THE FUTURE IS HUMAN
Abstract

In my thesis “The Future is Human” I attempt to take a look thirty years into the future, to see how the concept of fashion will change firstly due to the climate emergency and secondly due to changes in men’s gender roles. I am not looking for sustainable solutions for the fashion industry, but rather trying to take an objective look into what will happen in the next thirty years as a result of our actions or inactions now.

We are living in times of fundamental existential changes of our climate and environment. In the next few decades, life as we know will one way or another change. In the last few years, as awareness of the ongoing climate crisis has grown exponentially, fashion has become one of the loudest voices for sustainable industry and that has forced even the most sceptical actors to accept that sustainable thinking is needed. But now sustainability is often only used as a hollow term in fashion. It is mostly used as a marketing tool and a label, to fit into the trend it has become in recent years. The problem is that fashion trends are against sustainability as a concept. Through changing trends, the industry has been able to grow as big as it has and is able to sell, not only the masses of unnecessary apparel, but also the idea that we need to look different every few months or even every year.

In the same few years that fashion companies have started to show concern and make changes, our clothing consumption as well as greenhouse emissions have only gone up. Changes made are not nearly enough and it seems impossible for fashion to become sustainable in this economic system. The fashion industry has also had a part in keeping male and female fashion separate to be able to sell more clothing, thus enforcing traditional gender roles.

In this thesis I come to the conclusion that in thirty years fashion may not exist as we know it today. Needed sustainability is not possible within continuous growth capitalism so until our economic system is changed we cannot make the needed changes for sustainable lifestyles. The likelihood of making the changes in time to avert more disasters and conflicts, is minimal. But the need for sustainable living will not disappear in the coming age of turmoil. In fact the need for sustainable solutions will be even greater the more damage we end up doing now and in the next decade. We already have many of those solutions for clothing; zero waste design, recycled materials, no virgin materials and small scale, slow production near users, to name a few. In thirty years I believe they will all be commonplace practices. Uniform thinking will become more and more popular, people will only have a few outfits but those outfits are designed for them. In thirty years the fashion industry may not exist as it does today but our need for clothing will continue, as well as the need to represent ourselves with our style, so even though fashion may not survive, clothes and the importance of style will live for as long as humans do.

Keywords future, climate crisis, gender roles, inequality, fashion
Abstract

Opinnäytetyössäni “The Future is Human” yritän katsoa kolmekymmentä vuotta tulevaisuuteen, kuinka
muodin käsitte tulee muuttumaan ensinnäkin ilmastokriisin ja toiseksi miesten sukupuoliroolien muutosten
myötä. En etsi kestäviä ratkaisuja muotiteollisuuteen, vaan yritän objektiivisesti nähdä mitä seuraavan
kolmen vuosikymmenen aikana tulee tapahtumaan, tämänhetkisten ja seuraavien vuosien toimien tai
toimimattomuuden takia.

Elämme aikoja jolloin ilmastossamme ja ympäristössämme tapahtuu perustavanlaatuisia, olemassaoloon
koskevia muutoksia. Seuraavien vuosikymmenen aikana elämää, jollaisena sen nyt tunnemme, tulee
muuttumaan tavalla tai toisella. Muutaman vuosien aikana, kun tietoisuus ilmastokriisistä on
kasvanut, muodistaan tullut yksi kovimmista äänistä kestävän teollisuuden puolesta ja tämä on pakottanut
epäsuorasti toimijat hyväksymään tarpeen kestävälle ajattelulle. Mutta nyt kestäviä kehitystä tai
ympäristöystävällisyyttä käytetään usein tyhjänä terminä paljon muodissa. Se on markkinointityökalu ja
nimike, jonka alle kuuluu paljon toimjakseen viime vuosina kasvaneeseen trendiin. Trendin ongelma on, että ne
ovat perinteisiä kestäviä ajatteloja vastaan. Käyttämällä vaihtuvia trendejä, muotiteollisuus ei ole pelkästään
pystynyt kasvamaan niin suureksi kuin se on ja myymään massoittain tarpeettomia tuotteita, vaan myös
myymään meille ajatukseen, että meidän täytyy näyttää ilman ilmasta joka kolmas vuosi tai edes joka vuosi.

Samoin muutaman vuoden aikana, jolloin muotiteollisuus on näyttänyt välttävänä jokin aiheen
muutoksia, vaatteiden kulutus ja kasvihuonepäästöt ovat jatkaneet kasvua. Tekihty muutokset eivät riitä ja
kunnioittu ne mahdotonta, että moni tukiin muu, vaatteiden kulutukseen ja kauppaan vaatteekseen
pyynnöllinen, kuten sen nyt tunnemme. Ikäinen menestyvyys ei ole mahdollista jatkuvan kasvun kapitalistisen
lyhyttä vallankaupan aikana, joten ennen kuin talousjärjestelmä ja maailman elämää, joten
muutosten, mitä enemmän voina teemme nyt ja seuraavan yleismaan aikana. Meillä on jo moni
noista ratkaisuista vaatteekseen; nollahukkasuunnitteluloi, kierretetyt materiaaliset, ei neitsytateriaalit sekä
pienimuotoilua, Hidas liitätutanto. Uskon, että kaikki nämä täyttävät tuulemaan normikäyttöä
kolmen vuoden aikaa. Myös univormu-ajattelu tulee lisääntymään, johon tämä tuulemaan sitä
siipimempi, mutta se voi täyttää hallitusta. Kolmen vuoden aikaa tuulema normikäyttöä
ehkä

Keywords future, climate crisis, gender roles, inequality, fashion
It really boils down to this, all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one destiny, affects all indirectly.
You cannot stop me 2018
# Table of Contents

1 Introduction 11

2 Background 12
  2.1 Why the future 13
  2.2 Why human 14
  2.3 Why fashion 15

3 Research 18
  3.1 Literature Review 19-21
  3.2 Wardrobe Studies 22
    3.21 Justus Kantakoski 23-25
    3.22 Milla Vaahtera 26-28
    3.23 Tuomas Saikkonen 29-31
    3.24 Tiina Palm 32-34
    3.25 Wardrobe Studies Analysis 35
  3.3 Online Survey 36-39
  3.4 Interview with Janne Salakka, Michet ry 40-41

4 Future Review 44
  4.1 CLA Analysis 45-49
  4.2 The end of the human 50-53
  4.3 Living in a posthuman world 54-55

5 Conclusion 56

The Future is Human -project 62-63
  Work Process & Methods 64-69
    Emilianne I 71-75
    Emilianne II 76-79
    Emilianne III 80-83
    Tuomas Saikkonen 85-89
    Justus Kantakoski 90-95
    Milla Vaahtera 97-101
    Selfportraits 103-107
    Marame 108-113

References 114-115

Acknowledgements 117
When I was six years old I saw a white rabbit in a forest near my house. It stood there for what felt like many minutes and just stared at me with its large eyes, sniffing the air, ears twitching slightly. I was as still as the stone between us. Looking at that rabbit, I sensed a special unity. I understood, for the first time, that in our core we are the same.

It was winter 1984 and back then in Hämeenlinna, it was pretty much guaranteed every year was a winter wonderland, with mountains of snow on the ground, from November to April.

Winters in Southern Finland have drastically changed in the last few years. They are now much shorter, dryer and more unpredictable. It is now common to see green grass and flowers blooming in December. There can be days and weeks of hardly any light, because on top of the short winter days, an unsettling fog that doesn’t allow light to penetrate is now a familiar occurrence in Helsinki.

Environmental impacts of the fashion industry and the deepening climate crisis have been the only meaningful themes in my work for a long time, so I knew the subject of my thesis would somehow come from the same source. In recent years I have started to find links in the still very rigid male gender roles, everyone (men and women) supporting them and hindrance to sustainable development. In order to regenerate and nurture our planet when the damage stops, we need more empathy, and that is still an attribute not generally implanted in boys and men.

In this thesis I attempt to look thirty years into the future, to see how the concept of fashion will change in the next thirty years, firstly due to the climate emergency and secondly due to changes in men’s gender roles.

I explore some of the power structures behind fashion and their origins, as well as some of the myths in our society currently restricting change, and put forth the idea that patriarchal rigid male gender roles are at the core of all of our current issues.

I approach the subject from a critical, posthumanist point of view, attempting to look objectively at the events taking place now and the direction they seem to be moving in, as well as history, to formulate a general overview of the state of the world and fashion in 2050.

In the project I transformed stock overflow textiles with environmentally safe techniques. Out of the textiles, I made uniforms for muses, who I photographed in the finished uniforms in their favourite environments. I approached the production as an art project, so the end result is my photography and not the clothes.
We are living in times of substantial changes in our climate and environment, facing an emergency unlike any other before us in human history, a crisis that will directly touch every living being on Earth. Our planet is starting to succumb under the enormous pressure we are putting on it and the time of no turning back is nearing at a speed, we cannot even seem to understand on a human level.

The Earth, its climate and nature have been in constant change since their birth, but humans have fastened the speed of change towards hothouse earth exponentially. As a species we are now at a crossroads that will determine the timeline for our own extinction, as well as the extinction of most life on earth.

We like to think we are above nature as a species and as we have developed all this technology we can create solutions against climate change or to replace the natural resources and biodiversity we are currently losing. We do not like to think about the fact that we are only one species amongst many, a small part of a large, intricate system, in which all parts need each other, and we will most likely go extinct along with many others as the conditions on our planet change. This is something that will happen at some point anyway, looking at the Earth’s history, as all species before us have gone extinct. The earth will survive us, as it survived for 4.543 billion years before us, and perhaps design a better fitting set of life for itself.

For me personally the interest in environmental issues started already as a teenager, in the mid-nineties, when I first heard of global warming. It worried me and I desperately wanted to be a part of the change for the better, but at that time I did not fully understand the cause of the issue.

It was only whilst studying fashion in the late 2000s, that I started to link our consumption and the fashion industry to the issues destroying our planet. Back then sustainability in fashion was not widely spoken about, it was not taught to us in any way, we had to find all the information ourselves and the attitude towards fashion designers wanting change within the industry was somewhat mocking and patronising. Even when I started at Aalto University in 2016, the attitude towards sustainability issues was that of reluctance by many in fashion.

In the last few years awareness has grown exponentially, especially since the alarming IPCC report of October 2018, and that has forced even the most sceptical actors to accept sustainability as a trend. But now sustainability is often used as a hollow term in fashion. It is mostly used as a marketing tool and a label, to fit into the trend it has become in recent years. The problem is that fashion trends are against sustainability as a concept.

Through fast changing trends, the industry has been able to grow as big as it has and is able to sell not only the masses of unnecessary and dispensable apparel but also the idea that we need to look different every three months or even every year.

So far we have not seen most industries or governments adjust to the climate emergency in any real, concrete way, apart from using it as a marketing tool or a source of conspiracy theories. Fashion as an industry is especially attached to outdated concepts and unable to change.

For that reason the emerging climate crisis and the role fashion has had in creating it, is the only subject that feels meaningful concerning my work with fashion.

I am also interested in male gender roles, their role in recent history and as a part of creating the problem as well as the role of gender roles in solving the problems of our future.

Boys and men are still caged in the narrow and strict rules of accepted male behaviour, and I think this is one of the biggest issues in our society. Men’s rigid gender roles can lead to many different problematic issues, and they need to loosen up in order for us to make a move towards a sustainable society, because in order for that we need more people with empathy and nurturing natures, attributes not traditionally taught to boys in the same respect as girls.
It is important to offer alternative visions and ideas to people. Many people are unable to critically look at the hierarchical systems around them, much less consider there might be a better way, or even any other way, of creating systems to support human life. Many people are afraid of change, even if it is change for the better, perhaps because in times of major change it is often impossible to know what will happen next, and in the West we have achieved a lifestyle in which we never have to miss anything. Most people are worried about the climate emergency and would like to help but not enough to consume much less, because that would mean changes in that lifestyle.

