constant and fluid, we add to it in different ways throughout our lives depending on our socio-cultural situations, opportunities and life experiences.

In summary, physical, human and cultural capital can be utilised to cultivate and preserve traditional and culturally specific patterns of textile-making and to extend and shape it into new and different forms.

11.1.3: *Preserving and cultivating traditions*

In chapter seven (7.1) I discussed textiles as a cultural production with reference to traditional practices in Wales and Japan. Whereas Welsh textile traditions have declined due to changes in market demands, in Japan textile traditions thrive alongside innovative practice. During our trip to Japan Kate and I visited several small family run textile businesses located in textile areas. In the village of Oume we visited an indigo dye works where the third generation of the Murata family still practice the traditional art of indigo dyeing and produce shibori patterned cloth. In Japan the ecological benefits of natural dyeing are strongly appreciated and it is subsidised (Heilman Brooke 2002). To the west of Tokyo we visited two other family businesses, the Miyashin and Koyama weaving companies, who were successfully using textile traditions to shape practice innovatively. Both produced fabrics for fashion designer Issey Miyake.

In Japan there was an immediate sense of continuity in that traditional practices were preserved and used to shape current innovations. At the symposium Nobuto Fujitani, chair of Tama Arts University, discussed cultivating the future in shibori and how traditions have led to the development of new technologies. Because Japanese textile traditions are highly valued and a continuity of practice remains, it is possible to see how physical, human and cultural capital are utilised to extend and shape textile-making as an occupational domain.

In Wales textile traditions have been transmitted from one generation to another in only a few remaining family businesses, for example Tregwynt and Trefriw who have survived by re-shaping their practices to meet market demands (Jenkins 2005a). Because traditional practice is fragmented it is arguably now more difficult to develop and utilise human and cultural capital particularly to preserve, cultivate and re-shape tradition; it is, however, still happening albeit in isolated pockets. For example, Welsh traditions are strongly evident in Cefyn Burgess's work. Cefyn, a Welsh speaker educated in North Wales and at the Royal College of Art in London has drawn on the traditional practices of double weave and checked flannel to develop a contemporary range of rugs, upholstery fabrics and quilts based on designs taken from Penrhyn Castle and Welsh chapels (Piercy 1998, Burgess 2009, Lloyd-Jones 2009).

I pointed out in chapter seven (7.1) that today preserving and cultivating traditional textile practice is complicated by globalisation, innovations in communication and technology (Prichard 2005). As a consequence individual makers can more easily draw on a range of traditions to shape their work. I have already detailed the cultural influences on guild members' work, something which is also evident in the work of other textile-makers based in Wales. Sue Hiley Harris for instance who lives and works in Powys absorbs inspiration from the Welsh landscape; some of her three-dimensional forms were made for it and can be found in the Brecon Beacons National Park sculpture trail. Sue's work is also influenced by her Australian background, traditional aboriginal textile practices and her knowledge of oceanography. Sue also uses the folding and pleating techniques that are characteristic of shibori (Powell 2007, Riley 2007).

The art of shibori is a good example of how traditions cross cultural boundaries and cut across art, design, manufacturing and craft. At the shibori symposium Francoise Cousin from the Musée de l'Homme in Paris described it as a living craft, incorporating new tools and new forms with the potential to transform post-industrial craftsmanship. The individuals who now practice it come from a range of cultural backgrounds and constitute a rich resource of human and cultural capital to draw on when networking with others to share practices and traditions. Strong networks such as the International Shibori Network (ISN) have the potential to generate `social capital; it resides in 'networks of social connection' in other words 'doing with others' (Putnam 2000: 116). In addition, because networks such as the ISN connect individuals and groups across socio-cultural boundaries, it is sustained through and also builds network capital (Urry 2007). For its members, the guild is often the starting point for wider textile networking and the generation of social forms of capital.

11.1.4: *The role of the guild in generating capital*

I have already said that the guild has a role in developing textile craft knowledge through providing access to information and learning opportunities for its members. In this way the guild assists its members in developing and acquiring physical, human

and cultural capital. It is also part of a wider network of guilds and textile-making organisations who promote crafts publicly through courses, workshops, seminars and exhibitions. Guilds interact and communicate with each other across socio-cultural boundaries sharing skills, ideas, traditions and practices in a way that creatively and dynamically shapes textile-making as an occupational domain. In 2005 for example the AGWS&D joined with academics, textile artists and students to explore traditions and innovations in contemporary practice at a symposium. In 2007 and 2008 the guilds in the North of England led a series of workshops in conjunction with the AGWS&D national exhibition, to teach students traditional skills and encourage innovation (Turner 2008). This kind of networking and the development of social capital depends on trust, honesty and reciprocity (Coleman 1994, Putnam 2000).

11.1.5: *Trust and reciprocity*

When individual makers come together to share experiences and practices within the guilds and through networks they develop a 'specific, shared and often un-stated value system' (Metcalfe 1997: 78). It is this value system or set of norms, which is shared amongst group members, permitting them to work together for common ends that define social capital (Fukuyama 1999). The close ties that come from a shared value system and mutual respect amongst members in turn generate trust and reciprocity. The relative stability of our guild, sustained over the past four decades, is due to the voluntary commitment of a core group of people who have developed close ties and have trust in the group and each other. Trust, for Fukuyama (1999: 16) is 'like a lubricant' that makes the running of groups and organisations more efficient. Additionally, close ties and strong levels of trust promote the sharing of ideas, information and skills (Field, Schuller and Baron 2000), something which the guild actively demonstrates. In chapter eight (8.3) I discussed the formal and informal ways in which members share skills and information; this involves a considerable investment of time, often without remuneration. Borrowing and lending features strongly within the guild, we also donate goods in the form of equipment, materials and books to raise funds when required. This ability to do something for someone else without immediate return forms the 'touchstone' of social capital (Putnam 2000: 134).

The generation of respect amongst guild members allows us to pool resources for mutual benefit and pursue shared goals (Banks 1997, Szreter 2000). Our annual exhibition and other public events where we show and sell work collectively are examples of this. On a wider scale the AGWS&D bring guilds together to create social networks through conferences, seminars, summer schools and national exhibitions. Through working together for their own ends guilds have a strong bonding social capital, this form of capital created for 'private good' is inward looking, reinforcing group identity (Putnam 2000: 20).

11.1.6: *Bonding social capital: the benefits for guilds*

In the first place individuals form connections that benefit their own interest, fulfilling a need to bond with likeminded others (Putnam 2000). Groups which generate bonding social capital and particularly those with intensive binding ties, also have the potential to exclude others (Szreter 2000). In other words social capital can limit participation, as well as to promote it (Field et al 2000). Whilst the guilds attract people with a common interest in textiles, they aim to be inclusive in that membership is open to people with or without textile skills. In chapter six (6.4.11) I referred to recent attempts to widen access by encouraging students from relevant degree courses to join the guilds and to capitalise on current fashion by targeting people with an interest in knitting. This may, in the long term, have the effect of improving the age range and drawing on human and cultural capital by adding to the stock of knowledge and expertise, which in turn shapes the future of textile-making as an occupational domain through a broader mix of collective skills and interests.

To fully consider the development of social capital in the context of the guild however, it is necessary to consider the social benefits that membership can bring. In chapter ten (parts 2 and 3) I outline the benefits of belonging to the guild in that it promotes a collective sense of self, physical, mental and social well-being. This is reinforced by other occupational science and textile related studies discussed in chapter ten (10.2.3) (for example Reynolds 1997, Dickie 2003, Howell and Pierce 2000, Jones 2003 and Dickie 2004). These studies offer further evidence of the benefits of guild participation for individuals: the private good and also how

membership might help counteract social exclusion through wider networking and craft promotion. However, the guilds also have the potential to create bridging capital encompassing people across society and ultimately different cultures. The development of intra-textile networks that extend beyond the guilds forms a part of this and generates network capital that arguably supports the creation of social capital that can then be utilised for common good.

11.1.7: *Textile-making for common good*

I have already referred to the ISN as an example of how global links are created to share traditional shibori textile practices. Through the network the art of shibori has developed innovatively and creatively taking on new forms that enhance and build on traditional practices and processes (Wada 2002). The ISN facilitates communication and social connections between textile-makers across what Urry describes as 'varied multiple distances'. It has developed as a network that is sustained through 'intermittent meeting and communications' (Urry 2007: 48). Information about shibori is widely disseminated through the internet, books, courses and symposia making it a form of textile-making that is available for others to draw on formally and informally and develop yet further. For this to happen individual makers must be prepared to share resources with each other (Portes 1998) and where shibori is concerned, this takes place across cultural boundaries Consequently individual makers have the opportunity to develop human and cultural capital and through working together and building on trusting, reciprocal relationships, create social capital, which has a strong link with subjective well-being (Helliwell and Putnam 2005). Creating capital for public good in Putnam's (2000) view, means transcending social and cultural barriers to produce bridging capital by encompassing others across social groups. Urry (2007) takes the concept of capital a step further by recognising the complexity of social mobilities, where social networks are extended and elaborated through travel and communication providing a bridge between people and groups who are not necessarily proximate. Network capital has the capacity to sustain these complex social connections.

11.1.8: *Textile-making for public good: generating social and network capital*

Relationships with wider society are critical to the generation of social capital for public good, the bridging and linking forms of social capital (Szreter 2000, Putnam 2000). Our guild makes textile-knowledge and skills available to the public through staging open days and being part of major craft events and agricultural shows. We have recently donated equipment to a community of people with learning disabilities and members of the guild have also taught people with disabilities to weave. In chapter eight (8.3.7) I described how guild members such as David, Eleanor, Charlotte and Kate actively disseminated knowledge and skill across different social groups. This is a feature of guilds generally in that its members are involved in community and educational projects such as artist-in-residence programmes in a diverse range of settings such as schools, community centres and hospitals (McLaughlin 2002).

The Nepalese nettle project (referred to in chapter 9.3.1) is an example of how guilds have worked with scientists and other textile-makers over a decade to collaborate with local spinners and weavers in Nepal to make better use of the indigenous nettle plant in hand-made textiles (Dunsmore 1998, Dunsmore 2002, Delmas and Dunsmore 2004, Dibble 2008). Through this project British textile-makers have contributed physical, human and cultural capital to shape and extend local textile-making practices to make them more economically viable. The project clearly relies on both personal commitment through long-term occupational engagement and the development of network capital to sustain collaborations between non-proximate socio-cultural groups.

In 2006 whilst visiting the Festival of Quilts I met representatives from Aranya, a Tata Tea community development project in India, which began in 1994 to train and employ local young people with disabilities to extract and use dyes from the natural environment to make textiles. The project aims to help disabled young people from the local community become productive and self-reliant. It is supported by international textile-artists who have participated in training the project's teachers and project members have participated in international seminars and workshops. Its textile products now have an international market and links have been made with the ISN

(Tata Group 2009, Aranya 2008, Twistedthread 2006). Aranya offers a further example of how textile communities and networks come together and generate network capital, by exploiting the opportunities that arise between them (Urry 2007). In this way network capital can support the creation of social capital for the benefit of the wider community, public good and in turn promote individual and collective well-being.

11.2: Utilising forms of capital to extend well-being

Helliwell and Putman (2005) point to the growing body of evidence that positive subjective well-being relates to stocks of social capital in the form of networks and trusting relationships. The dense networks that exist within and between guilds and other textile communities have the potential to create strong bonding capital that can contribute to the well-being and quality of life of its members. The Nepalese nettle project and Aranya are examples of the development of network capital and consequently bridging social capital, where self-esteem and well-being has been raised through cross-cultural networks and relationships.

Textile-making however, is not always health promoting. In chapter ten (10.3.1) I discussed some of the detrimental effects that prolonged engagement in certain aspects of textile crafts can have on physical well-being. Guild members have generally found their own ways of adapting to such problems by utilising physical and human capital to change the ways in which they work and use equipment. In poorer cultural communities however, where there is a greater dependency on textile craft to make a living personal adaptation is not always possible. Backstrap weavers in the highlands of Gutamala for example, spend many hours a day in a kneeling position strapped to the loom (the weight of the body is used to tension the warp). Consequently they suffer pain, numbness, swelling and joint stiffness and this limits their ability to continue weaving and earn a living. Nine communities of backstrap weavers have been helped by a non-profit making organisation who has designed a weaving bench using ergonomic principles to improve weavers' health and well-being and increase economic activity (Piegorsch 2008). Through utilising skills and expertise in this way across a wider range of cultural communities textile-making as an occupational domain is shaped and developed for public good.

11.3: Conclusion

Individual makers bring to the process of textile-making different forms of capital. Physical capital manifests itself in the form of specialist equipment and materials; human capital through skills and knowledge; cultural capital, accrued from individual's cultural backgrounds is embodied in textile traditions and cultural practices and objectified in the form of textile products. These forms of capital are utilised through occupational engagement in the process of making to preserve and cultivate traditional practices and to shape textile-making in new ways. Through belonging to a group such as the guild and engaging with like-minded people to developing trusting and reciprocal relationships there is the potential to develop bonding social capital that reinforces group identity and is created for private good. By networking outside the guilds and through the development of intra-textile networks, network capital is generated that can be utilised to sustain social relationships for common good. Where this is extended yet further to develop socially inclusive relationships with wider communities network capital can support the creation of bridging social capital to shape textile-making for public good.

Chapter twelve:

Conclusions on methodology, methods and process

12: Introduction

This ethnography has concentrated on textile-making as an occupational domain in the context of a Welsh Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers where I am a long-standing member. Drawing on fieldwork experiences in Britain and Japan, interviews, my own experience, material culture, visual and documentary sources I explored how people engage in creating and making textiles by hand individually and collectively, what it means to them in the context of contemporary British (particularly Welsh) and other influential cultures and a technological society and how this contributes to their quality of life, sense of identity, and personal and social well-being. At the outset I broadly aimed to:

- Develop an understanding of the nature of textile-making as a form of occupation in the context of a Welsh guild of weavers, spinners and dyers.
- Identify how membership of a guild influences occupational development and engagement.
- Explore the socio-cultural, historical, temporal and gendered influences on creating hand-made textiles in the context of contemporary society.
- Explore the meanings of creating textiles by hand to individual makers.
- Identify how engaging in such occupation contributes to a sense of identity, quality of life and well-being.
- Explore the factors that might enhance or inhibit individual's engagement in such occupation.

In this chapter, the first of two concluding chapters, I offer a critique of the methodology and draw conclusions on the research process as a whole. In the final chapter I concentrate on the key conclusions from the study's findings and consider the theoretical and philosophical implications for occupational science with recommendations for further research.

I have explored textile-making contextually as it happens through a reflexive, visual and interpretive ethnography using constructivist grounded theory as a methodological approach. In the following sections I offer some critical reflections on the research design, process, methods and the issues related to being a reflexive insider researcher; taking into account Roberts and Sanders' (2005: 296) suggestion that research issues and dilemmas emerge temporally, before, during and after fieldwork.

