Organizational creativity as taste-making – towards a pragmatics of contemporary dance theater production

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The process of making oneself appreciate
is indissociable from the process of making things arrive.
(Hennion, 2011, p. 108)

Could sociology, as Whitehead said of philosophy,
not only begin but also end in wonder?
(Latour, 2005, p. 220)

Meinen Eltern gewidmet

Dedicated to my parents.

Acknowledgment

Creativity and invention need an ecology. They are situated within a practice and process that expand across time, space and people. This is a core idea of this study. Just as the making of Contemporary Dance Theater, the subject of this study, so is the writing of a doctoral thesis always already a collective endeavor. Regardless of whether I succeed in developing convincing empirical and conceptual narratives, writing this dissertation was contingent on the generous, benevolent, patient and inspirational support of my family and some extraordinary friends and colleagues as well as supervisors. It feels awkward to put my name alone on this dissertation while knowing that without you, this work would not have come into being.

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Abstract

In this thesis, I sought to contribute to *organizational creativity* research by empirically studying the collective production of *Contemporary Dance Theater* (CDT). I began with suggesting that the literature domain of organizational creativity, while a burgeoning academic field, is perpetuating paradigmatic and ideological assumptions that often *separate* creativity from practice. It is the prevailing ontological and methodological individualism of most organizational creativity research that brings about conceptual and methodological quandaries when seeking to account for (a) organizational creativity as a relational, processual and thoroughly embodied and affective affair, and (b) the basic question of how novelty and creativity are possible.

The overall aim of this thesis was therefore to *reclaim creativity* as a prolific category of social and organizational thought by exploring it within the holistic process of actual work. For this, I studied creativity as a form of *practice* and *enactive sensemaking* within the richness of the moment-to-moment, affective engagement of experienced bodies with culturally meaningful materials. From a perspective of creative practice, this meant turning creativity into a problematic modality of attachment and thus a matter of *taste*. Framing creativity in terms of a *pragmatic* conception of *taste-making* then allowed me to account for the performativity of relational becomings that conserve as well as refine and transform sensibilities and materials. This meant granting the materials of practice their own agencies, as well as endowing the practitioner with "passion," a specific skill set of active sensibilities that allows one to follow and intervene in the flow of materials.

Seeking to enact these conceptual formations through an empirical study of CDT production, I based this study on a multi-sited and focused organizational video-ethnography within a comparative, embedded case design. I thereby developed a methodology that attempted to "follow forward" the creative process and sought to produce rich and suggestive descriptions of the creative practice and its processes within CDT while developing theoretical propositions alongside the empirical material.

First, the empirical study detailed creative *practice* in terms of its *ecology*. I distinguished between (a) the actual *material* of creative practice, which consists of incorporated motion *repertoires* as well as biographical and cultural *proficiency*; (b) the various practice carriers (*plug-ins*) – from social techniques, over performative theories, devices, and the conduit of "taste talk" to the enactment of material in productive articulations – that enable creative practice through forging skilled bodies; and (c) the affective and "normaesthetic" *milieu* of creative practice that is constituted by the community of practitioners. Together, these elements were described as forming an *experimental apparatus*, or a collective set-up of a *performance* and *event ecology* that harbors *poetic practices* and their *occasions*. Second, this study specified the process of CDT *production* as an incremental qualification of a performance. Marked by a peculiar "fever curve" of attachments and detachments, CDT production was described as being affected within the formats of *researching*, *assembling* and *scaffolding*. A detailed analysis of the various practices of these formats revealed a nexus of *experimental* and *codifying* modes of taste-making. The findings were integrated within propositional models that specified the modes of taste-making as revolving around three central reciprocal relationships: (a) between *immanent* and *explicit*, (b) between *prospective* and *retrospective* and (c) between *inventive* and *restorative* forms of taste-making.

Overall, this study expands our understanding of organizational creativity by showing that creativity is 1) temporalized and processualized, 2) spatialized and collectivized, 3) grounded in affect and 4) politicized. It demonstrates the prolificacy of a practice-based framework of organizational creativity that is rooted in a pragmatic conception of taste-making and suggests that such a framing could open up creativity-as-practice as a stimulating research agenda. On a more general level, this study develops a framework of creative practice that concerns the status of its elements. It provides an "infra-language" or theory that seeks not to represent, systematically and from the outside, but to provide the sensibilities to explore organizational creativity from up-close – which can, as this study suggests, bear remarkable surprises.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Arbeit ist eine empirische Studie zur Produktion von Zeitgenössischem Tanztheater (ZTT) und versteht sich als Beitrag zur organisationalen Kreativitätsforschung (OKF). Zu Beginn dieser Arbeit stand die Annahme, dass die OKF zwar offensichtlich im Aufschwung begriffen ist, dabei aber paradigmatische und ideologische Grundannahmen perpetuiert, die oftmals Kreativität von der Praxis trennen. Eine genealogische Herangehensweise zeigte dass es vor allem der vorherrschende ontologische und methodologische Individualismus der OKF ist, der es erschwert oder sogar verunmöglicht a) organisationale Kreativität als relationales, prozesshaftes und grundlegend verkörpertes und affektives Phänomen zu verstehen, und b) die grundlegende Frage nach der Bedingung des Neuen und der Kreativität an sich zu stellen.

Das übergeordnete Ziel dieser Arbeit war daher, Kreativität als fruchtbare Kategorie sozialer und organisationaler Analysen zu reklamieren. Dies sollte durch die Beforschung und Konzeptualisierung von Kreativität auf der Ebene konkreter Arbeits- und Produktionsprozesse gelingen. Kreativität wurde in dieser Arbeit als Praxis der performativen Sinnerzeugung definiert. Der spezifische Fokus lag dabei auf der momenthaften, affektgetriebenen Auseinandersetzung von erfahrenen Körpern mit kulturell bedeutsamen Materialien. Hieraus entwickelte ich ein analytisches Konzept von Kreativität als Geschmacksbildungsprozess. Verstanden als „Geschmacksfrage“, wurde Kreativität hierdurch zu einer problematischen Bindungsmodalität. Die Grundannahme lautete dass Kreativität, ähnlich wie die Phänomene „Geschmack“ oder „Leidenschaft“, sich nur im Rahmen von relationalen Prozessen ko-konstituierender, „offener Subjekte und Objekte“ verstehen lassen würde. Das Verständnis von Kreativität als Geschmacksbildungsprozess ermöglichte dann die in diesem relationalen Gefüge entstehenden Kräfte – bewahrend, entwickelnd und transformierend – in den Blick zu nehmen.

Dieser konzeptionelle Rahmen prägte die Entwicklung einer prozessorientierten Methodologie. Das Forschungsdesign einer kontextualisierten und vergleichenden Fallstudie wurde hierbei umgesetzt durch die Methodik der multi-lokalen und fokussierten, organisationalen Kamera-Ethnographie. Die empirische Studie ermöglichte erstens eine Spezifizierung von kreativer Praxis in Bezug auf ihre “Ökologie.” Hierbei unterschied ich zwischen (a) dem tatsächlichen Material kreativer ZTT Praxis, bestehend aus einverleibten Bewegungsrepertoires sowie aus biographischer Fülle und kultureller Bewandertheit; (b) den unterschiedlichen, die Praxis ermöglichenden “Plug-ins” – von Heuristiken über Vorrichtungen und Technologien zum Zirkulationsmechanismus der sprachlichen Auseinandersetzung über Geschmacksfragen; und (c), dem affektiven und normativ-ästhetischen Milieu des Kollektivs der Praktizierenden. Diese Elemente wurden als Teile einer experimentellen Apparatur beschrieben, eines kollektiven Versuchsaufbaus einer Performance- und Ereignisökologie, welche poetische Praktiken und deren Ereignisse hervorbringt. Zweitens ermöglichte die Studie eine Differenzierung der ZTT Produktionen, nun verstanden als zunehmender Qualifikationsprozess einer Performance. Charakterisiert durch eine spezifische “Fieberkurve” von Bindung und Ablösung, wurden ZTT Produktionen dabei in den Formaten der *Forschung*, des *Assemblierens* und des *Gerüstbauens* realisiert. Durch eine detaillierte Analyse der spezifischen Praktiken dieser Formate konnte die Verbindung von experimentellen und festschreibenden Modi der Geschmacksbildung herausgearbeitet werden. Diese Ergebnisse wurden dann zusammengefasst in propositionalen Modellen. Hierbei wurden die geschmacksbildenden Modi abstrahiert, die von drei verschiedenen reziproken Verhältnissen bestimmt waren: (a) zwischen immanenten und expliziten, (b) zwischen prospektiven und retrospektiven und (c) zwischen erfinderischen und Sinn wiederherstellenden Formen der Geschmacksbildung.

Zusammengenommen tragen die Ergebnisse dieser Studie auf vierfache Weise zu einem erweiterten Verständnis von organisationaler Kreativität in ihrer 1) zeitlichen und prozesshaften, 2) räumlichen und kollektiven, 3) grundlegend affektiven und 4) politischen Dimension bei. Die Studie demonstriert damit die Fruchtbarkeit eines praxistheoretischen Verständnisses von organisationaler Kreativität auf der Grundlage einer pragmatischen Konzeption von Geschmacksbildungsprozessen. Damit legt die Studie eine auf Kreativität als Praxis begründete Kreativitätsforschungsagenda nahe. Allgemeiner gefasst entwickelt diese Studie ein Rahmenwerk kreativer Praxis, welches nicht die Bestandteile an sich sondern den ontologischen und epistemologischen Status seiner Bestandteile thematisiert. Damit liefert sie ein modellhaftes Rahmenwerk und analytische Konzepte die für die praktischen und alltäglichen Geschehnisse kreativer Praxis sensibilisieren. Dies, so suggeriert diese Arbeit, kann zu erstaunlichen Überraschungen führen.

Preface

"Write it again, just without using the word creativity," said a respondent to my first-ever presented paper at a conference on Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) (see Latour, 2005) three years ago. I was stunned. What did he mean? Abolish the notion of organizational creativity, the theme that I had set out to write about? It took me a few moments to realize that it was meant as an encouraging comment on my paper from a respondent who was highly skeptical of creativity as a fruitful concept and theme to write about. Specifically, the comment was targeted at the danger of creativity becoming just another "black box" for phenomena awaiting further empirical investigation. However, it also reminded me once more of the monstrous task of writing about creativity. Creativity has become a highly popular and simultaneously widely contested idea that potentially raises fundamental questions about anthropological and ontological issues. Looking back, I am thankful for this early skepticism and its implicit call for modesty. Not that I stopped using the word creativity; this warning I set at naught. Nonetheless, it helped me to eventually balance my appeal to and warranted suspicion of the idea of creativity. It is in this balanced way that within this thesis I seek to "reclaim" creativity as a fundamental and relevant category of social scientific and organizational research.

In the course of this thesis I took great liberty to explore the literature on creativity beyond mere organizational issues. What I found was a seemingly insurmountable "mountain," as one of my supervisors once remarked. Not for nothing people warned me not to write about creativity. But I was dedicated and thus my first step was to orient myself, to try to find my own position. Therefore a major part of my work was to circumambulate, explore and map the mountain's geography. Employing various approaches – from leisurely strolls, roaming freely in the broadness of creativity literature to fervent expeditions deep into remote philosophical areas, exploring ontological abysses and epistemological pitfalls – I charted the terrain of perspectives and assumptions about creativity.

Very different positions emerged and after a first reading of genealogical works on creativity (see Hope Mason, 2003; Reckwitz, 2012; Rehn, 2009; Sørensen, 2006, 2008) and genius (see McDermott, 2006), the notion of creativity started to appear increasingly as a highly charged ideological complex. Following Andreas Reckwitz's (2012) extensive genealogy of creativity, the idea of creativity is a modern "invention." In our late-modernity, creativity has since gained the status of a basic human capability and resource. It thereby seems to be both a wish and an (impossible)

imperative. A late modern creativity dispositive entails both subjective desire and social as well as economical expectation. Creativity awaits expression, is connoted with a sought-after and socially communicative fulfillment of one's capabilities, and, as an imperative, is highly appellative. In a simple manner: we *want* to be creative, and we *should* be.

This nexus of wanting to and needing to be creative adequately characterizes not only the conditions of the dance performers and choreographers I worked with in this study. No, the more I reflected on my own work, I realized that my own situation in writing this thesis was marked by the same mix of desire and expectation! Of course I wanted to be creative while writing about creativity, and yet this was also signaled and called for; "there is too much boring creativity research, this is your chance, make it creative!" Or was this just what I was telling myself? The "voices" of expectation and desire were sometimes hard to distinguish.

In any way, following the various callings, I submerged myself further into the wider literature on creativity. The lure of a myriad comments and views on the theme – from "A" like anthropology through "P" like philosophy to "Z" like zoology – proved as a source of persistent stimulation; a waxing and waning of intellectual and emotional pleasure and pain. My personal tendency to be an ardent neophiliac did not really help in this case either. Once I was submerged in the material, generating ideas was not the issue. Ideas came literally jumping at me, tempting me to follow them here and there. But which road should I travel? Which traces of thought and lines of ideas should I follow?

My supervisors granted me enormous freedom to explore beyond the confines of disciplinary discussions. And with this liberty, I realized that writing this thesis turned into a process not unlike the creative process I was actually writing about!

Ideas are not the problem. This held true for my own process. And it was one of my first major insights about creativity in my empirical field of Contemporary Dance Theater (CDT) production. If creativity had been equated with the idea of being able to generate a lot of ideas, it would have been of no concern for the performers I worked with. Once they started a creative process, they were mostly already drowning in ideas – and if not, they were highly skilled in generating ideas. As Francis Bacon said: "Images do drop in, constantly, but to crystallize these phantoms that drop into your mind is another thing. A phantom and an image are two totally different things" (Bacon, 1999, p. 49). Phantoms[1] abound, but a phantom, which is a fleeting idea, is far

[1] Although Bacon starts with saying that "images drop in," for his conclusion - the differentiation between images and phantoms - to make sense, I understand him as saying that "phantoms drop in."

from an actual image, which in turn is the result of a process of crystallization, or of "working things out." Be it painting, composing music, choreographing dance performances or writing, "anybody can start a piece – anybody. Finishing is the problem." This is for Errollyn Wallen, a British singer-songwriter and classical composer, at the heart of the creative process; she goes on to boil it down to the maxim "it's about nailing things while keeping the piece alive!" (Bannerman, Sofaer, & Watt, 2006, p. 36).

Creativity within CDT production encompasses more than just generating ideas; it is needed for making ideas work. Just as for the research participants in the field, idea generation is mostly not the problem. Finishing is what I struggled with.

To finish, I needed to find a provisional position. What helped me eventually was to link the research on organizational creativity to my own professional identity. Having an academic background in psychology myself and working at a research institute for organizational psychology, I started to follow a double agenda: I combined the quest for apt approaches to studying organizational creativity with an interest in psychological thinking that could become an alternative to mainstream psychology's resource-based view of creativity as an individual competence.

Eventually, this thesis therefore became a rich and rewarding intellectual journey that challenged my thinking and understanding of basic psychological concepts and categories while generating a conceptual framework that fit my purpose. In the course of my studies I discovered a minor tradition of psychologists and psychology-minded philosophers[2] whose relevant theories for developing an alternative understanding of creativity are in varying degrees and affinities currently being revived in the anthropology of making (see Hallam & Ingold, 2007; Ingold, 2010a, 2012), the sociology of science (see Latour, 2005) and cultural sociology (see Hennion, 1983, 2007, 2013a; Hennion & Méadel, 1989), as well as in studies of organizational creativity (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2006; Miettinen, 2006; Slutskaya, 2006; Styhre, 2006; see Weiskopf, 2002) and entrepreneurship studies (see Sørensen, 2006, 2008; Steyaert, 2007, 2011; Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2008).

I leave it to the reader to decide what to make out of my attempt, and to determine whether it allowed me to "nail things while keeping the piece alive." All mistakes and impreciseness are on my account.

[2] The pragmatist psychologists William James and John Dewey; process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead; French sociologist and psychologist Gabriel Tarde; the French philosopher Gilbert Simondon, a lecturer of psychology at the Sorbonne; Gilles Deleuze and the (anti-)psychiatrist Felix Guattari.

1 Introduction

> It is one of my first days of fieldwork and I join the rehearsal of the ensemble "Voltage" shortly after it started. After gathering his four dancers and talking with them about his latest ideas, Mark, the choreographer, puts on some flowing classical opera music and lets the dancers rehearse and improvise by themselves. The task is to further elaborate on the performance theme of "tension/voltage." Henry attempts whirling while Ingrid stands very still, staring at herself in an intense manner, in a straight posture with an extruding neck, a head that is slightly tilted forward and squinty eyes. She fixates on herself in a mirror and varies the intensity of her looks by squinting her eyes more or less and experimenting with different types of frowns. She then proceeds trying out different moves, an estimated 100 times over, each involving distinct elements of walking on tippy-toes, grabbing her socks at the ankles and intensely pulling them up wards.
>
> At some point she stops and starts talking to Marie who was also rehearsing by herself. They exchange impressions of their individual processes, Ingrid saying "*I'm using all ideas*," Marie replying "*me only a select few*." Mark approaches them, asking "*What are you doing*?" and Marie responds "*I'm creating*." Mark asks Marie if she would quickly rehearse an earlier series of movements with him that involves dancing with a lame limb, in this case an arm. Ingrid stays put watching curiously as Mark grabs an elastic band, saying "*I know you won't like that*" and asks Marie to tie her left arm tightly to her body and then dance like this. Marie moans and grins simultaneously as she fully throws herself into dancing with this experimental set up. After some iterations Mark unbinds her and Marie quickly launches herself into a reprise, adding "*I have to be quick before I lose this sensation*." Mark folds his arms and watches Marie contentedly as she does another round of her "lame dance." He nods in Marie's direction as she ends, saying "*Sweet, I like it*!"
>
> (Ensemble "Voltage," rehearsal, field note, 03.12.2010)

"*I'm creating*," said Marie. What could this mean? This study follows the question of how to understand creativity in the context and process of the collective production of *Contemporary Dance Theater* (CDT). How does creativity "work" within the social and organizational setting of a CDT ensemble? The vignette above contains in a nutshell many of the aspects and elements I am going to elaborate on in this dissertation. It offers a first glimpse of the social technique of improvisation and its particular way of experimentation. It illustrates the relation of repetition and difference, the role of emotions and affect, of being a collective, of devices and props like mirrors and elastic bands, the difference between the "inside" position of the dancers and the "outside" position of the choreographer. The vignette ends typically

enough with Mark saying: "*Sweet, I like it*!" For my study this is not just a throw-away sentence but the culmination of organizational creativity as a collective and individual search for what we "like"; a quest for and a production of "taste."

Generally, this study seeks to contribute to recent calls for *reclaiming creativity*[3] as a prolific category for social and organizational analysis. Creativity has become an immensely successful idea thanks to paradigmatic and ideological premises that yet, as I suggest, separate it from practice. To reclaim creativity thereby entails a task of "saving creativity from its own success." Studying the production of CDT, I have therefore developed a *practice*-based and *pragmatic* conception of *organizational creativity* within CDT as *taste-making*.

Over the last three to four decades, creativity and innovation have become popular concepts for policy makers and organization and management scholars alike. Creativity and innovation, which are often regarded as intrinsically related, have thereby been promoted as indispensable factors for a simultaneously economic, organizational and personal development (for an early affirmation, see Ford, 1996; for a thorough critique, see Sørensen, 2008). In this wake, organizational creativity research has been burgeoning. As recent reviews, encyclopedias and handbooks have shown, far from being a unified field, organizational creativity research has been sprawling and has produced a myriad of definitions and terminologies (Watson, 2007, p. 422).

Within my problematization (see Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011) of organizational research literature, I suggest that the majority of organizational creativity studies still adhere to *entitative* models of creativity as developed within the early psychology-based research on creativity in the 1950s and 1960s. Mel Rhodes' "4P" framework (1961), which distinguished the four strands of *person*, *process*, *product* and *press*,[4] has especially become the mainstay for theory-making, empirical research and literature reviews of the predominantly psychology-based creativity research realm (see also Glăveanu, 2013).

While organizational creativity research seeks to focus on the *interaction* of the "4Ps" (see for example Kallio, Barry, Visscher, & de Weerd-Nederhof, 2011), the uncritical reliance on Rhodes' (1961) framework means a perpetuation of its basic *entitative*, cognitivistic and functionalistic assumptions (see also Glăveanu, 2013). As shown later

[3] The idea of "reclaiming creativity" I developed in relation to the "reclaim the streets" slogan. Both are about recovering and recalling a certain symbolical or actual territory that had been appropriated by economic and political interests.