People want change while everything for them stays the same, but that of course is a paradoxical impossibility. Very early on in my research I came to consider if any industry as it is now, will exist in thirty years. It was clear to me from there on, that trying to find solutions for the fashion industry to continue operating within our current systems, cannot be my goal.

At the moment in fashion there is a lot of talk about innovations and technology, that may help save us from the climate emergency and end of natural resources. While I believe the majority of those innovations are genuinely needed, still most of the fashion industry solutions for more sustainability so far, are based on the same economic system we are operating in now, that is based on mass production using resources that are running out and continually growing consumption not out of need but ego. So the solutions too are based on the same paradox as mentioned before, wanting everything to change while things stay exactly as they are. At the core is the fact, that no industry dependant on producing things, can become sustainable within an economic climate that demands constant growth.

To be able to contextualise the present and to look into the future, it is necessary to understand the past. We know from history that something will change drastically within our societies this century, as it has every century before in human history. The human paradox is that even though we want to always be better than the generation before us, our lifespan is so limited we cannot see or feel time much further than one or two generations before us. We arrogantly think that we have solved the problems previous generations left behind, while creating new ones for the generations after us.

Yet the entire human history in the evolution of the Earth is minuscule. Even our current Western culture, and all the individual cultures within it, are very young compared to some of the cultures before us, like the Egyptian and Mayan cultures, both of which also ended eventually, just like all cultures before them and after them.

According to the historical record even advanced, complex civilisations are susceptible to collapse, inequality being the one of the most important factors in their collapse.

By investigating the human-nature dynamics of these past cases of collapse a research paper, ‘Human and Nature Dynamics (HANDY): Modeling Inequality and Use of Resources in the Collapse or Sustainability of Societies’, identified the most notable interrelated factors which explain civilisational decline; Population, Climate, Water, Agriculture, and Energy. These factors can lead to collapse when they converge to generate two crucial social features: the stretching of resources due to the strain placed on the ecological carrying capacity; and the economic stratification of society into Elites (rich) and Masses (poor). These social phenomena have played a central role in the character or in the process of the collapse, in all such cases over the last five thousand years. (Motesharrei, Rivas & Kalnay 2014)

It is clear to me that only superficial changes in the industry; talk of consumer behaviour, innovations, new technologies or materials, are not enough. I am not interested in looking for solutions to make the current industry more sustainable (although I fully believe those are needed steps for change), because I think the whole industry needs to change along with our economic system.

That is why I prefer to attempt to take an objective look further into the future. How will what is happening today, and what has happened in the past, affect us in the next thirty years, and what will our clothing culture look like in thirty years time.
The title of my thesis is a reference to the famous feminist slogan of the seventies ‘The Future is Female’. It resurfaced and was copied by every fast fashion company around the same time I started a master degree in Aalto. For a long time I was trying to figure out why that sentence annoyed me so much and then it hit me. In the seventies during the first wave of feminism, the sentence was undoubtedly very progressive, but in a new millennium and with different issues at hand, and even though women are still fighting for equality, it seems to represent old fashioned thinking. If we approach the current situation of gender equality in our society by dividing male and female further from each other, and totally leave men out of the discussion and thus outside the change that needs to happen, no real equality can be achieved. It is exactly men we need to get on board for change to happen, and especially men most affected by toxic masculinity.

Before starting the research for this thesis, I had already noticed through my six year old daughter and her friends, how strong the old fashioned ideas of what is accepted behaviour and self expression for women or men, still are within our society. In my own life and within my bubble I had no need to think about the reality of these issues. But as soon as I started, I realised that I have never felt like I fit in anywhere within the traditionally accepted spectrum of female stereotypes.

I raised my daughter not to mind gender stereotypes but as soon as she started kindergarten at three years old, the concepts of girls’ and boys’ things, toys, clothes etc came home with her. Her best friend, a boy, was drawn towards everything considered ‘girly’ and was allowed to express himself as he wished inside the house up to about age four. That is when things started to change and the little boy became angrier and started to speak hatefully about girls’ toys and activities because he was bullied for liking them. Left alone with my daughter, he still played with ponies and babies and wore my daughter’s glittery and frilly clothes with enthusiasm.

I was shocked when I realised how rigid and narrow our concepts of accepted male behaviour still are and how much they can affect boys’ lives, starting at a very tender, young age. Gendered norms and behaviors are taught and learned rather than being natural or genetic. There is no fixed, true masculinity, each societal construct of masculinity varies over time and according to culture. Still it seems we tend to offer only one kind of masculinity to boys today.

We hurt our boys when we teach them that being a man means suppressing your emotions and treating women as an inferior species, to be dominated and controlled. And toxic masculinity does not just hurt men, it kills them. In America, for example, men are 3.5 times more likely to die from suicide than women – a phenomenon many experts attribute, in part, to the fact that men are told they shouldn’t express emotion or admit that they feel vulnerable, and therefore are less likely to seek professional help (Mahdawi 2019).

Men have never had the kind of gender and sexual revolution from the outdated rules of patriarchy that women have, and I believe that revolution, and the freedom for self-expression following it, is exactly what real equality needs. This is not to take anything away from women, who are still struggling for equal rights in many areas of our society, but to claim that without the male gender revolution, the struggle for equal rights is futile. My objective in this thesis is to consider if making the existing gender gap much narrower, could help provide a radically more sustainable approach to fashion thinking.

In the name The Future is Human, I also refer to critical posthuman thinking, not looking for what comes after us, but rather what comes after humanism. The Enlightenment, the era that was also the beginning of modern humanism, was built on new sciences and ideals such as liberty, progress and tolerance. In this era of fake news, growing juxtapositions and many people still fighting for basic human rights, those values do not seem to actualise.

Perhaps humanism has come to an end, but we have made sure that humans will not be forgotten. In the last few centuries, humans have touched every part of the planet and changed the rest of nature to suit our needs, and have now finally hastened the speed of the Earth’s move towards a hothouse period. We know the Earth goes through natural cooling and warming cycles, but we do not know how the fact that our actions cause the next move towards hothouse Earth, may impact the natural course of the Earth’s evolution. We have made sure the entire Earth and all the species after us, will in fact be posthuman, changed forever by us.

The posthuman predicament enforces the necessity to think again and to think harder about the status of human subjectivity and the ethical relations, norms and values that may be worthy of the complexity of our times. (Braidotti 2016, 13)

In this reality unfolding in the coming decades, what kind of societies and cultures will humans create to replace the ones we live in now. What kind of values will our next form of culture and systems be based on.
Fashion is an important part of our culture, on a personal as well as societal level. Fashion is inseparably woven into our everyday life, as well as every special occasion in our lives. In one way or another, fashion touches nearly every human being on Earth. Even people who say they do not care about fashion, wear some kind of clothing that they have selected, which is already a statement on its own.

Fashion is at its best a powerful communication tool and it has kept me as a captive all my life because it is one of my favourite forms of self-expression. I love textiles, clothes and playing with my style, but I also strongly dislike most things about the fashion industry. This has been the paradox of my career for the last decade.

Is it possible that fashion can become sustainable, when it seems that not even the key actors, leading the change towards a more sustainable industry, are doing enough.

In the last few years, fashion has become one of the loudest voices for sustainable industry. This is a drastic change as before sustainability was seen as highly unfashionable by much of the industry, so even companies that were already doing major work on sustainability like Gucci, were ashamed to promote it. Now Gucci is heading the fight for a sustainable fashion industry and claiming total carbon neutrality, which is admirable and will hopefully show a better way for other fashion companies.

Even though Gucci and other Kering brands like Stella McCartney seem genuine in their quest for a more sustainable industry, I am afraid the changes made are not nearly enough. Even if we in the developed West, manage to drastically cut carbon emissions, we still also need to use drastically less natural resources and consume significantly less of everything.

We are still not facing the biggest issue, which is that production amounts need to go down everywhere, because most of the environmental damage is done in the beginning of the production line.

Also carbon offset projects, that many companies (including Gucci) are fond of using right now to cut their emissions and polish their image, are found not to have any effect according to Greenpeace. If companies are able to buy better looking GHG emissions records, without any responsibility for the effectiveness of the carbon offset project, is it not just another form of green washing.

“There has not been one forest offsetting project that we have found that has been able to provide the long-term, verifiable emissions reductions without negative human rights impacts,” Greenpeace’s Dr. Moas says. “Not one.” (Bauck 2019)

In her recent fashion show in Paris, Stella McCartney handed out a timeline for sustainable fashion innovations, since she started her label two decades ago. She said “I hope the timeline shows that some progress is being made. Things need to change immediately, but we also need to stay positive and hopeful. If you scare people so much that they are absolutely terrified, you can’t engage them. They need to feel they can make a difference.” (Cartner-Morley 2019).

While I understand negativity may lead to people trying to avoid sustainability issues, I also think we are now at a point where no one can avoid the climate emergency because we are seeing it happen everywhere. The idea of saving the planet by better consumption habits is naïve and simplistic. This thinking may have been enough two decades ago, if it was the ideology for every fashion company. But in those two decades we have in fact done most of the environmental damage, largely by our fashion consumption fuelled by fashion companies.

Now I think fear may be the only emotion that will get us acting immediately instead of just continuing the same business-as-usual thinking, while believing we are making a real difference in the world by buying more Gucci or Stella McCartney.

It seems that even though there are positive changes happening in the fashion industry; it is all too little, too late.

Does fashion have a future as the kind of industry we know today, or will it shrink along with other industries unable to change. Is fashion as a concept inseparably linked with the industry designing, producing and marketing our clothes or will fashion as a concept continue when the industry is over.
In my research I used both quantitative and qualitative methods as well as critical futures studies methods. I read books, articles, reports and studies relating to the climate emergency, as well as fashion’s role in it. This part of my research was to find out the environmental damage done, what part fashion has had in it and if it is possible for the fashion industry to change within this economic climate.

To find out what makes us love our clothes enough to keep them well and continue wearing them, I did in-depth wardrobe study interviews with the same muses I made outfits for in the thesis project. I also did a wardrobe study of my own wardrobe concerning my favourite items as well as my style consumption.

To take a look at how gender roles are currently experienced amongst teenagers, I sent an online survey to high schools in Helsinki. I was interested in the viewpoint of teenagers and young people in gender issues, because it is easy to think things have changed looking at media representations, but reality may actually be very different.

To gain a deeper understanding and a male perspective on gender roles and their current state in Finnish society, I conducted a phone interview with Janne Salakka from Miehet ry.

I also used a critical futures studies method, Causal Layered Analysis, and all the research above to write a future review. The future review brings together the concepts behind the systems and power structures in place today.
In this review I look at the last thirty years, their effect on our environments and fashion industry’s role on those effects. Just over thirty years ago the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established in November 1988. In 2007 Al Gore, together with IPPC, won the Nobel Peace Prize and Al Gore was the subject of the Academy Award winning documentary ‘The Inconvenient Truth’, a film about climate change.

In exactly the same amount of time, in two decades, between 1988 and 2007, the Aral Sea basin was drained dry by cotton production to feed demands of the fashion industry.

We have done as much damage to the fate of the planet and its ability to sustain human life and civilization since Al Gore published his first book on climate (1992), than in all the centuries - all the millennia - that came before that (Wallace-Wells 2019, 4).

Thirty years ago most producers of apparel started to move their factories to countries with cheaper labor, mainly in Asia, to gain bigger profits.

To compete in the ongoing race to make and sell clothes that are ever cheaper, the textile industry has relocated to countries with low labour costs and inadequate regulations. Despite regular media attention and NGO campaigns, suppliers in those countries are being pushed beyond their limits, with significant environmental and social impacts, such as the poisoning of rivers with hazardous chemicals, unacceptable working conditions and the use of child labour. (Greenpeace 2014, 3)

Thirty years is also the same time in which we have emitted over half of all the carbon from burning fossil fuels, since the start of the Industrial Revolution. (Union of Concerned Scientists 2014)

Most of the human damage to our planet has been done in a mere thirty years. That is a mind-boggling fact, and makes it clear that the move from mass-production to over-production, is a large part in creating the problem.