12.1: *Research design*

In chapter four (4.1) I referred to Virginia Dickie's studies of American craft workers (Dickie 1996, 2003a and b, 2004) as examples of how crafts had been explored through the use of ethnography in occupational science. Others, notably Reynolds (1997, 2004) and Reynolds and Prior (2003a and b, 2006) have used in-depth interviewing as a means of uncovering the subjective meanings of textile-making for women with chronic illnesses. Dickie (2003b) referred to the need to explore occupation broadly and in context, more recently Reynolds (2009: 1) has called for a longitudinal approach to studying creative occupations to uncover the long-term benefits of occupational engagement and develop insights into the 'transformative effects of creativity on well-being'.

In this study its longitudinal nature and naturalistic design has allowed for an in-depth exploration of the contextual nature of textile-making and its subjective meanings for the people who engage in it. In terms of design it has similarities to Dickie's ethnographies in that it does not focus on illness, but explores craft work in the context of people's daily lives in an attempt to understand the historical and socio-cultural influences on occupational engagement and its meanings contextually. It differs however, in terms of the researcher's position. Whilst Dickie is reflexive she came from outside the setting; I approached this study as a reflexive insider and considered myself to be a part of it. This can suggest a dichotomy, of being inside or outside. Dickie (2003c: 53) describes 'stepping in and stepping out' of the field, whereas I found it more a question of balance. As an insider I was never truly detached from the field, but sometimes required analytical space in order to make

sense of events from different perspectives. In the process of designing the study and during fieldwork this led me to question the extent to which it was autoethnography.

Ellis and Boschner (2000: 740) refer to a range of approaches associated with autoethnography including reflexive ethnography and complete member research. In reflexive ethnography the researcher's experience is studied alongside other participants and complete member researchers explore groups where they are already identified and accepted members. In the later stages of fieldwork and writing I reasoned that the terms reflexive ethnography and complete member research reflected my situation as a researcher more clearly than the term 'autoethnography', which appears less specific and describes 'blurred genres' (Ellis and Boschner 2000: 742).

12.2: *Reflexivity in occupational science*

If reflexivity is seen, as Primeau (2003: 10) puts it, as an 'awareness of our own presence in the research process' and of our own 'biographies, assumptions and personal values', then it has been used by occupational science researchers to varying extents. Primeau discusses her personal struggle in coming to terms with her 'researcher as participant role' illustrating how her personal biography and perceptions of parenting influenced her study of the orchestration of occupation in two-parent families (Primeau 2003: 11).

Others, notably Crepeau (1997) and Dickie (1997) identify how their past experiences shape the research process. Dickie focuses on two aspects of her life that had a bearing on her study of the organisation and meaning of work for self-employed craft workers in Detroit, one being her residence in the community and the other her life-long relationship with the crafts. For instance, Dickie acknowledges her conscious avoidance of creativity as a topic in her studies of craft workers through recognising where her own feelings about creativity come from in terms of her background and education. She had recognised craft as skilled workmanship, but had judged it as a lesser art (Dickie 2004: 54).

I saw my presence in the research as integral. In chapter four (4.1.4) I discussed the

different aspects of myself that I brought to fieldwork, the known selves that were familiar and already present in the context of the guild such as being a committed long-standing member, a weaver and a friend for instance. There were also aspects of myself that were not so familiar, which became more overt during fieldwork, such as my professional and theoretical interest in textile-making as occupation and role as researcher. The latter emerged and developed in the context of fieldwork and I discuss the differences aspects of the researcher role in the sections below. Unlike Dickie, I did not consciously avoid particular theoretical perspectives or topic areas. My initial tacit knowledge of textile-making when put together with my prior knowledge of occupational science offered some useful insights, but also had implications for the use of grounded theory.

12.3: *Reflections on the use of grounded theory*

In chapter four (4.1.2) I described an approach to constructivist grounded theory taking the view that the nature of occupational engagement and it meanings were a co-construction, coming from participants and my own shared understandings. That perspective takes account of prior knowledge and interests (Charmaz 2005, 2006). Because my knowledge of textile-making was tacit, whereas from the outset my knowledge of occupation had a theoretical edge, I felt the need to explore ideas and theories associated with textile craft and making in order to sensitise myself to a broad range of pertinent issues prior to data gathering and analysis and begin from a more balanced position. Without this I felt there was a possibility that theories of occupation and occupational analysis, which formed a part of my academic and professional knowledge, could take precedence when theorising. On reflection this seemed to work, in that an initial broad exploration of craft and the key influences on its development in pre and post-industrial Western society with particular reference to textiles meant that I could contextualise the issues that emerged during fieldwork in relation to craft and occupational science theory. The danger of prior knowledge where grounded theory is concerned is that it could be leading; I attempted to guard against this by writing my interpretations of the findings directly from the data in the first instance and then exploring themes and categories further with reference to additional literature and theory.

If grounded theory is seen as an inductive approach it could also be compromised through setting pre-determined aims. From a classic grounded theorist perspective, pre-determining the research problem in this way can lead to a search for theoretical explanations, rather than allowing the problem and the theory that explains it to emerge from the data in the first instance (Glaser 1992, Christiansen 2007). Writing a proposal for the study necessitated the formulation of research aims to identify research directions leading to an appropriate methodology. Initially these related to a broad research question coming from my interest in why people engaged in making textiles by hand, through identifiably pre-industrial craft practices in a technological society. A broad exploration of background literature led to some foreshadowing ideas and further research questions. The research aims developed from these and were used as a guide rather than a directive. This deviation from traditional grounded theory might be seen as imposing theory on the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967), whereas from a constructivist perspective it is an acknowledgment of prior knowledge and an attempt to develop theoretical sensitivity that accounts for and builds on this (Charmaz 2006, Clarke 2005).

As research progressed I developed a more abductive, rather than inductive approach to grounded theory. Being inductive implies that problems and theory emerge from data (Glaser 1992, Christiansen 2007), whereas I had used abductive reasoning (Coffey and Atkinson 1996) by utilising initial theoretical and tacit knowledge concerning occupation and textile-making to identify ideas and problems. Additionally, an integrated process of data collection and analysis using analytical layers helped me to contextualise the findings socially, culturally and historically. The process incorporated insight and intuition (Reichertz 2007) coming from my personal experience as a textile-maker and guild member. Taking a constructivist approach led to an exploration of implicit statements and actions embedding them in wider socio-cultural networks it also incorporated reflexivity (Charmaz 2006).

Throughout the study through theoretical, purposive and opportunistic sampling I gathered a wide range of data utilising different methods in order to develop a holistic understanding of textile-making in the context of the guild and its wider networks. In the following sections I reflect on their contribution and highlight some of the issues

and dilemmas for me as an insider and complete member researcher, particularly in relation to participant observation, visual images and interviews.

12.4: *The use of participant observation: finding a balance*

In chapter five (5.1.1) I justified my use of participant observation as a primary method of data gathering during all guild activities and events throughout the fieldwork period. As a long-standing member of the guild I was already immersed in its activities; an initial dilemma for me as an insider was establishing a researcher role, in the first instance as a participant observer. This was helped at the outset by formal and open access negotiations, but because my research activities, for example note-taking, informal conversations, observing others and photography did not seem particularly unusual and blurred into the background, ethically I felt the need to offer gentle and informal reminders of the purpose of my activities as fieldwork progressed.

As a textile-maker and guild member balancing participation with observation presented a further dilemma. Active participation in itself was not a problem, but for me as a textile-maker, insider and complete member it could easily have taken precedence. As a researcher I had to make a conscious effort to mentally find space in order to observe, record and interpret action. Spradley (1980) describes the participant observer as alternating between roles and experiencing them simultaneously. I found that in meetings, because of their semi-formal nature it was possible to find a reasonable balance. I could participate in the more informal social action before and after the meeting and also find space to unobtrusively listen and observe. Workshops however, presented different problems. The fluidity of events, movement of people and in some instances changing environments meant that I had to consciously develop and hone my observation skills alongside a heightened reflexive awareness of my familiarity with the more mundane aspects of textile-making and group activity.

Writing up field notes can also present problems. How one records field notes depends on circumstance, the environment and participant's views of note taking. Ethnographers typically make rough notes in the field and elaborate on these immediately afterwards (Lederman 1990, Wolfinger 2002). I made notes discreetly during talks and workshops as events unfolded with the intention of elaborating them

outside the field. From her own experience of educational fieldwork, Lareau (1996) advises that because good field notes rely on memory one should write them up within twenty four hours. This was the process I decided to adopt; something that was occasionally problematic for me as a part-time researcher with work commitments.

12.5: *Balancing commitments*

As a part-time ethnographer, with work and home responsibilities, maintaining a balance between fieldwork and other commitments was not entirely straightforward. Others, Lareau (1996: 220) for instance, describe 'hybrid patterns' of commitments affecting fieldwork and discuss the strain of moving in and out of the field. The timing of guild meetings and workshops meant that they did not clash with work commitments, but as I have pointed out fieldwork involves the timely generation of field notes and ongoing analysis. If other commitments get in the way in the way of this process, it can mean too much distance from the data (Krieger 1985), something which happened, although not disastrously, in relation to one or two evening meetings.

As an insider researcher I found that balancing commitments was not simply a matter of considering research, work and home. I also needed to consider my on-going commitment to the guild, which sometimes took precedence. In the first evening meeting of the designated fieldwork period for example, I gave the talk; something which was scheduled months in advance. As a consequence the data from that meeting was a reflection on participation rather than observation. On a different level taking part in the tea rota or clearing up after a workshop, mundane activities that sometimes detracted from participation in other action, were, on reflection, a necessary part of my guild membership role and became a reciprocal part of my researcher role. In other words it was a part of giving something back; this also happened inadvertently through the use of photography.

12.6: *Use of photograph and visual images*

Still photography became an important way of gathering data during fieldwork; in workshops, at external events, courses and during my trip to Japan. From a realist perspective photography complemented field notes as a means of recording what happened. It contextualised events socially and culturally It was also creative and expressive.

The photographs also had a purpose for the guild, who used some of them to inform the public about different aspects of textile-making when promoting the crafts at external events. They were also used as part of a guild talk on shibori textiles in Japan. Because the boundaries between photography for research and for personal or guild use were often blurred, I felt the need to unravel my intentions and clarify purpose (Pink 2007). In some instances this appeared straightforward in that I intentionally set out to record events as they unfolded as 'a sequence of frozen moments' (Chaplin 2004: 35) that would form a visual narrative. But on reflection the images often served multiple purposes and each one could be viewed in numerous ways: as a record of action, a memoir, information, a symbol, a design source or as a guild resource for instance. I did not consider however, that photographs might complement interview data. On reflection during analysis and writing I could see their potential, I elaborate on this in the following section.

12.7: *Reflections on interviewing*

I pointed out in chapter five (5.1.24) that I had planned to carry out interviews alongside participant observation, but this proved impractical. As a part-time researcher working in higher education demands on my time meant that the ongoing generation of field notes and their analyses following participant observation during workshops and meetings proved sufficient to cope with. On reflection the decision to interview at the end of fieldwork proved advantageous. I was able to discuss a full range of issues emerging from field work with participants and address the aims which could not be explored through other methods, particularly where they related to subjective meanings, personal background and preferences.

I have explained the iterative nature of recruitment and the interview process in chapter five (5.1.26) and that a decision to continue interviewing would be made if, during analysis and writing, un-answered questions remained. In the event it was unnecessary to interview more than the original seven guild members. They contributed rich and detailed information, informing the study in subtly different ways. The interviews, with one exception, took place in the participants' homes, which gave me the additional advantage of being able to see where and how they worked as individuals, discuss their use of equipment and materials and their working practices. One participant chose, for practical reasons, to meet me elsewhere. Although I was familiar with her personal working environment and practices, on reflection, parts of this interview lacked the depth of contextual grounding achieved in others, in that there was no opportunity to draw on tangible examples from her immediate working environment to enhance and develop the discussion.

Tangible material objects formed an important part of most interviews; discussions often took place whilst looking at participants' work, environment and equipment. This could be because the tacit nature of craft knowledge is difficult to articulate (Dormer 1994, Polanyi 1958) and explanations became easier through the use of concrete examples. On reflection photography could have usefully added depth to interview data in this respect, particularly where participants described their use of equipment and materials through work in progress.

I have said in chapter five (5.1.28) that because I was known to participants the interviews were interactive and conversational. I continually reflected on my part in the process and read transcripts carefully to make sure that I was not too leading or dominating. As a researcher with past interviewing experience this concerned me at the time. On reflection however these interviews were of a different nature; they were necessarily co-constructive and less formal than others I had conducted, a forum for discussing issues as well as eliciting participants' personal experiences. It was interesting to find that in the majority of the interviews, as I concluded, participants took the opportunity to ask me about the research in more detail. Explaining the findings to them assisted in clarifying issues for both of us and, in some cases, prompted further discussion. This was possible because of the collaborative and

reciprocal nature of the interviews and my relationship with the participants, but it clearly emphasised the importance of not closing down the interview process too hastily. In fact the interviews were based on existing relationships which also impacted on fieldwork as a whole.

12.8: *Relationships*

In chapter four (4.2.4) I pointed out some of the problems that might arise from relationships in the field, something that I was acutely aware of before, during and after fieldwork took place. I have already referred to my role as guild member and as an insider my place in the group became part of the research process. In the course of fieldwork roles become integrated in that group membership, friendships and research roles merge and are engaged in simultaneously (Adler and Adler 1997). I found that for the most part my roles as guild member and friend were not transformed or compromised by my temporary role as researcher (Adler and Adler 1997), but one of the key issues for an insider, as Rosneil (1993: 204) points out is that friends are continual sources of information, data and theory, and this can be ethically and socially problematic. I was aware from the outset that potential problems might arise and found that on several occasions I was asked for my opinions, as a member and friend, on issues affecting the guild and the individuals within it. As a reflexive researcher I dealt with this by constantly questioning and reflecting on how my ideas and opinions impacted on the research process and findings, together with the ethical consequences, particularly with regard to confidentiality and the potential for exploitation. In this way reflexivity can be used as a tool to help think through the consequences of relationships, both in the field and within the final text (Okley 1992).

12.9: *Balance in the text*

As a reflexive researcher and an insider I also saw myself as a participant whose experiences could add depth to the study as a whole. Here the issue could be one of making the story fit my needs rather than the participants' (Cottle 2002). I pointed out in chapter four (4.2.6) that representation in the text is a question of balance. Ethically, and to ensure authenticity, I have tried to represent the guild and its

members fairly and give participants a voice where it matters recognising that individuals have different experiences, views and interests. As a consequence I and others weave in and out of the text contributing to the discussion at different points. Direct quotes and photographs were intentionally integrated into the text because they have an explanatory and illustrative quality offering credibility to my interpretations. In a further attempt to enhance credibility the chapters relating to the study's findings were read by a fellow guild member and participant. In general she found them a clear and fair representation of the guild and its members, but suggested that I add more detail about the membership as a whole, which I have done contextually. By offering a thick description I intend the findings to be transferable to other comparable settings and forms of occupation. Finally, for an insider, closure can present a dilemma not just in terms of disengaging from the field, but also from the study as a whole.