[4] "Press" is by large referring to the embeddedness of human beings and points at environmental constraints and affordances (see Rhodes, 1961)

in more detail, this is problematic and significant for conceptual, methodological, political and practical reasons. Centrally, as Sørensen (2008) has claimed, an individualistic and cognitivistic understanding of creativity both is part of and effects the separation of creativity from actual practice. Almost paradoxically, a central implication is the dearth of organizational creativity research that attends to and can account for the "practical" and organizational, that is distributed, processual, affective and embodied aspects of organizational creativity (Kallio et al., 2011; Styhre & Sundgren, 2005; Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993). Such a focus on the actual *practice* of creativity within concrete social and organizational settings is still needed in order to diminish the existing gap between the fashionable discourse on creativity and its practice within organizational contexts. Without different ways to think and research creative practice, the notion of creativity risks turning into a blank, hollow signifier (see Rehn, 2009; Sørensen, 2008). A number of organization theorists hence call for different approaches to organizational creativity based on *relational* and *processual* ontological and epistemological assumptions (see for example De Cock & Rehn, 2008; Elkjaer & Simpson, 2006; Glăveanu, 2013; Nayak, 2008; Sørensen, 2006; Styhre, 2006; Styhre & Sundgren, 2005).

In order to address the neglect of theory and research on a distributed, affective and embodied creative practice, I have developed a *practice*-based framework of organizational creativity (see also Miettinen, 1999; Nayak, 2008; Styhre, 2011; Vilén, 2009) derived from a *pragmatic* conception of taste (see Gherardi, 2009; Hennion, 1997, 2001, 2004, 2007). This meant situating creativity within the richness of the moment-to-moment, affective engagement of experienced bodies with culturally meaningful materials. As a matter of taste, I thus approached creativity as a problematic modality of attachment. From this perspective, creativity is no longer thought of as an action of an individual mind, but as an effect of empirically describable arrangements of a social, material and technical practice (see Bartels & Bencherki, 2013; Passoth, 2012). The fundamental proposition put forth in this thesis is henceforth that *creativity* is tied to our dispositional embodied being and to sense, or taste-making, as viable conduct. Sense and taste are developing immanently, from within existing socio-material assemblages that exhibit virtual affordances for the transformation and generation of taste and meaning. My conceptual framework therefore granted the materials of practice their own agencies, while endowing the practitioners with "passion," a specific skill set of active sensibilities that allows one to follow and intervene in the flow of materials.

Overall, studying CDT production as a creative practice of *taste-making* offered the possibility to focus on: (a) the role of *affect* and *embodiment* in creative processes; (b)

the *collectivity*, *materiality* and *temporality* of collaborative creative practice and how it is continuously sustained, refined and transformed within activities that oscillate between *performative* and *representational* modes of engagement; and (c) the relation between the *actual* (the lived) and the *virtual* (the abstract).

Seeking to study "creativity-at-work," the conceptual framework and the research questions about taste-making within CDT demanded for an empiricist methodology. This study therefore relied on an empiricist methodology based on a multi-sited and focused organizational video-ethnography (Merchant, 2011; Mohn, 2002, 2008; Ybema, Yanow, Wels, & Kamsteeg, 2009) that adhered to a comparative embedded case design (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2003). The research design was structuring the empirical study along three principles: it suggested to collect data by "following forwards" (see Langley, 2007), to analyze data by "reading creativity forwards" (see Ingold & Hallam, 2007) and to present data by "writing forwards," that is, by producing "risky accounts" (Latour, 2005). Eventually, I sought to produce rich and suggestive descriptions of the creative practice and its processes within CDT while developing theoretical propositions alongside the empirical material.

1.1 Background

To further introduce the approach taken in this thesis, in the following sections I first present the central assumptions concerning creativity within organizational creativity research. I then situate the central paradigmatic and ideological creativity assumptions within a short genealogy of creativity in Western modernity, which will subsequently serve as a necessary context for presenting an overview of a respective problematization.

1.1.1 The "4P" matrix of organizational creativity research

Research on creativity within organization and management studies is conceptually and methodologically challenged with its heritage of predominantly individual-centered cognitive-psychometric perspectives (see Glăveanu, 2013; Kallio et al., 2011, p. 75). Creativity research is thereby centrally modeled on Rhodes' (1961) "4P" framework of creativity theory and research, which promoted the examination of creativity from four distinct perspectives: (1) the creative *product*, (2) the creative *person*, (3) the creative *processes* and (4) the creative *press* or context. This "metatheory" had turned into "the backbone of creativity theory and research for the decades to come" (Glăveanu, 2013, p. 69).

Rhodes' (1961) "4P" framework constitutes a tradition of *entitative* creativity research. As part of the early psychology-based research on creativity in the 1950s and 1960s, Rhodes' study was based on the *entitative* assumptions of the ontological and methodological *individualism* that was prevailing within psychological creativity research at that time. It bears the marks of that era's pertinent atomistic substantialism within academic psychology, conceptually and methodologically favoring individual subjects and their cognitive capacities and processes.

From a paradigmatic perspective on Rhodes' (1961) assumptions, it is apparent that the greater part of (organizational) creativity research is, beyond its seeming heterogeneity, actually consistent in its basic premises. On the whole, organizational creativity studies have mostly been adhering to *entitative*, that is individually-focused, psychometric approaches to creativity (research) (see the classical works of Amabile, 1988; Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996; George, 2007; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Woodman et al., 1993). A set of widely shared *field assumptions* can thereby be summarized as follows:

> Creativity is a cognitive *capacity* and *competence* of problem-solving and divergent thinking and is therefore an important human, organizational and economical *resource*.

Back in 1961, creativity and its study were indissociably linked with functionalist pretensions; the same is still true today. Fifty years after Rhodes (1961), who posited creativity as pivotal solution for "the problems of modern life" (p. 305), Hennessey and Amabile (2010) launched into their creativity review with a clear agenda: "The psychological study of creativity is essential to human progress" (p. 569). For Rhodes (1961), the entitative-cognitive approach to creativity was in line with his principal aim: to turn creativity into a functional *resource* and learnable *competence*.

Before the key field assumptions of the literature domain of organizational creativity can be critically assessed, they must first be identified and articulated. In the following sections I therefore further contextualize the set of field assumptions introduced above.

1.1.2 Reclaiming creativity means saving it from its own success

The field assumptions within the literature domain of organizational creativity posit creativity to be an individual capacity, competence and hence resource that must be organized for. This idea of creativity has successfully spread not only within this domain, but in popular discourses and policies as well. In setting up the problematization of the field assumptions, I have followed Sørensen's (2008, p. 91) argument that creativity was able to become a successful idea *because* it had been

separated from actual practice. The entitative take on creativity, as identified within the "4P" framework (M. Rhodes, 1961), thereby perpetuates the separation of creativity from practice which was originally affected through modernity's division of labor (Sørensen, 2008, p. 91).

Although organizational creativity research claims to situate the study of creativity within organization and work practice, in the current study I suggest that organizational creativity research's paradigmatic and ideological assumptions actually impede this very ambition. Already in 1993, Woodman et al. came to the sobering conclusion that "after decades of theory development and empirical research, researchers still know surprisingly little about how the creative process works, especially within the context of complex social systems" (p. 316). This has obviously not changed dramatically in the meantime, judging from various late calls for more studies that take creativity's social settings and organizational structures seriously (Kallio et al., 2011; Styhre & Sundgren, 2005). Research on organizational creativity most often lacks an idea of *organizational* creativity. This is why I have suggested that to reclaim creativity as a productive category of organizational analysis, it "needs to be saved from its own success" (see Rehn, 2009).

To understand this apparent paradox, a more extensive contextualization of the emergence of the idea of creativity in late Western thought is warranted. This will serve as the backdrop for sketching the problematic implications of entitative approaches to creativity on an ideological as well as paradigmatic level.

1.1.3 The "modern invention" of creativity

"[T]he great invention of the nineteenth century was the invention of the method of invention" noted Alfred North Whitehead (1925, p. 96) in his critical appraisal of the ideas of research and invention within modernity. The same holds true for the idea and method of creativity. Creativity is not a neutral concept. Creativity, whether as a popular or scientific notion, is ideologically tainted. In the footsteps of Whitehead, a number of genealogical and deconstructive readings of the notion of creativity (see Hope Mason, 2003; McDermott, 2006; Reckwitz, 2012) have suggested analyzing it as a situated, and therefore culturally and socially embedded phenomenon invested with domain and time-specific values and interests. As a result, in the following, even when the singular form *creativity* is used, the reader might substitute creativity as a solitary concept with an idea of *creativities*. To evaluate the predominant field assumptions within the literature domain of organizational creativity, I therefore proceeded by

approaching the idea of creativity as a "modern invention" (Reckwitz, 2012) and a "modern belief" (Hope Mason, 2003).

A genealogy of the modern idea of creativity has many possible starting points (see Reckwitz, 2012). For my argument, two significant events thereby need to be understood as related: firstly, the division of labor in the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, and secondly the advent of psychological theories and practices of creativity in the 1950s and 1960s and their uptake within organization and management practice and research.

1.1.4 The division of labor and creativity's separation from work

For most of Western history, humans were not attributed with the power of *creation* – not to speak of the term *creativity* itself, which only emerged in the middle of the 20th century (Pope, 2005, p. 19). According to Pope, "all medieval uses of 'creatio(u)n' ultimately refer to the Biblical act of creation in Genesis 1.1.3" (p. 37). God-given creation was a datum, and medieval orthodoxy held that God created things *ex nihilo*, that is from the Void or Nothing. The basic Judaeo-Christian and neo-Platonic myth of *creatio ex nihilo* therefore assumes that exceptionally and *ex nihilo*, a finished and perfect *creation* is imposed by an individual creator (or the spirit thereof) of supreme knowledge (see Hope Mason, 2003).

The worldly complement to divine *creatio* was the rule-based practice of *skilled imitatio* within craftwork (see Reckwitz, 2012, p. 61). Before the Renaissance, in the ancient system of apprenticeship, creativity was tied to a studio-based artisanal practice where hierarchically structured teams perfected their ability to imitate conventional masters and to faithfully depict nature. As the aesthetics of *imitatio* were based on virtuous reproduction, neither novelty nor originality were values attached to this model. In both models (*creatio*, *imitatio*), the idea of creativity was mainly attributed to the finished creation and was associated with a distinct set of values, namely adherence to divine order, moral goodness and harmony (see Hope Mason, 2003).

The onset of modernity through the late 17th century Enlightenment's push for secularization allowed for creativity to become a human attribute. Over the course of 150 years, what had once been the idea of divine creation was transformed into a full-blown human category thanks to man's increasing *emancipation* from nature and divine order (Latour, 2008a; Reckwitz, 2012). In a process of progressive secularization, creativity became, especially in Romantic terms, a matter of *divine inspiration* (and "divine expression") and then *ingenious imagination* (and "natural

expression") (see Reckwitz, 2012). The development of the figure of the original genius within modern art in the 18th and 19th centuries was paralleled by a more general social, economical and political embracement of the ideas of progress and innovation (see McDermott, 2006). The rational counterpart of the artistic genius within the political, scientific and technical spheres was thereby the demiurgic, Promethean figure of the great statesman, discoverer or inventor and its *revolutionary imagination*. In both spheres, extraordinary ideas, be they aesthetic or intellectual, became attributed for the first time in Western history to great men and minds, with novelty being treasured as genuine and original.

The emerging political economy and the industrial revolution's division of labor then played a pivotal role in the formation of our current ideas of creativity (see McDermott, 2006; Reckwitz, 2012; Sørensen, 2008). At this historical juncture, we find two fundamental and indissociably related emancipatory trajectories: *art* emancipated itself from *craft*, and *work* was superseded by the idea of *labor*. This double act of emancipation separated the partly aesthetic and partly instrumental nexus of creativity and work that was at the heart of handcraft and Marxist thought (Sørensen, 2008, p. 91). Through this significant event within the genealogy of the concept, creativity became redistributed in the following way: *labor* came to denote a thoroughly anesthetized and fully instrumental sphere devoid of any creativity, while the industrial technicians and managers were granted a more or less technical problem-solving capacity. Creativity as such was still claimed by and granted to the grand artists of the day. *Art* became the sphere of the original genius, where *authors* were engaging into non-teleological and fully creative aesthetic practices (see Reckwitz, 2012).

The spheres of labor and art thereby developed a dialectical relation. According to Reckwitz, the scarcity of affect in the emerging bourgeois modernity turned art's non-teleological and playful aesthetic practices as well as the artist's creative force into a profoundly, affectively charged ideal. The rise of art as an exclusive sphere that was separate from craft/work and thus also from labor was therefore not only made possible, but was also required in order to safeguard a place for aesthetics and creativity in an otherwise anaesthetized society. The formation of a socially acknowledged field of modern art played a key role in the genealogy of creativity. Against the backdrop of a bourgeois modernity and its widespread *anesthetization* of economic, political and pedagogical spheres, the genealogy of creativity can therefore be first of all read as a process of concentrating and making the ideas of aesthetic creative practices exclusive within the field of modern art (Reckwitz, 2012, pp. 58–59).

After this separation of creativity from work and its attribution to art and the original artist, in the following sections I focus on the various proliferations and universalizations that, from the 19th century onwards, further appropriated ideas of genius and creativity and transformed them in practice as well as in theory into increasingly ubiquitous phenomena. According to Pope (2005), this process meant "mov[ing] from creat*ion* (conceived as a narrowly artistic and ultimately divinely legitimated process) to creat*ivity* (conceived as a broadly human and potentially more-than or other-than human process)" (p. 32, emphasis in original). I thereby focus mainly on two pivotal agents for promoting the idea of creativity within the 20th century: psychology as well as organization and management.

1.1.5 Psychology Inc. – turning creativity into a human competence, desire and resource

The 18th and 19th centuries witnessed the development of creative genius primarily in artistic contexts. The driving force in the universalization of creativity in the 20th century was the exchange of ideas and practices between avant-garde art, psychology as well as organization and management.[5] Together, this amalgamation made possible the widespread dissemination of creative practices and discourses that started as social niches, blossomed as counter culture and ended up becoming a form of governmentality, or what Reckwitz (2012) called a *creativity dispositive* (p. 325).[6]

Below I focus on how in the 1950s and 1960s the emerging complex of psychological theory and practice became pivotal midwives for the popularization of creativity and its uptake in organization and management practices and discourses. This is important as a wider background for understanding and eventually evaluating the field assumptions of organizational creativity research as explicated before.

The division of labor separated creativity from practice by turning it into either a technical form of problem-solving or aggrandizing it within the exceptional artistic

[5] The ideas and techniques of *free association* and *brainstorming* are examples for this kind of cross-fertilization. Surrealist creativity techniques took up the psychoanalytical principle of *free association* (see Reckwitz, 2012), which Freud (1920) himself yet credited to the 19th century German novelist Ludwig Börne and a passage from his essay *The Art of Becoming an Original Writer in Three days* (1823). Osborne's (1953) "applied imagination" technique of *brainstorming* then again closely resembled the surrealist *recherches experimentales*. Another example would be the uptake of self-growth psychology within organizational and management discourses that sought to emancipate and mobilize the individual potentials of human resources (see for example McGregor, 1957).

[6] My own interest and fascination with questions of creativity and aesthetic production cannot be situated outside the mentioned "creativity dispositive." In writing this thesis on organizational creativity, I hence developed a double task and perspective. While writing about creative practice as a folding of desires, needs and expectations, I myself also had to negotiate the uneasy tension between wanting and needing to be creative (see also the preface).

genius. Turning creativity into an individual yet exceptional capacity was the prerequisite for the *normalization* of creativity within the 20th century's convolution of academic and popular psychology, psychotherapy and psychiatry. Way beyond psychological diagnosis and therapy, the reappropriation of the self as fundamentally creative thereby normalized and universalized creativity as a basic competence and resource.

Two initially independent streams of psychological thinking formulated separate humanistic and cognitivist approaches to the creative self. Within the former, creativity was rendered an anthropological need and desire. The cognitivist strand of academic psychology, on the other hand, promoted creativity as being a basic cognitive capacity and useful competence of problem-solving. Initially independent from each other, in their own way each version pushes the democratization and universalization of creativity as a sign of the healthy and normal subject.

Creativity as inexhaustible resource – the aesthetic-expressive model of creativity within self-growth psychology

The aesthetic-expressive model of creativity as a form of self-actualization is rooted in Romantic ideas of a playful and non-functional aesthetization of quotidian experience. The personality psychologies of psychoanalysis and the later humanistic self growth psychology were thereby paramount in promoting a "naturally" creative self.

For Reckwitz (2012, p. 215), the importance of *self growth psychology* for the coining of our contemporary understanding of creativity can hardly be overestimated. The humanistic self-growth psychology assumed creativity to be a form of personal creative expression, a self-realization of an authentic inner creative core. With its post-Romantic model of a self that needs to and wants to actualize its potentials, humanistic psychology thereby took up a culturally critical position against the alleged social conformism that had been ruling (psychological) thinking in the previous decades. Its concept of an expressive subjectivity was then quickly absorbed in counter culture and student movements, as well as in new organizational and management discourses (see for example McGregor, 1957).

The humanistic psychological idea of self growth meant moving from a predominantly pathology-oriented view of personality to a *resource-oriented perspective of personality*. Psychological work was suddenly directed towards the qualitative enhancement of normal, socially conformist and unobtrusive behavior.

> This means a structural change of psychological techniques of subjectivation: instead of finding and eliminating the objectionable, it is

> rather a question of mobilizing psychological *potentials* that are in principle *inexhaustible*. Always a further enhancement or increase seems possible. Such a psychology is not limiting but *liminal*: the individual ought to reach an imaginary liminal state of psychological maturity and psychological well-being which yet will never be reached. (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 217, translated by BM, emphasis added)

The new psychology of the potential self emerged as being *liminal*; the potential self promised boundless resources. And one of the resources promised is creativity. The ideal of self-actualization is closely linked to a concept of the creative personality.

While seemingly decentering the subject, the self-growth theories of the first generation arose with the rhetorical gesture of freeing a previously silenced self. A normative ideal of a psychological liminal state of a most intense, aesthetic-creative form of activation developed accordingly. "It is a state that each subject *ought* to achieve and that it at the same time, be it consciously or unconsciously, *wants* to achieve anyway" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 221, translated by BM, emphasis in original).

Within the aesthetic-expressive model of creativity, the actual process of creativity mostly stays shrouded or hides behind a transcendent discourse of creativity as a form of fantasy (see Sørensen, 2006). This model had been harshly criticized by opposing views on creativity as cognitive competence. Margaret Boden (2004), a creativity researcher who strongly opposes romantic views of creativity, therefore asserted that "romanticism provides no understanding of creativity" (p. 15). Boden is a late promoter of creativity as a basic form of intelligence and mental process. Against the Romantic appeal of expression, more rationalistic and functionalistic approaches to creativity focus on creativity as a basic and functionalistic form of *problem-solving*.

Creativity as a problem-solving competence of divergent thinking – the cognitive and functionalistic model of creativity

Initially independent from the aesthetic-expressive framings of creativity, a second strand in psychological thinking established creativity as a cognitive and functionalistic competence of *problem-solving*. The starting signal of this school of thought was Guilford's (1950) now famous and often-cited presidential address to the Association of American Psychologists. Guilford argued that creativity, just like logical intelligence, can and should be determined as a *cognitive competence of problem-solving*. He defined creativity to be a normally distributed competence to reason in novel ways. Academic scholars therefore attempted to empirically and objectively test creativity as a form of intelligence, just like conventional intelligence. To distinguish creativity from other forms of intelligence, Guilford (1967) later introduced the decisive distinction between "convergent thinking" and "divergent

thinking." While the former denoted reproductive thinking, the latter was supposed to indicate the competence to develop unconventional perspectives on and solutions to a given problem. The cognitive processes at the base of divergent thinking were often described in terms of the competence to produce novel pattern formations and associations.

Cognitive creativity research was tied to a positivistic psychology that was indebted to the modern idea of progress. Guilford (1950), for example, introduced the idea of creativity explicitly within a wider discourse on human resources as a competitive edge in the race against the Russians. Just as with the aforementioned humanistic approaches, the aim was to maximize and recall creative potential for the "solutions to problems of modern life" (M. Rhodes, 1961, p. 351). While the humanistic personality psychology of self growth aimed at a developed personality that might also belie social expectations, the functional approach of cognitive creativity research introduced the criterion of societal usefulness (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 222).