But our excess consumption has not even hit its peak yet, as every year the Earth Overshoot Day is earlier than before, in 2019 it was 29th of July, earliest ever. On their website Earth Overshoot Day explains that it is the day humanity will have used nature’s resource budget for the entire year, according to Global Footprint Network, an international sustainability organisation that has pioneered the Ecological Footprint. Its date has moved up two months over the past 20 years (Earth Overshoot Day 2019).

We are directly seeing this in rising temperatures, longer droughts, stronger hurricanes and forest fires on steroids, just to name a few of the growing natural or unnatural disasters, that lead to mass scale homelessness, refugees and famine.

The 20 warmest years on record have been in the past 22 years. The years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 had the highest temperatures since 1880, and 2019 is keeping pace to be another record year (WMO 2019).

The fashion industry is a significant global influencer both economically as well as environmentally and the fashion industry has influenced the pace of human caused climate emergency in a considerable way.

In 2017, carbon emissions increased globally by 1.7 percent. In 2018, they increased further, up 2.7 percent from the year before. (Liptak 2019)

Our ability to shop, discard and replace has become the prime indicator of our social standing and personal success. (Hopkins, 2014, 52)

All of this is possible only because of the existence of a surplus in society. Whereas animals produce only what they need, humans go beyond their immediate physical needs to produce a surplus of food, shelter, clothing and other commodities. There is more than enough wealth in society to support everybody, but a walk down Oxford Street clearly shows that socially produced surplus wealth is not evenly distributed. Worldwide sales of luxury goods stand at $150 billion, while outside Bond Street underground station the homeless beg for spare change. (Hopkins, 2014, 52-53)
So it is clear that the cheap overproduction fast fashion currently bases its profits on, needs to stop. But at the moment it is left up to consumers to make the right choices. People are supposed to buy less, while fashion companies try to sell them more. Yet another paradox within the fashion industry.

Vivienne Westwood is another high fashion designer, that has famously crusaded for sustainability in fashion and she is one the few designers that has addressed the issue of excess consumption, but even her sustainability credentials seem questionable. Based on her website and online shop her product amounts have not gone down significantly, there are oil based materials used and despite a lot of good talk on her website, there is absolutely no transparency about suppliers or subcontractors.

“I think it is a good thing to buy less and choose well - it’s good for the environment and to be fair it’s also good for me because my clothes are quite expensive.”

This is an infamous quote by Westwood, and in all its entitlement the sentence underlines one of the biggest issues in fashion and the world today. That issue is inequality.

The fashion industry is a significant player in creating inequality as it is built by some of the richest people on Earth, making money from the suffering of some of the poorest. Inequality is growing on an unseen level and it is weaved in the environmental problems we are facing.

We are living in a world of more billionaires than ever (2,604 billionaires according to the Billionaire Census 2019). Many of those billionaires have made their fortunes from fashion; Amancio Ortega (Inditex, founder, net worth $68.3 billion), Bernard Arnault (LVMH, CEO & major stakeholder, net worth $108 billion) and François-Henri Pinault (Kering, Chairman & CEO, net worth $33.2 billion) to name a few of the people in fashion with the largest fortunes.

This at the same time as 821 million people in the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy active life (World Food Programme 2019).

It is easy to judge people for buying fast fashion or generally cheap clothes, when you can afford to do otherwise and never had to worry whether you have enough money to provide basics for your family.

Fashion consumption is deeply unequal and generalisations about fashion consumers are misleading. A statistic such as the fact that in 2009 North Americans discarded 300 million pairs of shoes seems straightforward, but it obscures the fact that some 50 million Americans live below the poverty line and another 100 million subsist on a low income. Legitimate concerns about the impact of fashion on the world are not helped by blanket calls for everyone to ‘shop less’. These calls are irrelevant to families forced to choose between a pair of shoes without holes and putting hot food on the table for their children. (Hopkins, 2014, 53)

The premise of ‘buy less, spend more’ is that people who buy expensive clothes buy fewer than other people. In fact, the wardrobes and carbon footprints of those who can afford haute couture vastly exceed those of everyone else. The world’s population currently stands at approximately 7 billion. Just 8 percent of the population (500 million people) emit 50 percent of the greenhouse gases. (Hopkins, 2014, 100)

It should already be clear to us, that how ever the idea of buying less but better quality is marketed, it only really touches and affects people marginally. Only people who can afford to make changes to pricier, better quality products, may do so. But having the money to buy better quality does not guarantee people are buying less. I think it is another way to make the buyer feel good about the purchase. In any case we know the juxtaposition between “the rich” and “the poor”, that is constantly repeated in contemporary society, is certainly not helping environmental issues.
According to a research paper on exploring the essential dynamics of interaction between population and natural resources, the two features that seem to appear across societies that have collapsed are the stretching of resources due to strain placed on the ecological carrying capacity, and the division of society into Elites (rich) and Commoners (poor). It is important to note that the Elites do not suffer the detrimental effects of the environmental collapse until much later than the Commoners. This buffer of wealth allows Elites to continue “business as usual” despite the impending catastrophe. This buffer effect is further reinforced by the long, apparently sustainable trajectory prior to the beginning of the collapse. While some members of society might raise the alarm that the system is moving towards an impending collapse and therefore advocate structural changes to society in order to avoid it, Elites and their supporters, who opposed making these changes, could point to the long sustainable trajectory “so far” in support of doing nothing. (Motesharrei, Rivas & Kalnay 2014)

In the last decade, the evils of fast fashion and its influence on our environment have been brought to wide public attention, and many influencers and organisations have started to campaign against the fast fashion industry. In Finland for example, Eetti ry has had many visible campaigns against fast fashion, and they have compiled Rank-a-Brand index of Finnish companies’ transparency. So far it seems that their great efforts have gone unnoticed. People bought more clothing than ever before in Finland in 2018, but while the sales went up, profits went down (Pantzar 2019). This means people are buying more and more, cheaper and cheaper.

As an industry fashion is based on selling masses of cheap apparel or less but considerable amount of expensive apparel, neither of which are sustainable concepts, no matter how transparent the industry becomes or technological advancements develop. Companies have the tendency to blame others, consumers for consuming and other companies or industries for less sustainability than themselves.

At the moment fast fashion is deemed the biggest evil in the fashion industry, which it no doubt is. But this seems to have given absolution to high fashion companies, some of which produce their cheaper lines in the same factories that fast fashion companies do. For high fashion companies, the biggest profits come from the cheaper items available for any consumer to buy, not the high priced clothing unattainable for most people.

Reason why profits have remained high is because the luxury fashion sector does not rely exclusively on the sale of very expensive clothes to make its profits. Instead, it employs a strategy known as the pyramid model: a small number of luxury products like luggage and couture are sold to extremely wealthy customers, but the biggest profits are generated through the sale of ‘mass-market’ goods (which are still very much overpriced). (Hopkins 2014, 29)

It seems clear that no full scale change towards sustainability can be made in the fashion industry, without governments making changes in laws and policies concerning it. While some governments want to look interested in creating more sustainable practices in industries, it seems protecting the economy is far more important as no country has made any substantial changes concerning fashion production or consumption.

In February 2019, the UK Government’s Environmental Audit Committee published Fixing Fashion, their report on the sustainability of the UK fashion industry. The report included evidence from leading fashion retailers as well as supply chain and environmental experts, including evidence from Fashion Revolution. Within the report were key recommendations that the UK Government should adopt into policies and legislation, to help combat the social and environmental abuses that occur as a result of the way clothing is made, sold and discarded. The Government’s official response was sympathetic but passive. Ministers rejected all recommendations in favour of existing voluntary, non-regulatory approaches (Fashion Revolution 2019).
3.2 Wardrobe studies

I conducted informal in-depth wardrobe studies with three people, who were selected because they all enjoy playing with their style beyond gender boundaries, thus challenging existing gender roles, all in their own different ways. The interviews were conducted in two to three hour sessions at the interviewees homes. I had a list of questions that I also sent to the interviewees prior to the interview, but I added more detailed questions in the interview situations. I recorded the verbal interviews and photographed the selected items of clothing and the people. Tuomas Saikkonen was interviewed via video calls to Rio De Janeiro and the photographs were taken later while he was in Finland. After the initial interviews some adjustment questions were also sent via email.

The primary objective of the interviews was to find out what are the main reasons for a garment to stay in use for a long time with the interviewees. What different attributes do they most appreciate in garments. Do they hold on to garments for emotional reasons, even if they do not wear them. What combination of attributes makes them wear garments the most. How do they wear their clothes, do they have favourite outfits that they circulate or do they wear different outfits all the time. In my project I will use the interviewees as my muses and create an outfit to fit each personality.

**Wardrobe studies -**

*In-depth interview into the interviewee's most beloved garments and the reasons why they are special*

1. Pick 3-5 garments from your wardrobe, that you wear most.
   - Analyze why those items are most in active use:
     - General appearance
     - Shape
     - Colour
     - Print
     - Textile structure
     - Decoration
     - Details
     - Feel (haptically)
     - Material
     - Comfort
     - Ease of use
     - Stories / associations
     - How does this garment make you feel when you wear it

2. Pick one item in your wardrobe, that is the most precious and beloved to you (whether you wear it a lot or not), and analyze why by using the same criteria as above.

3. Do you have clothes in your wardrobe, that are treasures to you and that you are not willing to let go, even though you never / hardly ever wear them?
   - Analyze why those items are most in active use:
     - General appearance
     - Shape
     - Colour
     - Print
     - Textile structure
     - Decoration
     - Details
     - Feel (haptically)
     - Material
     - Comfort
     - Ease of use
     - Stories / associations
Personal style is fierce and flamboyant in a sensual, ethereal way. Comfort and quality in materials is essential for Justus. He likes to wear neutral colours, black & cold tones, sequins & glitter, mixing both women's & men's garments. Justus has strong personal style, that is always noticed by people. He buys most of his clothing secondhand, but likes to invest in good quality items. When buying new clothing the values of the company matter, but when buying second hand not so much. Justus often has favourite outfits and garments that are in constant use, even though he also likes to play with his style impulsively.
1. Glitter cardigan, that is easy to wear and take off, because there are no fixings. The half sleeve is not too hot and not too cold. “Glitter reflects my personality visually,” Justus says. Everyone tells Justus it looks like him. The cardigan attracts attention even though it is an ordinary, every day garment for him. Feels nice and soft to the touch, even though is polyester. He does not buy polyester clothing as new because the material matters a lot to him. But he does not mind second hand polyester clothes if other attributes override it. Cross is special because it was given to him by Remu.

Oversized wool jumper that Justus got from a former lover. It is winter so he is wearing this sweater all the time. It is so big he can pull it over his knees and use it as a napping blanket. It's almost overly comfortable so it is constant use.

Adidas tracksuit pants were bought second hand and made narrower in the ankle by Justus. Pants are in continuous everyday use. “I don’t care if I get them dirty so I wear them a lot at school, in the printing studio etc.” Trendy and relaxed but not too sporty.
2. Blue sheepskin coat from the seventies. The coat was worn by Justus’ mother when she was pregnant with him and when he was a small child, so there is a strong emotional story behind it and a visual memory from his own childhood. Justus modified the sleeves to make the style more contemporary. The coat feels very exclusive and special. It is originally made by a family friend’s company, the values of which are similar to Justus’ own fashion values. The coat fills a real need in his day-to-day life. It makes choosing outfits easy, because Justus does not need to worry about the cold when wearing it. He wears the coat everyday for five months of the year. Also the coat is a smoky blue colour, which Justus feels like is one of the colours that suit him the best, and the fact that it is in perfect condition after three decades of use, makes it extra special.