12.10: *Closure*

Closure, where fieldwork is concerned is inextricably linked to one's roles in the field. Disengagement needs to be considered in terms of the researcher's obligations and commitments (Labaree 2002). I found that by developing a strategy to manage closure, withdrawing from fieldwork did not present any particular dilemmas. At the end of the negotiated period I subtly phased out my researcher role, by reducing note taking and photography in meetings and workshops for instance and letting my roles as guild member and friend take precedence. Closure was usefully marked by a presentation of the preliminary findings from fieldwork and interviews to the guild in March 2006, but my continuing presence in the guild meant that an 'emotional connectedness' (Atkinson et al 2003: 55) remained. This allowed for on-going reflection on issues emerging from analysis and writing. The opportunity to re-consider issues post-fieldwork had clear advantages for me as a part-time researcher, I continued to reflect on and re-visit issues in the process of writing. My emotional connectedness to the guild and the topic area however, has in a sense made closing the study as a whole difficult, particularly where a grounded theory approach and theoretical sampling opens up new avenues for exploration. In this respect the aims that presented a dilemma at the beginning have helped me contain the study and bring it to a conclusion.

12.11: In conclusion

The naturalistic and longitudinal nature of this study has allowed for an in-depth exploration of textile-making in the context of a Welsh guild accounting for socio-cultural and historical influences and the meanings of engaging in making for its members. Through a reflexive and constructivist grounded theory approach I have taken account of my prior knowledge, interests and insights in constructing theory. Through the use of a wide range of data including participant observation, interviews, visual images, material culture and documentary sources I developed a holistic understanding of textile-making in the context of the guild and its wider networks. Through a process of critical reflection I have identified the key issues and dilemmas arising from the research design and process together with the impact of being an insider researcher before, during and after fieldwork. Engaging in the research process as an insider entailed a delicate balance between being a member of the guild, a textile-maker, friend and researcher. As a whole it was a reciprocal relationship that involved giving as well as receiving information and sometimes sharing the products of research, visual images for example.

Methodologically this study highlights the value of multiple forms of data and the integral use of visual and textual forms to develop a full interpretation of events. It also points to a false dichotomy in relation to positioning the researcher inside or outside. I found it was a question of contextually situating rather than positioning myself within the process as events unfolded, reflexively unravelling how the different roles I brought into the field and developed in it impacted on the research process, interpretation and writing. The final chapter draws together theoretical conclusions and implications for occupational science together with recommendations for further study.

Chapter thirteen:

Shaping textile-making as an occupational domain: theoretical conclusions

13: Introduction

In Chapter twelve through a process of critical reflection I concentrated on the methodological issues impacting on the study with particular reference to my role as a reflexive insider and complete member researcher. This chapter brings together the key conclusions in relation to different theoretical and philosophical perspectives, and considers the implications for occupational science and the study of occupation, recommending areas for further research.

The guild as a self-regulating and autonomous group with affiliations to a wider network of guilds and textile organisations provided a socio-cultural context for this study. Its growth and development over the past four decades has been influenced by social and educational trends and lifestyle changes. Through an opportunity to visit Japan and study the art of shibori, I was able to draw on textile-making practices in a different cultural context and develop an understanding of how global textile-networks shape practice. The core concepts emerging from the study's findings are that textile-making as an occupational domain is shaped by the people that engage in it individually and collectively in the context of social networks, culture and history. Ultimately this contributes to well-being through the creation and use of different forms of capital. In drawing together the conclusions from the findings chapters the following key concepts contribute to these central ideas:

- Inherent in textile-making as an occupational domain, or sphere of action, are a set of common elements, socio-culturally embedded traditional principles, processes and practices that are informed by past actions. Where these are transmissible and there is a continuity of traditions they can be used to guide current and future actions and practices. Where traditions are more fragmented as in the case of textile practices in Wales, eliciting a traditional pattern for action is problematic. Today through opportunities for travel and internet communication makers draw on an eclectic range of

cultural traditions and incorporate these into the process of making. The guild has a role to play in preserving and disseminating traditional textile craft practices internally and publicly, one of its key aims.

- Engaging with the different forms of textile-making, in other words through doing, involves the maker in highly skilled bodily interaction with equipment and materials and this takes considerable time and practice to master. As a craft, textile-making relies on continually developing tacit knowledge that is inherent in doing and difficult to articulate. The guild is instrumental in providing opportunities for its members to develop, learn and practice skills through workshops, lectures, courses and wider networking.

- Skills and tacit knowledge, forms of human capital, can be used to reiterate traditional textile-making practices and to extend and shape it in different ways. Ultimately however, shaping textile-making into new forms by moving beyond traditional and habitual practice relies on individuals' creativity and inspirations, influencing tastes, preferences and interests.

- The re-shaped textile-product is an objectification of textile-makers' skills, knowledge and creativity; socio-historical and cultural backgrounds, embodied in cultural capital.

- Active, prolonged, meaningful engagement in textile-making is embedded in individuals' personal histories, backgrounds and sensibilities. It has benefits for the individual who, in the process of becoming and being a maker develops a sense of self, personal identity and a deep sense of satisfaction from the process of making that ultimately contributes to personal well-being. In addition, through belonging to a guild individuals develop a collective sense of self and social well-being.

- The guild as an in-group of like-minded people with a common interest in textiles and through the development of trusting reciprocal relationships

amongst its members develops bonding social capital for private good. Through networking with other textile groups and organisations network capital is generated that can be used to sustain social relationships for common good. Where networking extends to include wider cultural communities and bridging social capital is created, textile-making also has the potential to contribute to social well-being for public good.

In the following sections I will consider how these concepts relate to different philosophical and theoretical perspectives on occupation.

13.1: *Shaping and capitalising on occupation: key perspectives*

In chapter two I offered a broad explanation of occupation, its relationship to health and well-being and contextualised it in relation to craft generally and textiles particularly in order to establish some foreshadowing ideas for the study (chapter 2.4). In chapter three I considered occupational science literature in more detail, deconstructing it in order to analyse my initial ideas and develop the study's design. In these early chapters I drew on pre-2004 perspectives of occupation as a foundation for fieldwork. Before then, with an acknowledgement of the importance of culture, society and time, occupation was generally considered from an individualistic perspective; key elements included 'its social and personal meanings' (Hocking 2000a: 64). There was an assumed relationship between occupation and health, probably arising from the discipline's close ties with occupational therapy (Hocking 2000a).

Where occupation was related to textiles and craft, Reynolds (1997, 2004) and Reynolds and Prior's (2003a and b) studies of women textile- artists with chronic illnesses emphasised subjective experience, the predominant view of occupation at the time. Dickie's studies of American craft workers (1996, 1997, 2003a and b) on the other hand, considered occupation from a broader socio-cultural and economic perspective. All of this work, albeit coming from different philosophical positions, informed this study.

Post-fieldwork however, a relevant debate has come to the fore in the Journal of Occupational Science concerning the contextual and individualistic nature of occupation (Dickie, Cutchin and Humphry 2006, Barber 2006, Cutchin, Dickie and Humphry 2006). Two positions emerge from this: The first (in order of presentation), drawing on the work of John Dewey, proposes that occupation is transactional and extends beyond individual experience encompassing a 'social, physical and cultural context' (Dickie et al 2006: 85); the second, drawing on phenomenology, proposes a first-person perspective 'to take account of how actors experience themselves to be affected by environmental-contextual factors' (Barber 2006: 94). In effect Cutchin et al (2006) consider themselves as constructivists and Barber (2006) emphasises the interpretive tradition. In this study I have explored occupation from both perspectives and taken account of others.

13.1.1: *The contextual nature of occupation*

In chapter two I began by positioning textile crafts as socially and historically constructed forms of occupation through exploring its pre-industrial domestic nature; the impact of a nineteenth century division of labour in Britain and the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement. This led to a consideration of the gendered nature of textile-making, its association with domesticity, femininity and women which, from a feminist perspective is part of a wider debate about what constitutes art or craft. I also considered the history of the guilds in Britain as a pre-requisite for an analysis of their current role in preserving rural craft traditions and shaping contemporary textile craft practice. Through considering the historical, cultural and social nature of our guild I uncovered some of the key influences on its growth and development such as age, gender, changing trends in adult education, lifestyles and environmental location.

In considering the nature of textile making as a form of occupation I took Nelson's (1988) definition of occupational form as a starting point and during fieldwork tried to elicit the common elements of textile-making, its patterns and processes. These patterns, I found, were embedded in doing, and whilst as Clarke et al (1998) point out they are observable, without a consideration of material culture, social context, culture and tradition, they remain superficial. By considering occupational form in relation to traditional practices in the fieldwork locations of Wales and Japan, together with an

in-depth exploration of what textile-makers do in a cultural context, I was able to account for the influence of cultural traditions and how globalisation has led to practice cutting across cultural boundaries leading to an eclectic mix of patterns or forms that now shape contemporary textile practice. Arguably occupational forms are a foundation for shaping textile-making as an occupational domain as a sphere of action when considered in a socio-cultural and historical context.

Textile making itself is a constructive and arguably a co-constructed process. Textiles as a product are constructed by the maker, or makers in collaboration, who develop and learn skills through bodily interaction with equipment and materials, but also with others. In this way makers utilise physical capital in the form of equipment and materials and generate human capital. Today textile-making links art and science and incorporates the use of technology. Knowledge and understanding is acquired contextually through interacting with like-minded others, by learning from master craftspeople, during courses and workshops. The guild offers a context for access to learning opportunities (this was also highlighted in Dickie's (2003a) study of quilt makers), networking and sharing ideas all of which contribute to the shape of textile-making.

I have argued that creativity and inspiration are the ultimate constituents for shaping and re-shaping textile-making as occupation. Both are inherent in individuals, but develop in a socio-cultural and historical context. In chapter two (2.2.8) by drawing on Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) work, I introduced creativity as an interactive system where an innovative and creative individual brings something new into the domain where its contribution is assessed and judged by experts and connoisseurs in that sphere. From this perspective creative textile-making, shaped and re-shaped by individuals working alone or collectively, can be seen in a wider social and cultural context. It also positions contemporary textile-making in relation to the historical separation of art and design from craft in Western culture and a view that craft is concerned with skill rather than creativity.

The findings from this study indicate that design, art and craft are blended together in the process of making and that creativity requires skill, but skill does not necessarily lead to creativity. In other words highly skilled makers can produce exquisite textiles

that replicate a traditional form or pattern, or through an openness to experience, experimenting with materials, risk-taking and lateral thinking they can re-shape textile-making and develop new forms. In chapter nine (part 2) I argued that the extent to which this happens depends on context. Within the guild for instance innovations are relatively small scale, whereas textile designers and makers who interface with other disciplines and with industry can push the boundaries in highly innovative directions.

In addition to inspiration and creativity, I have argued that individual preferences, tastes and interests together with collective tastes in the form of fashion and trends also shape occupation. Preferences, tastes and interests are historically, socially and culturally constructed and are, in turn, shaped by individuals' personal, educational and social backgrounds, embodied in cultural capital.

Up to this point I have emphasised a constructivist approach to exploring how textile-making as an occupational domain is shaped and re-shaped by contextualising it in relation to its history, traditional practice, culture, environment and social setting. A full understanding of textile-making as occupation however, required an exploration of it as an experience from the perspective of the makers themselves.

13.1.2: *Experiencing textile-making: perspectives on meaning*

In chapter three, through a deconstruction of occupational science literature, I pointed out that the nature of occupation could not be understood without considering its meanings. The findings from this study identify that becoming and being a textile-maker with a sense of self is a subjective experience that holds similar and different meanings for individuals engaging in the same occupational domain. I found that makers shared a sense of commitment and dedication to their craft; they also shared a sense of integrity, and sensibilities in the form of an affinity for materials and a sophisticated sense of touch. They gained satisfaction from the process of making and by taking a phenomenological, first person perspective I found that the meanings derived from engaging in the process of making differed. Some participants gained satisfaction from the intricacies of the process whilst others derived deep satisfaction and flow from the rhythm inherent in weaving or spinning. I also found that becoming

and being a maker was enhanced or inhibited by a range of factors such as personal confidence, encouragement from others, family circumstances, life events and time. Belonging to a guild was also a meaningful experience; members developed a collective sense of self through opportunities to share ideas and information and socialise with like-minded others. Becoming and being a textile-maker with a sense of self contributes to personal identity and subjective well-being.

As an insider, a member of the guild and a textile-maker, I also brought myself into the study and by taking a hermeneutic perspective I was able to take account of my own experience as a maker and personal meanings whilst remaining open to others. Uncovering personal meanings was both a reflective and a reflexive process that led me to question my own motives for making. Meanings were also co-constructed; for instance in relation to how we value ourselves and our own work, what this meant in the context of the guild and wider society.

In chapter five (5.2.5) I also considered that meanings are symbolic. From this perspective the equipment and materials that makers invest in and the time to acquire skills and perfect the process of making symbolises a sense of commitment and dedication to the craft. Engaging in the process of making and the deep satisfaction and flow that comes from the rhythm of working a loom or spinning wheel, symbolises a sense of well-being, an opportunity to wind down from the pressures of 21st century living. The textile product, an objectification of individual skill, creativity, inspiration and perseverance is also symbolic of the self, the maker's existential being. Additionally symbolic interactionism, with particular reference to Blumer (1969) offered a way of conceptualising meaning as a social product arising from joint or collective action which is informed by participants' past actions.

13.1.3: *A symbolic interactionist perspective*

Textile-making as an occupational domain is shaped by individual and collective action and the findings from this study identify that both aspects are important. Individual makers from different social backgrounds and with different interests actively engage in making textiles alone sometimes reiterating past patterns of action or incorporating these into new forms of action. In the context of the guild makers

engage in joint action by coming together in workshops to explore a particular aspect of making. Through the network of guilds that make up the AGWS&D we join with like minded others on courses, in seminars and conferences; through yet wider and international networks this cuts across cultural boundaries. Collective or joint action whether it is situated locally, nationally or internationally shapes textile-making whilst maintaining a connection and continuity with tradition. This is complicated however, by the influence of global and cross cultural perspectives.

13.1.4: *Global and cross-cultural perspectives*

In chapter three (3.15) I identified the importance of a global and cross-cultural perspective for studying occupation in order to understand its significance in post-industrial societies. Textile-making, as I have pointed out, now cuts across cultures and this has become possible through international travel and advances in communication. Textile-makers can network together globally to share practices, interests and ideas. As a consequence textile-making is now shaped by an eclectic mix of skills, inspirations and cultural traditions. In addition networking and opportunities to join with like-minded others leads to the generation of capital that has broader implications for textile-making in contemporary society.

13.1.5: *Capitalising on textile-making as occupation: a socially inclusive perspective*

The guild as a cohesive group of like-minded people who have trusting and reciprocal relationships develops bonding social capital for the mutual benefit of its members. This is extended where guilds network together and with other textile-related organisations and groups to generate network capital that can support the creation of social capital for common good. Through developing networks and relationships with wider communities there is the potential to be socially inclusive and extend social well-being through the development of social capital for public good.