Therefore, while a cognitivist creativity psychology held a strong academic position, its basic ideas and discourse were also finding their way into various practical creativity techniques. One of the most famous creativity techniques that evolved at that time was *brainstorming*. Developed by Madison Avenue advertising executive Alex Osborn (1953), brainstorming was a method of group thinking for the collective production of ideas. With his approach of *applied imagination*, Osborn advocated that the principles and procedures of creative problem-solving could basically be learned.

The primary role model for creativity thereby changed from artistic genius to pensive scientist, inventive engineer and lastly the creative everyday (work)man. "Beyond the myth of genius," as Weisberg (1993) asserted, "creative thinking is an extension of our normal mental capacity – … the roots of "genius" lie in all of us" (backcover). With the advent of psychology as an authoritative voice in the 1950s and 1960s, the spirit (of) genius was caught and put back into the bottle, that is the individual mind. What was before exterior and exceptional apparently became interior and learnable. Creativity, which was reframed as creative thinking and hence became a question of *computation*, was thought to augment the scope of human agency (see Harvey & Strathern, 2005, p. 109). At its extreme, computational creativity systems and their artificial intelligence algorithms nowadays promise to engineer creativity literally at the "push of a button" (Varshney et al., 2013).

Summary – a resource-based view of creativity as individual desire and competence

Psychology was crucial for shaping a view of the subject as naturally desiring to be creative and endowed with innate creative capacities that, through teaching and learning, could be developed into literally inexhaustible imaginative powers.

The psychological interest in creativity developed in two independent yet complementary strands: firstly, the subject-oriented psychology of self growth formulated a basic human *desire* and *need* to be creative. Secondly, the cognitivist psychology of creativity advanced an understanding of creativity as basic cognitive *capacity* and *competence*. While the former focused on therapy and the coaching of the private self, the latter aimed at furthering professionally valued competences (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 228). What they both share is a *resource-based view on creativity*, which defines the subject as "a structured ensemble of *psychological resources* that are employed in intelligent action as well as in the creation of novel and subjectively satisfying perceptions and activities" (p. 235, translated by BM, emphasis in original). Creative dynamics were thus rendered both fundamentally vital and productive.

Together, the humanistic and the cognitive approaches to creativity fashioned a new ideal subject. Way beyond psychological diagnosis, therapy or workplace application, the reappropriation of the self as fundamentally creative transformed from the 1960s onwards the popular understanding of what a felicitous self and a satisfying conduct of life should be (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 203). The envisioned creative self is able to make its basic creative desire and comprehensive creative competences work for private and professional purposes:

> The ideal is now a subject that is able to connect its inner desire for creative-aesthetic self-development and the social necessity of creative problem-solving in everyday life, work and society. The goal of a positive psychology of creativity is a *pragmatic aesthetization* of the general conduct of life, where creative practice is an end in itself of the expressive subject *and* a means to the end of professional and private success. (pp. 237-238, translated by BM, emphasis in original)

The psychology of resources and its resource-based view of creativity as individual desire and competence constructed a self that, if successful, is on the one hand experimenting with itself in a non-conformist way, while on the other hand awaiting the recognition and appreciation of its creative performances by a societal audience. It is in this way that Reckwitz argues that creativity has turned into a *dispositive*, where self-motivated and controlled subjects and an indirect steering of institutional mechanisms are interwoven – we *need*, we *want* and we *ought* to be creative.

Creativity within organization and management – asked for, promised and required

Humanistic and cognitive psychology normalized a creative subject that was happily embraced by organization and management as a resourceful creative employee in the human relations movement (see for example McGregor, 1957). In due course, the view of the creative self as being capable of creative problem-solving then further opened up the way for the development of post-Fordist cultures of innovation and eventually an aesthetic economy that is "management-by-design-driven" (Reckwitz, 2012).

The developments in organization and management were thereby especially propelled by seeking a more dynamic and progressive alternative to organized capitalism's entrenched division of labor. The fact that the division of labor separated creativity from work initially made possible an "organized capitalism" (Reckwitz, 2012) and the corresponding technical model of innovation that aspired technical change within a frame of factual order. Yet this was not enough for a form of capitalism that in the 20th century by and by required ongoing innovation and was hence haunted by the very separation of creativity from actual work. Psychology's blueprint of the creative self was therefore highly promising as a solution to the self-created problem of the division of labor.

Creativity has become a key idea in organization and management contexts particularly in the last two decades (see Reiter-Palmon, 2011; Stamm, 2008, p. xi). With the latest advent of a burgeoning information and communication technology and the rise of "knowledge work," creativity and innovation, which are often regarded as intrinsically related phenomena, are being promoted as indispensable for the development of new technologies, products, processes and systems (see Ford, 1996). The twin notions of *creativity* and *innovation* have thus partly succeeded the notions of *quality* and *knowledge* as current economic imperative (see Bröckling, 2006; Reckwitz, 2012; Rehn, 2009).

Policy makers and functionalistic organization and management scholars especially exhibit an almost religious belief in creativity and innovation as boundless (personal) resources and a general (economic) *panacea* (see Sørensen, 2008). In the respective discourses we find the remnants of an early functionalist cognitive psychology that amalgamates trajectories of economic, organizational and personal development. The expanding belief into the creative potential of the liberal individual subject is at the same time welcomed as a democratization of creativity and glorified as an empowering human dimension of economic value. From self-help books to the classifieds in our local newspapers, from job descriptions and CVs to policies of urban

development, in kindergardens, schools, universities and eventually in the form of organizational creativity, creativity is asked for, promised or required.

1.2 Problematization

Having sketched the emergence of the idea of creativity in late Western thought, I have suggested that creativity has become a successful concept because its entitative assumptions, as articulated within Rhodes' (1961) "4P" framework, uphold a persuasive and popular idea of creativity as an individual need, competence and resource. As I show in the following sections, this still supports a *hylomorphic* model of creativity that fundamentally assumes creation *ex nihilo*, and thus separated from practice. This explanation further serves as the backdrop for sketching the problematic implications of entitative approaches to creativity in paradigmatic as well as ideological terms.[7]

1.2.1 Creativity as a "modern myth"

In this thesis I have decided to meet the fascination for creativity, its uncritical embrace and its at times presumptuous claims with suspicion. Policy makers' uncritical affirmation of creativity hardly conceals a powerful ideological dimension: "a need to respond to and fit in with the perceived needs of contemporary capitalism in a globalized risk society" (De Cock & Rehn, 2008, p. 223). Creativity is often inextricably tied to capitalist regimes of accumulation. Bröckling (2007) offers a rather grim verdict, in this respect calling creativity the "civil religion" of an "entrepreneurial self" (p. 152). From this perspective, creativity might seem as little more than a euphemism for self-exploitation in what turns out to be the latest management fad (see also Rehn, 2009; Sørensen, 2008).

Creativity, as I suggested before, has turned into an encompassing dispositive (Reckwitz, 2012) because it has been severed from actual work. This is the price it has paid. As discourse, creativity has thereby become an ideological complex with deep trenches. It has been appropriated by policy makers and functionalistic organizational and management scholars and consultants. In this respect creativity has been made into a key ingredient of policies and theories that promote innovation and creativity as a panacea for societal, economic and organizational growth. And as such, the idea of creativity risks to be much talked about, while losing touch with practice. The

[7] An extensive evaluation of the conceptual, methodological, practical and ethical implications of entitative thinking within creativity studies can be found in Chapter 2.

performers and choreographers in this study, for example, almost never used the term "creativity" while undertaking their activity or talking about what they were doing. Creativity has become a fashionable discourse in policies and organizational theory while, or because, it does not necessarily serve to describe actual practice.

At the center of the following problematization is the argument that, while psychological theory *normalized* creativity, it did *not reunite* creativity with work. The cognitivistic and the humanistic strand of psychological thought perpetuated the ideas of creativity that emerged along the advent of the idea of labor: be it as a cognitivistic form of instrumental problem-solving or as a form of neo-romantic expression of one's true creative self, creativity stays aloof and separated from the nitty-gritty of the actual practice of work.

Psychological theories of creativity have successfully challenged "the myth of genius" (Weisberg, 1993). This idea of creativity as exceptional was affected through the division of labor that turned creativity into an exceptional event of extraordinary men.[8] Normalizing creativity therefore meant to "demystify" creativity, transforming it from an exceptional into a quotidian phenomenon (see Boden, 2004; Weisberg, 1993). Psychological creativity theories challenged the exceptionality of creativity and normalized it by promoting entitative creativity theories that posited creativity to be a basic need and competence of a "creative self."

While having demystified the myth of exceptionality, entitative creativity theories still however perpetuate the *hylomorphic* "myth" of formless matter. *Hylomorphism* is the basic understanding of creativity as an *action* with a definite point of origin *within* the human subject and that is directed towards formless matter. It is a highly contestable theory of change and becoming within substantialist ontologies that assumes a dualist doctrine of thinking form (Greek: *morphe*) and matter (Greek: *hyle*) as separate (entities) (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Ingold, 2012; Simondon, 1958/2010). The argument is that because matter is formless, it can only gain structure through a principle of form that must spring from *elsewhere* and is *imposed* upon such matter. Hylomorphic models of creation center around the agency of divine or demiurgic entities (God – great men – creative selves) that both hold these forms and express or impose them (mainly understood as ideas) onto formless matter. The *entitative* models of *aesthetic expression* and *problem-solving* respectively view creativity as being

[8] The early "original geniuses" were all (white) men.

situated *within* an individual entity[9] and as originating *from* this fixed place: a creative self wishing for creative expression or an intelligent subject imbued with an innate cognitive capacity and a malleable competence for creative thinking.

The *entitative* assumptions of *aesthetic expression* and *problem-solving* continue the modern idea of man's emancipation that has been dominating the Western understanding of creativity. As will be shown in Chapter 2, this still perpetuates a *hylomorphic* model of creation, which is problematic because this model's force of "emancipation" is the very source of the separation of the autonomous subject from materials and the intricacies of practice and work. Psychological theories of creativity therefore perpetuate entitative assumptions that are at the heart of creativity's separation from practice and work.

Creativity (within entitative theories) is a modern myth that perpetuates an idea of *creatio ex nihilo*. The separation of creativity from practice through the division of labor forwent the sense of *creatio ex materia* that characterized the nexus of creativity and work within craft practice. In its place, separation from practice condemned creativity from labor and modeled creativity after the divine *creatio ex nihilo*. Continuing the separation of creativity from work through hylomorphic assumptions therefore allowed creativity to become a "homeless wanderer" (Sørensen, 2008, p. 91). This was a crucial requisite for turning creativity into the successful discourse that it has since become. "Creativity transformed into a ghost as it left industrial labor; presently it haunts, according to another modern myth, the "creative classes" (p. 91).[10] A quick glance at the restless and notoriously semi burned-out "army" of creatives in Western metropoles should suffice for getting an idea of the kind of haunting Sørensen is pointing at.

1.2.2 Evaluating the ontological, epistemological and ideological logic of entitative creativity theories

The problematization of the paradigmatic and the ideological assumptions of entitative creativity theories can be summarized by shortly explicating the three dominant logics found: firstly, concerning the ontological assumptions, the *interactional* and *impositional* logic of a hylomorphic model of creation; secondly, concerning the epistemological assumptions, the *retrospective* and *explanatory* logic of knowledge-

[9] The entities vary, ranging from a transcendental spirit, over a "creative self" to some kind of psychological creative faculty or capacity (e.g., divergent thinking). What they all have in common is the assumption of an independent and distinct existence.

[10] See Florida (2002) for the alleged "rise of the creative class" (title).

based creativity (studies); and thirdly, concerning the ideological assumptions, the *masterful* and *liminal* logic of creativity as a human resource.

Hylomorphism is the model of creation of an entitative, that is substantialist, ontology (see for example Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Ingold, 2012; Simondon, 1958/2010). It posits to start with the identity of full-blown individuals and conceives of creativity on the basis of classical theories of action. Assuming creativity involves the realization of already existing possibilities (see 2.2.6), its central logic is that of an active *imposition* of pre-existing forms/ideas on passive matter. This is a highly problematic account as it stays mute on the question of how change and novelty are possible "in this world." Entitative approaches therefore often fall into either transcendent or tautological answers to the question of where forms originate from if matter is thought of as being inherently passive and void (see Feyerabend, 1987; Sørensen, 2006). The competent practitioner of cognitive theories is tied to the mechanical execution and imposition of a set plan (see Ingold, 2001). This makes it difficult to leave a creative margin of indeterminacy and thus to conceive of the creative process as being unpredictable.

Overall, hylomorphism's logic of *imposition* is a conception of transcendent change. It lacks the ontological and theoretical sources for thinking of creativity as being immanent within practice. Gilbert Simondon (1958/2010), one of the most eminent critics of hylomorphic thinking, therefore suggested that hylomorphism is a normative and idealized model of creation (p. 114). The hylomorphic conception of creativity as a process of problem-solving through divergent thinking expresses more its positivistic ambitions than actually accounting for the material intricacies of creative practice. Conceptually, the cognitivistic logic of imposition thereby neglects especially the experiential and affective sides of creative processes (see Adler & Obstfeld, 2007; Amabile, Barsade, Mueller, & Staw, 2005; George, 2007; Slutskaya, 2006).

When it comes to collective forms of creativity and thus organizational creativity, *inter-action* approaches still maintain entitative assumptions of the underlying substantialism and its theory of action (see Emirbayer, 1997, pp. 285–286; Latour, 1996). This means that the relations between the "4Ps" (see M. Rhodes, 1961), and especially between *person* and *product*, can only be conceived as a "back and forth" with a definite point of origin and a transportation of force. Due to its entitative assumptions, organizational creativity can therefore never conceive of a collectivity beyond an aggregation of individual creativities (see Adler & Obstfeld, 2007; George, 2007) or a form of "inter-action" (see for example Hargadon & Bechky, 2006). A central question is therefore how organizational creativity can be conceptualized in

such a way that it allows for creativity beyond a mere focus on the individual and their cognitive processes (which are at best moderated by contextual variables).

Epistemologically and methodologically, hylomorphism is the foundation for the *retrospective* and *explanatory* logic of knowledge-based creativity studies. Within entitative models, creativity is framed as a matter of human knowledgeability and sought to be explained retrospectively within a general input-output model (see for example George, 2007). Once again, it is Rhodes' (1961) "4P" framework that presents the respective methodological approach in its essence: the creativity of the *person* is assessed via a backward reading from the *product*, or the respective creative outcome. "Reading creativity backwards" thereby judges the creativity of action by the novelty of its outcomes alone. It operates by comparing an outcome to what has been before and to its antecedent conditions in the form of unprecedented ideas in the minds of individual agents (Ingold, 2010a). All in all, a backward reading of creativity reversely attributes the emergent form to some kind of prior design. To infer creativity from the finished result of creative practice is however omitting "the very creativity of the very processes wherein every design is realised in practice" (Ingold, 2011, p. 7).

Creativity research within an *explanatory* frame of science strives to expose the logic of invention, which I yet assume to be an ontologically unpredictable process. The scientific logic of explanation thereby runs up against "creativity's creative nature" (Rehn, 2009, p. 251). Here we find an "ontological paradox" (Rickards & De Cock, 1999) that effects an epistemological as well as methodological impasse. Human knowledgeability is at the basis of both the entitative-cognitive understanding of creativity as well as the theories that correspondingly seek to produce scientific knowledge. Assuming a definite point of origin of creative action, research based on hylomorphic premises seeks to generate definite knowledge of creativity. Yet how might the generative process of creativity be explained in generalizable models "if an essential part of the process is its uniqueness from that which existed before?" (Rickards & De Cock, 1999, p. 239). Creativity research cannot generate any definite knowledge of creativity, because it would otherwise demote creativity to a petty technical trick. The unpredictability of practice between input and output asks for a science of creativity that can account for the indeterminate aspects of creative processes. I therefore started this study assuming that creativity can affirmatively only be thought as an *event*.

The ideological dimension of entitative assumptions can be problematized according to its *liminal* and *masterful* logic of creativity as an innate capacity, competence and resource. Hailing creativity as an important organizational and economical resource

(Reckwitz, 2012, pp. 155–197; Rehn, 2009, p. 251), functionalist approaches especially within management and organization studies (see for example Peters, 1992) mobilize a narrative of *liminality*. Creativity is, at least in theory, here depicted not as limited but liminal: it is lauded as a literally inexhaustible resource, which suggests that a further enhancement or increase would always be possible. Positing creativity as an inexhaustible resource and "permanent presence" is a *liminal* logic that yet easily incites feelings of "permanent lack" (see Rehn, 2009, p. 250) and fears of inertia (see Osborne, 2003) and being non-creative (see Reckwitz, 2012, pp. 347–348). The shadow of creativity as a human resource, closely tied to cultural values of individuality and authenticity, is thereby the existential risk of social marginalization (p. 348)

A shortage of creativity points at a lack of being *masterful*. The adjective *masterful*, as distinct from *masterly*, is here thought to mean "powerful and able to control others" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). Entitative theories and their hylomorphic assumptions are linked to modernity's grand narrative of emancipation (see Latour, 2008a), which again is closely tied to the division of labor (see Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 114). Simondon offered a highly instructive political and ethical analysis that posits hylomorphism to be a social representation of the labor condition as such: "[H]ylomorphism is really artisanal production seen from the perspective of the architect or master" (Bonta & Protevi, 2004, p. 98). The hylomorphic model of creation is socially advancing the Tayloristic division between those that think up the objects (heads) and those who make it (hands). It takes the technical operation from labor and posits it as "the universal paradigm for the genesis of beings" (Simondon, 1989, in Combes, 2013, p. 71). Ultimately the model represents an outsider's perspective (Simondon, 2005, in Ingold, 2012, p. 433) that turns out to be more "a norm and an ideal than an experience of the real" (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 114).

Altogether, I claim that the hylomorphic model, as a normative and idealized version of creation, neglects all of the active and affective, social, material and technological intricacies of an actual (work) practice. Ethically and politically, the scheme of hylomorphism further reproduces problematic social and political distinctions, as it is shown to be part of a modernist narrative of mastery and autonomy that is modeled on the condition of labor.

Having problematized the predominant assumptions within (organizational) creativity research, I now present the overall objective and an overview of my study.

1.3 Aim and overview of the study

The overall aim of this thesis is to *reclaim creativity*[11] as a prolific category of social and organizational thought. Acknowledging the problematic side of approaches that promote an unholy alliance of creativity as a personal, organizational as well as economic resource, one could easily reach the conclusion that research on creativity is bound to "take a position" on one side of the ideological trench: it will either embrace creativity as a discourse that is relatively disconnected from actual practice or condemn it as such. However, in order to address this problem, in this thesis I chose a different, *critical affirmative* approach. Not condemning the notion of creativity from the outset, I sought to be critical about its many, often presumptuous claims while at the same time affirming it as a productive concept that can help us to better understand creative organizational practice and processes.

In the following sections I begin by further detailing the aim of this study. Then I introduce the empirical field of Contemporary Dance Theater (CDT) and its warrant. A larger section deals with the alternative conceptual framework I have developed within this study, before coming to the research questions. Eventually I present the methodology and outline how I set about to answer the research questions.

1.3.1 Reclaiming creativity as inherent to practice

To reclaim creativity is to try to save it from its own success. Its success, as I have argued, is based on its separation from work. Hence, in this project a main objective is to study and theorize creativity within the holistic unfolding, that is, the process of actual work. My personal interest (see interlude 1, below), motivated through my own experiences as semi-professional dancer, DJ and improvisational theater actor, was thereby to study how creativity is part of a collective endeavor of making.

> I was intrigued by the idea of studying organizational creativity as an actual practice and process. This thrust stemmed from my own experiences as a semi-professional Tango dancer and DJ, as well as improvisational theater actor. I enjoy performing and improvising within these fields and often marvel how much experience, effort, preparation and also serendipity is needed to make things work. In Tango as well as on stage, a lot of training and "tuning in" is necessary to make creative actions more likely and eventually to appear as if magically being conjured up. A certain skill can be developed, yet that does not automatically make one a genius or produce creative acts at the push of a button. These experiences shaped my broad

[11] See footnote 3.

assumption that creativity is a process contingent on various factors that allow for "something to happen."