3. Silk shirt bought in Italy, made by Falconeri. Justus likes to buy their clothes because they use good quality natural fibres and produce in Italy. The shirt was bought new. He likes to buy Falconeri products because he thinks that the design is great for a commercial brand, there is always some modern twist in it. Their clothes are sensual and feel luxurious. It is the design philosophy that attracts Justus, more than the brand image, like in any clothing. When buying clothes new, the values have to match. The shirt is not worn very much because it is best in warm weather. Justus also feels like it is not good for everyday wear, but more for special occasions.
Milla Vahtera
Artist & Designer

Milla has a personal style that is bold, colourful and joyful. Milla appreciates quality, comfort and practicality, but those attributes can be overruled by garments that she is very attracted to, especially in secondhand finds. She likes to dress in a feminine way, but is in no way a conventional representation of what is considered appropriate for females. She is a curvy bombshell and has done work on body image positivity, including photo series for Rivo magazine and a soft sculpture exhibition. Milla has favourite garments and outfits that are in continuous use for long times, some for decades.
1. Marimekko coat with stripes was bought recently and has been worn almost every day since. Putting it on always makes her feel special, even if she wears it every day. The coat is very practical for her, as Milla likes to layer instead of wearing thick clothing. Mostly the winter in Helsinki is quite warm nowadays so it is the perfect coat for her. Buying it felt like coming home, because Milla has felt the need to start dressing in a more ‘adult’ way, but really loves crazy colour and pattern as well as being noticed by her style. Graphic look and colour feel good even though in a quite conventional way.

Kimono from Japanese spa in Stockholm. Last adults only trip, before becoming a mother (no children allowed in the spa). Everyone is given a kimono when entering the spa, which creates visual unity, tranquility, calmness. Uniform thinking. Makes the visit very memorable and special. Milla also bought the same for her boyfriend.

R-Collection wool and polyester mix anorak represents Milla’s hobby, which is outdoor life - hiking, camping, fishing. Difficult garment for a long hike but great for one or two day hikes. Also R-Collection as a brand has special value, as their anoraks her favourites as a teenager. Bright red colour fits her style. Difficult garment for city use but great for really cold weather, when in nature. Milla loves the coat so much that even though she cannot wear it while breastfeeding, she is keeping it for winters in the future.
3. Levi’s denim jacket Milla has had since the nineties. She still wears it has and it is the only garment that has been wearable for her no matter how much her weight has changed. It reminds her of her teenage years, hanging out in the parks of Pasila, but it fits in with her style now.

Milla does not hold on to clothes for emotional reasons, if she cannot wear the garments. She loves memories and stories behind clothes, but recycles them with ease and efficiency, if she does not want to wear them anymore. The Levi’s denim jacket is the only garment Milla has, that has more value as memorabilia than as wearable clothing.

Only clothes that are really striking and bring her attention are allowed to be impractical. If something is impractical in her wardrobe, it is most likely very colourful and joyful. It is very important for Milla to express her personality through her style.


Very wearable and practical. Bought from a fleamarket, one of her best finds. Milla feels like in the recent years her life has become more and more conventional (family, career etc), and the jacket reminds her of freedom and represents her personality. When she feels like she is losing touch with herself, she wears the jacket and goes out.
Tuomas Saikkonen
Illustrator and tattoo artist

Tuomas has a colourful, fun-loving and relaxed style. He likes to play with his style and wearing a piece of female clothing, sequins, jewellery or make-up is not a big deal to him. In fact he prefers buying clothes that are not labeled men’s or women’s. All his clothes are comfortable and that is the most important value to him, but the practicality, look and style are also very important. He enjoys decorative items, colourful patterns and good quality in clothing. He buys most of his clothes second hand, some quality items new. His style philosophy is that everything can be found used or made better with a personal touch.
1. Short sleeved cotton shirt with collar and graphic print. The shirt is in almost daily use, because it combines everything Tuomas could ever ask of a garment. It is comfortable in extreme heat (Tuomas and Filipe live in Rio De Janeiro), the material is breathable. The print represents his personality and it is not a t-shirt so it can be worn in a more versatile way. Tuomas has worn it everywhere from work meetings to weddings. Bought from an African vendor at a street market, who made it himself. Tuomas like to buy garments directly from the maker, and hear stories of the people behind the clothes. This makes me more meaningful for him.

Viscose shirt with leopard print and cotton jersey shirt with black and white graphic print. Both are also in constant use, for the same reasons as above. Also bought at a market in Rio De Janeiro directly from the designer and maker.
2. White cotton dress shirt, that he has embroidered himself. The shirt has special emotional value, because he wore it at his and his husband’s wedding. The shirt is still in heavy use. This shirt was the first garment Tuomas customised beyond cutting sleeves, and it has inspired him to do more customisation and think of new ways to do it.

3. Colourful cotton shirt is not in use in Rio De Janeiro, because it is too hot. But Tuomas loves the shirt and wears it when in Finland. Very good quality material and make, bought from second hand shop in Helsinki. Tuomas does not hold on to clothes for emotional reasons. He keeps only clothes he loves and wears, for as long as he wears them, and after he is done using them, he passes them on or customises them to make them appear more appealing to himself.
My personal style is eclectic, colourful and quite bold. I appreciate quality and practicality, but comfort is the most important factor in a garment, as important as the look. When buying something it has to appeal with the style first but I will not get it if it feels uncomfortable when on. That is why a lot of my clothes are oversized. I like to dress in a lot of male clothing but my style is not especially masculine. I have never felt that I fitted into those terms feminine or masculine, I have always been somewhere in between and my style reflects that. I have favourite garments and outfits, that are in continuous use for long times. Some clothes I have had for decades and they are still in use. When I get bored of clothes I sell or give them away easily. I do not get attached to any object really, but the most special garments I tend to hold on to and keep in the back of my closet until they look fresh again, at which point I will use them again maybe with a different outfit. I always have a few favourite outfits that are in circulation. I buy most of my clothes second hand, some I make myself or customise. Nowadays I do not buy anything that is not absolutely necessary, not even second hand. I try to keep my clothes well, not to wash them too much and I fix or customise loved clothes if they get ruined somehow and something can be done. I hate throwing out anything that could be useful and do not understand replacing something that works. I think this came from my much-loved grandmother, who saved and reused everything. She lived through two World Wars and got used to everything having value as a small child. She used to unravel broken socks and had a cupboard full of colourful, tiny balls of yarn. That image has stayed with me all my life. Her life philosophy and love for textiles, clothing and handcraft arts has influenced my career and personal style thinking very much.
1. Weekday leopard print dress I bought in 2011 as new. It has been in continuous use since then, just the outfit combinations change. I love the slightly twisted print and the asymmetrical cut, as well as loose fit. It has now holes in it but it has not stopped me from wearing it, and I have plans to customise the dress so I can get further use from it.

Weekday hoodie with blotch print, bought as new in 2017. Since buying the hoodie I have worn it at least three times a week and it has been by far my favourite garment. I got it as large as it came, and love the looseness and long sleeves. It makes any outfit great for me and I wear it with almost anything. I love the print because even if I am doing messy work, it hides all the stains well.

Shirt dress with match print I had made for me while in Senegal in 2018. I was there visiting my daughter’s family and at an artists’ residency sun dyeing, both for the first time. I bought the fabric in Saint-Louis at the market and drew the very simple style with measurements for the tailor. The dress is perfect for any weather and occasion for me. It is cotton so it is breathable and light to wear and super comfortable. I love collars but they are often too tight, so I made sure this one is loose fitting. The dress has pockets, which is a key factor for me. I love the print and that is often the thing that first appeals to me in a garment.
2. **T-shirt handpainted by an artist friend, Teemu Keisteri.**
The t-shirt is super oversized and can be used as a dress. I love oversized clothes because they are comfortable and look like a kid wearing their parents' clothing. This shirt is my most beloved garment because I love Teemu’s Ukkeli paintings, he is one of my favourite artists, and I was there to help him get started. We studied in Lahti at the same time and I was working in 2OR+, and helped Teemu get his first Ukkeli bags to sell in the shop. I also bought the first signed and numbered bag. I wear the t-shirt everywhere and keep it really well.

3. **Yves Saint Laurent wool jacket bought at Beacon’s Closet, New York in 2010. A.F. Vandevorst knitted gardigan from 2OR+ as payment for work, got in 2009.** I am some sort of a hoarder but at the same time I do not like to have too much of anything. I have many clothes that I love but that do not stay in continuous use, still I am not willing to let them go. In 2011 I sold and gave away almost everything I owned, most of it gathered since 2004 when I moved back to Finland after living in London for seven years. Giving up my possessions made me feel light and free for some time especially while travelling and not having a permanent home. After I settled in Helsinki again I noticed that most of those things were replaced in the years that followed. There have been many times I have missed some garments a lot, and wished I did not sell it away, especially some garments by Comme Des Garçon, Martin Margiela and A.F. Vandervorst that I got as wages and could not afford to buy. I do not believe in methods like KonMari for myself, having tried a similar approach. I believe most people are similar. People have natural tendencies to have more than they need, perhaps because of our gatherer history. It may work for a while but most people have the tendency to replace the things given away. Also the most sustainable clothes are the ones we already have, so I keep clothes for a long time and when I get bored I put them in the back of the closet and take them out again, when they feel fresh for me.
3.3 Wardrobe studies analysis

The most noticeable parallelisms with all my interviewees was that they all appreciated quality in materials and details that make the garment somehow special. Also important was comfort in clothing. All the interviewees like clothes that are distinctive and noticeable.

They all like to wear their most beloved outfits or garments for a long time, and keep their clothes well for that reason. The interviewees often have the same favourite outfit or garment in almost daily use, that is kept for some time and then changed into the next favourite outfit. They all appreciate expressing their personality as well as gender in their style, and the ease of getting dressed. All interviewees wear their favourite outfits almost like a uniform, nearly daily and at almost every occasion. This also speaks to the ease of selecting outfits. When you have a favourite outfit or a few, then the daily choice of what to wear is made simple. Especially the kimono Milla Vaatnera was talking about appealed to me. The kimono is a garment that is by nature unisex, it can be made as a zero-waste product and easily adjusted to fit different people.

All interviewees also bought clothes in very much the same way, preferably second hand or good quality items as new. All like to customise garments that are appealing but in need of some changes.

From the interviews it is clear that personal stories add a lot of value to the users and make them wear garments for longer. Personal stories happen as the clothes are worn so it may be impossible to add when designing, especially for a large public, but perhaps there is a way to add emotional value. Emotional relationship with a garment can be formed when purchasing the piece as well. When there is something quite special, unique or distinctive in a garment, it can create an immediate personal bond, if the user feels the garment really represents their personality.

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a model created by American psychologist and philosopher Abraham Maslow, that organises basic human needs into five categories and hierarchical order by their urgency - Physiological needs, Security needs, Social needs, Ego needs and Self-actualisation needs. In the comfortable developed world, the satisfaction of physiological, safety and security needs is practically a given. This concentrates remaining human need within the other three levels; therefore, developed world consumer motivation is primarily driven by social, ego and self-actualisation needs. (Chapman 2005, 44).

It seems most fashion consumption today is done more for ego needs; prestige, status and self-esteem; than self-actualisation needs like creativity. In fact maybe creativity and personal fulfillment would be a much more sustainable starting point for fashion design. But when we start to design clothes from a real need based starting point, most of the current fashion industry becomes void. If clothes are designed thinking of the person’s own individual needs, they immediately become more sustainable because the emotional bond is created from the start.

In the present time, the designer can provide good product performance in those attributes that are important to consumers and that are also determinants for the product’s longevity and product satisfaction. The designer can also create opportunities for product attachments to emerge in the future by providing continuing satisfaction in the use experience through e.g. high intrinsic product quality and satisfying aesthetic experiences. (Niinimäki 2011)

As a starting point to design we need to research the person wearing the clothes - what clothing needs and likes they have, what resonates and creates empathy for them, what stories are the most significant to them and how it might be possible to relate those to clothing. To be able to create sustainable clothing another starting point must be good quality. Clothing should be made to last long-term in use, both technically as well as aesthetically, and repair services or self-help instructions to fix them should be provided. From the interviews it became clear that some items of clothing can stay in use for decades, if they are well made out of good quality material and suit the user’s personality. It is also good if garments are loose fit or adjustable, as well as quite simple shapes and in that way somewhat timeless, even though I think everything is connected to time.