In summary, a theory of how textile-making as an occupational domain is shaped through individual and collective engagement in a socio-cultural and historical context and how capitalising on textile-making as occupation can extend its benefits

to a wider community was constructed from different theoretical and philosophical perspectives. The next section addresses the implications of this for the study of occupation.

13.2: Implications for the study of occupation

In this study I have concentrated on an occupational domain to allow for an inclusive view of occupation in context of a group of like-minded people in order to account for social, cultural and historical influences (Dickie 2003a). From this perspective I concur with Dickie et al (2006: 84) that 'occupation and context are inseparable', extending beyond individual experience. Because of its multi-faceted and complex nature however, a full and holistic picture of occupation arguably requires more than one perspective. The first-person perspective proposed by Barber (2006) is also important in order to account for the meaning that individuals derive from engaging in occupation; Cutchin et al (2006) acknowledge that an understanding of individual experience is necessary, but consider it should be secondary. I have intentionally brought contextual, first-person and other perspectives together in an attempt to gain a holistic view of textile-making as occupation.

Furthermore, a holistic understanding of the complex and contextual nature of human engagement in occupation necessarily requires the use of theory from a range of disciplines. In this study, in addition to occupational science I have drawn theory from the fields of arts, crafts, psychology, education, sociology, history and anthropology particularly to support the findings. Focusing on textile-making as an occupational domain has highlighted a requirement for different philosophical perspectives and an eclectic use of theory in order to understand its complexity in context. This implies a need for focused research questions that can penetrate complexity to uncover the essential elements or essence of occupation.

13.3: The study's contribution to occupational science

The findings from this study add to the growing body of occupational science knowledge in several key areas. In the first place the study offers a new understanding of textile-making as an occupational domain, its forms, patterns, principles and traditions in a socio-cultural and historical context. Consequently it advances understanding of occupational form and the nature of craft textile-related occupations with particular reference to weaving, spinning and dyeing, together with the role of individuals and groups in shaping occupational form. Secondly it adds to understanding of the development of craft-knowledge and skill in relation to textiles and the relationship between hand-work and the use of technology. Thirdly it identifies how creativity, personal preferences and inspirations shape the domain. In addition it offers a particular understanding of occupational identity: a sense of self through becoming and being; a collective sense of self through belonging to a guild. Finally the study identifies the meanings of occupational engagement in textile-making and its impact on personal well-being, together with the wider benefits of occupational networking; the generation of capital and how this is utilised in the wider community for social well-being. The following sections expand on these key areas to establish how this study adds to the existing literature.

13.3.1: *Textile-making as an occupational domain: forms, patterns, principles and traditions*

In this study I have conceptualised textile-making as an occupational domain, a sphere of action, by initially drawing on Dickie's (2003a: 121) use of the term to encompass knowledge, actions and culture, and account for historical influences and shared values. Dickie refers to Csikszentmihalyi (1996) who, in his study of creativity, conceptualises the domain as symbolic, a part of an interactive system. Here, I have used the term domain to encompass the complexity and breadth of textile-making as a set of inter-related practices that share common elements. Whilst I concur with Dickie that textile-making practices are socially, culturally and historically constructed, in drawing together the findings from this study I offer a more detailed account of the forms, patterns, principles and traditions inherent in textile-making, with particular reference to weaving, spinning and dyeing.

As Dickie (2003a) points out, studies of occupation outside the context of disability are relatively rare in occupational science. In relation to craft occupations, Dickie's studies of American crafters (Dickie 1996, 1998), which offer an ethnographic account of self-employed craft workers, together with her studies of American quilt-makers (Dickie 2003a, 2004), are perhaps the most significant. However, Dickie (2003a) concentrates on the role of learning and later (Dickie 2004) its creative aspects, rather than on the nature of quilting as an occupational form. This study details the complex nature of textile-making and its particular occupational forms, its traditional and habitual patterns of action and principles, taking into account the environment, socio-cultural and historical contexts. In doing so I build on Nelson's (1988, 1994) and Nelson and Jesop-Thomas's (2003) concept of occupational form as the pre-existing structures that guide occupational performance.

Nelson (1988) and later Nelson and Jesop-Thomas (2003) conceptualise occupational form as objective and external to the person and his/her occupational experience. Nelson and Jesop-Thomas describe it as having physical and socio-cultural dimensions. Whilst I concur that these dimensions are crucial to an understanding of occupation - in this study for example the equipment, materials and environment were key elements in developing an understanding of the nature of textile-making - I also found that a separation of these elements from human action, or doing, was limiting. This study identifies that an in-depth understanding of occupational form in terms of 'pre-existing structures' required an analysis of habitual patterns of action and an understanding of traditions or past patterns of action together with the environmental, geographical and socio-cultural context in which it takes (or took) place.

13.3.2: *The development of craft knowledge and skill*

In her study of the role of learning in quilt-making in the context of a quilting guild, Dickie (2003a) uncovered the structured and less structured aspects of learning the craft and the role of the individual and the group in the process. She identified clusters of learning that encompassed the 'how to' aspects of making, history, aesthetics, culture and learning about one's self as a maker.

In this study I approached the nature of knowledge, skills and forms of learning differently. One of its strengths is that through first undertaking an in-depth analysis of the nature, forms, principles and patterns of textile-making as it was practiced by individuals in the context of the guild, taking into account its traditional patterns of action, I was able to identify the detailed and complex nature of textile-making knowledge and skill. I then identified its different forms and means of dissemination together with the resources and contexts for learning. Above all, the experiential nature of learning and the tacit nature of knowledge, together with the time, motivation and dedication taken to acquire it, emerged strongly from the data. The development of textile-making skill was a protracted and cumulative process, coming from sustained occupational engagement as a bodily interaction with equipment and materials, encompassing the relationship between hand and technology. This was reinforced by studies from other disciplines, notably Farrar and Trorey's (2008) study of dry stone wallers and Marchand's (2008) study of craft apprenticeship, together with Sennett's (2008) recent work on the craftsman. In a similar way to Dickie (2003a), I also found that the guild had a strong facilitatory role in the learning process.

13.3.3: *Shaping the domain: creativity, preferences and inspirations*

The core concept emerging from this study is that textile-making as an occupational domain is shaped by the people that engage in it, individually and collectively. Whilst I have identified that such occupational engagement requires the development of skill and craft knowledge, it is clear that shaping and re-shaping textile-making as an occupational domain, in other words changing or adding to traditional patterns and practices, also requires creativity and inspiration as a catalyst. It addition it is shaped by individual and collective tastes and preferences, which are socio-culturally constructed.

In the occupational science literature creativity is generally approached in terms of its meaning for the individual. Hasselkus (2002) conceptualises creativity as a source of meaning and Dickie (2004) describes quilters' experiences of being creative. Blanche (2008), in looking at creativity as a form of expression, identifies that creativity is process and product, or outcome oriented. These orientations are reflected in my study

where creativity is expressed both though the process of making and in the outcome. Both have meaning for the maker. By taking the concept of creativity further, however, and identifying how creative and innovative practice can shape and re-shape textile-making as an occupational domain, this study adds a new dimension to the body of knowledge relating to creativity and occupation.

13.3.4: *Occupational identity: a sense of self and a collective sense of self*

In developing a holistic understanding of textile-making practices and processes, the knowledge and skills required and how as a form of occupation it is shaped through creativity, it became evident that these aspects were inseparable from its meanings. In addition the personal qualities and attributes that individuals bring to textile-making are clearly influential in shaping it as an occupational domain. With reference to Wilcock's (2006) concept of becoming, being, and belonging in relation to occupation, I identified how becoming and being a textile-maker are intimately connected to a sense of self and our identities, and how a collective sense of self develops through belonging to a group such as the guild.

Occupational identity presents itself as a relatively strong theme in the occupational science literature, notably through the work of Charles Christiansen (1999, 2000, 2004) for example. Christiansen's work offers a theoretical overview of the relationship between daily occupations, personal and social identity and well-being, taking into account external influences. This study adds to the body of knowledge concerning identity and occupation by exploring these issues in the context of a specific occupational domain. From my own experience and through interviewing committed textile-makers, I have developed a detailed understanding of what it means to become and be a maker, how this is related to our sensibilities, personal backgrounds and development. I also uncovered the deep sense of satisfaction that comes from engaging in the whole process of making, bodily and spiritually, together with how this contributes to a sense of personal well-being. In addition I have identified how, by belonging to a group such as the guild and working with others through shared meaningful occupation, members can develop a collective sense of self and social well-being.

13.3.5: *Occupational networking and the generation of capital*

The concept of capital and its relationship to occupational groups and networks has hitherto received little attention in occupational science. Exceptionally Ross (1998), in a study on mental health in work contexts, briefly refers to a marginalisation of personal and social forms of capital at the expense of economic capital and Wilcock (2006) mentions social capital in relation to health and well-being. Neither work explores the concept in any detail. In this study, by considering the benefits of textile-making to local and wider communities, I have identified how different forms of capital, particularly personal, social and network are generated and utilised in the context of the guild and other non-proximate groups and communities for private, common and public good This study offers new insights into the value of considering how different forms of capital are generated and utilised in the context of sustained, meaningful occupation by occupational groups and networks and the consequential benefits for individuals, the groups themselves, wider communities and society.

In summary this study highlights the need for an in-depth understanding of the forms, and traditional principles of occupation, its habitual patterns of action, together with its socio-cultural, environmental and historical contexts as a foundation for understanding its practice and how this is shaped and changed in the course of time. In the context of textile-making, practice requires detailed craft-knowledge and skill and is shaped by creativity and innovation. Sustained occupational engagement in textile-making also contributes to individuals' sense of self and occupational identity. Where it is practiced in the context of a like-minded group such as the guild and through networking, it also contributes to a collective sense of self and well-being.

Finally, and in view of its eclectic nature, this study also has the potential to contribute to other disciplines and particularly those mentioned in section 13.2 above. Although it was not my intention to relate the findings directly to occupational therapy, as an occupational scientist I have concerns about the profession's relationship with craft and as an occupational therapist and educator I feel it is necessary to consider the implications for the profession and student education.

13.3.6: *The implications for occupational therapy*

The occupational therapy profession's relationship with craft changed considerably in the course of the twentieth century, moving away from its use as a creative and therapeutic medium in the early part of the century towards a more reductionist task-based approach latterly through its alliance with medicine (Wilcock 2002). This has undoubtedly influenced the value and status of crafts within the profession today. The findings from this study highlight the complex, creative and highly skilled nature of craft which is not easily reducible to a series of tasks. The findings confirm Fidler's (2000: 100) theory of 'person-activity-congruence', in that participants shared certain sensibilities such as an affinity for textile materials and a sophisticated sense of touch. Taking into account that the participants in this study are intrinsically motivated adults and choose to engage in textile-making; as a meaningful occupation it has therapeutic benefits. Individuals who engage in the creative crafts can derive high levels of satisfaction, self-esteem and personal well-being from particular aspects of the process. In a recent editorial in the British Journal of Occupational Therapy, Reynolds (2009: 1) points out that such occupation promotes well-being and occupational therapist are well placed to draw clients' attention to its possibilities. As occupational domains crafts such as textile-making also have the potential to be socially inclusive and can cut across cultural boundaries, an important consideration in contemporary professional practice.

The final section of this chapter addresses the study's limitations and puts forward recommendations for further study.

13.4: Limitations and recommendations

Bearing in mind that occupational science is a relatively new and emerging discipline, to understand occupation in more depth, one could argue that all of the areas listed above to which this study contributes require further research. In addition, taking into account the debate surrounding the study of occupation from different theoretical and philosophical perspectives, further work is also required on this front (Cutchin et al 2006; Cutchin, Aldrich, Bailliard and Coppola 2008).

The findings from this study relate to a single case, a Welsh guild of weavers, spinners and dyers. Its limitations lie particularly in its socio-cultural specificity; it is also discipline-specific, relating to committed group of t textile-makers with particular areas of interest, knowledge and skill. To fully understand creative craftwork as a form of occupation and ultimately how it influences quality of life and well-being, occupational science would benefit from naturalistic studies of craftspeople in different cultural settings and across different craft disciplines. The following recommendations relate to more specific aspects of this study that could be taken forward through further research:

- The impact of traditions on occupational form and performance in relation to craft.
- Occupational engagement in textile-making and its meanings in the context of virtual (online) group or community.
- An exploration of the relationship between individuals' sensibilities and creative forms of occupation.
- The relationship between flow, bodily interaction, repetition and rhythm.
- Further understanding of the therapeutic and social benefits of creative crafts for people with disabilities and socially excluded groups.
- The impact of technology on the development of creative handcrafts as occupation.
- How global networks and communication shape occupation.
- How different forms of capital are accrued through occupation and utilised for the benefit of wider communities.

13.5: In conclusion

This chapter has concentrated on the conclusions relating to the study's findings and how different philosophical and theoretical perspectives have contributed to the construction of a contextual and substantive theory. As a product this ethnography offers a reflexive, visual, interpretive account of how textile-making as an occupational domain is shaped by individuals who come together to share personal experiences, attributes and skills in a group such as the guild. Ultimately through

sustained occupational engagement and developing wider socio-cultural networks this can create a form of capital available for guild members and others to draw on as a means of enhancing quality of life and well-being. Methodologically it recounts a personal research journey from an initial idea to a final product and closure; highlighting the value of diverse forms of data and the complexity of situating the researcher in reflexive ethnography. The findings imply the need to study occupation as a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon contextually and from a range of philosophical and theoretical perspectives. It contributes to occupational science knowledge in several key areas and has the potential to contribute to other disciplines.

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APPENDIX 1:

Information for participants

On headed paper

Tel: xxxxxxx
xxxxxxxx(home)
e-mail: xxxxxxx

28th April 2004

Dear xxxxxx,

As you are aware, I am currently a part-time PhD student in the Department of Occupational Therapy Education at the University Of Wales College Of Medicine, Cardiff. I am researching the individual, social and cultural meanings of creating handcrafted textiles in contemporary British society in relation to health and well-being.

I would like the xxxxxx Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers to participate in the research project and I would be grateful if, in your capacity as chairperson of the Guild, you could bring this proposal to the attention of the Guild committee for their consideration in the first instance.

I have enclosed a separate sheet (enough for the committee) which briefly explains the research, how data will be gathered and what this will mean for the guild and its members together with timescales and assurances of how the research will be ethically conducted.

With the committee's approval, I will send an explanatory letter and information sheet (as enclosed) to all guild members. I am also willing to talk to the guild about the research and answer any questions they may have, if the committee feel this is appropriate.

In the meantime if you or the committee have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me, by phone or e mail, at work or at home (details above).

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

Jill Riley

Version 1.Jill Riley 06/04

On headed paper

Home address: xxxxxxxx

Tel: xxxxxx (work)
xxxxxx (home)
e-mail: xxxxxxx
10th June 2004

Dear Guild Member,

I am currently a part-time PhD student in the Department of Occupational Therapy Education at the University Of Wales College Of Medicine, Cardiff. I am researching the individual, social and cultural meanings of creating handcrafted textiles in contemporary British society in relation to health and well-being.

