

**TEXTILE - Cloth and Culture**  
**Blue skies have never been so blue**  
--Manuscript Draft--

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<b>Abstract:</b>	<p>This was written in Lincolnshire, England in April 2020</p> <p>“I sit in my garden I look up there is a clean smell in the air and the skies have never been so blue.</p> <p>My house has become a haven to feel safe and a place to create.”</p> <p>We have more time on our hands and literally want to use them more. We suddenly have an urge to make our food from scratch and we take up knitting. Like never before we learn a new skill and we surprise ourselves! The world has changed dramatically and so have our daily lives.</p>
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## Blue skies have never been so blue

*This was written in Lincolnshire, England in April 2020*

“I sit in my garden I look up there is a clean smell in the air and the skies have never been so blue. My house has become a haven to feel safe and a place to create.”

We have more time on our hands and literally want to use them more. We suddenly have an urge to make our food from scratch and we take up knitting. Like never before we learn a new skill and we surprise ourselves! The world has changed dramatically and so have our daily lives.

With sadness and sorrow comes a newfound love of unexpected things; not necessarily material things but things that have become the new luxury and that give us joy. When before did the nation make a point of doing daily exercise? Evening entertainment consisting of online performances from great artists – something the whole world may not have been able to access live before. Making those video calls to our friends and family really make us talk more and appreciate the little things in life.

With all this time on our hands people realise that making their own stuff is way more fun and fulfilling than binge buying from a shop. The DIY fashion created is inherently unique, the exclusivity of the process making it highly valuable for itself.

The fashion and textile industries have made a start towards sustainability but have been very slow in actually achieving any real goals.

World leaders have committed to seventeen sustainable development goals which means that businesses can no longer ignore this issue. Most businesses publish some sort of sustainability report, which you could argue superficially satisfies the most concerned consumer. Consumers have been slow in taking on sustainability issues when it comes to their purchasing choice. The 2019 pulse report shows that only 7% of consumers factor in sustainability as one of their most important decision-making factors when purchasing.

With all this slowing down and taking stock there is the opportunity to gain new insights and start to really appreciate what we once took for granted. You could say that some sustainability goals that were planned to take decades have been achieved in less than a month.

If the changes to our work and travel patterns are retained, even just in a small way, after this crisis our airports, roads and railways will suddenly have ample capacity.

More production needs to be undertaken closer to home rather than the other side of the world.

We have gone from shops that provide any and all luxury all year round, to shops where you are happy if you can walk out with a two-pack of toilet roll and a packet of pasta. The sense of victory when you find a “luxury item” outweighs any thrill you ever had when buying a new dress.

We have a chance with our newfound “selves” to develop a more individual approach to what we wear and how we consume it. What better way than being more involved in how and where our clothes are made.

1 Not everyone will want to make their own products but that doesn't mean that people don't want to  
2 be involved in developing and designing them.

3  
4 At the end of this crisis a lot of new businesses will spring up as creative people take their home-  
5 making out of their homes and share the results with the wider community.

6  
7 There can again be life in old mills and factories with proud craft traditions left for "dead" by the  
8 chasing of faster and cheaper production.

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10 The difficulties caused by this crisis might be a blessing in disguise. We may be able to reset some of  
11 our living patterns in the longer term.

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13 The rediscovery of making with our hands gives people the opportunity to see that quality and craft  
14 trumps the quick fix of cheap shopping.

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