In order to create empathy and thus an emotional bond to clothes, we first have to change the way we think about designing and wearing clothes. There is no need to change the way we look every other month and it may in fact be more holistically rewarding to wear custom made clothing.
When starting my thesis process, I had many discussions with my friends and colleagues about the current state of gender affairs nationally and globally, within our own bubbles as well as around them. I myself thought that although there is quite a lot of talk around the issue of male gender roles widening in real life, the situations and attitudes that matter in boys’ and men’s lives have not changed enough. To get some kind of an idea of how young people living in Helsinki today experience gender roles, I decided to create a short online survey. The survey was the first part of my research and it was fundamental in determining the necessity of work still to be done in this area.

I contacted four high school guidance counselors in Helsinki and asked them to forward my questionnaire to their students aged between seventeen and twenty. The schools contacted were Helsingin Suomalainen Yhteiskoulu, Ressun lukio, Helsingin kuvataidelukio and Kallion lukio. I wanted to have students with very different interests and future goals, so I selected schools that have different emphasis on the taught subjects. Two of the schools are art based, Kallion lukio emphasising performing arts and Helsingin kuvataide lukio emphasising visual arts. Ressun lukio and Helsingin Suomalainen Yhteiskoulu place more emphasis on the sciences and business in their teaching.

The questionnaire was anonymous, so I have no idea how many of the answers come from which schools, and how the students’ attitudes differ from one school to another or if they do. I wanted to get answers from a diverse group of young people in Finland, more of an average of how many people still have problems with gender roles in our current society, so I felt it was important for the responders to have different interests and surroundings. These are also some of the people who will have to live with, and try to fix, the consequences of the choices we make today.

The questionnaires included questions about the current state of gender issues, how they relate to and affect the students and people in their circle of friends, as well as how they hope these issues will develop in the near future.

Majority (77%) of the survey participants were women. 11.6% were men and 8.6% identified as other.

Over third of the participants were sixteen years old, a third were seventeen, a quarter were eighteen, five percent nineteen and less than four percent were fifteen and twenty to twenty-one.
QUESTIONS -

How do you identify?
   Woman
   Man
   Other
   I prefer not to disclose

How old are you?

What do you think you will want to do as a profession?

Do you find contemporary gender roles or their expectations limiting in the following context?
   Fashion choices
   Career choices
   Self expression or emotional expression
   Communication
   I do not find contemporary gender roles limiting

Are female or male gender roles more strict in your opinion?

What social issues can gender roles cause in your opinion if any?
   Social alienation
   Sexual harassment or violence
   Feeling of exclusion and always being different
   Depression and other mental health issues
   Nothing
   Give examples if you want to

Would you like to express yourself differently but feel like your gender limits you?
   If yes can you expand

Where do you see yourself in 30 years?
When asked which gender, men or women, suffer from tighter gender roles, over half said men (52.1%), a third women (29.5%), tenth said both (10.5%) and about three percent said that neither have tight gender roles.

“I think men have a harder time because femininity is seen as a weakness. Women can do masculine things (wear traditionally men's clothes like a suit), but if a man wants to do feminine things (wear makeup or a dress or be a stay-at-home-dad) he is often labeled weak or gay. Men are expected to always be strong and emotionless, according to gender rules men are not allowed to for example refuse sex or show their feelings.”

“I think gender roles have different issues for different genders. On the other hand when it comes to fashion women are allowed masculinity in self expression, whereas for men femininity is not as accepted.”

“Men have tighter gender roles when it comes to fashion choices and emotional expression.”

“Women's narrow gender roles have been talked about more, but I think men have it even worse than women.”

Most people answering did not have negative experiences around gender roles and that to me was expected. But I was not expecting to find so many participants to have issues with gender roles. Twenty-one percent of young people participating in the survey did not feel like they are allowed to express themselves as they wish because of their gender. That is a major portion of the participants and re-enforces the preconception I had that this is still a major issue in our society that needs further work. The survey was also done in Helsinki, the largest city in Finland, and in schools with mostly students from quite affluent backgrounds and thus socio-economically privileged. It is generally larger cities and the more privileged people, that get to enjoy the acceptance of more open gender roles, so I would expect if I did this in schools in different areas results might also vary significantly.
Do you feel your gender limits how you can express yourself with your style?

“It would be wonderful to be able to freely wear clothes from the women’s department, and not to get judgy looks. Not that I care if I do anyway.”

“I would like to express myself sometimes in a masculine and sometimes in a feminine way but often in my work it’s difficult.”

“Not sure if this is answering your question but I can’t always wear what I want because the “right body shape” imposed on females is giving me anxiety about my looks. I feel like my body’s the wrong shape so I don’t feel like I can wear what others wear.”

“Women can wear trousers or skirts and it’s considered normal but if a man wears a skirt, it’s considered weird or unique. No colour coding, normalising men’s emotions etc.”

“I don’t want to be as girly as I am but I don’t wanna feel different.”

“At the moment I feel like I can express myself how I want to because school has a very open and accepting atmosphere. I am however scared for the future.”

“Showy, colourful or “feminine” shapes have gotten bad looks.”

“Gender can cause concrete limitations for clothing choices, for example with many clothes it can be impossible to find the right size is the garment is originally designed for the opposite sex.”

Why is it that generally most unisex clothing is modeled after or developed from male clothing. Why is it more accepted for women to dress like men as it is for men to dress like women. Why is it determined that colourful clothing is feminine. Some of these strict rules of gender seem almost silly when said out loud but still affect many lives negatively. It still seems that ‘feminine’ has much more freedom and social acceptance to explore the ‘masculine’ than the other way around. These myths of what is ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ created by our society, need to break in order for real equality to happen.
I was interested in how men themselves view equality in gender issues from the point of view of self-expression. We are living at a time of populism and juxtapositions, and men speaking out about men’s rights are often directly against women or other minorities. This has resulted in any opening about men’s rights for equality having an immediate uncomfortable stigma. I believe men need equality as much as women, just in different issues. For men the rigid rules of what is traditionally considered ‘masculine’ have not shifted very much and there is inequality according to different life situations. Men’s emotional and general self-expression is directly linked to men’s welfare, and one of the reasons for many problematic issues in our society. Men need more channels to talk about acceptable masculinity, because the best and possibly the only real way to fix issues like these is from inside the issue by the people experiencing the issue.

Since it’s founding in 2018, I have followed the Finnish feminist organisation for men, Miehet ry, with growing interest and joy. In order to find male perspectives on the current state of gender issues concerning men and boys, I contacted them and asked for an interview. I conducted a short phone interview with the chairman of the organisation, Janne Salakka in September 2019.

**What were the main reasons for founding Miehet Ry: n?**
We wanted to have a more active role in equality work. At the same time we wanted to give the same opportunity for other men and to create a community of feminist men. In other words, we wanted to bring feminist men together and on the other hand show men who do not indentify as feminists, that there is nothing wrong or immasculine about feminism. We wanted to bring the conversation about men’s equality on the right track. Before the conversation has been somewhat disruptive, at times aggressive and at its worst directly discriminative towards women and minorities. We wanted to dissociate from this and to start doing our own thing.

**How do you experience the gender roles for men and boys in Finland today?**
Gender roles have opened up over the years. There is however a clear social (or socio-economic) differentiation. University students in bigger cities have a different spectrum of possibilities from a vocational student or a dockworker in a small town.
Despite this gender roles still strongly affect men’s concept of what it is “to be a good man”. This can lead to for example silence about emotions and accumulation of problems. Humaneness can be seen as weakness or “feminine” qualities can be seen as shameful and as something that needs to be hidden. Some repeat the traditional male gender roles consciously or subconsciously in their work or home life. It is for example a common assumption that a man needs to do well financially and to be able to support his family.
Especially men’s sexuality seems to have many silent themes associated with it. Although “the sexual history” is mostly dominated by men (for example women’s sexuality was not recognised for a long time), at the same time this story is very one-dimensional - it is a story of a sexual conqueror, that many men do not relate to. Thus men’s sexuality is still waiting for liberation and diversifying.
How do problematic issues of men’s/boys’ gender roles affect the society?
They affect in numerous different ways. Gender roles can affect for example what kind of school subjects it is acceptable to be interested in - literature can be seen as non-masculine subject. Doing well in sports can deliver more social rewards than knowledge of language or literature. Language skills are connected to learning difficulties, which can in turn affect early experiences of success in learning, which according to research can affect as far as academic identity at university level. Although the cause and effect relationship is not necessarily direct or the same for everyone, the gender roles learned at an early age can have far-reaching impact.
These issues can be tackled by for example by diversifying male role models. The reading circle “Kevin Lankisen lukupiiri” started by ice hockey player Kevin Lankinen is a good example of this. In the end there is not one “right” solution or a sure way to dismantle male gender roles, it takes wide scale work in schools and homes, as well as at work places and hobbies.

In your opinion do boys and men have possibilities for emotional self-expression in contemporary society?
For sure more than before. As said, certain hobbies, interests ja career choices can still be seen as ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’. I believe this affects people’s behaviour at least to some extent. I also think that besides not all men having the skills to process their emotions in a constructive way, at the same time society (I mean other people regardless of their gender) cannot process men’s emotions any better than men themselves: if a man cries in public, for example, most likely it causes embarrassment in other people. In the same way, if a man opens up about their sexuality in a way that is considered non-masculine (like insecurities concerning sexuality) reactions from others can be quite subdued. Reaction of avoidance can in turn at its worst lead to disconnection and hiding deeper in their shell.

How are the limitations/possibilities of self-expression shown in men’s dressing?
I am not an expert in the matter but it feels like many men are shy to search for and express themselves especially in their style. Boys and men take a long time to become convinced that a certain thing in dressing is accepted (and it is important that others accept outfit and style choices). New things are not tried or it is done with caution.
Speciality in men’s dressing is the Indepence day presidential reception. Dark suit or tailcoat is acceptable for men, without any possibility for style or self-expression (just wearing red shoes with a traditional tailcoat, done by Heikki Koponen, was a sensation). This is a sad message from our society.

How can we influence the future of male gender roles within our society?
Versatile role models, accepting atmosphere and letting go of unnecessary clichés that enforce gender roles, are all important steps in the right direction.
Especially men need to offer each other peer support and encouragement. No one else but men can break down the gender roles restricting men. However each and every person should support this work and reflect on their own behaviour, for example how they themselves may be regularising certain expectations, hopes and concepts about and towards men.
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
YOU ARE NOT A STRANGER HERE
In this future review I take a critical look at current world events, as well as history, to determine the direction of future events using futures studies method Causal Layered Analysis (CLA). CLA was developed by Sohail Inayatullah in the 1990s and it is based on exploring different levels of a problem and thus understanding the problem better by moving up and down between the levels.

CLA assumes four levels. The first level is the “litany” – quantitative trends, problems, often exaggerated, often used for political purposes, usually presented by the news media. Events, issues and trends are not connected and appear discontinuous. The second level is concerned with social causes, including economic, cultural, political, and historical factors. The third, deeper, level is concerned with structure and the discourse or worldview that supports and legitimates it. The fourth layer of analysis is at the level of metaphor or myth (Inayatullah 2009, 8).

Even though CLA is generally used to find solutions, it is not my intention here. I want to have an objective look and form a general image of future events. CLA is the perfect method for my research as it deals with different aspects of an issue, and weaves them together holistically. Everything in our world is linked and CLA is a method to see those connections between different concepts. The main purpose is to look at different plans, strategies, decisions or assumptions from the point of view of different ways and traditions of knowledge. No knowledge is an objective, universal truth but depends on cultures, societies, religions and many other factors influencing how we see the world. The end goal is to free from the prejudice limiting imagination. For this the level of myth or metaphor is crucial.