As a member of the xxxxxx Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers, I would like to carry out the next phase of my research within the guild, with members' approval. This will enable me to use my own experience as a weaver and a guild member as a part of the research together with the experience and views of other members.

I have enclosed a separate sheet which briefly explains the research, how data will be gathered and what this will mean for the guild and its members together with timescales and assurances of how the research will be ethically conducted.

If, for any reason you do not wish to take part in the research or have any queries now or at any time in the process please do not hesitate to contact me, by phone or e-mail, at work or at home (details above).

Yours sincerely

Jill Riley

Handcrafted Textiles in Contemporary Society

My project on "Handcrafted Textiles in Contemporary Society" explores the relations between textile handcrafts, culture, occupation and well-being in Britain today. An important part of this research is concerned with how people engage in making textiles, individually and as members of a guild.

How can the guild help?

From September 2004 to July 2005, with members' approval, I will gather data for the project by observing actions and events whilst participating in meetings and workshops and through interviews with individual members.

What will this involve?

Like other guild members I sometimes ask questions, make notes and take photographs in the usual course of events. However, for the period of the research I will need to make more detailed notes, take photographs and ask to interview individuals specifically for research purposes.

Assurances:

In accordance with the ethics of research I need to ensure that exploring contemporary issues with a group such as the guild is conducted with full consent. To that end I give the following assurances:

- The research will be conducted without disruption to events and in an unobtrusive manner.
- Privacy will be respected. No details of private conversations or of a personal nature will form any part of the project.
- Confidentiality: any information will be treated as entirely confidential.
- Anonymity: neither the guild nor any individual member will be named in the report written for submission for the degree. Pseudonyms will be used where appropriate.
- Use of photographs: any photographs will be shown to individuals concerned and included in the report only after obtaining written permission.
- Interviews: anyone interviewed will be asked for their consent, made aware of the purpose of the interview and given these assurances separately.
- Members have the right to withdraw from the process at any stage.

Will the guild be informed of progress?

Progress reports will be included in the guild newsletter to give members an opportunity to comment on findings and interpretations as the research progresses.

How will the findings be used?

The research will be written up as a thesis and may also be published in academic journals and presented at conferences.

Interview Information Sheet:

My project on 'Handcrafted Textiles in Contemporary Society' explores the relations between textile handcrafts, culture, occupation and well-being in Britain today. As you are aware, I am currently exploring these issues through my participation and observations at guild meetings, workshops and events. I am also interested in what textile-making means for individual craftspeople and will explore this area through a series of one-to-one interviews.

Interview format:

The interview will be loosely structured and conversational in nature. I have identified some topics I would like to explore with you, but remain open to any issues that you feel are important.

Timing:

I anticipate that the interview will last approximately one hour and will be held at a mutually agreed time and in a location to suit you.

Recording:

In order to ensure accuracy and make sure that I do not miss any information, or interrupt the flow, I would like to record the interview using a small digital Dictaphone. I will subsequently transcribe the recording verbatim and send a copy to you together with my initial analyses for comment.

Ethical Assurances:

- *Confidentiality:* The process and content of interviews will be treated as private and confidential.
- *Anonymity:* Interviewees and locations will not be named in the report written for degree submission or in any subsequent reports or presentations of the research findings. Pseudonyms will be used where appropriate.
- *Data storage*: Recordings will be stored initially on a digital memory card and transcribed data on a C.D. These will be kept in a secure place until the research process is complete after which information will be deleted.
- You have the right to withdraw from the process at any stage.

Signed:

Jill Riley, Researcher
Occupational Therapy
School of Healthcare Studies
Cardiff University

Version 1.Jill Riley 06/04

Interview Consent Form:

(Please initial the boxes and sign the form if you are willing to take part)

I have read information regarding the interview process: ☐

I understand the assurances given: ☐

I understand that I can withdraw at any time during the interview process: ☐

I am willing to take part in an interview: ☐

Signed: Date:

Print name:

Please return this form to:

Jill Riley, Researcher
Occupational Therapy
School of Healthcare Studies
Cardiff University

Version 1.Jill Riley 06/04

APPENDIX 2:

Extract from field notes:

'The silk spinning workshop'

&

Examples of visual data analysis

6. 15/1/05: Silk spinning workshop: 9 participants

	Tutor: Eleanor	***Initial codes***
1	Arrival 10am – usual sequence – signing in, paying	*Setting up,*
2	dues, arranging room, coffee. Eleanor had brought	*socialising,*
3	a selection of different silk fibres, some for sale and	*providing, sharing*
4	others to use in the workshop (arranged on table at	
5	one end of the hall). We arranged our chairs in a	*Organising,*
6	semi-circle with in space between to work.	*arranging*
7	Everyone had brought their own equipment -	*Owning*
8	spinning wheels, carders etc. There were no	*(specialised tools*
9	complete beginners in the group, although the	*and equipment)*
10	range of expertise varied, with some being familiar	*Range of expertise*
11	with spinning silk and others not.	*Familiarity*
12	Our spinning wheels differ in design (some	*Fitness for purpose*
13	traditional and others modern), although they all	*Trad v. modern*
14	fulfil the same purpose. Some of them need	*Preparation*
15	assembling and all need some adjustments after	*Adjustment*
16	being packed for travelling to the workshop. D had	*Adaptability*
17	an unusual wheel that could be packed away in	
18	pieces and re-assembled for use. This is a	
19	personalised wheel, painted blue and with a design	*Personalising*
20	he had painted on himself (image (I).3). All the	
21	wheels were originally purchased in kit form from	*Specialist*
22	specialist suppliers. For us, the wheel is a piece of	*equipment*
23	working equipment that has a purpose rather than	
24	for decoration, although some spinners like their	*Aesthetics*
25	wheels to be decorative too. Other prefer a practical	
26	wheel designed for travelling (I.11). All are now	*Practicalities*
27	costly.	*Expense*
28	We need to be familiar with how the wheel works	
29	in order to be able to maintain it effectively and get	*Technical*
30	the best results from it. We make adjustments	*/practical*

31	before the session begins – oiling, positioning the	*knowledge*
32	drive-band (I.1,2). We discuss some of the	
33	differences between wheels from a technical	
34	perspective	
35	Eleanor opens the session with a short talk about	*Formal tuition /*
36	silk – the process of cultivation and the various	*information giving*
37	types of fibre. She explains the outline of the day.	*Special*
38	We will all spin from 3 different types of silk –	*terminology*
39	bombyx, noil and mawatta cap. They require	*Processes, prep*
40	different processes, preparations and skills in	*and skill*
41	spinning (I.4). She begins by sharing out the	
42	mawatta caps, giving one to each participant for	*Sharing*
43	spinning later (I.5). Eleanor demonstrates 2	
44	different ways of spinning bombyx – a high quality	*Alternative*
45	smooth silk that can be spun into a fine, strong and	*methods*
46	lustrous yarn. The fibres are long and can be spun	*Knowledge of*
47	from the tip of the finger (the fibres are arranged in	*materials*
48	parallel and looped over the finger and then drawn	
49	off the fingertip into a twisted yarn (I.6, 12)) or end	*Process*
50	on, holding the fibres parallel between the thumb	*Sequence,*
51	and forefinger carefully drawing them into a	*Coordination and*
52	twisted yarn (I.8).	*skill*
53	We start by adjusting the tension on the wheel –	*Technical know-*
54	these fibres require a high twist and a slow feed	*how*
55	onto the bobbin. For the more expert spinners this	*Expertise*
56	quickly becomes an automatically smooth	*Skill as second-*
57	operation. The wheel is treadled rhythmically, at a	*nature*
58	consistent speed and the spinner concentrates on	*Rhythm,*
59	drawing out the fibres to the desired thickness, with	*concentration*
60	the right amount of twist. For others the process is	*Mastering the*
61	frustrating – the fibres feed in too quickly making	*process,*

62	the yarn too thick and lumpy, or there are breaks in	*frustrations*
63	the yarn. Spinning is highly skilled and takes time	*Time and patience*
64	and patience to master. It involves a strong sensory	*Sensory perception*
65	awareness, visual and tactile together with well-	
66	developed hand-eye coordination and controlled	*Hand-eye*
67	movement to treadle (I.7). It also involves	*coordination,*
68	judgement, making minor adjustments in pressure	*Reflection in action*
69	between the thumb and forefinger that grip the	
70	fibres in one hand and the thumb and forefinger of	
71	the other hand controlling the amount of twist that	*Control*
72	is allowed to travel up the yarn from the wheel. It is	
73	essential to monitor tension and ensure controlled	*Monitoring and*
74	distribution in the amount of twist. This becomes	*adjusting*
75	intuitive once the techniques are mastered (I.8, 9,	*Intuition*
76	11). At the same time the spinner needs to control	*Mastery and*
77	the wheel giving it a gentle turn to gain momentum	*control*
78	begin treadling and work up a rhythm (I.10 *see*	*Rhythm*
	below).	
		posture
79	Posture and seating are also important in order to	*Ergonomics*
80	work comfortably and without strain or tiredness.	*Comfort*
81	There needs to be a comfortable distance between	
82	the seat and the wheel to allow for a relaxed posture	*Posture*
83	and even treadling (I.13). The chairs provided in	
84	the Scout Hall are not necessarily right for	*Adaptation*
85	everyone, but are adequate for the duration of a	*Compromise*
86	workshop.	
87	We move onto silk noil. This is a short fibre and	*Adjusting skill and*
88	requires a different approach. Again Eleanor	*technique to*
89	demonstrates the technique and we are given a	*materials*
90	small amount of fibre to try. This fibre is a form of	
91	silk waste and is lumpy in texture. There is a need	

92	to understand the fibres and how they are likely to	*Understanding /*
93	behave when spun before a yarn can be designed	*affinity for*
94	and created. These short fibres need to be carefully	*materials*
95	teased out before spinning for the best results. The	*Process and*
96	teasing out process continues during spinning	*technique*
97	requiring a high degree of control to prevent the	
98	yarn from breaking (I.15). If too much fibre is	*Control*
99	allowed to feed in the yarn becomes thick and	*Skill*
100	lumpy if too few fibres it becomes thin. Mastering	*Mastering control*
101	control means that we can make decisions about the	*Decision making*
102	nature of the yarn we are spinning and work to a	*and design*
103	design rather than the result being left to chance.	*Practice and*
104	Clearly control comes with practice and experience	*experience*
105	(I.16). Experienced spinners such as David can then	*Reflection / flow*
106	work at speed whilst reflecting on other issues	
	(I.17).	*Preparation and*
		techniques
107	D cards the short fibre and works from a rolag and	*Skill*
108	long-draw technique. Carding requires a sequence	*Sequence and*
109	of rhythmical strokes, passing the fibres from one	*rhythm, flow*
110	carder to the other and combing them into a parallel	
111	form (I.20, 21). One carder is drawn firmly across	
112	the other in a rhythmical sweep (I.22).	*Concentration*
		Sense of purpose
113	At the beginning of the process we concentrate, the	*Working separately*
114	room is silent. There is a sense of purpose, we work	*yet together*
115	together yet separately concentrating on our own	*Proficiency*
116	projects (I.18 *see below*). As we become more	*Sense of touch*
117	relaxed and proficient we also chat to each other.	
118	The more expert spinner can spin through feel and	*Mastery and time*
119	touch and doesn't need to concentrate exclusively	*Task concentration*
120	on the task. I can do this now after years of	*& mastery*
121	perfecting spinning techniques, but others need to	

122	concentrate more on the task in hand.	
123	Although we sit and spin, this is not a static	*Rhythmical*
124	activity. There is a sense of speed and rhythmical	*movement*
125	movement, the spinner in tune with the wheel (I.18,	*Being in tune, flow*
126	19), and in flow.	
127	We break for lunch (shared) and discuss our plans	*Sharing and*
128	for summer school, the golden jubilee year for the	*socialising*
129	association and some ideas for the all Wales event	*News, ideas, plans*
130	in the autumn. We also discuss the forthcoming	
131	programme for the year. Lucy arrives with the	
132	membership cards.	
133	After lunch we spin the mawatta cap. Eleanor	*Fibre preparation*
134	shows how to prepare the cap, carefully peeling	
135	back its layers (I.23, 24). The fibres are very long	*Process*
136	and require pulling out into a roving prior to	*Strength – physical*
137	spinning (I.25). The hands are placed inside the cap	*Improvising*
138	and pulled forcibly apart (I.26). The roving is then	
139	wound around a core (we use pens) to keep it in	*Technique and skill*
140	place during spinning (I.27). Eleanor demonstrates	
141	the spinning technique – the very long fibres need	
142	to be firmly drawn out and then twisted into a fine	*Control*
143	thread (I.28). Once again the fibres and the amount	*Coordination*
144	of twist must be controlled (I.30, 31). The left hand	*Sequence*
145	pulls out the fibres whilst the right controls the	
146	twist and tension of the fibres as it feeds through	
147	the orifice and winds onto the bobbin. Whilst the	
148	hands are working the foot continuously treadles to	
149	maintain an even rhythm and speed (I.32). Once the	
150	co-ordinated sequence has been mastered it	*Rhythm*
151	becomes second nature and can be picked up at any	*Bodily*

152	time. I rarely spin and generally do so at guild	*coordination*
153	events only, but it has become second nature, rather	*Second nature*
154	like swimming.	
!55	Most of us quickly get into a rhythm and enjoy	*Rhythm*
156	spinning this once we are used to it. Although R	*Enjoyment*
157	and P who haven't spun from caps before find it	*Difficulty in*
158	difficult to control at first because the fibres are so	*control*
159	strong. I advise them to make a finer roving so that	*Advice*
160	fewer fibres feed in together.	
!61	There is some discussion about why we spin. We	*Meanings of*
162	generally agree that it is for the sheer pleasure that	*spinning*
163	mastering the techniques gives us and the	
164	satisfaction of producing a yarn from raw fibre. We	
165	talk about what we do with the yarn (is spinning an	*Pleasure form*
166	end in itself?) Although we enjoy the process, we	*process and*
167	also want to be able to make use of the yarns – and	*purpose*
168	need to consider their purpose. We discuss how	
169	knitting has started to become fashionable again, or	*Fashions / trends*
170	has it? W says there is no real evidence of this – we	
171	are told by the media that celebrities are knitting	*Media*
172	and it has hit the nightclub scene, but wool shops	
173	are closing. We also discuss the difficulties of	*Specialist supplies*
174	purchasing weaving yarns. David attributes this to	
175	the mills closing and the fact that yarn manufacture	
176	in Britain is in decline. We also discuss the high	*Costs of materials*
177	price of raw and manufactured silk yarn which in	
178	turn raises the price of craft items made from silk –	*Marketing*
179	these have become extremely expensive and	
180	difficult to market. This leads to a conversation	
181	between David and Eleanor (both of whom sell	*Making ends meet*
182	their work) about the difficulties of making any	*Economics*