From my own experience, I assumed that creativity cannot be forced. It rather seems like a process involving others (humans and non-humans), which gives rise to unforeseen events. Tango and improvisational theater are collective creative processes. It takes two to Tango and improvisation theater also lives from the collaborative unfolding of a plot. I often wondered about the role of "others" in (not) enabling the "creative spark" within joint improvisations. Whether on the dance floor or on stage, despite the certain expertise and situational preparation required, directors would still ask me to "let things happen." Invoking exhilarating and distressing feelings that things could always be different, or at least that they could still founder, improvisation is where in the heat of the moment reactions become actions become reactions. Whether in the intimate togetherness of Tango or while on stage with colleagues, it was puzzling how at times we would tend to re-produce certain well-known patterns and how we then again would be lured into an unexpected move. With Tango, for example, it was – and still is intriguing – how the joint performance of two bodies dancing the same songs again and again can be and feel so different. Based on deeply incorporated movement repertoires, the dance can sometimes become repetitive and boring. And then again, with the "right" partner, at the "right" time and with the "right" music, the dance can overstep its repetitive impetus and transform or refine itself. The idea of authorship, in terms of a distinctly situated and directed agency, thereby seems an unsuitable concept.

Overall, my experiences of the creative process were revolving around intensive interactions between its various participants and with the materials involved. The creativity of collective improvisation seemed to me an unpredictable effect of a socio-material setup, involving preparedness, passion and a meeting of bodies. This was the background with which I both approached this study on the production of CDT and the literature on the chosen academic discourse of organizational creativity.

Interlude 1: Tango and theater – personal experiences of creativity as an unpredictable process

My critical affirmative stance meant to opt for an oblique alternative to the conventional engagement with the idea of creativity. Affirming creativity to be fundamentally an event, in this thesis I aimed to "stay true to the event of creativity rather than the ideology built up around it" (Rehn, 2009, p. 254). Neither seeking to explain and fashion functionalistic models of creativity nor denouncing the very possibility of studying creativity, "staying true to the event" in this thesis has thereby meant providing accounts that can convey a sense of the complexity of creative practice and describe organizational creativity "at work."

Attempting to reclaim creativity necessitated heeding Styhre's (2006) call for a "broader research agenda anchored in ontological and epistemological discussions" (p.

147). In this dissertation I therefore present the double work of forging an alternative conceptual framework based on different paradigmatic assumptions in dialogue with and propelled by my empirical material. The central conceptual task was thereby to move away from an ontological and methodological individualism and its hylomorphic model of creation. This, as Steyaert (2007) asserted within the context of entrepreneurial creativity, is not an easy task:

> To move the understanding of the creation process from the agency of imaginative actors towards creation as a social practice, one of the most difficult remaining challenges is to transcend the methodological individualism. (Steyaert, 2007, p. 472)

A considerable effort of my study was therefore to develop a conceptual framework of *creative practice* (see Chapter 3).

1.3.2 Why study Contemporary Dance Theater?

In this dissertation I have developed an account and framework of creative practice by empirically studying the *production of Contemporary Dance Theater* (CDT). I chose CDT for personal, pragmatic (see interlude 2), conceptual as well as methodological reasons (see methodology, Chapter 4). Overall, the choice to study CDT was first of all motivated through very simple personal and pragmatic reasons: I felt excited about the prospect of studying a field of personal relevance and concern, and I suddenly had the opportunity to actually do so.

> Knowing that one always starts "in the middle," every project nevertheless needs its founding story, its own "creation myth." The story of how I got into studying the production of Contemporary Dance Theater (CDT) starts on an unusually sunny and hot day in the middle of September 2010. I was at a local symposium on the aesthetics and politics of organization, when I had one of the typical conference coffee break conversations that turned out to be more interesting than the rest of the program. While exchanging thoughts with a contemporary dance choreographer on the relation of choreography and organization, the choreographer rather casually remarked that for her, *choreography is more than just a metaphor for organizing, it is a specific way of organizing*.
> This idea fell on fertile ground. At that time I was looking for an empirical field for my research that was broadly targeted at covering themes of organizational change and creativity. Within an instant I saw the possibility of connecting personal and academic interests with doing research on the production of CDT. With lingering fascination, I left the conference venue for a leisurely stroll back to the institute. I still clearly remember the walk through a wonderful late summer day, and how I along the way further dwelled on the idea of choreography-as-organization. Writing up my thoughts later that very day, I formed the basic idea of choreography as an

uncertain and risky organization of the performance of bodies in time and space. I was intrigued by this prospect.
Whether as a PhD student interested in questions of organizational creativity, an avid dancer of Argentine Tango or a performer of improvisational theater, what interested me was to learn and think (differently) about the collective and uncertain process of creative production and its organization. And thus the first general *research questions* were formed:
How do theater pieces come into being? How is creativity organized within CDT choreography? And what can we learn about organizational creativity from CDT production?
About one month later I had a first meeting with Tom, one of the dancers in the local CDT company. He was a friend of an old colleague and proved to be the perfect gatekeeper. His reference gave me easy access to Mario, the head of the company. At that time, the dance company had just begun a production project called "Sharp Cutz." As this project entailed the parallel development of a number of shorter performances within small teams of company members, it seemed like the perfect setting for my fieldwork. After having been given *carte blanche* by the company director and his theater superiors, I was attending my first rehearsal not even one week later.
Looking back, what fascinated me primarily about the production of a CDT performance is that it is a rather precarious and unpredictable process of creative production. The Czech novelist and playwright Karel Capek likened theater making to warfare and gambling. Declaring his love to the daily insanity of theater making in his charming little book on the "formation of a theater performance" (1925/2012), he asserted it is next to a miracle that, notwithstanding all its uncertainty, theater makers and performers managed and manage time and again to "make theater work."

Interlude 2: How I came to study the making of Contemporary Dance Theater

1.3.3 Conceptual framework

How to approach the making of CDT? What alternative assumptions are foundational for this study after having criticized the entitative premises of organizational creativity research? Overall, in contrast to entitative approaches, I proposed a *relational* approach to creativity that framed creative practice as a matter of taste. This turned creativity into a problematic modality of attachment. The concepts of taste and attachment are furthering an understanding of *organizational creativity* as follows: from the perspective of attachment and taste, an organizational view on "creativity" places it as the effect of a situated activity of taste-making and its ecology. Creativity then must be regarded as a collective achievement accomplished within a network of cultural, institutional, organizational and personal relations which assemble people, technologies, material and knowledge in response to the demand of creating a "new" (cultural) product – in my case a CDT performance.

To illustrate the conceptual framework developed in this thesis, I contrast an *entitative* with a *relational* position on the *what* and *how* of theater making. The first quote is from Goethe on the making of Mozart's opera *Don Juan*. The second quote is from Jeff, one of the participating performers within this study, on the making of CDT:

> The French use the word "composition" inappropriately. The expression is degrading as applied to genuine productions of art and poetry. … How can one say, Mozart has *composed* Don Juan! Composition! As if it was a piece of cake or biscuit, which had been stirred together out of eggs, flour and sugar! It is a spiritual creation, in which the details, as well as the whole, are pervaded by *one* spirit, and by the breath of *one* life; so that the producer did not make experiments, and patch together, and follow his own caprice, but was altogether in the power of the daemonic spirit of his genius, and acted according to his orders. (Goethe in a conversation with his secretary Eckermann; 1831/2013, pp. 15–16, emphasis in original)

> Making pieces is always a little like baking cake. You always look what ingredients you have or what is at your disposal and then you see what you do with it. This is much easier than kind of imposing things, you know. (Jeff, choreographer, research participant, 2010, translated from German)

In their juxtaposition, Goethe and Jeff here stand for two very different ideas of the production of theater and also for two different approaches towards creativity research.[12] Goethe, in a romantic praise of Mozart's individual genius in creating *Don Juan*, defends the opera's "magic work" against the very French idea of it being a mere *composition*. The thought of *Don Juan* being a mere "piece of cake," an ordinary composition of common materials, made Goethe shudder. Jeff, on the other hand, likens the emergence of a CDT performance exactly to this: the baking of cake with whatever ingredients are at hand.

The statements of Goethe and Jeff contrast in terms of their basic assumptions regarding the process of production and the location and agency of creativity. On the one side is the romantic and artistic idea of a transcendent, eventful "spiritual creation" that, far from any tinge of *bricolage*, is perfected at once through "one spirit"; on the other side is the more artisanal idea of "baking cake," of experimenting and composing with the ingredients or materials at hand, trying them out and working with what they offer. The second difference between the two commentators is that while Goethe "looks backwards," Jeff "looks forwards." Goethe starts from the seemingly finished creation, the *product* of *Don Juan* (as "spiritual creation") and deduces that Mozart is an ingenious *person*. Jeff, however, looks at the *process* (cake baking) of making a

[12] With their respective differences, Goethe and Jeff must also be seen as men of their time, expressing contemporary assumptions and views on creativity (see Chapter 2).

new performance as such, where more emphasis is on the *materials* and their properties than the finished product.

Seeking to learn from and take my research participants seriously, I felt challenged to develop a conceptual framework that could account for production as an analogy to what Jeff called a process of "baking cake," a "doing something with ingredients." Goethe disdained the notions of both *material* and *composition*. They were for him examples of the French language's inability to account for the ethereal specifics of artistic creation. As a German who is writing in English and drawing on a number of French thinkers, I myself have yet come to embrace these notions. Seeking to heed the logic of creative practice, the idea of creativity as basically a question of composition with or from materials has become the cornerstone of my account. However, I did not mean to forgo the Goethean sense of event; I rather sought to develop a conceptual framework that could combine both Jeff's emphasis on the *immanence* of an object-oriented, relational creative practice and Goethe's accent on the *eventfulness* of creation.

A conceptual framework of relational practice

My conceptual task was to develop an understanding of creativity as an event that is immanent to practical engagements with materials and ingredients. Therefore I developed a *relational practice* approach that centrally posits creativity as a question of a performative and eventful composition *ex materia*. This means a shift from entitative assumptions of an ontological and methodological individualism that aim to explain creativity in terms of individual actor's intentions and actions towards a processual relationalism that assumes the latent primacy of practices and relations over the individual or the organization (see Steyaert & van Looy, 2010; Tsoukas, 2008).

With Latour (1999a, 2008a), we can understand the *entitative* and the *relational* paradigms as following two distinct modern narratives: one of *emancipation*, or a centering of the subject as inherently powerful and creative, and one of *attachment*, or a decentering of the subject as relying on its relatedness to heterogeneous mediators that can make (creative) action happen. As basic creativity traditions, the two narratives come with specific sets of values and passions: "one of emancipation, detachment, modernization, progress and mastery, and the other, completely different, of attachment, precaution, entanglement, dependence and care" (Latour, 2008a, p. 2).

Relational practices (see Steyaert & van Looy, 2010) are characterized by their central foundation of *attachment* (see Gomart & Hennion, 1999; Hennion, 2013a). To understand the relation and interactivity of subject and object, the rich concept of

attachment makes us move beyond a theory of action towards an idea of mutual existence and presence. Beyond the dualism of voluntarity and compulsion, attachment accounts for phenomena of change and creativity within the "middle ranges of agency" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 13). Creative practice means a thorough entanglement with and a dependency on constraints and enablers, be they materials, techniques, doings or other humans. As exemplified in avant-garde creativity techniques and design principles of appropriation and arrangement (see Reckwitz, 2012), creativity here appears as a trans-individual process and a property not of individuals but of relations within situations. The idea of attachment therefore proposes positing the individual not as origin but as emerging within a situational, that is a processual and materialized form of practice. For Latour (2008a),[13] the idea of creativity as attachment thereby includes a specific set of attitudes: "modesty, care, precautions, skills, crafts, meanings, attention to details, careful conservations, redesign, artificiality, and ever shifting transitory fashions" (p. 7). A relational take on creativity on the basis of attachments opens it up to the vernacular. It situates creativity in everyday experience while, thinking creativity as *event*, maintains "the mystery of unintended consequences" (p. 6).

Creativity as a combination of conservation and innovation

An attachment–based approach to creativity formulates a first, yet still vague, direction for creativity research: from a perspective of attachment, creativity means the "strange combination of conservation and innovation" (Latour, 2008a, p. 11). For Latour (1999a, 2005, 2008a), there is a need to rethink the creative potential of emancipation as a question of attachment. Set against both a humanist as well as a post-humanist position that either conceives of relationality as a question of "mere" context or as determination, Latour (2008a) seeks to reconcile "the entirely different sets of emotions, passions and drives triggered by the two alternative Great Narratives of modernity" (p. 8). He wants to show how both stories, namely the one on emancipation and the one on attachment, are actually a single story; how emancipation is based on attachment, and how we only see the constraining fetters – not the enabling feathers. For Latour, to be "emancipated to do" or to be "something" is always a *creation ex materia*. This is the basic idea of thinking in attachments, be they called "life supports" or "plug-ins" (Latour, 2005).

The conceptual and methodological consequences of thinking about creativity in terms of attachment are subtle but far-reaching. Instead of thinking of the "4Ps" (M. Rhodes,

[13] Latour (2008) speaks about *design*, which I take to be a relational and attachment-based understanding of creativity.

1961) as being “inter-acting” (see Kallio et al., 2011), person, product, and press are thought of as being immanently entangled within an ongoing process of a world “in the making” (James, 1909/1996). The unit of analysis of such an approach is neither the individual (human) nor the structure (organization), but the basic relationality of practice where subject and object are mutually constitutive. From a perspective of attachment, creative practice is drawing on a substantial number of materials and resources that it is maintaining, perpetuating and conserving while at the same time seeking to refine and transform them. Studying creativity then becomes a question of how, in the broadest sense, an *activity of relation* (Combes, 2013) makes things and bodies gain, sustain or refine their existence and presence. With such an approach, creativity is no longer thought of as an action of an individual mind, but as an effect of empirically describable arrangements of a socio-technico-material practice (see Bartels & Bencherki, 2013; Passoth, 2012).

Thinking of creativity in terms of attachment means assuming that creativity is not an entitative but a thoroughly *distributed* phenomenon. This invites us to pay attention to what materials can do, which, as Laura Cull (2012b) has asserted,

> is less a call for (another) return to formalism and its elimination of the inessential within a medium-specific approach, so much as for an expansion of the notion of authorship to include the inventive powers of the nonhuman, in a manner that allows us to consider all art [creative; BM] practice as fundamentally collaborative. (p. 7)

Expanding the idea of authorship, and in contrast to entitative perspectives that “read creativity backwards” via its finished products, a processual and relational approach based on the notion of attachment proposes to *read creativity forwards* via its practices, processes and material transformations (see 4.2.2). It is Tim Ingold’s work within the anthropology of making (2010a, 2011; Ingold & Hallam, 2007) that introduces this crucial distinction. Turning creativity into a processual and relational phenomenon, “reading creativity forwards” seeks to follow creativity in “the movements that give rise to things, rather than backwards from their outcomes” (Ingold, 2011, p. 7). It assumes that in all cases of “making,” practitioners deal not with finished objects but rely on “live” ingredients, that is, material that bears the potential for further acts of creation and transformation.

In contrast to entitative ideas of creativity as capacity and competence, a relational approach to creativity then formulates an ecological account of creative *skill* (see Ingold, 2001). The competent person of cognitive-entitative approaches is, as suggested, bound to the automated execution of already determined ideas or plans. The movement of a skilled practitioner, however, is ongoingly and consistently responsive

to changes of the perceived environment. This is possible, as Ingold (2001) has suggested,

> because the practitioner's bodily movement is, at one and the same time, a *movement of attention*; because he watches, listens, and feels even as he works. It is this responsiveness that underpins the qualities of care, judgement, and dexterity that are the hallmarks of skilled workmanship. (p. 132, emphasis in original)

Creative practice – a question of "interobjectivity and fascination"

At the beginning of this chapter I formulated the parameter that a conceptual framework for studying CDT production should combine a sense of *immanence* with the *eventfulness* of creation. Thinking of creativity as based on attachments assumes creative practice to be marked by *interobjectivity* (see Latour, 1996) and *fascination* (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 197). The notion of attachment carries a meaning that entails various grades of emotional as well as physical relatedness, then forms of appreciation, attention and engagement and eventually forms of being captivated, enthralled or dependent. Central is an affectionate bond – that is, a form of sympathy or *fascination* for a person, a thing or a place that is affective and (kin)aesthetic. *Fascination*, from the Latin term *fascinum* ("spell, witchcraft") (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010), is what I propose as a late modern equivalent to Goethe's "power of the daemonic spirit of … genius." I have therefore approached the creative practice of CDT production as a basically unpredictable and performative process that "interobjectively" (see Latour, 1996) revolves around the production, circulation and appropriation of aesthetics and affects. Interobjectivity here means that affective relations "center on the production and use of fascinating objects through fascinated subjects" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 197, translated by BM).

The central analytical concept of taste-making

As a central *analytical concept* I have adopted and developed the idea of creativity as *taste-making*. To think of creative practice as a matter of taste concretizes a fundamentally processual and relational perspective on creativity. Taste is "a problematic modality of attachment" (Hennion, 2004, p. 131), and therefore asks us never to separate creativity from concern and desire.

Taste is a key concept that I have adopted from Antoine Hennion's studies of *amateurs* and their practices of taste-making.[14] Practice, as claimed by Gherardi (2009), is a "matter of taste." I suggest this holds true *a fortiori* for creative practice.

Positing creative practice as a matter of taste then results in the formulation of three pertinent aspects of creativity: firstly, and in contrast to popular positions within creativity and innovation research (see for example Kijkuit & Van Den Ende, 2007) that have separated idea generation from idea evaluation, *creation is never separated from (e)valuation*. It is within an experimental rehearsal process that the process of making things arrive is indissociable from the process of making oneself appreciate. The idea of taste thereby insists on creativity being an *embodied* and *(kin)aesthetic* process of sensemaking. Secondly, following from the first aspect, creativity always means a *mutual becoming of amateur and material* within ongoing trials (i.e., tests of taste). Thirdly, the creativity of taste is an *event* and taste(-making) *performance* that is reliant on an *ecology*. Taste-making, the probing and creative engagement of amateur and material, is a *performance* that is always mediated through elements within its milieu. It relies among other things on methods, techniques, devices, sensible knowledge, skill and a lexicon of taste. The ecology of the creative event still further entails one's peers, communities and whole (artistic) movements. As such the ecology of taste-making involves events from other places and times.

1.3.4 Research questions

I started this study with a personal interest in very general questions about creativity in the context of CDT production. *How do new theater performances come into being?* Or, as I came to learn through my investigation: *given all of the degrees of freedom and possible troubles involved, how are complex and "good enough" CDT performances collectively "made to work" – through doings and events?* And further: *what is the role of the collective in creative practice? And who "decides"?* And, from an organizational perspective: *what organizational forms are conducive for creating a performance?*

With the backdrop of the basic conceptual framework alluded to before, I then re-cast these questions for analytical purposes in two chapters (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6). Firstly, focusing on the crucial relation of amateurs and materials, I asked:

[14] Within a sociology of mediation and pragmatist attachments (Hennion, 2013a, see 2013b), Antoine Hennion developed a performative notion of taste through his studies on musical amateurs (Gomart & Hennion, 1999; Hennion, 1997, 2001, 2014), drug users (Gomart & Hennion, 1999), wine *connoisseurs* (Hennion, 2015) and through his conceptual work on the pragmatics of taste (Hennion, 2004, 2007). Silvia Gherardi (2009) introduced Hennion's ideas to organization studies in an article on practice as "a matter of taste."

> *What materials, practices, technologies etc. comprise the ecology of creative practice? How do the various plug-ins and attachments enable the performative engagement of amateur and material?*

Secondly, with an interest in the production of a CDT performance and hence a processual view on organizational creativity, I asked:

> *How are the generation, formation and stabilization of the product "theater performance" affected? What modes of engagement are thereby crucial? And how do these modes interact?*

1.3.5 Methodology

The research questions demanded a *methodology* that is centrally capable of registering and accounting for the micro dynamics of experience and these dynamics' link with the more solid and organized forms of social existence. Therefore I propose that studying creativity in the making asks us to become "radically empirical"[15] in terms of being faithful to experience and taking seriously all of the bodies and beings that somehow are made relevant by the people and things that we study. In relation to questions of creativity, this means to "not take sides" and to stay open to where and how creativity is situated and affected. As such, studying creative practice asks us to develop a relational and processual sensibility.

Therefore, in this dissertation I present an ethnographic study of the making of Contemporary Dance Theater. Following up on the conceptual framework outlined before, my research design relied on an empiricist methodology based on a multi-sited and focused organizational video-ethnography (Merchant, 2011; Mohn, 2002, 2008; Ybema et al., 2009) that adhered to a comparative embedded case design (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2003). In altogether six months of fieldwork in 2010 and 2011, I attended six different production processes. The use of video within CDT production was intended to allow for an account of embodied and decidedly non-discursive aspects of creative practice.