Deconstructing conventional metaphors and then articulating alternative metaphors becomes a powerful way to critique the present and create the possibility of alternative futures. Metaphors and myths not only reveal the deeper civilisational bases for particular futures but they move the creation/understanding of the future beyond rational/design efforts. Causal layered analysis includes this metaphorical dimension and links it with other levels of analysis. It takes as its starting point the assumption that there are different levels of reality and ways of knowing. Individuals, organisations and civilisations see the world from different vantage points – horizontal and vertical. (Inayatullah 2009, 9)
Context

Climate emergency, sixth mass extinction and end of resources are all imminent threats facing humankind in the coming decades. While I am not naive enough to think I may find solutions for such massive issues, that will take the entire human race to change, I want to look at power structures behind these issues on different levels.

1 Climate Emergency / The “Litany”

We are facing an existential threat and rapid prioritisation of attention and action is necessary. If we continue along our current path, scientists say that the consequences will be devastating, having implications on where we live, how we grow food and other services vital to our well-being. A 2°C increase could mean more heat waves, a ten-fold increase in Arctic ice-free summers and a complete wipe-out of the world’s coral reefs, home to millions of species. (UN Environment Program 2019)

There is alarming evidence that important tipping points, leading to irreversible changes in major ecosystems and the planetary climate system, may already have been reached or passed. Ecosystems as diverse as the Amazon rainforest and the Arctic tundra, may be approaching thresholds of dramatic change through warming and drying. Mountain glaciers are in alarming retreat and the downstream effects of reduced water supply in the driest months will have repercussions that transcend generations. (IPCC 2019)

The fossil fuel industry is the biggest driver of climate breakdown. Just 90 entities were responsible for 65% of industrial carbon emissions between 1751 and 2013. Alarmingly annual fossil fuel emissions are still rising. Deforestation is the second leading cause of global warming and produces about 24% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Big agrobusiness like the meat and soy industry as well as disastrous wildfires, like those in the Amazon, are causing tremendous loss. Carbon dioxide emissions are not just impacting our atmosphere. More than 40% of CO₂ emitted by people is absorbed by our oceans. When carbon dioxide dissolves in seawater, the water becomes more acidic. Acid oceans are fueling faster climate change. (Greenpeace International 2019)

Everyone is finally listening, most are worried, some are panicking but only a handful of people, countries and organisations are doing anything. On the larger scale of things the situation is constantly being made worse by humans in different parts of the world (Kongo, Borneo, Amazon) burning down rainforests that we desperately need to clean our air, at the same time as we are emitting more carbon dioxide in the air than ever before.

Especially worrisome are potential irreversible climate tipping points and nature’s reinforcing feedbacks. These climate chain reactions could cause significant disruptions to ecosystems, society, and economies, potentially making large areas of Earth uninhabitable. (Ripple, Wolf, Newsome, Barnard, Moomaw 2019)
2 Economic system / Systemic Analysis

The climate emergency is mostly caused by the affluent West. The climate crisis is closely linked to excessive consumption of the wealthy lifestyles. The most affluent countries are mainly responsible for the historical emissions and generally have the greatest per capita emissions.

Excessive extraction of materials and overexploitation of ecosystems, driven by economic growth, must be quickly curtailed to maintain long-term sustainability of the biosphere. We need a carbon-free economy that explicitly addresses human dependence on the biosphere and policies that guide economic decisions accordingly. Our goals need to shift from GDP growth and the pursuit of affluence toward sustaining ecosystems and improving human well-being by prioritising basic needs and reducing inequality. (Ripple, Wolf, Newsome, Barnard, Moomaw 2019)

Living, eating and moving needs to change but the biggest change needs to happen in the consumption mentality of the wealthiest countries and people. From this it seems rational to assume the current economic system, capitalism, that needs and feeds excessive consumption, is one of the main systems that needs change.

It is clear that strong political governance is required to accomplish the key transitions. Market-based action will not suffice – even with a high carbon price. There must be a comprehensive vision and closely coordinated plans. Otherwise, a rapid system-level transformation toward global sustainability goals is inconceivable (Järvensivu, Paavo; Toivanen, Tero; Vadén, Tere; Lähde, Ville; Majava, Antti; Eronen, Jussi T. 2018).

We now know that the fossil fuel industry has known the effects of their actions for decades. Exxon was aware of climate change, as early as 1977, 11 years before it became a public issue, according to a recent investigation from InsideClimate News. This knowledge did not prevent the company (now ExxonMobil and the world’s largest oil and gas company) from spending decades refusing to publicly acknowledge climate change and even promoting climate misinformation—an approach many have likened to the lies spread by the tobacco industry regarding the health risks of smoking (Hall 2015).

3 Inequality / Discourse analysis/Worldview

In addition to rapid climate change, biodiversity loss, and other environmental hazards, societies are witnessing rising inequality, rising unemployment, slow economic growth, rising debt levels, and governments without workable tools for managing their economies. It can be safely said that no widely applicable economic models have been developed specifically for the upcoming era (Järvensivu, Toivanen, Vadén, Lähde, Majava, Eronen 2018).

Inequality is the major underlying issue behind the climate emergency. The problem is mostly created by the wealthy West, at the expense of the poorest people in the world, often making the goods consumed by the rich but hardly being paid a living wage.

The use of cheap labour forced to work for the fashion industry has a long history, as long as the entire industrial revolution. The industry is built on the assumption of free labour and that assumption has been systematically implemented almost everywhere (except the top of the hierarchy) in different areas of industry and around the world.

Poverty wages were used by colonial powers to create mass destitution that forced people to take any work that was going at whatever cost to themselves. Neoliberalism has followed this pattern, with the IMF and World Bank pushing structural adjustment programmes that have destroyed local industries such as fishing and small-scale farming. This has created the hordes of people forced to migrate to cities in search of work. Couple this need for work with the loss of protective trade tariffs and labour laws and it becomes clear why companies like Nike or Primark rush to exploit the situation in the third world. (Hopkins 2014, 83)

It is also the poorest countries and people that experience the first and the worst climate emergency effects. Either one of the two features apparent in historical societal collapses – over-exploitation of natural resources and strong economic stratification – can independently result in a complete collapse. Given economic stratification, collapse is very difficult to avoid and requires major policy changes, including major reductions in inequality and population growth rates (Motesharrei, Rivas & Kahny 2014).

Inequality is growing even though poverty is going down, because there are over 2000 billionaires and 14 million millionaires in the world today, who are consuming excessively. With very simple logic it seems probable that if the wealth in our world was divided equally, everyone could have enough to live a nice life. Why don’t the rich of the world feed the poor instead of throwing out food every day. It seems the need to protect what you own grows the more you have.
One study finds rich people are more selfish than poor people, who are more community oriented. Why is social class associated with the frequency and intensity of experiences of particular positive self-oriented versus other-oriented emotions? Whereas pride and contentment may reflect upper class individuals’ desire for independence and self-sufficiency, increased love and compassion may help lower class individuals form more harmonious, interdependent bonds to help cope with their more threatening environments (Piff and Moskowitz 2017).

It is qualities the study finds more in poor people, that the future of the humankind and our planet needs, in order to survive. In this light greed and excess seem like the diseases of our society and communal thinking one of the cures.

The world’s population currently stands at approximately 7 billion. Just 8 percent of the population (500 million people) emit 50 percent of the greenhouse gases. In Canada, the top 10 percent of the population has an ecological footprint nine times that of the bottom 10 percent. The super-rich of the United States have an ecological footprint up to 1,000 times that of those at the bottom of society: more a ‘death-style’ than a lifestyle. The poor might be easier to harangue but it was not a teenage Primark customer that reportedly owns 4,000 pairs of shoes (Anna dello Russo) or who allegedly owns £1 million worth of Birkin bags (Victoria Beckham). (Hopkins 2014, 100)

4 Gender roles / Myth analysis

Patriarchy is the birthplace of the ideal male and the suffocating concept of the ideal male is at the root of our problem. Toxic masculinity and the impossible alpha male gender roles spread everywhere by the European and American colonists are causing many different problems all around the world. Western culture defines certain quite tight characteristics to fit the patriarchal male ideal. The socialisation of masculine ideals starts at a young age and defines ideal masculinity as related to toughness, heterosexism, self-sufficient attitudes and lack of emotional sensitivity. Boys learn to be men from the men in their lives, from their own experiences navigating our social norms, and from the large social and cultural context.

Humans have created very different societies throughout history and in them the gender roles have greatly varied. “Masculinity” does not exist except in contrast to “femininity.” It is a relatively recent historical product of massive societal change. Prior to changes in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, there was evidence of considerable cultural diversity in the definition of gender roles and male gender roles. There were cultural and historical situations, for example, where rape was absent or, at least, extremely rare; where homosexuality was the predominant sexual practice at certain stages in life; where mothers were not responsible for child care and where men were not normally aggressive (Unicef 2005). Some foragers lived in communes devoid of private property, monogamous relationships and even fatherhood (Harari 2011, 46).

Current conceptualisations of masculinities and gender roles were shaped by a number of factors — the unprecedented economic and military growth of European and American power; the creation of global empires and a global capitalist economy; and the impact of colonisation on the developing world. Empires, for example, were won, built and ruled by men—forging a direct link between legitimising patriarchy and legitimising empire. Colonisation, in addition, forced a reshaping of local cultures and practices under the pressure of the colonisers who tried to re-create native societies into mirror images of their own. Local groups and tribes were clothed, force-fed Christianity and relegated into hierarchical work crews and administrative structures, albeit at the lowest levels (Unicef 2005).

What is called into question is the humanistic arrogance of continuing to place Man at the centre of world history, and more specifically, the implicit assumption that the distinctively human prerogative is ‘reason’. Connected to a sovereign and rationalist ideal, this ‘reason’ is conceived as the motor of science-driven world-historical progress. (Braidotti 2016, 14) Contemporary posthuman critical thought builds on these premises but according to a different architecture. Ever mindful of the fact that, the ‘human’ is not a neutral term but rather a hierarchical one that indexes access to privileges and entitlements, linked to both the humanist tradition and anthropocentric ‘exceptionalism’. (Braidotti 2016, 14)

Deconstructing conventional gender stereotypes is a crucial step in human evolution because they cause so much harm that spreads throughout our societies from isolation to violence towards women. Imagine if we lived in a world where men can cry in public and not be judged, or where boys can wear dresses and not get bullied. Imagine if we were taught from when we are babies, that we are all one, all the same, energy that changes shape, as modern science suggests. What kind of a world could that be?
Our patriarchal male gender roles are at the heart of our current issues. It is the stoic, self-sufficient, tough and often violent men, that we still hail as heroes of our countries and industries, that have started this problem and it is the descendants of those men, who are still holding on to unimaginable power and wealth, that are now the greatest retardants of change like for example U.S. president Donald Trump.

Capitalism was created by self-centered men driven by greed and the need to guard their own economic growth, and the future of their fortune through their sons. Modern patriarchy developed in the 17th century from the concept of ‘divine right of kings’ passed down from Adam, the first man according to Christian myth. It was developed at the same time as modern capitalism and as the Industrial Revolution was drastically changing societies. The Industrial Revolution was largely based on the textile industry innovations and growth, which in turn was based on the free labor provided by the transatlantic slave trade.