183	profit from textiles (particularly hand-woven).	
184	There is some discussion about the most successful	*Successful crafts*
185	form of craft. Eleanor thinks this could be jewellery	
186	– it sells well through the craft centre where she	
187	displays her work.	
188	David talks about his yearning to be a full-time	*Vocation*
189	craftsman (he is also a priest in a small rural parish).	
190	Towards the end of the afternoon Eleanor shows us	*Information giving*
191	how to extract raw silk fibres from the cocoons by	*Technical,*
192	gently heating them in a pan to break down the gum	*techniques &*
193	And draw off the fibres for reeling (I.34, 35). She	*process*
194	improvises by using a vegetable brush to take up	*Improvisation*
195	the fibres in parallel. We have an interest in	*Technical*
196	understanding the nature of silk and its properties.	*Understanding of*
197	We appreciate the need for this understanding	*materials*
198	before we can make use of the fibre.	*Importance of process*
199	The afternoon passes quickly and we break for tea,	
200	although J and M are in full flow and want to	*Flow, motivation,*
201	complete the task before it is time to clear up (I.36).	*determination*
202	At 4pm we share the task of clearing up. We take	*Clearing up*
203	our leave and look forward to the next event in	*Looking forward*
204	February	

Thoughts and reflections:

1. *The workshop followed the usual pattern in terms of preparing the environment, setting up and clearing up and formalities such as paying dues, signing in etc. Like the batik workshop it was organised, had a theme (silk spinning) and was led by a member who had specialist knowledge and expertise in the subject.*
2. *The workshop was about learning new techniques, honing existing skills, working with different materials and understanding them. Spinning is a highly skilled activity that requires time to develop, experience and master. Members visibly demonstrated patience, determination, concentration and coordination in carrying out the sequences involved.*
3. *It is a sequential process which involves reflection-in-action. For the in-experienced, learning a new process or skill can be frustrating, but once mastered, the expert can experience flow and can also divert attention to other things – conversation, internal thoughts etc. It is also, at this stage, rhythmical and relaxing*
4. *The ability to be creative in designing and spinning yarn depends on one's level of skill and understanding of the fibres and their properties*
5. *Enjoyment and satisfaction comes from both the process and the materials. The act of spinning is an enjoyable experience in itself, so is the handling of the fibres (touch, sensibility). It can also be tiring and uncomfortable if the physical conditions are wrong.*
6. *There is also a need to understand the equipment used, how it works, how to assemble and maintain it*
7. *Again, in terms of occupational engagement this is hands-on 'doing', engaging with materials*

Reflections on method and process:

The use of photography in this meeting was extremely valuable. I used it to record the processes and sequences involved in fibre preparation and spinning and tried to take pictures at each stage of events. Because people were settled in one place during the workshop and we worked through the different processes and different fibres together it seemed less difficult to record events. I relied more on photography than on note taking this time. Again I kept the camera on automatic and this time took close ups as well as general shots. I wanted to capture the detail of hand coordination and control – using the spinning wheel, preparing fibres etc. in order to capture the essence of skill involved. I also captured the movement (although this happened incidentally) and might otherwise have missed this as a detail in writing the field notes.

I wrote up the notes immediately after the workshop, then printed off the photos (with no digital manipulation – 300 ppi), made further notes on these together with some preliminary analyses and then extended the original field notes. I will feed the analytical categories into the emerging pattern of developing themes. The developing framework indicates where the fieldwork can answer questions and where it cannot. So far I am not uncovering subjective meanings for individuals and how they create individual work (this happens outside the guild). I need now to begin developing a rationale and format for the interviews, decide who to include and why.

Examples of visual data analysis

mage 10: (6.76-78) *Preparing spin, bodily engagement with quipment and materials*



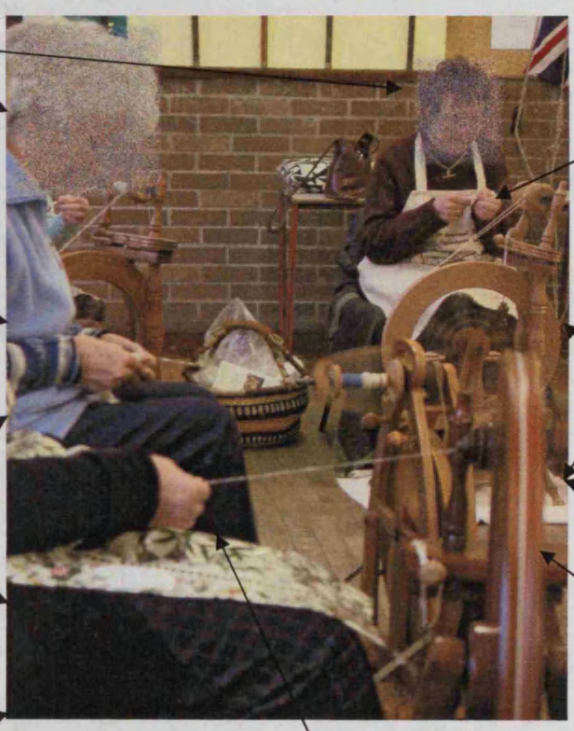
Gaining momentum, A gentle turn of the wheel

Gaining control - drawing back the fibre under tension

Positioning the body to begin treadling – leaning slightly forward

Foot poised on treadle – gentle pressure to start

Image 18: (6. 112-115) *Developing rhythm and flow*



Bodily co-ordination: teasing out the fibre whilst working the wheel, continual readjustments are made

A sense of purpose & quiet concentration

Stabilising the whee to maintain rhythm

Concentration to maintain momentum

A sense of movement

Developing a rhythm

Working together, yet separately

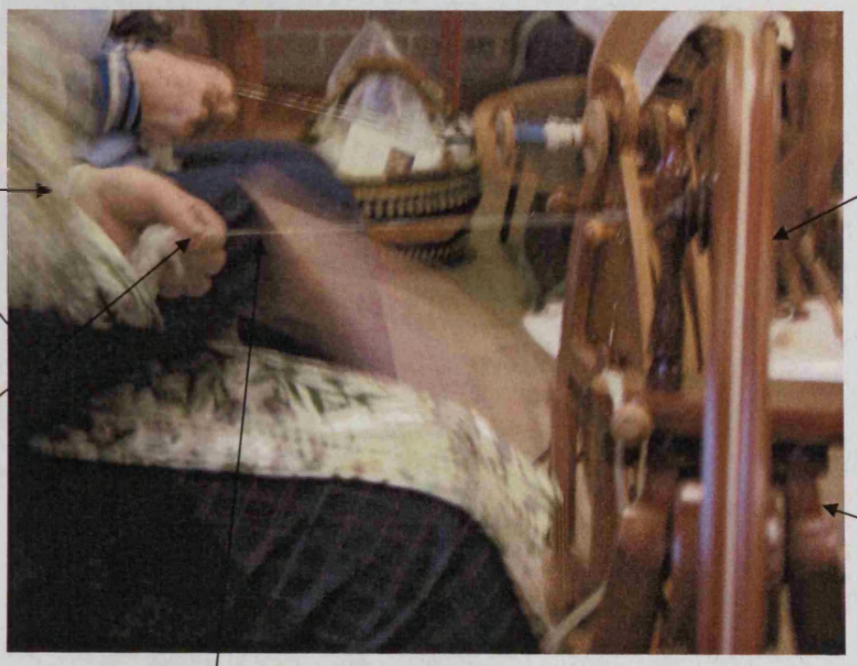
Beginning to work at speed, consistent rhythmical treadling

Being in tune with the wheel

Drawing out the fibre under tension

Image 19: (6. 123-126)

Being in flow



Whole body movement, co-ordinated & controlled

A sense of touch – controlling the fibres between the thumb and forefinger

A sense of speed and rhythmical movement as the wheel is treadled consistently faster

Being in tune with the wheel

Carefully teasing out fibres into a fine yarn

APPENDIX 3:

Interview schedule

Interview Schedule:

Influences on making and creating:
Personal history: background and how they became interested in making textiles

Personal interests and preferences:
Particular areas of interest, preferences for making, what influenced these? How they were developed, future developments

Inspiration:
What inspires / influences making, nature of inspiration where it is found

The development of knowledge and skills:
The ways in which knowledge has been accumulated and skills developed, influencing factors.

Guild membership:
From the individual's perspective, what it means to the individual: how membership has influenced (or not) skill development

Gender and age:
Draw on observations and explore individual's views

The environment:
Personal (space), social and cultural – how these factors affect the individual textile maker

Enhancers and inhibitors:
The factors that enhance occupational engagement and those which might inhibit it, effect on quality of life, personal well-being

APPENDIX 4:

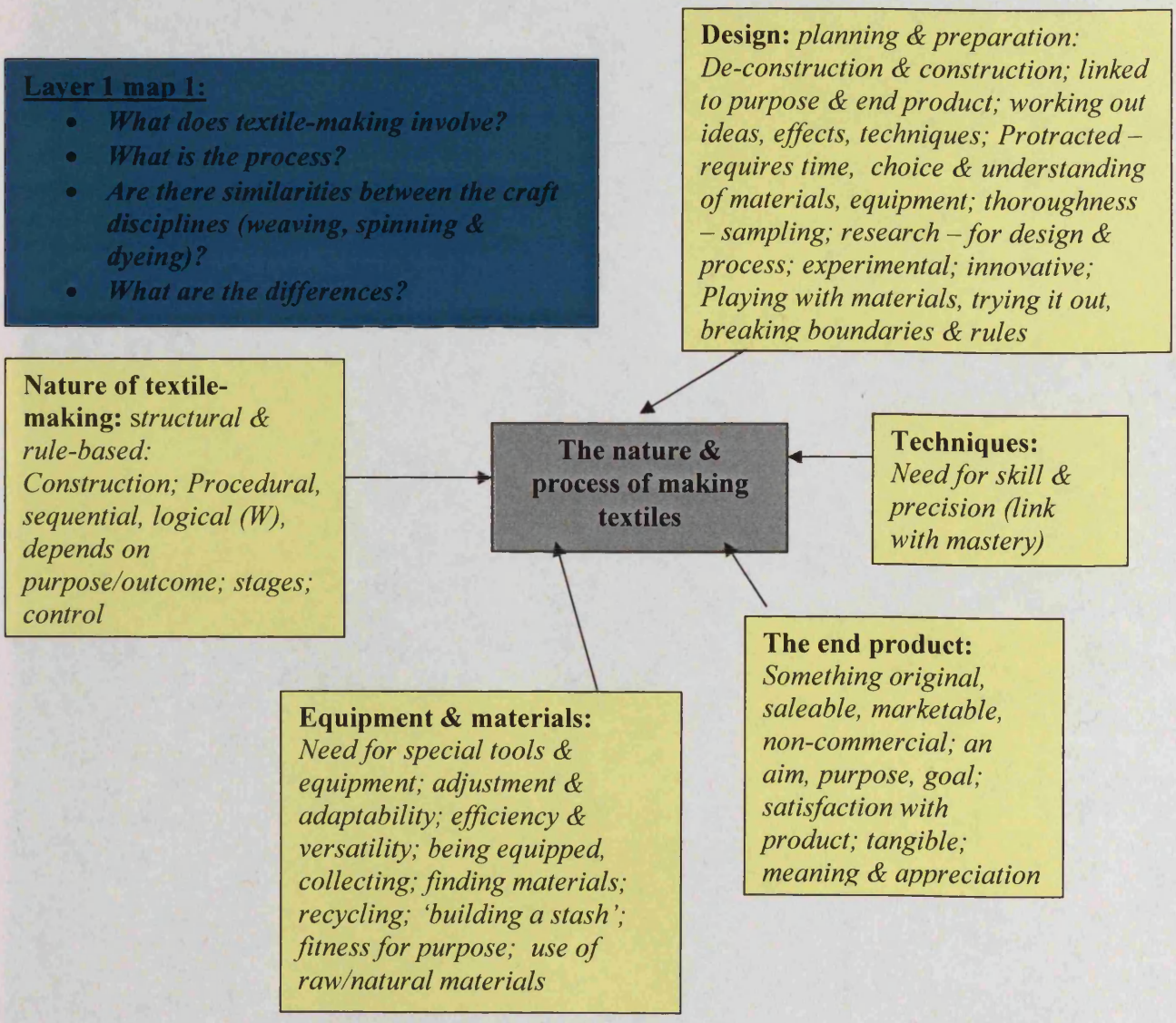
Analytical maps

Analytical maps:

Layer one: (maps 1 to 5)

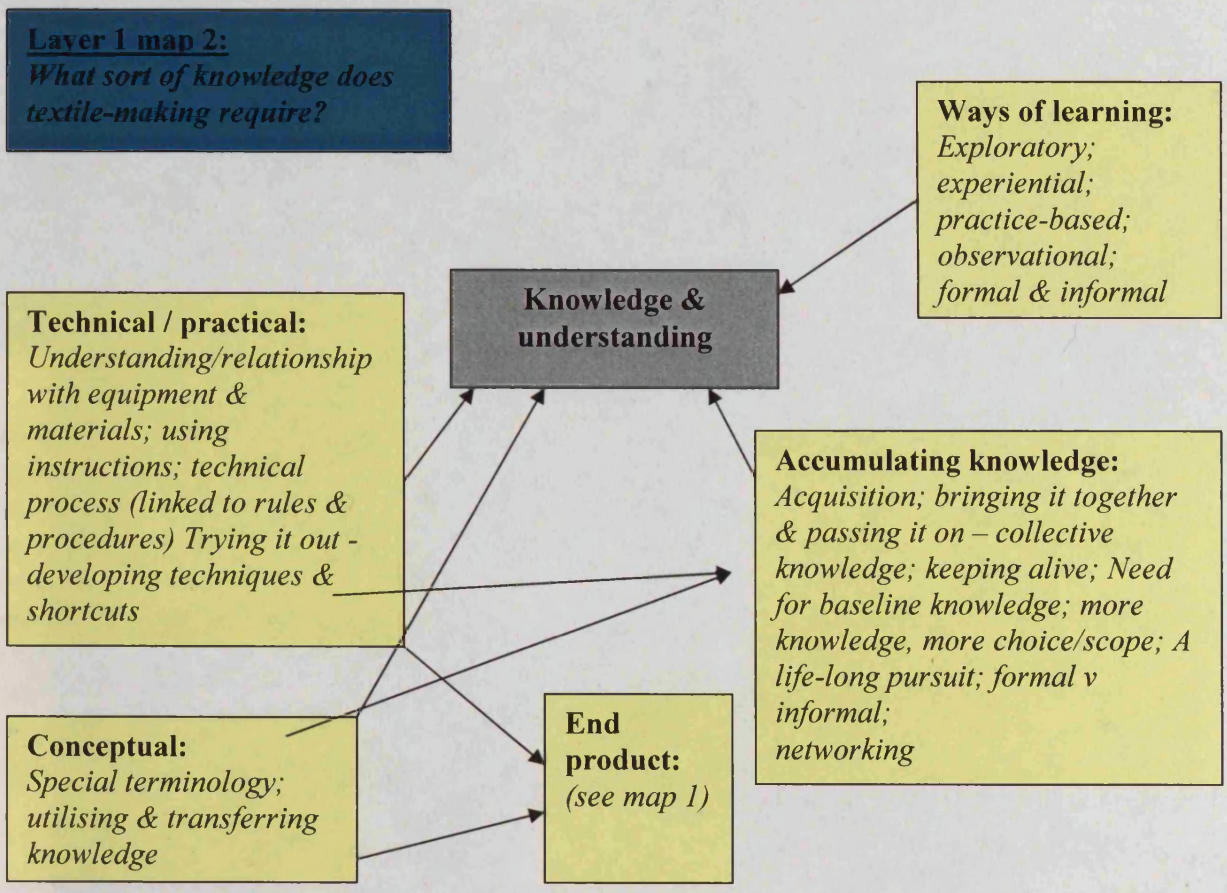
In constructing this layer I focused specifically on textile-making as a form of occupation by questioning its nature and process; the similarities and differences between textile craft disciplines; how knowledge and understanding is developed; the abilities and attributes of individual makers and the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence making. This layer also uncovers the nature and purpose of the guild and the impact of being a guild member on occupational engagement.