The research design followed a *praxeographic approach* (see also Schmidt, 2012) to studying creativity. In contrast to a methodological ambition of accurate theory building, a praxeographic approach is rooted in the theoretical and methodological call not for explanation but for a rich *description* (see Latour, 2005) of practice and its various constituents and connections (see Gherardi, 2012, p. 49). This means understanding the assumed practice framework not so much as a new organizational or

[15] See William James' "radical empiricism" (for example 1912a) and its contemporary uptake in methodological works taking experience serious (see for example Brown, Cromby, Harper, Johnson, & Reavey, 2011).

social theory but as a methodological sensitivity for the unfolding of practice under consideration of its constituents. Seeking to produce rich and alternative descriptions that unfold and develop a sense of an unfolding creative practice, the research design suggested to *collect* data by "following forwards" (see Langley, 2007), *analyze* data by "reading creativity forwards" (see Ingold & Hallam, 2007) and *present* data by "writing forwards," that is, producing "risky accounts" (Latour, 2005).

The analytical procedure was guided through Nicolini's (2009a) practice-oriented methodology and its analytical movement of "zooming out" and "zooming in." The analytical movement of "zooming out" thereby did not mean shifting to detached abstraction, but rather tracing and trailing the relevant "attachments" that constitute the socio-material ecology of CDT productions. "Zooming out" was never a question of vertical distance, but of horizontal range.

1.3.6 Findings, contributions and implications

The findings of these study were differentiated according to the two research questions posed.

I firstly detailed creative *practice* in terms of its various practice carriers, that is, its *ecology*. The following elements were described as forming a collective set-up of a *performance* and *event ecology*: (a) incorporated motion *repertoires* as well as biographical and cultural *proficiency*; (b) the key elements that afford a skilled body, from social techniques to performative theories, devices and the conduit of "taste talk" to the enactment of material in productive articulations; (c) the community of practitioners itself, constituting an affective and "normaesthetic" *milieu* for creative practice. Summing up these findings, I devised an overall framework of creative practice. Alluding to the widely discussed frameworks of Rhodes (1961) ("4Ps") and Glăveanu (2013) ("5As"), this framework was dubbed the "P24A" framework. It listed the main carriers of creative *P*ractice within CDT production: *A*mateurs, *P*roducts, *A*udience, *A*ttachments, and *A*ppraisal lexicon.

Secondly, this study specified the process of CDT *production* as an incremental qualification of a performance. Marked by a peculiar "fever curve" of attachments and detachments, CDT production was described as being affected within the formats of *researching*, *assembling* and *scaffolding*. A detailed analysis of the various practices of these formats revealed a nexus of *experimental* and *codifying* modes of taste-making. The findings were integrated within propositional models that specified the modes of taste-making as revolving around three central reciprocal relationships: (a) between

immanent and *explicit*, (b) between *prospective* and *retrospective* and (c) between *inventive* and *restorative* forms of taste-making.

Together, the findings of this study contribute to the theory, methodology and the education, or practice, of organizational creativity (research). The "P2A4" framework of organizational creativity as a practice of taste-making is not proposing just another, more accurate and objective model. The list provided is neither exhaustive nor stable. The argument of this study and also this framework runs differently: not the elements as such are important, but the status of its elements. As such, the proposed framework has to be considered an infra-language or theory: it contributes to theory, methodology and education a different and also new conceptual vocabulary that allows to more precisely and with different effects think, study and talk about creativity as a processual, collective, affective and uncertain event that is however materially mediated. As such, the findings of this study expand our understanding of organizational creativity by suggesting that creativity within organizational practice needs to be accounted for as 1) temporalized and processualized, 2) spatialized and collectivized, 3) grounded in affect and 4) politicized. More specifically then, the findings about the role and relation of the different modes of taste-making contribute to current discussions about "immanent" and "prospective" forms of sensemaking.

Overall, this study demonstrates the prolificacy of a practice-based framework of organizational creativity that is rooted in a *pragmatic* conception of taste-making. As such, this study suggests creativity-as-practice as a stimulating research agenda.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

The thesis comprises eight chapters. The structure of the dissertation thereby follows the conventional presentational strategy of social scientific work. Firstly a "front end" comprises an introduction (Chapter 1), a literature review (Chapter 2) and a theoretical framework (Chapter 3); a "back end" then encompasses methods (Chapter 4), empirical findings (Chapters 5 & 6), a discussion that includes emergent theory (Chapter 7) and a conclusion that includes contributions, implications and outlook (Chapter 8). Working with the conviction that qualitative research is eventually about producing *stories*, the logic of presentation thereby unfolds and entwines two complementary substories: a theory narrative and a data narrative (see Bansal & Corley, 2012). The theory narrative starts with Chapter 3 and is further developed in the propositional discussion and theory development within Chapter 7. The data narrative comprises the empirical Chapters 5 and 6 and is the basis for the discussion and theory development in Chapter 7. While this conventional structure easily suggests

a linear logic, it is however important to note that the conceptual framework presented up-front actually emerged from the research process itself.

Having introduced the overall framing and the argument of my thesis in the *introduction*, *Chapter 2* ("Literature review and problematization") seeks to "problematize" the explicit and implicit assumptions of current notions of "creativity" through an in-depth reading of Rhodes' (1961) "4P" framework. Following this problematization, I eventually propose orienting creativity research towards the aesthetic sociality of creative practice. A respective conceptual framework therefore needs to be able to offer analytical concepts that can answer the following question: how can creativity be conceptualized as a generative yet unpredictable process that relies on the affective role of materials and the (aesthetic) receptivity of creative practitioners?

Chapter 3 ("Towards an understanding of creative practice as pragmatic taste-making") relies on ontological and epistemological discussions in order to develop an alternative conceptual framework that is contrasting the logic of *imposition* inherent in entitative creativity models. It does so by proposing a relational and processual logic of *taste-making* that assumes the relation of practitioner and material to be one of *in(ter)vention* and mutual *following*. Eventually, to understand creativity not only as a momentary event but within the development of a creative artifact over time, I mobilize the notion of *production*. I suggest production thereby to be realized through various *modes of engagement* that affect the generation, formation and stabilization of a product. The chapter ends with a formulation of the *research questions*.

Chapter 4 details the epistemological and methodological aspects of "following," "reading" and "writing" creativity forwards and therefore introduces the ethnographic approach together with the means of producing, analyzing and presenting the empirical material.

Chapter 5 and *Chapter 6* are the empirical sections of this dissertation. Both chapters are paired with analytical intersections that go beyond descriptive findings and transform the results into conceptual findings. Following a logic of "zooming out" to what conventionally is described as "context." *Chapter 5* ("Creatio ex materia: "zooming out" to the ecology of the event") specifies the various "plug-ins" and attachments that enable the performative engagement of practitioner and material by analyzing data across various cases. *Chapter 6* ("The organizational creativity of taste-making between experimentation and codification") zooms in on CDT production over time, tracing and describing the transformations, tensions and stabilizations of material into a "working performance."

Chapter 7 (“Discussion & propositions – prospects of a poetic praxeology of practice”) then draws on and takes up the findings of the previous chapters as well as the first and close analytical readings found therein. As such, this chapter is a meta-discussion that further develops the “theory narrative” (Bansal & Corley, 2012) started within Chapter 3 through proposing a number of conceptual developments and tentative frameworks.

In the concluding *Chapter 8* (“Conclusion”), I summarize the central findings of my study, indicate its implications and make suggestions for further research.

2 Literature Review and Problematization

Creativity, which is one of the most popular ideas Western culture has been promoting over the last 30-40 years, has spawned copious amounts of popular and academic publications. The task of reviewing the relevant literature can thereby be overwhelming. As recent reviews (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010; George, 2007; Kahl, da Fonseca, & Witte, 2009; Klijn & Tomic, 2010), encyclopedias (Carayannis, 2013) and handbooks (Mumford, 2012; Zhou & Shalley, 2008) have shown, even the field of organizational creativity research is rather fragmented. Watson (2007), for example, concluded that

> the evident emergence of interest in creativity as a phenomenon based in the social world and studied across a variety of research fields has resulted in literature without any shared definitions or commonly accepted terminology for use as units of analysis or as the loci for creative processes. (p. 422)

At first sight, the literature domain has been populated by heterogeneous approaches with widely differing definitions, terminologies, units of analysis and assumptions about the loci for creative processes.

To deal with the heterogeneous literature and in order to generate relevant research questions, I have worked with Alvesson and Sandberg's (2011) method of problematization. Seeking to generate relevant and interesting research questions beyond mere "gap-spotting," the idea of problematization proposes scrutinizing the central underlying assumptions of the existing literature. The crucial steps are thereby to identify, articulate and evaluate key assumptions of a research field before developing a set of alternative assumptions (p. 256). To identify the domain of literature for assessing the basic assumptions that are underlying a field of research, an in-depth reading of a "path-defining study" (p. 256) is suggested.

The pivotal study for creativity research in general is Mel Rhodes' (1961) article "An Analysis of Creativity." Its famous "4P" framework, which distinguished the four strands of *person*, *process*, *product* and *press*,[16] has been and still is providing a meta-theory for creativity research within psychology as well as organization and management studies. As Glăveanu (2013) rightly notes, the "4Ps" approach is not really a model of creativity, but rather a "framework or conceptual organizer" (p. 69). It has "offered the backbone of creativity theory and research for the decades to come"

[16] "Press" is by and large referring to the embeddedness of human beings and points at contextual constraints and affordances (see M. Rhodes, 1961).

(p. 69) and therefore became "probably the most often-used structure for creativity studies" (Runco, 2004, p. 661), including theory-making, empirical research and literature reviews.

The "4P" framework's entitative approach to studying creativity from distinctive perspectives has recently been raising criticisms. These critical appraisals of the framework revolve around the fact that "studying creativity from a particular vantage point … overlooks the fact that all these things can be going on at the same time" (Kallio et al., 2011, p. 75). Kallio et. al are thereby only the latest voices in a number of works that call for a stronger focus on the actual organizational practice and process of creativity (see for example Styhre & Sundgren, 2005; Woodman et al., 1993). The solution proposed by the majority of later approaches is thereby to account more for the interaction between the "4Ps," assuming that "it is the interaction between personal agency and structure that determines the goodness of creative outcomes, not just one or the other" (Kallio et al., 2011, p. 75).

Rhodes (1961) never specified the way or form of *interaction* that could occur between creative persons, or between the other three strands (namely process, product and press). While generally applauding the move of theories of organizational creativity towards more comprehensive and complex studies that are based on the notion of interaction, in this thesis I take a step back in order to identify, articulate and evaluate the key assumptions of (inter)actional approaches as such. I propose that this is needed as the move towards interaction does not remedy key problems of entitative approaches *per se*. The question of the nature of the "4Ps" and their relations touches on pertinent and contentious issues of social theory that, as I suggest, require a paradigmatic problematization. Subjects, objects, agencies and their relations are understood differently, depending on basic paradigmatic assumptions. Problematizing paradigmatic assumptions therefore asks for specifying the interaction or relation between the "4Ps" (see also Hennion & Méadel, 1989). I therefore address basic questions about the status of *subjects* and *objects*, of the *agency* (origination and vector) of creativity and its distribution across *production and reception* as well as creativity's *processuality*.

Fifty years after Rhodes (1961), the specificity of the relations between the four facets of creativity is only slowly attended to and spelled out in (organizational) creativity research. In seeking to problematize the entitative assumptions at the center of the "4P" framework and the subsequent call for an interaction-focused research, I specifically draw on Vlad Petre Glăveanu's pivotal development of socio-cultural approaches to creativity (2010, 2011, 2013, 2014). Glăveanu's (2013) "5A"

framework, itself a substantial contribution to an alternative metatheory of creativity, thereby especially serves as a backdrop for a more nuanced articulation of the assumptions deemed important in this study.

The following literature review and problematization then depart from Rhodes' (1961) influential "4P" framework. They offer an in-depth analysis of Rhodes' approach that sets the scene for a thorough problematization of its basic paradigmatic and ideological assumptions by drawing on philosophical (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Feyerabend, 1987; Ingold, 2012; Simondon, 1958/2010), economical (Osborne, 2003) and organizational (De Cock & Rehn, 2008; Glăveanu, 2013; Rehn, 2009; Sørensen, 2006, 2008) evaluations.

The problematization lastly suggests that the basic entitative assumptions of ontologically independent yet interacting strands of person, product, process and press are shown to have contestable *conceptual*, *methodological* and *ideological* implications. Entitative approaches are thereby problematized as pertaining to a more or less explicit *methodological individualism* that conceives the autonomous, self-interested individual as the logical starting point for social scientific creativity theories.

At the end of this chapter I contrast *entitative* creativity theories with *relational* approaches within creative practice. This yields a number of questions as well as possible requirements for an alternative theoretical framework for my own study. As such this chapter closes with questions guiding the next chapter along its way of constructing an adequate conceptual framework.

2.1 Identifying and articulating key assumptions

The following two sections feature first an in-depth reading of Rhodes' (1961) path-defining "4P" metatheory of creativity and then take to more recent developments within organizational creativity research. This is the basis for the subsequent problematization of the field assumptions found within the "4P" framework and recent organizational creativity research.

2.1.1 The "4P" framework as matrix for creativity research

> The problems of modern life cry out for creative solutions. Hence the growing interest in creativity. But what is it? Can it be taught? Mr. Rhodes takes some of the fuzz off the concept of creativity and assures us that it can indeed be developed in children. (M. Rhodes, 1961, p. 305, caption)

One of the most influential metatheories of creativity research is Mel Rhodes' framework (1961) of the "4Ps." Rhodes' (1961) simple alliterative scheme of *person*, *process*, *product* and *press* thereby turned into a matrix that has been formative for the emerging academic discipline of creativity psychology and for studies on organizational creativity.[17] Its ideological stress on the functionality of creativity weds creativity indissociably to an emancipatory approach that sought to "demystify" it and turn it into a basic human competence that could "indeed be developed in children" (p. 305, caption). Rhodes posited creativity as a pivotal solution for "the problems of modern life" (p. 305).

Rhodes developed the "4P" framework on the basis of his doctoral thesis, which comprised a meta-analysis of creativity definitions. In his article of 1961, Rhodes thereby deplored that the words "creative" and "creativity" had been "loosely used and overused" or even "misused" (p. 307):

> What is happening … is that a word which should be reserved to name a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon is misused to name only one part of a phenomenon. It is like explaining a hurricane by explaining wind or explaining a bird's flight by describing its perchings. But creativity cannot be explained alone in terms of any … single component, no matter how vital that component may be. (Rhodes, 1961, p. 306)

Seeking to theorize creativity as a "complex, multi-faceted phenomenon" (p. 306), Rhodes proposed the following four creativity "strands":

> One of these strands pertains essentially to the *person as a human being*. Another strand pertains to the *mental processes* that are operative in creating ideas. A third strand pertains to the influence of the ecological *press on the person and upon his mental processes*. And the fourth strand pertains to *ideas*. Ideas are usually expressed in the form of either language or craft and this is what we call *product*. (p. 307, emphasis added)

Rhodes labeled the four strands *person*, *process*, *press* and *product*, "the four P's of creativity" (p. 307). *Person* referred to notions of "personality," "temperament," individual abilities, skills (as measured by test scores), "habits" and "behavior" (p. 307) and therefore mainly to psychometric properties. Rhodes posited creativity as a form of measurable "intelligence" (p. 307). With *process*, the author implied "the mental processes that are operative in creating ideas" (p. 307). All of the specified dimensions of process are thereby subsumed as *mental processes*: from the developmental dimension of learning, over the emotional dimension in motivation, to the relational dimension in perception and communication (p. 308). The term *press*

[17] See Glăveanu's (2013) substantial review of Rhodes' (1961) framework, which demonstrates the framework's actuality in creativity research across theory-building, literature reviews and empirical studies.

then very generally "refers to the relationship between human beings and their environment" (p. 308). For Rhodes, press particularly meant the historical, cultural as well as spatial "influences" "upon the originator's self, his [sic] sensory equipment, his mentality, his value systems, and his conditioning to the everyday experiences of life" (p. 308). In line with the basic cognitive outset, Rhodes lastly saw press as a set of moderating variables that influence a person's "mental processes" (p. 308). The "final" *products* of creativity then were for Rhodes nothing but materialized ideas: "When an idea becomes embodied into tangible form it is called a *product*. Each product of a man's [sic] mind or hands presents a record of his thinking at some point of time…. Products are artifacts of thought" (p. 309, emphasis in original).

Rhodes' formulation of the four different strands of creativity further involved clear *methodological* directions. Assuming products to be "artifacts of thought," and by distinguishing thinking from doing, he suggested a direction of research that would be "probing backward from the moment of inspiration … to trace the thoughts and the events leading up to the idea" (p. 310). He thereby likened creativity research to archeology or criminology, where events are also reconstructed after the fact. As such, Rhodes was very clear in stating that an "objective investigation into the nature of the creative process can proceed in only one direction, i.e. from product to person and thence to process and to press" (p. 310).

Overall, the *paradigmatic*, that is, ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions of Rhodes' entitative framework are based on its fundamental ontological and methodological *individualism*. As it is derived from a dualist ontology, Rhodes' (1961) entitative matrix for instance promoted the separation of sharply demarcated, substantial entities (e.g., *person*, *product* and *press*) and a self-contained (thinking) *process*. As a form of "faculty psychology" (see Ingold, 2001), creativity was therefore thought as mainly consisting of two distinctive elements: a set of competences possessed by the individual who is granted the basic anthropological capacity for creativity, and a separate set of creative activities where the actual creative *processes* are moderated through various forms of *press*. The *product* was thereby thought to be a direct actualization of the person's competences and processes. Rhodes' suggested methodology for analyzing creativity therefore meant *reading creativity backwards* from the final product to the creative person and his or her mental processes and then to the moderating elements of press (see Ingold & Hallam, 2007).

As part of the early psychology-based research on creativity of the 1950s and 1960s, the "4P" framework is therefore based on the *entitative* assumptions of the ontological and methodological *individualism* that prevailed within psychological creativity

research at that time. Rhodes' conceptualization therefore maintains the pertinent atomistic substantialism within academic psychology found at that point in time. It conceptually and methodologically favors individual subjects and their cognitive capacities, processes and actions. By following Rhodes' interpretation of process, the psychology of creativity by and large therefore assumed the creative process to be mostly a cognitive and internal dynamic. Sawyer (1998) accordingly stated that "psychologists who study creativity have usually separated ideation, divergent thought, and insight on the one hand and execution, implementation, and performance on the other" (p. 11).

The *ideological assumptions* of Rhodes' "4P" framework posit creativity to be a basic human capacity and competence that is important as a resource for "solving the problems of modern life." Such an approach is thereby forced to differentiate between "true," that is useful, creativity and rather specious forms. Its basic criteria is the degree of social orientation within creativity: it should neither be too much (the fashionable conformist) nor too little (the absurdity of crazy or strange outcomes) (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 227).

In identifying and articulating Rhodes' (1961) assumptions, it becomes apparent that the greater part of organizational creativity research is, beyond its seeming heterogeneity, actually consistent in its basic premises. At large, organizational creativity studies have been and still adhere to *entitative* models of creativity research.[18] As illustrated with Rhodes' (1961) framework, entitative approaches to creativity are marked through consistent *paradigmatic* and *ideology assumptions* (see Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011, p. 255). Together the paradigmatic assumptions (which include ontological, epistemological and methodological premises) as well as the ideological assumptions (which involve political and moral concerns) converge in a set of widely shared *field assumptions*:

> Creativity means creative thinking. It entails a set of individual, learnable cognitive competences such as problem-solving and divergent thinking that are based on an innate capacity of creative computation. As a basic human resource it is indissociably linked to an idea of societal and economical development.