In 1775, 5 million pounds of raw cotton were imported into the UK; by 1844 this had increased to 600 million. This was cotton grown and picked by African slaves. The origins of the fashion industry and the slave trade share several disturbing intersections. (Hopkins 2014, 71)

These massive societal and scientific changes also gave birth to the Enlightenment, which in turn gave birth to modern humanism, in the centre of which was the rights of white men. This idea of the superiority of the white male is so deeply built into our systemic structures, it is clear that the systems need to entirely change and be replaced by new ones that represent the knowledge we have from science now and our current values, instead of knowledge and values that are now 300 years old. To put it another way, our current economic system was created before the evolution theory by Darwin, so at a time when humans believed they were in no way related to other animals, or even other ‘races’ of humans (white always being the superior ‘race’), that the entire world and everything in it was created by God for Adam and Eve (but mostly Adam) and their heirs to use. The entire system is built on the idea of white men getting rich on the backs of brown people and those exact same power dynamics are still in operation today. In fact our outdated economic system has created the biggest imbalance of wealth and power in human history.
The high degrees of technological mediation and the undoing of the nature – culture divide create a series of paradoxes, such as an electronically linked pan-humanity which is split by convulsive internal fractures: forced proximity can breed intolerance and even xenophobic violence. And the contradictions multiply: genetically recombined plants, animals and vegetables proliferate alongside computer and other viruses, while unmanned flying and ground armed vehicles confront us with new ways of killing and dying. Humanity is re-created as a negative category, held together by shared vulnerability and the spectre of extinction, but also struck down by environmental devastation, by new and old epidemics, in endless ‘new’ wars, in the proliferation of migrations and exodus, detention camps and refugees’ centres. (Braidotti 2016, 18-19)
The current political situation gives some reference on the near future direction of events. In Finland the youngest female prime minister was appointed in December 2019 and the current government is looking to make needed changes towards a carbon neutral society by 2035. Environmentally, societally and culturally speaking, Finland has possibly the best government in decades to tackle climate issues and on top of that all government party leaders are women. At the same time the polls show that the Finns Party is growing in support, they now have nearly 25% of the Finnish voters. The Finns Party is an extreme right wing party with openly racist and islamophobic messages, and they are the only political party that denies any action towards sustainability should be taken. So people who vote for them are, in effect, immediately climate crisis denialists. It is frightening to think that a quarter of Finnish people want to deny any action, because it shows the trend that is repeating everywhere.

The next few years will be crucial to our future. European parliament has declared a climate and environmental emergency. This clearly divides Europe from the countries still procrastinating to admit the scientific facts. But even the EU declaration means nothing if it is not backed up with action and that is yet to be seen from any European country as well. Looking at the signs of political instability increasing everywhere, I suspect things will only get worse on the same trajectory we are on now, and not enough concrete improvements are made in time.

We are already seeing natural and manmade disasters and extreme weather events wreak havoc around the world, including the U.S., Russia, Brazil and Australia. Yet all of these countries, with particularly much power and influence over the rest of the world, are denying any action against making the climate emergency worse. Australia is suffering the biggest and longest drought and bushfires in recorded history, but the prime minister is still in climate emergency denial, holidaying in Hawaii whilst the country goes up in flames. The US is withdrawing from the Paris Agreement. The UN Climate Change talks in December 2019 failed to bring any results. Brazil, Australia, the U.S., China and other major emitters were all accused of holding up progress.

Countries contributing most to global emissions have the best chance of curbing climate change, but leaders are doing little to address it. The United States, for example, is the second leading emitter of greenhouse gases behind China and the leading emitter per capita. Still, U.S. President Donald Trump has confirmed plans to pull the U.S. out of the Paris Agreement — which would have held us to reducing emissions 26 to 28 percent by 2025 — allowing industries to remain mostly unchecked. The U.S., unfortunately, is not the only country making the wrong promises — protecting the fossil fuel industry and proposing environmental rollbacks — or failing to follow through on policies that will actually help the environment. China continues to build coal-fired power stations despite investing in alternative energy sources like solar and wind. The United Kingdom, while an ambitious global leader in climate change policy, is reducing its targets for cutting emissions. (Liptak, 2019)

Rise of propaganda news and the people who want to believe in them is a very worrying sign. Most of the time the propaganda is right wing, nationalist political parties and groups, spreading fake news about easy targets to hate. This has the reminiscent of every propaganda machine before a major conflict, leading to genocide. Even in Europe we should still have fresh memories of such conflicts. Yet it seems we are blindly heading towards one in the coming decades.

We have already done so much irreversible damage but the amount of GHG emitted by us is still growing every year. The natural disasters, we are now seeing get wilder every year around the world, will get worse as the climate breaks down. In the coming decades this will lead to major lack of resources to support human life, especially in many of the poorest parts of the world. Which in turn will lead to local conflicts and people leaving their homes to look for better living conditions, resulting in masses of more refugees to Europe and North America. We are already seeing the beginning, but it is nothing compared to what is yet to come.

This will most likely result in right wing organisations gaining large amounts of supporters, which will aggravate the already growing juxtaposition between values, until the divide becomes intolerable and somehow erupts. The resulting conflicts will most likely be more based more on values rather than modern country borders.
NEW SOCIETIES
The next generation of leaders create new systems based on new values. Posthuman societies.

2 - 15 years
Conservative / republican / right wing values vs. Liberal / democratic / left wing values
Growing juxtaposition
Political instability
Growing propaganda
Super rich vs super poor
Growing inequality
Growing consumerism > Growing greenhouse gas emissions & use of natural resources beyond sustainable limits > Deepening climate breakdown
The poorest people suffer the most
Worsening natural & manmade disasters
Lead to increased famine, homelessness & refugee masses

5 - 20 years
ERA OF REVOLUTION
Growing protests lead to revolutions around the world. Most societal structures abolished.

or

ERA OF TURMOIL
Major global conflicts, no place on Earth will be untouched. Based on values more than modern borders.

15 - 30 years
NEW SOCIETIES
The next generation of leaders create new systems based on new values.
Posthuman societies.
We have known what is happening in our world for a long time, as well as who are the people paying the highest price for our lifestyles, but we have willfully closed our eyes and turned away. In comparison, before World War II, the entire world knew about the persecution of Jews (and other ‘unwanted races and people’) in Germany after Hitler got power in 1933, but nobody was able to stop what was happening until up to twenty million innocent people were systematically slaughtered. In the possibly upcoming crises, the loss of human life will most likely be astronomically higher.

Continuous growth capitalism can continue for some years, perhaps even a decade or two, but it is not realistic it can last another thirty years. As climate emergency effects worsen and resources start to become more scarce, there will be more political turmoil, protests, refugees, conflicts and many other disruptive forces that will coerce the collapse of capitalism, if we do not make peaceful transitions to another economic system before then.

By looking at how political environments are changing, as well as our history, dystopian scenarios seem most likely at the moment. I understand the point of futures research is to offer possibilities and solutions, and fatalist or alarmist thinking is not widely accepted within science communities or fashion. But according to the most recent studies of how our planet is changing, the worst case scenario is dystopian, and we are going towards it with our eyes wide open. Every natural disaster, war, famine and mass dying of life is dystopian. In all of human history utopia has never succeeded but every war has brought dystopic conditions to any culture it has touched. And there is not a culture in the history of humankind, that has not been touched by war. Or many generations of humans for that matter. Looking at history, it unfortunately seems very human that things have to get worse, before they can get better.

It was reported earlier in 2019 that it only takes 3.5% of people for change through peaceful protest but in reality it is not enough people to stop climate crisis from deepening because the issue is much, much larger than any one country or government and the time for change is now.

Greta Thunberg and the youth climate movement, the action of Rebellion Extinction, Greenpeace and many other organisations, are very promising signs of protests that will multiply in the next decade. But if the needed political and economic changes are not made now, it will be too late by the time those young people are in power, and we are not seeing change yet on a concrete level anywhere. Need for positivity and hope is clouding people’s judgement. It seems like all the changes that are being made now, although needed, are not enough for any real change, but they are enough for people to think the issues are fixed so we can go on with life just as before.

People can make very drastic and fluent changes quickly, when we are forced to do so. At the moment it does not look like we are going to make those changes in time. But change is happening constantly and the industries we have now, as we know them now, will not always exist. As history has shown us, everything changes, all our systems change with time and according to the predominant values within our society. Currently we are living in an economic system, that is totally outdated, built over two-hundred years ago on values that were current back then, made possible by slavery and colonialism. We cannot achieve equality in a system built on inequality, a system constructed to make a few people rich and keep most poor. Economy in itself is not the enemy of our environment, nor is it the reason for inequality, as every modern society needs some kind of economy.
The current form of free enterprise capitalism is however, directly against all that needs to change in order for us to limit the changes in our climate, because it depends on constant growth of consumption, which in turn depends on using natural resources beyond their capacity to renew. Most politicians, CEOs and other entities, that have their own wealth at stake, refuse to even consider that the current form of capitalism may be to blame for the worsening decline of our environments, never mind the possibility of a change in our economic system. But of course sooner or later capitalism too will change, it is just a question of whether we make the needed change soon and save resources or later when there is no choice or resources left for us to abuse.

In any case it is safe to assume there will be more conflicts, immigration and climate refugees as we are already seeing this trend rapidly climbing. As I see it we have two ways out of our current systems, through revolutions or through major conflicts, both of which will bring imbalance to society. Generally in times of conflict toxic masculinity and violence against women increase, but we cannot go back in time so even if there is instability and turmoil ahead, I doubt Western women will go back to having no rights and accepting wide scale abuse. Gender roles may not be able to change in times of conflict, but as we cannot go back in time and erase the change already made, it is safe to assume the patriarchal norms of gender will continue to deteriorate.
4.3 Living in a posthuman world

We are already living in a deformed environment. In the twentieth century the USA built two paradises, Florida out of swamp and California out of desert. By 2100 neither will endure. We re-engineered the natural world so sufficiently as to close the book on an entire geological era. 22 percent of the Earth’s land masses were altered by humans just between 1992 and 2015. 96 percent of the world’s mammals by weight are now humans or their livestock. (Wallace-Wells, 2019)

We have worked to conquer a system, we are now realising cannot be controlled. Nature is at the same time in and all around us, we cannot escape or outsmart it because we are it. The climate emergency will eventually force us to realise our place as a part of nature, because it is something we cannot fight against. We have no choice but to learn to live with our environment, as a part of it not on top of it, no matter what that environment will end up being like in thirty years.

Humans have a need to create better conditions and societies after major conflicts, or even whilst living in some kind of dystopian conditions to make life bearable as much as possible, so it is safe to assume there will be new societies built after current ones collapse.

We will see communities and societies becoming more fragmented, microsocieties, and they come together based on values rather than nationality, race, religion and other external characteristics.

The UN has not been working for a long time in terms of actual action, so some kind of a new international organisation protecting values, rights and responsibilities concerning our planet and all humans equally, is needed to replace it.

Different forms of new economies will rise parallel to each other, as global trade as we know it now will cease to exist. There will be international trade of goods, but the scale will diminish compared to the current situation. New limits to private property are formulated. Forms of circular economics and donut economics may be implemented in 2050, following the laws of nature and not the laws of physics.

Regenerative economic design ensures that instead of using up Earth’s resources, we use them again and again and again. We learn to work with, not against, the cyclical processes of life, including those for carbon, water and nutrients. Thanks to innovations in the circular economy and cradle-to-cradle design we can start turning last century’s degenerative economy into this century’s regenerative one. (Raworth 2017)

Value of everything is re-evaluated. We will live in a zero waste society where there will be hardly any use of virgin materials, but using waste and recycled materials, which leads to creativity thriving. This can in turn bring more meaning, balance and peace of mind to societies.

Automatisation of many mundane actions will affect how people use their time and everything will slow down with no financial pressure to constantly grow, so people have time for activities they actually want to do.
We already now know that there is no better way for carbon capture than trees, so nature preservation and sustainable forestry will be essential industries in the future, as well as renewable energy and regenerative agricultural practices.

We will need clothes, but will not have the needed resources for similar mass production as before and private possession will be more limited than now.

Also our values will have changed to reconsider the meaning of our clothing and self-expression.

There will be wide-scale uniform thinking, people will only have a few outfits but those outfits will be designed specifically to suit their needs and aesthetic sensibilities. This will make clothing culture immediately sustainable and self-expression through style more meaningful.

Production will be small scale, slow and concentrating in quality, as well as near users.

Men's gender roles will widen and become more allowing emotional expression.