The nature and process of textile-making (map 1):



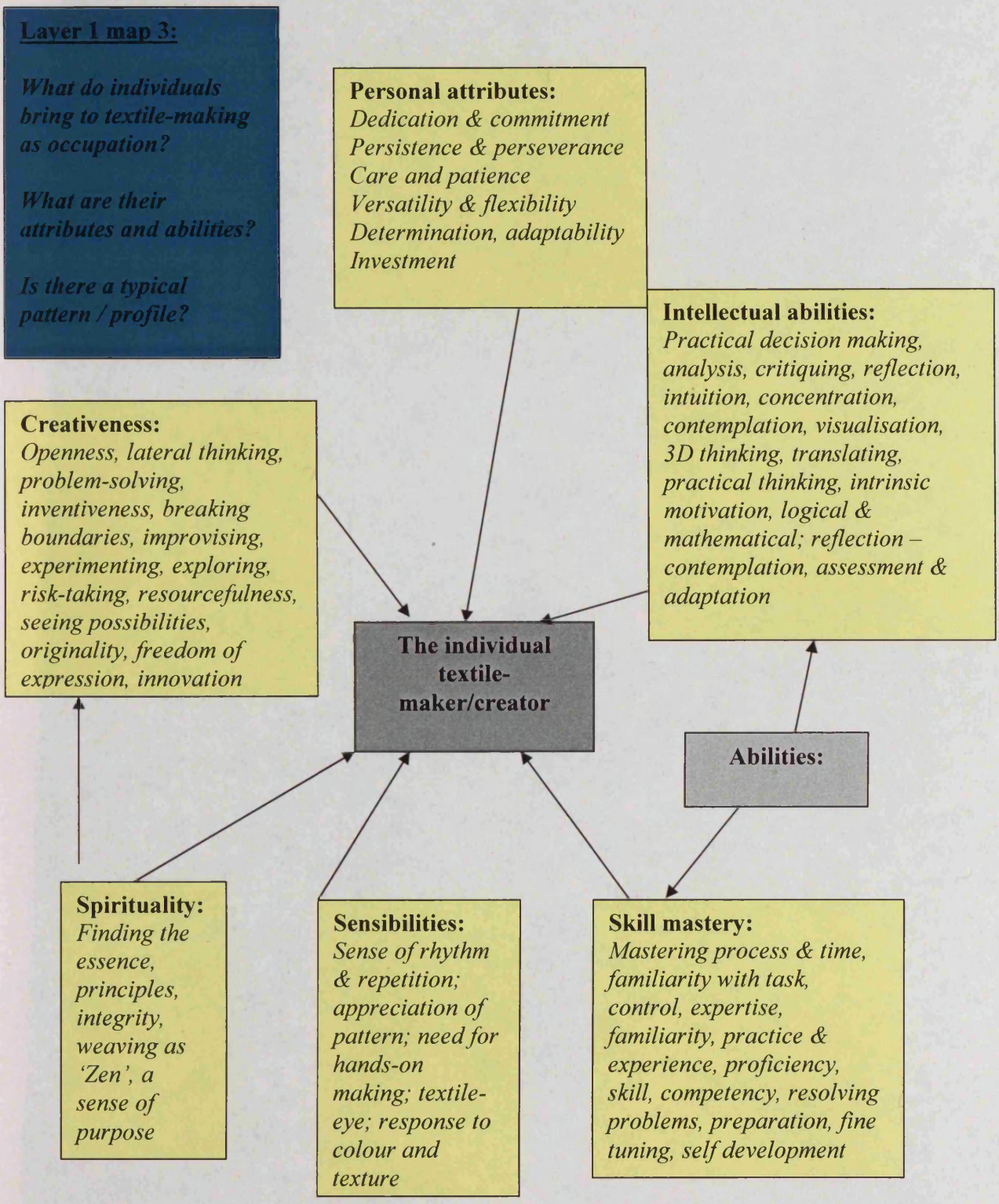
Knowledge and understanding (map 2):

Developing knowledge and understanding can take two forms: *technical and practical* or *conceptual* and individual makers appear to develop a combination of these.



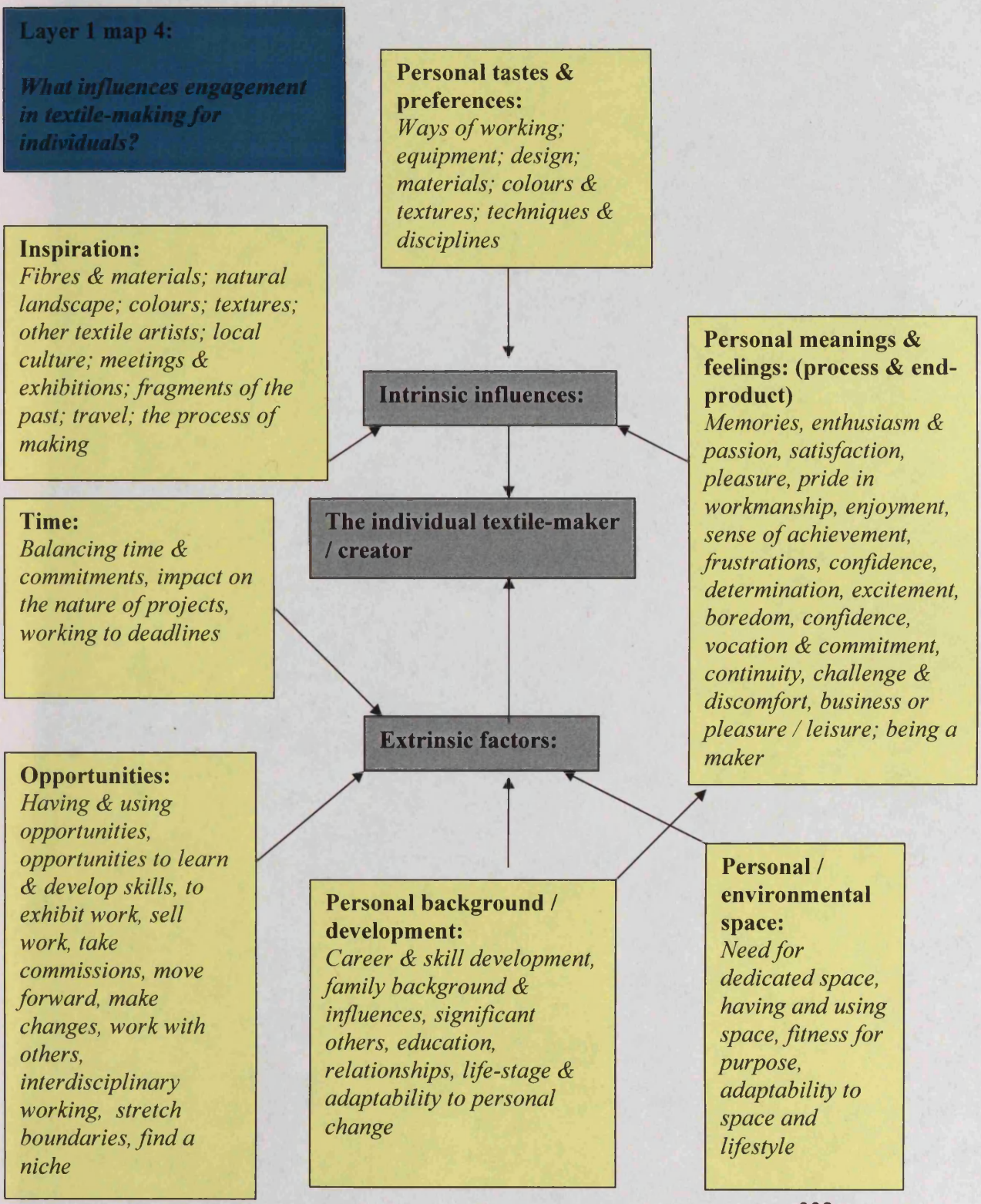
The individual textile-maker / creator (map 3):

Individuals bring to their craft personal attributes; abilities, both practical and cognitive, and sensibilities, some of which they have in common with other textile-makers.

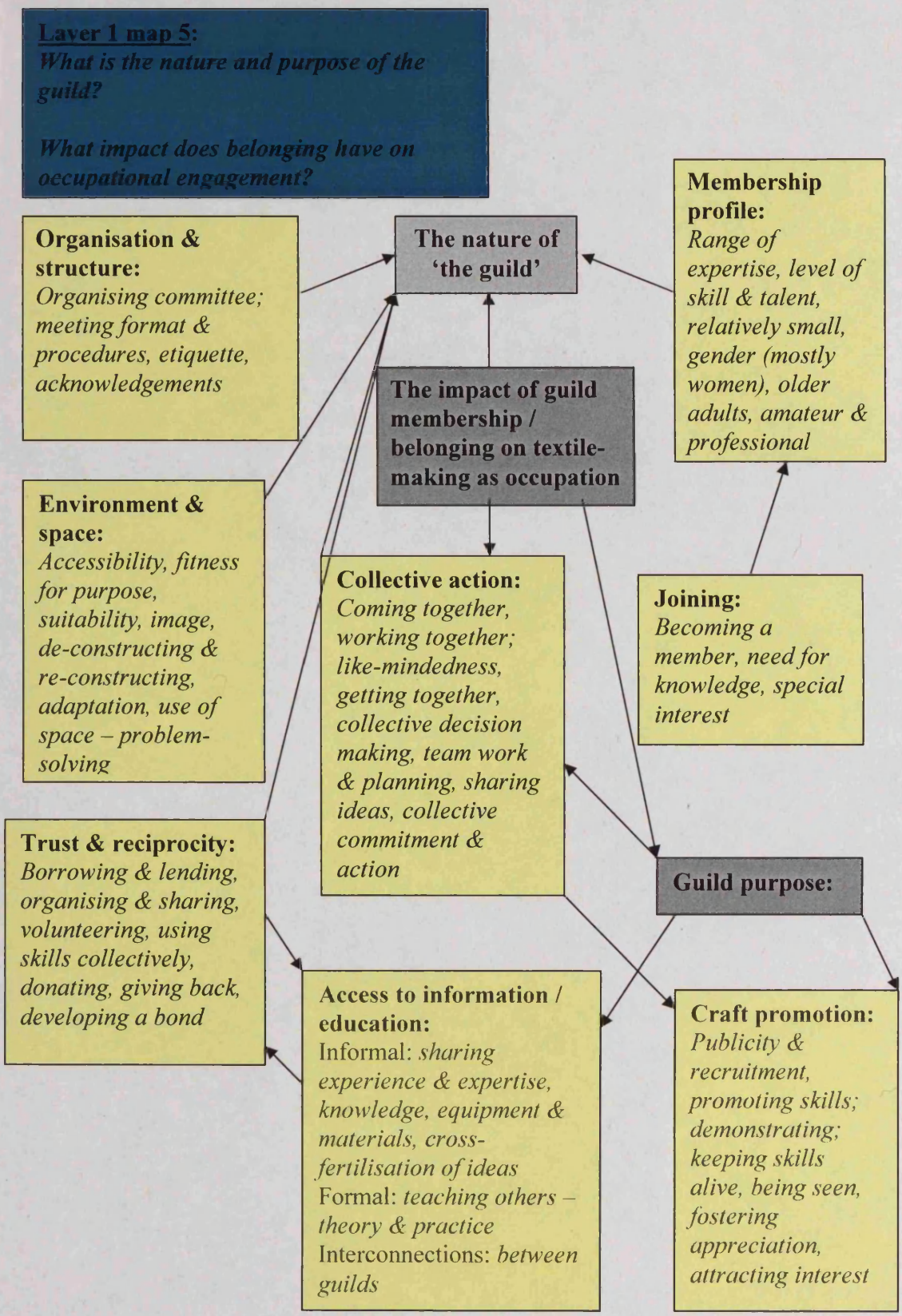


Intrinsic and extrinsic influences (map 4):

Engaging in the process of making and the nature of the end product is shaped by individuals' personal meanings and feelings towards the process and outcome; tastes and preferences and sources of inspiration and extrinsic factors such as time; space; opportunities and background.



The nature and purpose of the guild (map 5):

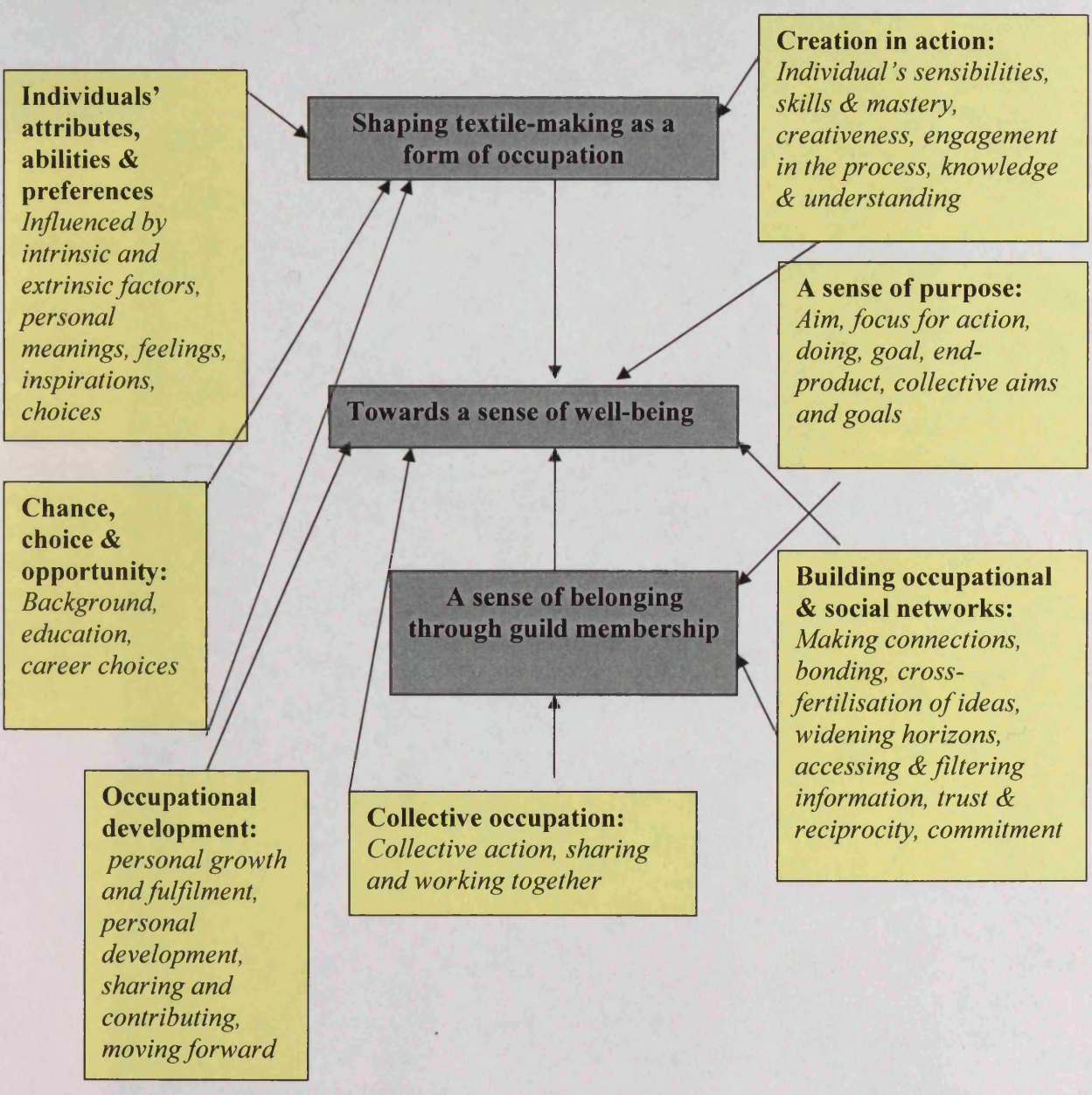


Layer two (map 6):

Taking into account the categories generated and developed in layer one, the second layer of analysis moves to a deeper level by questioning how the individual shapes textile-making; what impact guild membership has on the occupational domain, and ultimately how textile-making might impact on well-being.