[18] See the classical studies of organizational creativity (Amabile, 1988; Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993), recent reviews (George, 2007) and the mounting criticism of entitative approaches (Glăveanu, 2010, 2011, 2013; Styhre, 2006; Styhre & Sundgren, 2005)

2.1.2 Organizational creativity – an interaction of the "4Ps"?

The question of organizational creativity is closely tied to the question of how to think about the relation between the "4Ps" and therefore the nexus of personal agency and structure. Over the last two decades, social and organizational creativity studies have as a result started to criticize Rhodes' "4P" framework for its apparent tendency, notwithstanding Rhodes' emphasis of the *press* element, to not situate creativity in practice and actual (organizational) processes (see Glăveanu, 2013; Hargadon & Bechky, 2006; Kallio et al., 2011; Styhre & Sundgren, 2005; Woodman et al., 1993). Glăveanu (2013) for example observed that the "4Ps" are "studied in ways that decontextualize creativity and do not engage with societal and cultural elements sufficiently. Person, process, and product are repeatedly considered in atomistic ways" (p. 71). The basic atomism of the "4P" framework led to mostly individualistic, inert and therefore separate analyses of the different factors:

> One inherent limitation of the four P's framework resides in the fact that person, process, product, and press can well be studied in isolation and there is little, within this conception, that necessarily leads the attention of the researcher from one factor to the next. Those studying features of the person can do so without necessarily thinking about products, the process can be researched separately from press factors, and there is almost no connection between products and the environment. (Glăveanu, 2013, p. 71)

This tendency is reflected especially in more recent psychological approaches of creativity within organization and management studies (Amabile, 1988; Amabile et al., 1996; Crossan & Apaydin, 2010; George, 2007; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010; Klijn & Tomic, 2010; Oldham & Cummings, 1996). Mostly "looking backwards" from the finished products, and thereby discerning product from process as well as from person and press, psychology eventually situates creativity in the individual (and its thinking processes).[19]

[19] While, in this problematization I mainly focus on entitative theories of creativity, it must be noted that research on creativity can be seen as divided between psychological explanations and opposing structuralist sociological approaches (see for example Peterson & Anand, 2004). The alternative to "individual creation" thereby seemed to be, for a long time, "social causality" (see Hennion & Grenier, 2000). Sociological research until recently tended to study solely the social intermediaries of creative productions (see Hennion, 1997; Hennion & Grenier, 2000). Creativity as such was not subject of sociological analyses as it was a concept too closely associated with an entitative paradigm that situated creativity within the individual and therefore beyond the reach of sociological methods. The sociology of art therefore further tended to assume that the artwork only comes into being in the moment of its reception: only the social recognition of an audience produces a meaningful work of art within a field of art which is itself socially stratified (see for example Bourdieu, 1984). The products of so-called creative processes were hence equated with the entirely conventional outcomes of a collective activity. See for example Becker (1974) and the comprehensive critique of Becker's and Bourdieu's positions in Hennion and Grenier (2000). In their extreme forms, psychological creativity research and sociological research on the social reception of art have been reproducing the agency-structure-debate that has kept social sciences busy for the last 150 years. Both strands of research are thereby stuck in mono-causal explanations.

In order to solve the tendency of the "4P" approach to decontextualize creativity, ecological, interactional and sociocultural approaches within creativity research have started to ask "How can these dimensions be studied interactively? That is, what lens might support scholars to focus not on the elements themselves but on the dynamics among elements?" (Moran, 2009, p. 294). For example, Barron's (1995) ecological approach to creativity, which asserts that creativity is no "rootless flower," thereby started questioning the clear distinction between the "4Ps," suggesting that "many products are processes, and many processes are products. And a person is both a product and a process" (p. 32). More and more, behavioral and social scientists started regarding action and behavior as a function of the *interaction* between a person and a situational context. Situational determinants (Rhodes' (1961) "press" element) thereby became a stronger focus of creativity research, especially within cognitivist studies. It was increasingly accepted that creative persons are embedded in specific contexts that either foster or hinder creative acts.

Organizational creativity and the question of inter-action

Organizational creativity research has similarly started to move towards an idea of *organizational* creativity by focusing on the *interaction* between the "4Ps," and therefore of agency and structure (Kallio et al., 2011, p. 75).

> [S]tudying creativity from a particular vantage point – as the property of persons, as something that is a systems thing, as a structural phenomenon where different worlds collide, or as a practice or process – overlooks the fact that all these things can be going on at the same time. One can be a creative person working in a system that shuffles creatives off to one corner, and where creative collisions are limited to whatever is in that corner. We can also imagine the opposite. Either way, we can speculate that it is the *interaction* between personal agency and structure that determines the goodness of creative outcomes, not just one or the other. (Kallio et al., 2011, p. 75, emphasis in original)

As Sundgren and Styhre (2007) state, "an important step in understanding creativity in an organizational context is to take a more holistic approach and use the concept of organizational creativity" (p. 219). Chris Bilton (2007, 2010) accordingly diagnoses a move from "heroic" to structural conceptualizations of creativity and a shift in emphasis from "individual competences to the social and organizational frameworks" (2007, p. 24) and their systems and processes. Similar attempts can be witnessed especially in social psychological approaches (see for example Amabile & Pillemer, 2012). Research along a so-called "systems perspective" (see for example Hennessey & Amabile, 2010) started to move beyond an individualistic focus and, for example, looked at team levels.

> In all of the [current] approaches, the focus has rested squarely on the individual, highlighting individual cognitive processing, stable individual difference, and the effects of the external environment on the individual. Relatively little attention has been paid to team level creative synergy, in which ideas are generated by groups instead of being generated by one mind. (Kurtzberg & Amabile, 2001, p. 285)

Research on creative teams has therefore begun to focus on the interaction between team members, attending to the phenomena that make "collections of creatives become creative collectives" (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006, title).

Summarizing the state of current (organizational) creativity research, a general focus on the *interaction* of the "4Ps" can be determined. Notwithstanding all ambitions to a more holistic and organizational perspective on creativity, most interactionist approaches however maintain basic *entitative* assumptions. Before moving to a thorough problematization of the paradigmatic and ideological assumptions of entitative creativity frameworks, I present Glăveanu's (2013) recent attempt to think differently about interaction.

2.1.3 From the "4Ps" to the "5As" – a new understanding of interaction?

Vlad Glăveanu's (2013) "5A" framework, a contemporary successor to Rhodes' (1961) path-defining "4P" framework, is a promising approach to the notion of interaction within creativity studies. Drawing from important developments within cognitive theory towards notions of distributed cognition (see Hutchins, 1995) as well as sociocultural and ecological frameworks for the psychology of creativity, Glăveanu (2013) rendered interaction as a basic relation of co-constitutive entities.

Developing a socio-cultural approach to studying creativity (see for example 2010, 2011, 2013), Glăveanu specified the relations between the various strands of creativity. In his framework, Glăveanu substituted *person*, *process*, *product* and *press* with the 5A's of *actor*, *action*, *artifact*, *audience* and *affordance*. Glăveanu thereby aimed at a "dynamic integration" (p. 72) of the various elements:

> The four P's, notwithstanding the fact that they include a "press" element, have been studied in ways that decontextualize creativity and do not engage with societal and cultural elements sufficiently. … The five A's framework tries to address these limitations by rewriting our current language of creativity – from person to actor, from process to action, from product to artifact, from press to audiences and affordances. … [T]his is more than a change of terminology but a fundamental change of epistemological position. In light of sociocultural sources, the actor exists only in relation to an audience, action cannot take place outside of interactions with a social

> and material world, and artifacts embody the cultural traditions of different communities. (Glăveanu, 2013, p. 71)

Glăveanu proposed an alternative epistemological position to Rhodes' (1961) "4P" framework and formulated a psychology of creativity that *contextualizes* subjects and actions within a specific theory of *interaction*.

The approaches he drew on, from late developments in sociocultural psychology to cognitive studies on the embodied and distributed mind to ecological psychology, all take "as a basic unit of analysis the *interaction* between elements (e.g., between people, people and objects, etc.) rather than the elements themselves (e.g., person, product, etc.)" (p. 70, emphasis added). By drawing especially on sociocultural psychology and late ideas in cognitive ecology (see for example Hutchins, 2010) based on the idea of distributed cognition (see Hutchins, 1995), Glăveanu pointed out a differentiated understanding of interaction:

> [C]ultural psychologists … consider self and other, psyche and culture, person and context to be interdependent and not to exist as two separate and simply interacting units (something assumed for instance by research concerned with the "press" factor of creativity). This is particularly relevant for understanding a phenomenon like creativity in which the person is embedded in/acts from within a system of social relations and the activity of creation produces meaning by integrating and transforming types of knowledge that, although individual in expression, are social in origin. (Glăveanu, 2013, p. 70)

Interaction is here thought to be the basic relation of co-constitutive entities. As suggested by research on distributed cognition (see Hutchins, 1995, 2010), creativity can therefore be thought of "as not taking place exclusively 'in the head' but being situated and distributed between brain and body, person and environment" (Glăveanu, 2013, p. 70). Therefore, we find here an important conceptual difference to the entitative approach to creativity – "a function traditionally grounded 'inside' the person, the elusive mind of the creator and its functioning" (p. 70).

While advancing a more "relational" understanding of interaction, overall Glăveanu yet also maintains a central orientation to an entitative theory of action. Reappropriating Rhodes' (1961) category of *process* as *action* for Glăveanu (2013) means acknowledging the "double nature of creativity: an internal, psychological dimension and an external, behavioral one" (p. 5). He thereby grounds Dewey's (1934/1980) understanding of experience as a nexus of doing and undergoing within a theory of action:

> There are many possible bridges between creativity and action and perhaps the most obvious one has to do with the goal-directed nature of activity and

> the "intentional" definition of creativity …. This postulate of intentionality is not in any case meant to exclude moments of subconscious incubation of ideas or habitual action …, but integrate them into a broader context of acting in the world in order to achieve particular goals. (Glăveanu, 2013, p. 73)

At the end, Glăveanu's approach, while drawing on Dewey's *transactional* ontology, thus stays wedded to an interactional frame that, while acknowledging the flexibility of means and ends, renders creativity a teleological scheme typical of entitative theories of action.

2.1.4 Towards a problematization of key assumptions

The understanding of organizational creativity is closely tied to the basic assumptions about the "4Ps" and their relations. As long as theory stays wedded to an interactional frame and a theory of action, it is difficult to conceive of organizational creativity beyond an aggregation of individual, purposeful behavior. The former shows for example in the proportionally little consideration of affect, emotion and aesthetics within creativity research. The call for more attention to creativity as an aesthetic and passionate practice beyond rational command, for example from psychoanalytical work (Gabriel, 1998; Gabriel & Carr, 2002; Russ, 1993), has however been echoing in a growing number of contributions that argue for the "key role of affect in exploratory search" (Adler & Obstfeld, 2007, p. 1). Unfortunately the understanding of affect is thereby reduced mainly to an element of *press* in terms of motivational underpinnings of creativity (Adler & Obstfeld, 2007; Amabile et al., 2005; George, 2007).

The field of organizational creativity research itself calls for studies and theories that can firstly account more for the experiential and affective side of creativity (Adler & Obstfeld, 2007; Amabile et al., 2005; George, 2007), and that secondly can account for "collective creativity" beyond a mere addition of individual creative faculties (Adler & Obstfeld, 2007; George, 2007; Hargadon & Bechky, 2006). To move forwards on these issues, I below problematize the theoretical, methodological and political consequences of the underlying entitative assumptions of creativity research.

The problematization of the paradigmatic and the ideological assumptions of entitative creativity theories can be summarized along three dominant logics found within the theory, methodology and policy of creativity research (see table 1): firstly, the basic ontological assumptions of substantialism and hylomorphism play out in creativity theory according to an *interactional* and *impositional* model of creation. Secondly, the epistemological assumption of representationalism leads to a methodology of creativity research along the *retrospective* and *explanatory* logic of knowledge-based

creativity studies. And thirdly, the ideological assumptions of creativity as a human resource shape creativity policies that perpetuate a *masterful* and *liminal* logic. The following evaluation of the key assumptions of entitative creativity frameworks is then a prerequisite for construing an alternative framework.

… assumptions	**Ontological**	**Epistemological**	**Ideological**
of …	Substantialism; Hylomorphism	Representationalism	Resourcefulness
in creativity…	Theory	Methodology	Policy
according to a(n) … logic	*Interactional*: Substantialism's theory of action allows to conceive of interaction only as back and forth between already existing entities. Reducing the collective to a sum of individuals. *Impositional:* The hylomorphic matrix of creation can only conceive of creativity as imposition of prefigured ideas / forms.	*Retrospective*: Input-output methodologies that assume either finished objects or personality characteristics as unit of analysis and "read creativity backwards," from an outsider perspective. *Explanatory*: The science of creativity seeks to represent and explain creativity in ever more accurate models in order to produce definite knowledge about creativity.	*Masterful:* Hylomorphism is a normative and ideal model of creativity that elevates the human realm of ideas above passive matter. Creativity as part of the late modern semantic of the emancipated subject, associated with cultural values of autonomy, individuality and authenticity. *Liminal:* The psychological, resource-based view of creativity as an inexhaustible human desire, need and competence posits a liminal state of mastery that will never be reached. As such it produces a liminal logic of permanent insistence as well as permanent insufficiency. This goes together with a narrow, functional focus on novelty and novel products.

Table 1: Assumptions and logics of theory, methodology and policy in entitative creativity frameworks

2.2 Evaluating theory

The majority of organizational creativity research maintains two pervasive ideas based on the entitative assumptions of its underlying substantialism. Firstly, assuming person, product, process and press to be fundamentally distinct entities, "*inter-action*"[20] is a guiding concept. Secondly, when it comes to the implicit or explicit

[20] Using the hyphenated form of "inter-action," I seek to emphasize a distinctive ontological position in contrast to the use of "interaction" in everyday language (see also Emirbayer, 1997, p. 285).

concept of creativity, the entitative paradigm promotes a *hylomorphic model of creation* that revolves around the idea of *imposition*. This, as suggested in the following, is a technical and idealized account of form-taking that carries the germs of the "myth" of transcendent creation *ex nihilo*. While psychology-based creativity models have "demystified" creativity, transforming it from an exceptional into a quotidian phenomenon (see Boden, 2004; Weisberg, 1993), I suggest that they yet perpetuate the "myth" of *hylomorphism*.

In the following problematization, I start with a short excourse to the basic entitative assumptions of substantialism, which is the underlying ontological position of most creativity research. This is the ground for explicating and evaluating both creativity research's theory of (inter-)action and its hylomorphic model of creation.

2.2.1 Substantialist ontology and an entitative theory of inter-action

Substantialism, as made popular by Plato and Aristotle, is the doctrine that all phenomena derive autonomy from a substantial, that is essential reality. Any inquiry therefore is assumed to start with the fundamental unit of *substance*, appearing in various kinds, from indivisible essences to beings and matter to form. These substantial elements, with their stable and fixed qualities, are subsequently used to explain individualized phenomena. Elements are seen as autonomous and are approached independently from their relations to other elements and their context. From a substantialist view, the world is made up of pre-determined and durable entities (e.g., subjects and object). A substantialist theory of action therefore only allows assuming and working with givens.

Within the social sciences, two forms of substantialism prevail, revolving around the question of where to situate the origin of *action* (see Emirbayer, 1997). First are the "self-action" paradigms of social scientific approaches that either posit the individual mind (individualism) or self-subsistent "structures," "societies" or "social systems" (holism) as the sole source of action (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 285). Relevant for creativity research is hereby the pertinent ontological and methodological individualism that assumes individual human action to be the elementary unit of social life.

Derived from the first form of substantialism, the "inter-actional" paradigm is the second type of substantialism prevalent in social science. Individuals are here no longer thought to generate their own actions; action is rather situated *among* them (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 286). Although it may easily be mistaken as a relational perspective, the substantialist view of inter-action assumes that only entities can be *in* relation. Interaction is here thought of as causal interconnection (p. 285), where

"entities remain fixed and unchanging throughout such interaction, each independent of the existence of the others, much like billiard balls or the particles in Newtonian mechanics" (pp. 285-286). The interactionist notion of causality is iconized within the widely spread social scientific methodology of the variable approach: interactions between independent variables ("invariables") are thought to produce or cause dependent variables as outcomes that can be measured as attributes of the invariable entities themselves.

Inter-action[21] within substantialist approaches means a back and forth of action with a definite point of origin within individual actors. Within entitative approaches based on an ontological and methodological individualism, the very idea of an inter-action presupposes a reduction, a prior partitioning. Inter-action carries the inheritance of a theory of action and alludes to a relation between two entities. Brian Massumi (2008) is accordingly suggesting "to take inter*activity* at its word. Its flow is a flow of action. It's true that the flow is two-way. But the back and forth is of action and *re*action" (p. 7, emphasis in original). The notion of interaction thereby mostly stays wedded to the idea of an action with a definite point of origin and a transport of force (see Latour, 1996), even if it is going two ways, as with action and reaction. Further, the idea of interaction easily takes on associations of causal relations and an air of instrumentality.

> It always comes back to causal efficacy, instrumentality, affordance. This backgrounds the qualitative-relational aspect – even when it is supposed to be all about social relation. By putting relation so fully into action, interactivity backgrounds its own artistic dimension. That's the dimension of relationality in its own right, as opposed to a particular relating-to, for this or that already determined purpose. (Massumi, 2008, pp. 7–8)

An entitative reading of interaction easily backgrounds a dimension of relationality that affects the related beings and is more akin to a form of mutuality. When ontological primacy is granted to the already constituted entity, any form of collectivity or sociality can only ever be a collection of essentially autonomous elements that are at best inter-acting.

I propose that the entitative assumptions of substantialism are problematic for creativity research that is interested in *organizational creativity*. Frameworks based on the entitative assumptions of methodological individualism, presupposing "the primacy of mentalism, cognitivism or even intentionality in engaging with the day-to-day affairs of the world" (Chia & MacKay, 2007, p. 228), are badly equipped for conceiving creativity as a collective organizational practice because they reduce

[21] For a thorough critique of a substantialist understanding of "inter-action," see Latour (1996) and Massumi (2008).

creative *products* to "objects" and *persons* to "a list of individuals who are no more than representations of character traits" (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 92). Within entitative perspectives, collective creativity can only be thought of as the aggregation of individual (cognitive) actions (see Adler & Obstfeld, 2007; George, 2007) or as a form of substantialist interaction (see for example Hargadon & Bechky, 2006).

2.2.2 Creation as action?

Following from substantialist theories of (inter)action, creativity means that an independent individual, or its creative self or genius, is imposing form on passive matter. Be it while employing our creative problem-solving competence or suspending our routine perception and attitude to let the "creative self express itself," we are entangled in a similar scheme, just under changed auspices. Creativity here either means to actively assert one's competences, or to passively let "the creative self" do the work. Either way, it is a form of "making-be" assuming "the odd idea of mastery that refused to include the mystery of unintended consequences" (Latour, 2008a, p. 6).

To devise a theory of creativity on the basis of the substantialist theories of action presupposes an active subject as the point of origin of a process that, from potentiality, actualizes a passive (material) object (see Latour, 1996). Thinking in categories of either action (active, assertive, mastery) or determination (passive, suspension) is thereby a direct consequence of entitative assumptions that distinguish between distinctive entities and spheres of an "inside" and an "outside." As said, while the auspices change, at the center of either self-expression or problem-solving approaches, we still find "the heroic, Promethean, hubristic dream of action" (Latour, 2008a, p. 3).

Taking up Latour's hint at the mythological base of entitative creativity views, in the next section I further specify the trajectory of a creativity tradition that started with the Judeo-Christian creation myth and an almighty "potter-God," then tied creativity to the extraordinary, Promethean power of the human "vice-God," and eventually turned the creative self into a ubiquitary contemporary demiurge. While these creativity conceptions differ in the "locus" and "purpose" of creative action, they share central assumptions about agency as a property and its vector as a form of efficient causality. The Judeo-Christian creation myth conceives of a masterly creator in the same way as the Promethean myth – the locus of agency has just shifted from a transcendental God or genius to an immanent demiurge. The fantastic account of creativity as *miracle* and the technological account of creativity as natural *competence* are logical complements in light of the accounts' underlying *substantialist ontology* and *hylomorphic* model of becoming, as suggested in the next section. Hylomorphic models of creation center

around individuals expressing or imposing forms (mainly understood as "ideas") onto formless matter.

2.2.3 The hylomorphic model of creation

The critical reading of hylomorphism presented below mostly goes back to Gilbert Simondon (see for example 2009, 1958/2010),[22] who placed the critique of hylomorphic models of invention at the center of his philosophy of individuation.

The hylomorphic schema, as originally developed by Aristotle, is a substantialist attempt "to account for the genesis of the individual" (Barthélémy, 2012, p. 228) as a coming together of the substantial principles of matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*).[23] Seeking an alternative to mechanistic change theories of an atomist substantialism, Aristotle thought of hylomorphism as the best way of explaining change and creation. He illustrated its principle with the analogy of the technical form-taking of a wooden artifact: the process requires timber (*hyle*) and a design, idea or plan, which was thought to be situated in the craftsman's mind. The wood is hence formed according to this previously determined model into the indicated form or shape (*morphe*). Generalizing this analogy, Aristotle turned the term for timber (*hyle*) into a general expression for primal matter, for which the Greek had hitherto no specific expression. Timber[24] came to stand for the all-purposive, because it is undifferentiated primal matter that is a passive substance with static properties that provides for continuity and identity. It is supposed to be formless, thus possessing unlimited potential to be made into something. The manifest form of the artifact is then but the outward display of an essential pattern, an ideal form impressed and *imposed* upon passive matter to take on a distinctive shape.