An equal society is needed for sustainability and we cannot claim to have an equal society if it is not accepted for men to cry or wear a dress. I believe that will be the next step in our evolution as humans.

The new male gender roles will be a crucial part of creating a new society. We need more empathetic values to be able to live in a sustainable way together with our planet.

Humanism has come to an end, as all the values it was built on have become outdated or failed to make the world a better place. In fact it is the human centric thinking that is in the heart of our current issues. Everybody wants the privileges and power of the mythical white alpha male but it is killing our planet and us.

No matter what happens in the next thirty years we know for a fact that the need for truly sustainable thinking will only grow. We already know what is sustainable and it is not difficult - using what we have, not buying more things we don’t need, using everything, recycling everything and generally taking care of the things around us, including our planet and all the people on it equally.
Fashion is an inseparable part of our culture, reflecting our society and the time we live in. Yet so far in the twenty-first century fashion has stood still, mainly looking back to the last century for trends to help sell more apparel. Changes in fashion in the last few decades have been mostly superficial, relating to only style rather than reflecting changes in ideologies, values or attitudes within our society. In the first two decades of the twenty-first century fashion has become a mere slave to corporations draining energy and resources out of our planet and out of our minds. Yet in this time of peak individualism, personal style is possibly more important to people now than it has ever been. People care about their style tremendously but not at all for their clothes. This is a paradox in the heart of the problem. It seems fashion today reflects mainly consumerism, which in turn is a manifestation of the disease in our society that is eating up our planet from underneath us.

We are now at a point where making more products, no matter how sustainable, is not doing enough. Humans will obviously always need clothing, so there is no doubt clothing will live on as a part of our human cultures, no matter how cultures change. Expressing ourselves with our style is as human and necessary as any other form of culture, on an individual as well as societal level. Style can certainly exist without the current fashion industry, so it is not dependent on it. Perhaps a better fitting term will also be found for our clothing culture in the future, to fit that time and its values. In any case it seems quite certain that in 2050 we will not have a fashion industry as we know it now.

I absolutely think this is the time to panic, not because it will paralyse us, but because it will get us to finally start acting on all the knowledge we have. After all, what are we now if not paralysed. Nobody is doing anything, that is making any difference. Our world is starting to divide based on values more every year and the worsening climate emergency effects will only make that division greater. That will undoubtedly bring more conflict around the world. It is a future we all need to think about more seriously.

But as always in times of the worst human disasters, the possibility for a better tomorrow is also present. Humans have the need to make their situation the best it can be, so even in dystopian conditions humans want to make life meaningful. Perhaps the fashion industry will have entirely changed in thirty years, or completely ceased to exist, but clothes will have a part in creating meaning for people, one way or another, for as long as humans survive.
I encourage all of us, whatever our beliefs, to question the basic narratives of our world, to connect past developments with present concerns, and not be afraid of controversial issues.

Yuval Noah Harari
My entire time in Aalto University, the theme of this thesis has been developing in my mind and has started to slowly live through projects and reflections. One thing has become crystal clear during this time. Making things from the perspective of designing products to be consumed, has become increasingly difficult for me, in the end nearly impossible.

When I admitted to myself that I want to work as an artist, everything changed. I decided that as the photographs are the culmination of everything I have done in the last year, they are the end result of the project as works of art, and not the clothes as products.

Although I want to be a part of the change towards a better future, I don’t want to create solutions for the current economic climate, as it is a major factor behind our issues. Instead of making things I want to make a statement with my work.

With my photography project I invite the viewer to critically consider their style thinking, fashion consumption and attitude towards traditional gender roles. I hope to inspire people to critically look at the hierarchy and systems around them and to consider their necessity, as well as rationality, in the world today.

Our values as a society have changed in the last thirty years, but our systems or our clothing ideology have not. I want to challenge traditional fashion thinking and systems that are obviously not working and offer another way to view personal style.

My thoughts, on how we wear our clothes, as well as how we perhaps should be wearing them, clarified and deepened substantially, during the research phase of the thesis. Especially the wardrobe studies expanded my original ideas and helped me lean towards uniform thinking.

I love how Einstein had many copies made of the same grey suit, to help him save brain energy in the morning. Besides saving thinking time, it is a source of self-confidence to wear something that makes us feel comfortable and good about ourselves, as well as being memorable if we have a signature look. Having clothes designed and made for us, can be a great source of personal well-being, save money and avert stress.

In the project each muse had a uniform made to fit their personality. When the photographs became the end result, the clothes became more of a reference, instead of what the muses’ actual, functional uniforms would be. I still wanted to bring forth and emphasise each personality, and did so with the colour and prints used.

Before each photography session, we discussed all the details out with the muses so that the photoshoots represented them. Each muse chose their own makeup, accessories and general photography locations near their home.

Photography with Emilianne was different and with her we shot more outfits. Emlianne has been my original muse since I designed the first I Made This zero waste collection in 2012 and in almost all my own collection photoshoots since then. We work together seamlessly and it is always an uplifting and productive experience. This time we shot at a location near my studio, in Kalasatama, where Emilianne had a role in a theatre production some years earlier.
Woven leftover cotton sundyed with a photographic print and painted with coloured beeswax.
Woven leftover cotton sun-dyed with a photographic print and painted with coloured beeswax.

IMT logo by Aleksi Ahjopalo 2011, based on the shape of my first zero waste jewellery.

File for laser cut jewellery.
Work Process & Methods

From the online survey and interview with Janne Salakka I gained insight into how much work there is still to be done for an equal society, and what part rigid gender roles still play in personal style choices. The CLA analysis made it clear to me that we need to free men of patriarchal gender roles to get to a sustainable society.

All of the above lead me to design very similar simple silhouettes for all my muses, male or female. I was inspired by the shape of the kimono as well as that type of straightforward zero waste thinking.

In the project I only used leftover textiles bought from two different small, independent textile shops in Helsinki, when they closed down. In my research I came to the conclusion that in thirty years all materials will be valued more. Everything will be used as many times as possible and then recycled, instead of throwing out. Creativity will be used more to figure out how to make the materials suit the purpose. In the project I challenged myself to transform the textiles I had in sustainable and environmentally friendly ways.

No chemicals were used in the treatment of the textiles and the techniques selected also needed very little water. I tested many different ways to treat the materials I had, for example dyeing with turmeric and beetroot, different ways of embroidery and felting.

I ended up using sun dyeing for natural fibres with a dye called SolarFast. I have perfected my technique in sun dyeing since January 2018, when I first tried it in the Waaw Senegal Artists’ residency for my personal project. I fell in love with the technique immediately because it is free from toxins, needs only one wash and reminds me of my first creative love, film photography and working in the dark room.

I like that sun dyeing can produce quite organic surfaces. It is difficult to fully control the process to make an exact repeat image from the same negative, because there are many factors influencing the end result (UV light amount, distance & direction; dye stuff amount, consistency & spreading mechanism; size of the area being treated etc). I love that unpredictability and leaned into it, finding new ways of using the technique along the way. I plan to keep using this technique in my work in the future.

I also used coloured beeswax to paint on some of the sun dyed textiles, to give them natural water resistance. This was the most interesting part of material research for me. I mixed in some wax crayons when melting the beeswax to add colour, and painted three to four layers with different shades. The textiles treated with the coloured beeswax gained more depth and significance in addition to texture and water resilience.

I received a three kilo beeswax sponsorship from Lahtisen Vahavalimo for this part of the project.

Pigment silk screen printing and sublimation were used for polyester fabrics.

For knitting I used some leftover pieces of yarn, received from the recycling centre (Pääkaupunkiseudun Kierrätyskeskus). All clothes and jewellery were made zero waste, because in the future review I come to the conclusion we will live in a waste free society in thirty years.

The jewellery was laser cut from plywood and leftover leather as well as test pieces of pigment printed textile. As before my jewellery comes from the shapes of the IMT logo. The logo design originally came from me finding zero waste thinking in 2010. This time I also added the word human and the shapes around it to the jewellery.
Cotton and polyester blend woven textile silkscreen printed with pigment.
Testing dyeing with turmeric. I used wool yarn, some dried turmeric, vinegar and cold water, and left the yarn to soak over night.

Testing dyeing with beetroot.

Testing painting with beeswax.
Sun dyeing with UV light directly on top of the textile.

The process of painting with the beeswax. I did many layers with different tones.
Woven leftover cotton sun dyed with a photographic print and painted with coloured beeswax.
Jacket made zero waste out of woven leftover cotton, sundyed with a photographic & text print and painted with coloured beeswax.
Woven leftover cotton sun-dyed with a photographic and text print and painted with coloured beeswax.
Woven leftover cotton sundyed with a photographic and text print and painted with coloured beeswax.
Emilianne II
Singer-songwriter, Actress & Model

Dress made zero waste out of leftover viscose, sun dyed with text and photographic print. Jewellery laser cut zero waste out of left over birch wood, leather and textile.
You didn’t come into this world
You came out of it
Like a wave from the ocean
Emilianne III
Singer-songwriter, Actress & Model

Woven leftover cotton sun dyed with a photographic and text print and painted with colored beeswax.
Woven leftover cotton sundyed with a photographic and text print and painted with coloured beeswax.
Woven leftover cotton sundyed with a photographic and text print and painted with coloured beeswax.
Shirts made zero waste out of leftover viscose jersey, sun dyed with text print.
Jewellery laser cut zero waste out of left over birch wood, leather and textile.
Dress made zero waste out of leftover viscose jersey sundried with a photographic and text print.
Handknitted cardigan made out of mixed leftover yarn.
Zero waste jewellery laser cut out of leftover leather, textile and birch wood.
Discarded dress 2018
MILLA VAAHTERA
Artist & Designer

Oversized t-shirt made zero waste out of leftover viscose jersey sundyed with a photographic and text print. Zero waste jewellery out of leftover leather, textile and birch wood.
Oversized t-shirt made zero waste out of leftover viscose jersey sanded with a photographic and text print.
Coat made zero waste out of pigment silkscreen printed leftover cotton/ polyester blend.
Zero waste jewellery out of leftover leather, textile and birch wood.
Short suit made zero waste out of leftover polyester sublimated with photographic, hand drawn and text prints.
Zero waste jewellery out of leftover leather, cotton/polyester blend textile and birch wood.
Dress made zero waste out of leftover polyester. Photographic print silkscreen printed with pigment.
Zero waste jewellery out of leftover leather, textile and birch wood.
References

BOOKS


RESEARCH PAPERS & REPORTS


IPCC 2018. SPECIAL REPORT: Global Warming of 1.5 °C.


Motesharrei, Safa; Rivas, Jorge & Kalnay, Eugenia; “Human and nature dynamics (HANDY): Modeling inequality and use of resources in the collapse or sustainability of societies.” Ecological Economics, Volume 101, May 2014, Pages 90-102.

Niinimäki, Kirsi 2011. From Disposable to sustainable, Aalto University, Helsinki.


NEWSPAPER & JOURNAL ARTICLES:


WEBSITE CONTENT:


UN Environment Program 2019. Why does climate change matter?  


World Meteorological Organization 2019. Press Release. WMO confirms past 4 years were warmest on record. 6 February 2019.  
https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/wmo-confirms-past-4-years-were-warmest-record

PHOTOGRAPHY

All photography by the Author (Tiina Palm).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU:

Elina Laitinen for guidance.
Annamari Vänskä for advice.
Maarit Salolainen for supervision & the last minute cheer, it was needed.

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO MY MUSES:

Emilia Neuvonen
Tuomas Saikkonen
Justus Kantakoski
Milla Vaahtera
Marame Palm

EXTRA SPECIAL THANK YOU TO MY SPONSORS:

Lahtisen Vahavalimo
Kierrätyskeskus
kuule istuta vielä se omenapuu
vaikka tuli jo tukkaasi nuolee
vaikka huomenna saaste jo laskeutuu
vaikka huomenna aurinko kuolee

Juice Leskinen