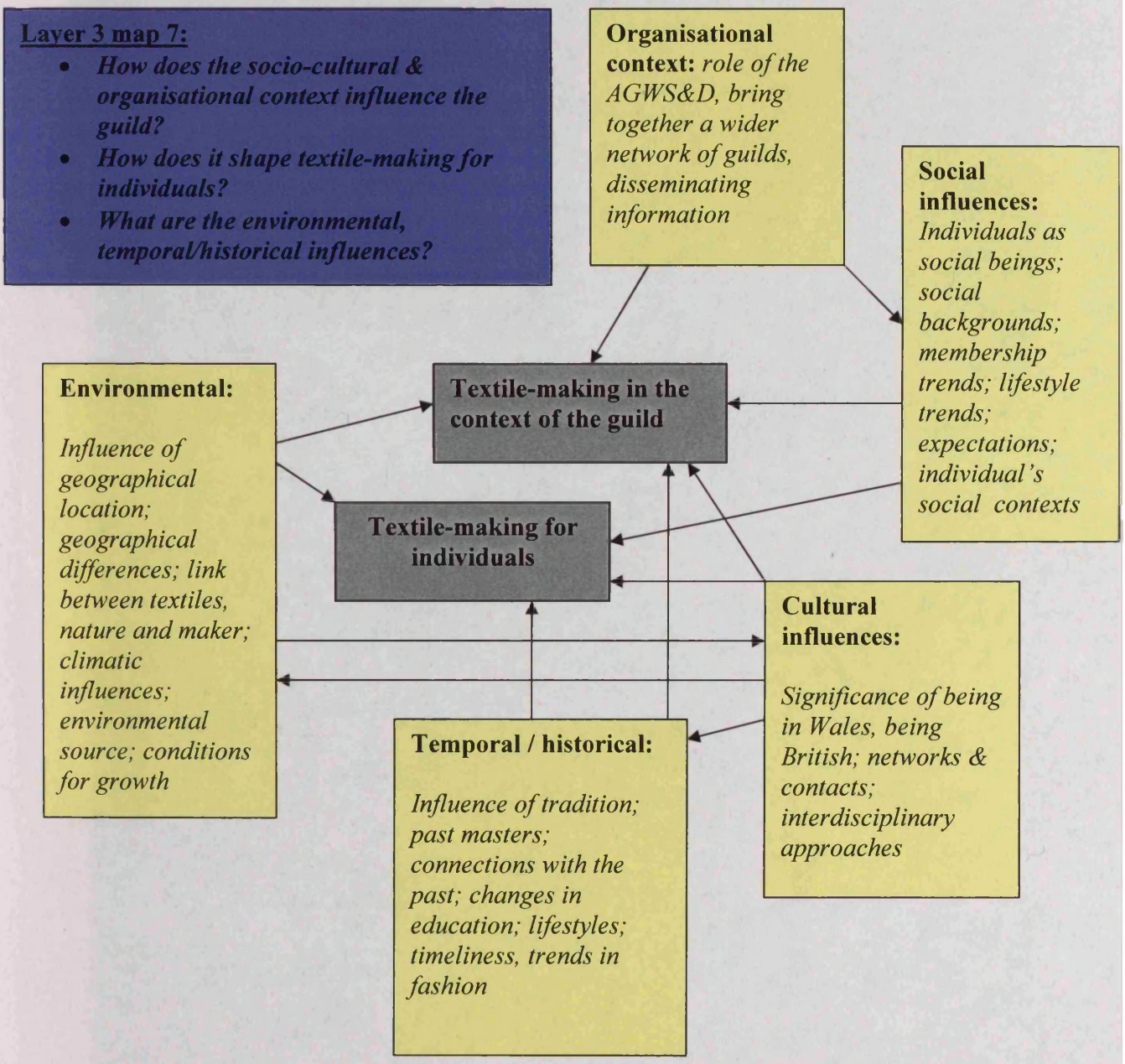
Layer 2 map 6:

- ***How does the individual shape textile-making?***
- ***What impact does guild membership/belonging have on the occupational domain?***
- ***How does engagement in textile-making impact on well-being?***



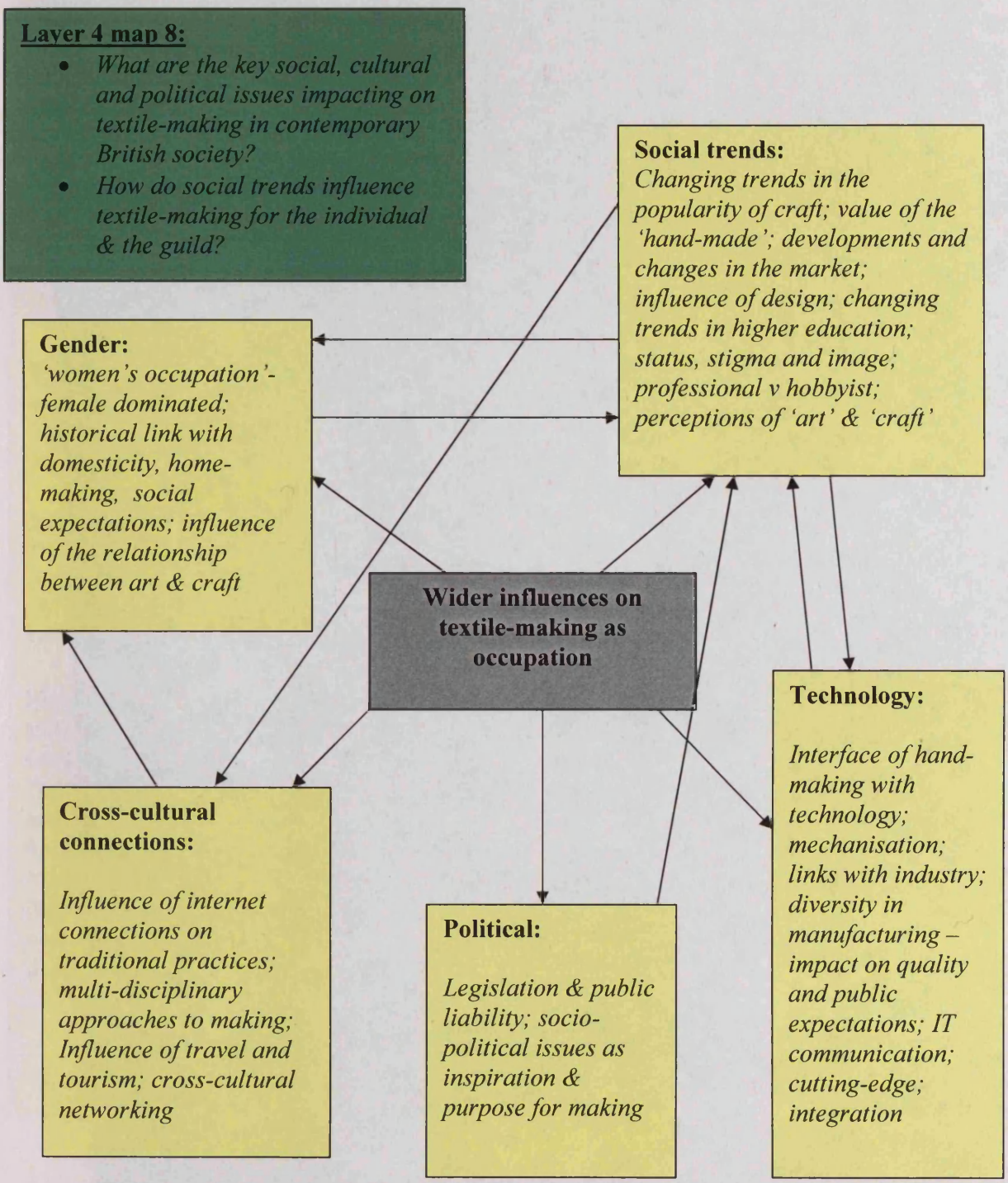
Layer three (map 7):

Moving on from layers one and two, the third layer of interpretation considers the socio-cultural, environmental, temporal and historical influences that shape textile-making for the individuals and have a bearing on the guild as an occupational group. The guild however, operates in a wider organisational context.



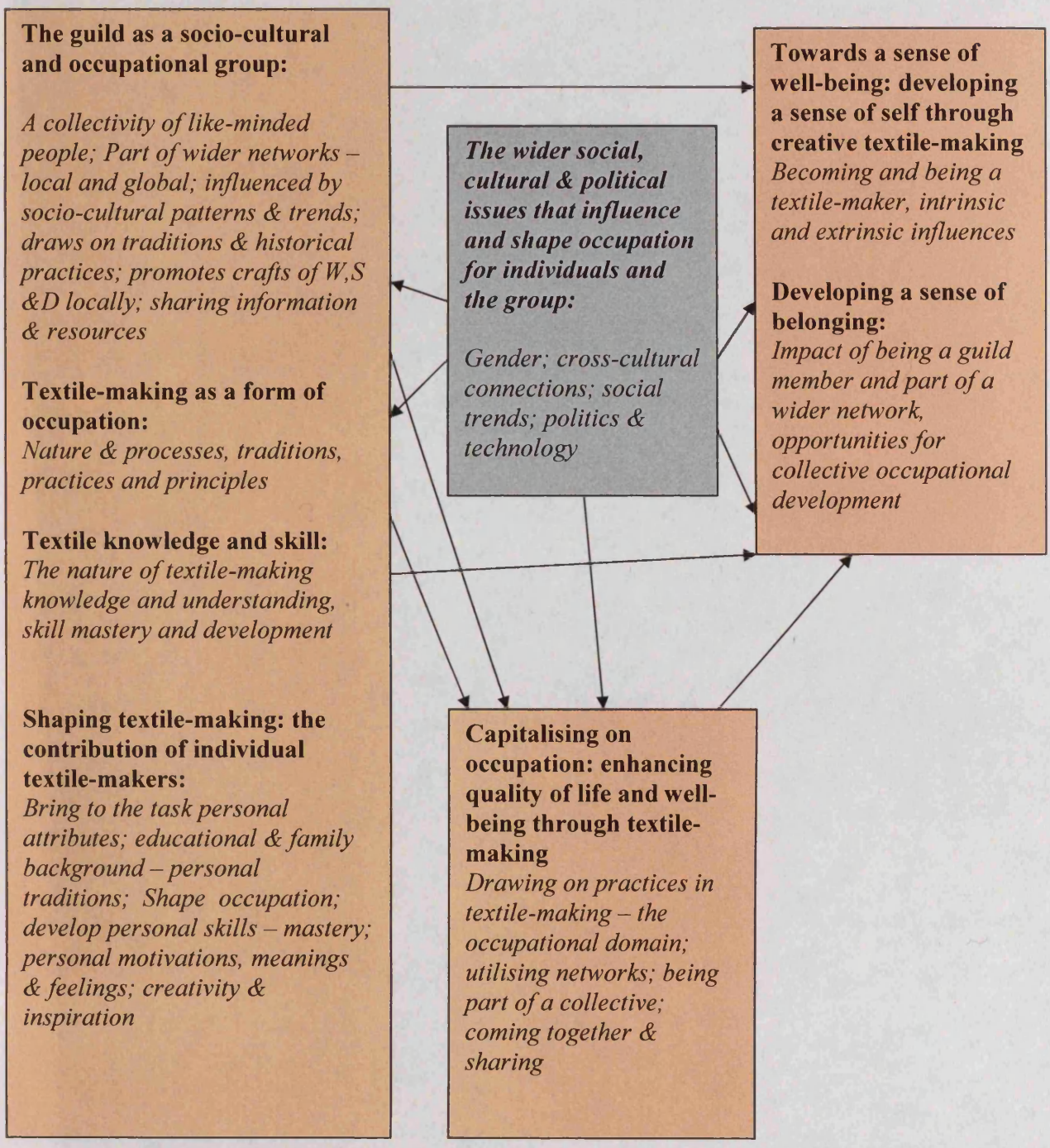
Layer four (map 8):

Building on layer three, the development of the fourth interpretive layer stemmed from questions relating to the key social, cultural and political issues that impact on textile-making in contemporary British society and how social trends influence textile-making for individuals and for the guild as an occupational group.



Map 9 key themes:

Developing the emerging theory



APPENDIX 5:

Related publications and conference presentations

Related publications and conference presentations:

Riley, J. (2006). Researching from the inside: re-defining the 'self' through reflexive ethnography *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 5(3) 68 (published abstract). Paper presentation: *7th International Interdisciplinary Conference, Advances in Qualitative Methods: Australia.*

Riley, J. (2006). Connecting through making: the socio-cultural impact of group membership on the development of craft skills in the 21st century. Poster presentation: *World Federation of Occupational Therapists Conference: Sydney, Australia.*

Riley, J. (2007). Through positivism, pragmatism and constructivism: a personal journey into grounded theory. Paper presentation: *8th International Interdisciplinary Conference, Advances in Qualitative Methods: Banff, Canada.*

Riley, J. (2008). Weaving an enhanced sense of self and a collective sense of self through creative textile-making. *Journal of Occupational Science* 15(2) pp. 63-73.