An entitative and hylomorphic perspective conceives of matter as being un-formatted, waiting to be formed, or as (finished) object. As such, the objects of most entitative approaches to creativity are "matters of fact" – finished objects, undisputable, and

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[22] Through Deleuze and Guattari (1987), who have been heavily drawing on Simondon's thoughts, critiques on hylomorphic conceptions of becoming and "making-be" have over the last decade also appeared outside philosophy. It has been explicitly discussed in relational-materialist approaches to anthropology (see for example Ingold, 2012), the philosophy of (performance) art (see Cull, 2009, 2012a) and, very recently, also in a practice-based approach to organizational creativity (see Gherardi & Perrotta, 2013). Simondon's work has so far only been partly translated officially into English. My reading of Simondon is therefore mainly based on partial translations (Simondon, 1958/2010) and other smaller translations of his work (Simondon, 2009), a German translation (Simondon, 2012a) as well as various commentaries (Barthélémy, 2012; Combes, 2013).

[23] Simondon (2009) differentiated the "self-centered monism of [atomist] substantialism" and the "bipolarity of the hylomorphic schema" (p. 4). While an atomist substantialism considers being as "consistent in its unity, given to itself, founded upon itself, *not created*, resistant to that which it is not" (p. 4, emphasis in original), a hylomorphic substantialism posits the individual to be *created*, that is, composed of matter and form.

[24] Timber goes back to the Germanic "Zimmer," denoting a building or building material.

removed from normative judgments (see also Latour, 2008a). Hylomorphic models of creation are more interested in "dead," that is finished, forms than in "alive" form-taking. The *object*ive of a creative process is a creative product, that is an outcome in the form of an object. For Bunn (1999), the notion of *object* connotes a sense of finality and completeness; it "seems to indicate a complete separation from itself and others, and implies that something can be finished" (p. 21).[25]

According to Bartélémy (2012), Simondon differentiated hylomorphism's "conscious" and "unconscious" paradigm (p. 212). The conscious side of hylomorphism is its account of technical form-taking, be it of buildings, works of art(istry), or, a classical example, the molding of bricks. For Simondon, the unconscious aspect of hylomorphism is its social representation of the labor condition (see 2.4). For now I concentrate on the conscious side, the account of technical form-taking.

As a technical model of becoming, hylomorphism is a persuasive model. Simondon (1995) illustrated the seemingly convincing logic of imposition with the example of making clay bricks.[26] In brick making, clay is pressed into a wooden form and accordingly takes on a new shape. A simple reasoning would state that the clay now has form and was therefore formless before. Only the imposition of an outside form could have given structure and form to the clay. And imposition necessitates an agent that constructed – intellectually first and then in the shaping of a wooden mold – and imposed the form on the formless clay.

Depending on whether we talk about creativity as *self-expression* or *problem-solving competence*, we are thus made to believe that matter can only take on form through an active spirit or mind – the creative self or the competent Prometheus – individually conceiving and producing a particular design. As the basic argument runs that matter is *formless*, we are led to conclude that preconceived forms are *imposed* by a knowing agent on matter, thereby giving the matter structure.

We will see later (2.3.1) why this perspective might be regarded as an *outsider's perspective*. For now, I will follow the logic of *imposition* as a pertinent issue especially when framing creativity as a cognitive form of *problem-solving*, as the next section shows.

[25] See also Ingold's (2011, 2012) anthropology of making for an Heideggerian criticism of the "object" in comparison to "things" or "materials': "while objects are *against* us, things are *with* us" (2011, p. 5, emphasis in original).

[26] Deleuze and Guattari (1987) as well as Ingold (2012) offer discussions of Simondon's example.

2.2.4 The central logic of imposition – the example of problem-solving

At the heart of entitative approaches to creativity lies a *logic of imposition*.[27] The hylomorphic model assumes, in its crass form, a basic opposition of matter and form as distinctive entities. Because matter is thought of as formless, *structure* must be *imposed* through *forms* that *descend* from *elsewhere*. The logic of imposition is tied to hylomorphism's basic assumptions about creative agency as *property* and a respective form of *causality*: agency is conceived as "a property, an inherent power of separate entities" (Barad, 2003, p. 807). Creative action is based on a sort of efficient causality, where an active principle (form) is imposed on a passive principle (matter):

> Any thing, Aristotle had reasoned, is a compound of matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*), which are brought together in the act of its creation. Accordingly, making begins with a form in mind and a formless lump of "raw material," and it ends when form and matter are united in the complete artifact. In the history of modern thought, this *hylomorphic* model of creation was both further entrenched and increasingly unbalanced. Form came to be seen as actively imposed, whereas matter – thus rendered passive and inert – became that which was imposed upon. (Ingold, 2012, p. 432, emphasis in original)

As we cannot conceive how form might impose itself on formless matter by itself, the active agency of God or a demiurge must be assumed. In its description of the movement between form and matter, form dominates matter; thinking and ideas are *imposed* upon matter as molding, which is rendered passive and inert. In classical aesthetics, hylomorphism therefore implies the idea that the artistic work is only a crucible for the Ideal of Beauty (Latour, 2011, p. 314). Matter is the mere substrate (hypokeimon) of becoming (Weik, 2011, p. 665), with "a spirit at the origin of the action whose consistency is then carried by ricochet onto a material that has no other maintenance, no other ontological dignity, than what one condescends to give it" (Latour, 2011, p. 313).

From a perspective of imposition, creativity turns into a mechanical *technology*. For Bunn (1999), within this perspective creativity is seen as an action "where something is done *to* something, the materials, in order to make something, an object" (p. 15, emphasis in original). The idea of imposition turns creativity into a "goal oriented process with the end product being the main objective" (p. 15). This is particularly evident with the pertinent idea of creativity as a cognitive competence of problem-solving.

[27] Latin *imponere* "inflict" (upon) (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

The logic of imposition is at the heart of the widely spread conception of creativity as *problem-solving*. The idea of problem-solving is rooted within the assumption that creativity is a basic form of intelligence. This is derived from a faculty psychology of capacities and competences (see Ingold, 2001). The notions of capacities and competences are thereby tied together as follows: while the idea of a capacity implies a pre-built or inherent proneness, the idea of a competence implies the actualization of the basic capacity for a specific purpose. For example, the individual equipped with a capacity for movement and rhythm can become a competent dancer. Within a faculty-based cognitive psychology, the idea of capacity is thereby "rooted in the metaphors of container and content … waiting to be filled up with cultural information in the form of mental *representations*" (Ingold, 2001, p. 134, emphasis added). Thinking of psychological faculties "as a set of preconstituted, modular compartments or 'acquisition devices'" (p. 134) thereby means assuming capacity as a pre-built proneness "to accept certain types of rules and representations" and competence as being built on this "received mental content" (p. 134).

The same goes for the functionalistic notion of creativity as a problem-solving competence. For Ingold, cognitive schemes of mental *representations* are at the heart of cognitive understandings of problem-solving as intelligent action.

> Competence … underwrites the kind of process that, according to cognitive science, lies at the heart of all intelligent action, namely "problem-solving." The approach of the intelligent problem solver, in this view, is always to act on the basis of a plan, which is formulated by bringing a given set of decision rules to bear upon a representation of the existing situation. (p. 134)

To think of problem-solving as a competence suggests a

> knowledgeability that is detached from action and from the contexts of actors' bodily engagement with the world, and that takes the form of interior rules or programmes capable of specifying, in advance, the appropriate behavioural response to any given situation. (p. 134)

For Chia and Hold (2009), a process of problem-solving therefore might be characterized as "navigation." In their practice-based approach to strategy, they employ maritime metaphors to distinguish between "wayfinding" and "navigation" (p. 160). Navigation is thereby likened to the heroic ship captain's competence to map the course and steer the ship by using maps and instruments. In such a teleological theory, the isolated individual is capable of imposing solutions onto a certain situation and therefore executing a plan, by the power of representation. The environment is seen as

a mere source of problems to be overcome through divergent thinking and creative problem-solving.

A logic of imposition implies a clear distinction between a situation, its *representation* and a comprehensibly formulated problem. The hylomorphic model of problem-solving operates on the basis of a form of *representationalism* that assumes an ontological distinction between representations and what they appear to be representing:

> The idea that beings exist as individuals with inherent attributes, anterior to their representation, is a metaphysical presupposition that underlies the belief in political, linguistic, and epistemological forms of representationalism. Or, to put the point the other way around, representationalism is the belief in the ontological distinction between representations and that which they purport to represent; in particular, that which is represented is held to be independent of all practices of representing. That is, there are assumed to be two distinct and independent kinds of entities – representations and entities to be represented. (Barad, 2003, pp. 803–804)

The logic of imposition therefore requires representations to mediate between independently existing entities. As suggested before, it thereby implies a "doing-to," the view that agency is a property, that is an inherent power of separate entities (p. 807).

To view problems as representations that are distinct from situations is highly contestable. John Dewey, who offered an alternative to problem-solving with what he called *inquiry*, wrote:

> There is not at first a situation *and* a problem, much less just a problem and no situation. There is a troubled, perplexed, trying situation, where the difficulty is, as it were, spread throughout the entire situation, infecting it as a whole. If we knew just what the difficulty was and where it lay, the job of reflection would be much easier than it is. … In fact, we know what the problem *exactly* is simultaneously with finding a way out and getting it resolved. (Dewey, 1933/1998, p. 140, emphasis in original)

We never find ourselves vis-à-vis a problem as such, but only within problematic, difficult situations. If we could say what the actual problem is, we would have already found the solution.

In conclusion, the logic of imposition specifies the hylomorphic model of creation as supposing creativity to be an entitative competence that is detached from any bodily engagement with the world and that performs as a mono-causal and goal-oriented process based on representations and a static view of objects and the environment.

2.2.5 Novelty – transcendent fantasy or tautological immanence?

If hylomorphic models of creation assume a logic of imposition, where does novelty come from? Although it assumes novelty to be at the heart of creativity and innovation, the field of creativity research has hardly reflected the category of "the new" itself (see for example Rehn, De Cock, & De Weerd-Nederhof, 2006):

> Although we are conditioned to accept novelty at face value, as *fait accompli*, key questions about the new – What is it? How can we know it? How does it come to be? – still remain. (p. 123, emphasis in original)

This might have to do with the possibility that the answers to these questions from entitative, hylomorphic models of creation are leading to philosophical quandaries (see Sørensen, 2006). A substantialist theory of action only allows working with givens. This poses a central problem for the account of novelty within entitative creativity theory. The two "solutions" are the Romantic assumption of transcendent forces doing the work, or the rational, technocratic ideas of the creativeness of computational (human or non-human) processes.

Creativity theory oscillates between *transcendental* or *immanent* but *tautological* models of creation. Drawing on Boeddrich (2004), Sørensen (2006) respectively speaks about the "fantasy route to innovation" and the "technocratic route to innovation." New forms can come from "outside" (God, a divine inspiration, a genius), as seen in forms of divine inspiration or ingenious imagination. The humanistic self-expression model thereby posits an "inner exteriority" by situating creativity within the fantastic realm of a preconscious creative self. Forms can alternatively come from "inside," that is existent, knowledge-based competences of problem-solving and divergent thinking. Where creativity is turned into a computational approach, it is not far to then seek to enhance the human *wetware* or even replace it by knowledge-based *hardware* and *software* (see Varshney et al., 2013).

At the basis of entitative approaches' to the question of novelty, we find two equally unsatisfactory conceptualizations: assuming a transport of force or an imposition of form onto passive matter, the hylomorphic model in entitative creativity discourses can only conceive of either a *transcendental*, post-Romantic process or an *immanent*, yet technocratic and lastly tautological process (Sørensen, 2006). Why tautological? A modernist theory of action only allows working with givens. Either novelty is given and granted from without, or, when situating creativity within a cognitive faculty, novelty is reduced to the employment of known rules and operations. Creativity as either self-expression or competence thereby entangles us into grand schemes: the "business of the big" or "big business" (p. 136). Either we are left with a

transcendental explanation, where an all-creative genius-turned-creative-self actualizes and therefore expresses a potential ideal, or we are left with an immanent explanation where novelty is supposed to emerge out of technology, existing knowledge and information. The first version leaves creativity outside organization; the second version posits it within existing knowledge, yet cannot account for how novelty is actually produced. Innovation research therefore often resorts to vague formulations such as "the fuzzy front end of innovation" (Boeddrich, 2004), omits the question as such or turns creativity into a mere matter of problem-solving and decision-making (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010).

According to Feyerabend's (1987) critique, entitative approaches to creativity as an individual competence, if thought to the end, bear a paradoxical note: being based on rationalistic assumptions they lastly require a secret recourse to transcendental, Romantic ideas:

> It needs a miracle to bridge the abyss between subject and object, man and nature, experience and reality … – and creativity leading to wonderful castles of … thought is supposed to be that miracle. Thus the allegedly most rational view of the world yet in existence can function only when combined with the most irrational events there are, namely miracles. (p. 709)

Theorizing creativity on the basis of a hylomorphic model is theoretically contestable, because it situates novelty either outside of the realm of organization – a question of *miracles* – or inside human or artificial knowledgeability – a question of *computation*. As Feyerabend asserts, this is a result of the substantialist, and therefore dualist ontology, at the base of entitative views of creativity.

2.2.6 Possibilism and potentiality

Hylomorphic models of creation maintain an entrenched form of *possibilism* (see Alloa, 2014a) within Western thought. Possibilism is the idea that creation means a particular realization of a general and transcendental principle or form. A set of predefined forms turn into material forms that resemble their predefined essences. Difference can therefore only ever be a derivative of identity; it can only arise after the fact, as a special occasion – it is a "bifurcation of essence and occurrence" (Alloa, 2014a, p. 151). This assumption blackboxes all of the processes and operations taking place, for example, for an acorn to turn into a tree.

> You can't say it had a magic potential in advance, because … every step of the translation is important. Saying that "the oak tree was potentially in the acorn" means that you allow yourself to skip the difficult question of what

> all the phases were. (Graham Harman in Harman, Latour, & Erdélyi, 2011, p. 121)

A transcendent notion of potentiality obscures the actual operation of the acorn taking on the form of the tree itself.

The hylomorphic model of creation is based on the idea of a movement from the *possible* to the *real* as the principles of individuation prefigure the constituted individual (Simondon, 2009). The first term, the principle, is thought to contain, *in potentia*, that which will become real and can therefore explain the individual's haecceity. The idea of potentiality, a longstanding philosophical concept, was introduced by Aristotle to explain the fact of how things move, develop and change. For example, when an acorn turns into an oak tree, the acorn is thought to aspire to its potential form of the oak tree. The possible and the real therefore exist within a relation of "resemblance" (see Deleuze, 1994, p. 212) that presupposes that

> a term is already an individual or, in any case, something individualizable and that can be a source of ecceity and can turn itself into multiple ecceities. Anything that can serve as the basis for a relation is already of the same mode of being as the individual, whether it be an atom, an external and indivisible particle, *prima materia* or form. (Simondon, 2009, p. 4, emphasis in original)

The temporal succession of first a principle, then an operation of individuation and lastly the appearance of a full-blown individual resembling the principle's pre-determined possibilities "does not add anything to a predefined form, except reality" (DeLanda, 1999, p. 34). Bruno Latour (1998), in one of his view explicit references to Deleuze and his notion of virtuality, employs Deleuze's example of a pendulum to explain the relation of the possible and the real.

> When you have a pendulum, the potential of a pendulum is just actualised by the actual fall of the pendulum. No new information will be produced. Once you know the potential of a pendulum you know everything there is to know about the pendulum and you can let it fall and it doesn't matter too much. In other words, reality is just the realisation and the actualisation of a potential which is calculable. (Latour, 1998, p. 11)

The analogy of the pendulum nicely illustrates substantialism's primary emphasis on identity, which, as the possible, will come to be realized and thus actual. Substantialism reduces the being of an entity to its locally actualized properties. "Being" always starts with the identity of full-blown individuals – be it possible or real individuals. Hence, within a hylomorphic approach, the outcome of creative making can be deduced from pre-given forms; difference, as we have noted above, appears as a derivative of the identity of pre-determined, essential forms.

The principle of identity and the process of resemblance of the possible and the real posit problems for any profound account of creativity. From this perspective, nothing "really new" can be thought to come into being as the genesis of substance – as particle or form – itself is not anything further inquired into. What comes into being is never more than a deficient copy of some first principle. Reducing being to a unity, the forces of becoming only serve a homeostatic function. This avoids the question of where the potential reserve for change and novelty is found in "this world." As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) note: "Simondon demonstrates that the *hylomorphic* model leaves many things, active and affective, by the wayside" (p. 408, emphasis in original) as it neglects or denies "the existence, between form and matter, of a zone of medium and intermediary dimension, of energetic, molecular dimension – a space unto itself that deploys its materiality through matter, a number unto itself that propels its traits through form" (p. 409). In reducing being to identity, the affective and constitutive connections that make living beings exist within a milieu are disparaged as mere background, or exterior context.

2.3 Evaluating methodology

Entitative creativity frameworks are based on substantialist theories of action and creation that centrally assume creativity *and* its research to be questions of knowledgeability and representation. The epistemological assumption of representationalism thereby leads to a methodology of creativity research along the *retrospective* and *explanatory* logic of input-output studies and models.

2.3.1 Hylomorphism's ergonic fallacy: a retrospective outsider perspective

In this methodological problematization of entitative views on creativity, I suggest that creativity research takes up an *outside* perspective that *reads creativity backwards*.

To start, I turn once more to the persuasive example of brick making shortly presented in section 2.2.3. In his substantial critique of hylomorphism, Gilbert Simondon offers a re-reading of brick making as a process of energy exchange (see Simondon, 2005). For Simondon, when looking closely, on the molecular level we find an energetic exchange between prepared clay and a formatted mold. Simondon circumscribes brick making never as just an abstract form and abstract matter, but always as a concrete operation. Hylomorphism is for Simondon an account of taking-form that is too simple, as it fails to account for the "energetic" operations taking place in the formation of beings.

Psychological creativity research has been mainly operating on the basis of methodologies that assume an outside position in regard to the actual process of formation. For Simondon, to understand how the molecular forces and exchanges of dynamic forms constitute macrophysics one should however be *inside* the mold (Simondon, 2005, p. 46).

> The hylomorphic model, Simondon concludes, corresponds to the perspective of a man who stands outside the works and sees what goes in and what comes out but nothing of what happens in between, of the actual processes wherein materials of diverse kinds come to take on the forms they do. (Ingold, 2012, p. 433)

For creativity and innovation research within organization and management studies, the idea of studying not only "what goes in and what comes out" has been formulated for years, but until lately it has found little actual empirical operationalizations. Twenty years ago, Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin (1993) already predicated that "after decades of theory development and empirical research, researchers still know surprisingly little about how the creative process works, especially within the context of complex social systems" (p. 316). That this has little changed, I propose, has to do with entitative assumptions that "the moment of creativity" is a private and interior phenomenon that is not easily observable (unless, from this perspective, we engage in neurocognitive imagining research). Therefore hylomorphic studies of organizational creativity, as we have seen, have by and large refrained from attending to the micro-processes of creative practice (see Woodman et al., 1993). In particular, "[t]he literature on innovation primarily explores the creative process at the collective level of organizations, yet is largely concerned with the ongoing organizational context … and neglects those moments when creative insights occur" (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006, p. 485).

Psychological creativity research is assuming *input-output* methodologies that mainly take as *unit of analysis* either finished objects or personality characteristics. As already seen in Rhodes' (1961) "4P" framework (see 2.1.1), the pathway of analysis is either *a posteriori*, retrospectively going from the product to the person and its processes, or assessing personality characteristics directly yet abstractly – that is psychological traits measured in questionnaires. The methodological approach of entitative creativity models is thereby based on the supposition that the creator's character and creative acts can be deduced from the work he or she has created. A direct correspondence – via the notions of "expression" and "representation" – is assumed between individual characteristics and processes and the finished work (of art). As such, the entitative

creative model is an input-output model that attends to both the input and the output of creative processes but not what happens in between.

Input-output methodologies engage in a retrospective, that is backward, reading of creativity. Distinguishing the "forward-facing intuition of the practitioner" from the "backward-facing reflection of the analyst" (Ingold, 2011, p. 7), Tim Ingold's work (see Ingold, 2011; Ingold & Hallam, 2007) introduced the basic and helpful methodological differentiation between reading creativity "backwards" – via its products – and reading it "forwards" – via its processes and its practices (Ingold & Hallam, 2007, p. 2). Ingold therefore contrasts

> the prospective or *a priori* orientation of the practitioner, moving forward in tandem with the materials that he or she follows, and the *retrospective*, a posteriori orientation of the student or analyst, looking back on selected outcomes and tracing their antecedent causes. In the former case, the intentionality that powers the practice is found in the action itself, in the merging of movement and sensory awareness, in *pro*-duction; in the latter, it is derived by *ab*-duction …, as a prior intention hypothetically placed before the action, of which the outcome is posited to be the effect. It is because analysts have typically adopted this latter orientation that they have been so inclined to locate the sources of creativity in images and objects rather than in things and performances. To create, in this view, is in itself to innovate. The equivalence rests on a "backwards" reading which finds the creativity of action by tracing the novelty of its outcomes to unprecedented ideas in the minds of individuals. (2011, p. 6, emphasis in original)

The distinction between a forward and a backward reading is based on differentiating the notions of *creativity* – an open, very general creative process of "making" (see also Ingold, 2010a) – and *innovation* – the *a posteriori* attributed novelty and usefulness of the creative outcome. Reading creativity backwards – assuming a *creatio ex nihilo* – means judging the creativity of action by the novelty of its outcomes, that is by comparing with what has gone before and to the outcomes' antecedent conditions in the form of unmatched ideas in individual creative selves and minds. From such a perspective, creativity always equates innovation. And, paralleling modern art's opposition to medieval craftwork's principle of *imitatio* (see 1.1.3), the antithesis of innovation is imitation. "To imitate, in this view, is to run off replicas from an already established design or template" (Ingold, 2011, p. 7). All in all, a backward reading of creativity reversely attributes the emergent form to some kind of prior design.

Input-output methodologies that infer creativity from the finished result of creative practice commit to an *ergonic fallacy* (Hope Mason, 2003, p. 78); they maintain "the idea that we can tell the character of a creator from the artwork she or he has created" (Neill, 2007, p. 132). Hope Mason (2003) thereby noted: "It is an error to suppose that

a design visible in an end-product had originally been present in the impulses or motives which had let to its production" (p. 78). An input-output model "omits the very creativity of the very processes wherein every design is realised in practice" (Ingold, 2011, p. 7).

Input-output methodologies at the same time explain "too little and too much" (p. 7). On the one hand they neglect the micro processes of "making a design work;" on the other hand they are overconfident when assuming that practice can be modeled as a result of a sequence of formal rules and procedures. Creativity research has produced a number of stage and phase models. Wallas' (1926) four-stage model of the creative process – preparation, incubation, illumination and verification – is thereby probably the most famous. To think of creativity in terms of more or less clearly distinguishable phases or stages is for Ingold (2012) a direct consequence of the hylomorphic model that "can conceive of technical operations only as sequences of discrete steps, with a clear threshold marking the termination of each step and the commencement of the next" (p. 433). For Gherardi's and Perrotta's (2013) late practice-based approach to creativity, "the idea of the forming process as a linear one which moves through distinct stages … is unsatisfactory, and it may also be misleading" (p. 251).

Overall, creativity research that is based on hylomorphic models of creation assumes a retrospective outsider perspective. It thereby cannot properly account for the intimate engagement of practitioners with their materials and a fundamentally indeterminate process of making.

2.3.2 Explanatory science and creativity's creative nature – an impasse

Entitative creativity frameworks centrally assume creativity to be a question of knowledgeability and representation. The same applies for retrospective input-output research designs, models and theories. The science of creativity is mainly an *explanatory* science that seeks to represent and explain creativity in increasingly accurate or encompassing models in order to produce definite knowledge about creativity. Thinking of creativity as a process of representation entails also thinking of creativity as something that can be definitively represented. Assuming a definite origin of creative action, the central (research) questions to be asked from a hylomorphic and emancipative approach are therefore "who acts?" and "who receives?" The activity/passivity divide of a hylomorphic theory of action thereby cannot but assume an "efficient causality."

From an ontological perspective, creativity research is thereby stuck at the methodological impasse of seeking to fix the generative notion of creativity as a

definite concept and a definite process. Rickards and De Cock (1999) therefore speak of the *ontological paradox* in creativity methodologies: "How might the generative process of creativity be expressed within a model or theory seeking some generalizability if an essential part of the process is its uniqueness from that which existed before?" (p. 239). The teleological notion of creativity as a cognitive competence of problem-solving is especially thereby at odds with a basic understanding of creativity as an unpredictable process that includes unintended consequences. Tsoukas (2008) respectively asserts that "[c]reative action cannot be adequately theorized in the traditional manner of efficient causality, since if we could specify in advance what would count as creative it would cease to be so" (p. 196).

A fundamental problem of creativity research is therefore that it cannot generate any definite *knowledge*. As such it is caught within ideological discussions, and the notion of creativity risks turning into an "empty signifier." For Miettinen (2006), "attempts to formulate a model of creativity or innovation face a basic problem of defining a logic of something that by definition does not yet exist" (p. 178). Creativity research cannot generate any definite *knowledge* of creativity, else it would reduce creativity to a mere technical trick. This would fly in the face of everyday experience, where, as most of us have encountered, "[c]reative acts do or do not take place. They can be enticed into being through work or enthusiasm, and above all through both, but they cannot be forced" (Bröckling, 2006, p. 514). Therefore, creative acts cannot be limited to conceptual knowledge. It would be a categorical mistake to expect any definite – rationally accepted – theory of creativity (Osborne, 2003, p. 516). According to De Cock and Rehn (2008, p. 224), an explanatory science of creativity would therefore be an "inherent contradiction in thought," because "the object being purified and controlled is then creativity, the one thing one claims is beyond pure control" (p. 224). Out of this reason, the philosophy of science, which also focuses on creative processes, differentiated in its early writings a context of discovery and a context of justification. The task of formulating a logic of discovery was regarded as very difficult or altogether impossible (see Miettinen, 2006, p. 178).

Overall, I suggest that an *explanatory* science of creativity that seeks to *know* creativity as such reaches a methodological impasse. Creativity is "by nature" impossible to know as definite. Creativity research is therefore in need of alternative methodologies that ac*know*ledge creativity's ontological unpredictability.

2.4 Evaluating policy

The ideological dimension of an entitative creativity framework is indissociably linked to its substantialist assumptions and its "unconscious" paradigm of hylomorphism (Simondon, 1989, in Barthélémy, 2012, p. 212). It is especially the wider discourse of creativity within functionalist science and in policy circles that thereby follows the *masterful* and *liminal* logic of creativity posited as need, desire, competence and resource.

2.4.1 Creativity perpetuates the masterful logic of the labor condition

Ethically and politically, the scheme of hylomorphism is shown to be invested with problematic social and political distinctions, as it has become part of a modernist narrative of mastery and autonomy that is modeled on the idea of labor.

The "unconscious" side of hylomorphism is the model's masterful[28] and patriarchal matrix for thinking about creativity and change (see Simondon, 1989, p. 241). It follows from the hylomorphic distinction between active, form-*atted* entities and passive, form-*less* matter. The hylomorphic model of creation thereby perpetuates modernity's "Great Divide" (see Latour, 1996), or what Whitehead called the bifurcation of nature (see also Latour, 2011): the division of nature into an objective sphere, which is a formless material world without importance and value, and the subjective realm, with full import, values, tendencies, motivation, desire and ideas (forms). The underlying dualism finds its equivalent within the hylomorphic scheme where one substance passively endures and makes possible a change in form that is initiated through an active movement of form, while persisting through this trans-*form*-ation. Form is thereby thought to be inhering in matter. Matter, from the Latin *mater* (meaning "mother"), is here thought as potentiality and form as its actualization.

For Simondon, hylomorphism is a patriarchally gendered concept: "matter aspires to form as the female to the male" (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 114). At the foundation of the hylomorphic scheme we thus find the teleological scheme of a male demiurge[29] forming passive matter into an ordered entity according to his will. In more neutral terms, Bonta and Protevi (2004) summarize the basic hylomorphic idea as follows: "the order displayed by material systems is due to the form projected in advance of production by an external productive agent, a form which organizes what would

[28] The adjective *masterful*, as distinct from *masterly*, is here thought to mean "powerful and able to control others" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

[29] Demiurge derives from the Greek *dēmiourgos,* meaning "craftsman" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

supposedly otherwise be chaotic or passive matter" (p. 97). The unconscious side of hylomorphism, as alluded to above with its gendered rendering, pertains to hylomorphism as "paradigm of the impoverished social relation between the slave who moulds the brick and the master who gives the order for the technical operation" (Barthélémy, 2012, p. 211). Simondon hence offers a highly instructive political and ethical critique that uncovers hylomorphism as being a social representation of the labor condition, socially advancing the Tayloristic division between those that think the objects (heads) and those who make it (hands). According to Simondon, the hylomorphic schema "represents the transposition into philosophical thought of the technical operation drawn from labor and taken as the universal paradigm for the genesis of beings" (Simondon, 1989 in Combes, 2013, p. 71).

Latour (2008a) voices a similar critique when identifying Prometheus as the prototypical demiurge and his story as one of "emancipation, detachment, modernization, progress and mastery" (p. 2), a narrative that has identified a "heroic, Promethean, hubristic dream of action" (p. 3) as being in line with key intellectual developments within Western modernity. From this perspective, "hylomorphism is really artisanal production seen from the perspective of the architect or *master*" (Bonta & Protevi, 2004, p. 98, emphasis added), and an outsider's perspective (Simondon, 2005, in Ingold, 2012, p. 433) that turns out to be more "a norm and an ideal than an experience of the real" (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 114). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) see the hylomorphic scheme as an instantiation of the idea of the law: "It is the idea of the law that assures the model's coherence, since laws are what submit matter to this or that form, and conversely, realize in matter a given property deduced from the form" (p. 40). In relation to art and architecture, hylomorphism therefore emphasizes the role of the architect and the master artist, underscoring the division of "design" and "matter." The design of a structure is thought to be the flawless ideal that subsequently crystallizes into a material manifestation. This is the masterful logic of hylomorphic models of creation.

2.4.2 Unleashing creativity: liminality, permanent presence and lack

Creativity has been an extremely successful concept *because* the hylomorphic scheme, as social model of the labor condition, separated it from actual practice and work (see Sørensen, 2008, p. 91). The masterful logic of creativity tied it directly into the late modern semantic of the emancipated subject, associating it with cultural values of autonomy, individuality and authenticity (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 347). As a result, functionalist management and organization studies have especially been turning the glorification of creative capabilities into a strictly *resource*-based view of creativity

(Reckwitz, 2012, pp. 155–197; Rehn, 2009, pp. 250–251; Sørensen, 2008, pp. 90–91). Positing the human capacity and resource of creativity as literally inexhaustible, resource-based approaches produce a *liminal* logic of "permanent presence and permanent lack" (Rehn, 2009, p. 250).

Emancipating the everyday subject to be creative, psychology-based creativity research thereby has especially been spawning the current values of general discourses on creativity and has been holding them tightly focused on the subject and the creative outcome (see Reckwitz, 2012). Psychology-inspired creativity discourses in late modernity have been revolving around the *wish*, the *need*, the *capability* and the *demand* to be creative. While late psychoanalysis promotes a basic creative urge and *desire*, humanistic self-growth theories assume creativity to be an anthropological *need*. Cognitivist models presume creativity to be a basic *capability* for divergent thinking, which is needed for the models' widely required *demand* for creative problem-solving. With its subjectivist schemes, entitative approaches thereby submerge artistic procedures into either post-Romantic schemata – a creative self, needing or desiring to express innate creative potentials – or tame them into divergent thinking and a functional form of problem-solving. The result of this development is *a resource- and desire-based view of creativity* telling us that "*we need, we want, we can, we ought and we will be creative."* The organizational and economic demand for creativity especially does not ask anymore whether one is creative, but only to what extent; it therefore even appears as imperative – be creative! For creativity to become so popular, the force of entitative theories, with the theories' dominant metaphors of creativity as desire, need, competence and resource, must be thereby not underestimated.

The human resource of creativity, which is situated in an inherently creative self or psychological faculties, is posited as literally inexhaustible. As Reckwitz (2012) notes, this means a *liminal* perspective on resources:

> [I]t is a question of mobilizing psychological potentials that are in principle *inexhaustible*. Always a further enhancement or increase seems possible. Such a psychology is not limitating but *liminal*: the individual ought to approximate an imaginary *liminal* state of psychological maturity and psychological well-being which will never be reached. (p. 217, emphasis added, translated from German)

The theme of *liminality* within resource-based conceptualizations of creativity is therefore central in post-bureaucratic management discourses (see for example Peters, 1992). It is an overarching theme that inextricably links creativity to a modernist agenda of progress. Here, talk is of bountiful supplies of individual and organizational

resources that are only waiting to be emancipated in "carnivalistic" organizations (see also Reckwitz, 2012, p. 186). For Sørensen (2008), such discourses constitute "the present utopia," where "creativity is a new abundant resource" (p. 90).

> [W]hereas the resources of humans as labour shared their exploitability with the earthly resources of the industrial age – energy, raw material, and land – this new resource, creativity, cannot be exploited fully or used up and is thus tantamount to creation itself, enacting the incredible mirage of a never-ending prosperous modernity, supported by unimagined resources. (p. 91)

Siding with Derrida, Sørensen sees the medieval idea of an infinitely creative God as having been turned into an "infinite creative subjectivity" (Derrida, 1976, in Sørensen, 2008, p. 91).

Paradoxically, such a notion of creativity being lauded as a literally inexhaustible resource – especially in contrast with depletable human resources tied to (physical) labor as such – incites paradoxical feelings of lack and fear. As a potentially abundant (human) resource, it could (personally) and should (socially/economically) always be more (see Rehn, 2009, pp. 250–251). That is why "being creative" is not only lauded, but also feared for being not enough. The confluence of the wish and the demand for being creative has led to a situation where "creativity is presented as a permanent presence as well as a permanent lack" (Rehn, 2009, p. 250).

Economically and politically, creativity has therefore become the primary asset of a logic of liminality that is driven by "the fear of not having enough, of not being able to generate enough, in short, to not be able to amass and gather" (p. 250). The mirage of an "infinite creative subjectivity" thereby haunts not only the so-called "creative class" (Florida, 2002). Within a time of increasing velocity, the promise and expectation of a liminal conceptualization of creativity is closely tied to a general condemnation of inertia;

> the resentment against those who are supposed to be preventing creativity, those who are holding things up, those who are saying "wait a minute," those who are resisting certain kinds of change, against, indeed, all the constraints on creativity. (Osborne, 2003, p. 520)

The problem and fear of creativity constraints can thereby turn quickly into a peculiar form of *social marginalization*. While the specific affective signature of the creativity dispositive is, as a promise, all positive, here then looms the shadow of a predominant conceptualization of creativity as a personal competence and resource. "*We want to be creative and we should. If we aren't, then something is wrong with(in) us*":

> Because creativity is, within the late modern semantic of subjectivity, closely tied to cultural values of individuality and authenticity, so that a shortage of creativity seems at the same time to signal a lack of individuality and authenticity. If the subject, in its core, is supposed to be a creative one and it also wishes to be one *itself*, then deficient or missing creative performance does not only mean that it is denied social recognition, but that it is not conforming with its own self-ideal and is respectively feeling undermined in its self-image. … That the creative way of life orients "exterior" social expectations and "inner" wishes towards the same goal entails an exceptional promise of sense and satisfaction and at the same time a very grave risk of failure. (Reckwitz, 2012, pp. 347–348, emphasis in original, translated from German)

The attribution of a lack of creativity comes as a very specific form of social marginalization. Creative performance is never only an "external" proof, like in functional or normative actions. The lack of creative performance is rather often attributed to a lack of the psychological structure and personality of the respective subject. In a desire- and resource-based model of creativity that promotes the need and obligation to realize one's innate potentials, failing to be(come) creative can become an existential risk.

In summary, the optimist story of creativity within emancipative and therefore entitative approaches shows dissonances and paradoxes. Posited as a permanent positive presence and abundant potential, the liminal conceptualization of creativity produces feelings of permanent lack and fear on personal as well as economical and political levels. Critical voices therefore attempt to unmask the dispositive of creativity as "civil religion" of the "entrepreneurial self" (Bröckling, 2007, p. 152). Osborne (2003) also suspects that many aspects of contemporary creativity discourses reflect rather conservative attitudes: "compulsory individualism, compulsory 'innovation,' compulsory performativity and productiveness, the compulsory valorization of the putatively new" (p. 507).

2.5 Towards a relational framework of creative practice

In this section I once more articulate the central problems of entitative thinking in order to point out the requirements for an alternative framework (see Chapter 3). What is at stake is a shift from entitative assumptions of an ontological and methodological individualism that aim to explain creativity in terms of individual actor's intentions and actions towards a framework of *relational practice* (see Steyaert & van Looy, 2010; Tsoukas, 2008) that assumes the latent primacy of practices and relations over the individual or the organization. Following up on the implications of the previous

problematization, the central requirement for a relational framework of creative practice is thereby to develop an understanding of creativity as an *event* that is *immanent* to the very practical engagements of practitioners with their materials.

2.5.1 Central questions for an alternative framework

The problematization of the paradigmatic and ideological assumptions of entitative theories of creativity expose a number of blanks and questions within the predominant social scientific approaches to researching creativity. While more recent creativity research claims to have "demystified" any (post-)Romantic notions of creativity (see for example Boden, 2004; Weisberg, 1993), its problematic theories of (inter-)action and creation still perpetuate an idealized and normative account of technical form-taking.

The hylomorphic theory of creation and change fails to account for the "energetic" operations that take place within the fabrication of an object. The static conception of a simple union of matter and form cannot account for the way things are constantly involved into and emerging from energetic processes of transformation, even after production. Designs do not magically transform into finished forms, as any construction worker would affirm. Without workmanship, designs cannot be fulfilled. Builders know that "the idea is crystalline, the fact fluid" (Brand, 1994 in Ingold & Hallam, 2007, p. 4). There is a plan, and then it takes materials and people to construct according to the fixed design envisioned. Yet materials have properties all of their own and they are not predisposed to fall into the configurations and shapes required of them. And in order to make materials behave how the architect desires, different professionals need to put their experience and skills to use. Only through continuous improvisation can an inflexible design be accommodated to the realities of an erratic and unforeseeable world.

To acknowledge and account for a generative creative practice, Ingold suggested that creativity must hence be *read forwards*. What is at stake is the "intuitive, inventive component of skilled practice" (Ingold, 2011, p. 7) that is not properly explained by input-output models. To do so would then mean following creativity in "the movements that give rise to things, rather than backwards from their outcomes" (p. 7). Ingold therefore situates creativity within the process of practice, the "moment-by-moment inventiveness of practice – that is, in its improvisatory quality – as it carries on, in the midst of things, always responsive to what is going on in its surroundings" (p. 7). The "action of making," as Bunn (1999) asserts, "is a working *with* rather than a doing *to*" (p. 15, emphasis in original). The creator's relationship with materials is

surely a pivotal aspect of creative practice for designers, artists, craftspeople and handworkers. Reading creativity forwards yet assumes that in all cases of "making," practitioners deal not with finished objects but "live" material – the potential of *form*-atted matter for further acts of creation and transformation.

To think of creativity as being immanent to practice calls for a framework that offers an alternative to the hylomorphic scheme of the *possible* and the *real*. What remains to be shown is how difference itself, as a basic form of creativity, is the differential ground from which through specific operations the ostensible stability of a world filled with fully-defined individuals emerges. The coupling of the *possible* and the *real* is thereby superseded by the coupling of the *virtual* and the *actual*. The latter distinction is not based on a process of resemblance: thinking both the virtual and the actual as real, rather than merely realizing a given potential, the virtual is actualizing into unpredictable occasions that yet preserve the virtual capacity of being (see DeLanda, 1999; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Simondon, 2009).

Assuming a relation of virtuality/actuality requires a methodology that goes beyond the difficulty of an explanatory science to account for a basically unpredictable process. An alternative framework for studying creativity needs to be able to conceptualize novelty as an immanent *event* that emerges *ex materia*. How can we account for the precariousness of the creative process and what are the key sites and events (and their practices) where the course of development is influenced or set? I suggest that the unpredictability of practice asks for analytical perspectives that make it "possible to describe this immersion of the work in the uncertainty of its end" (Menger, 2006, p. 43). Osborne (2003) therefore advocated "a certain "negative" aesthetics of creativity," which encompasses "the humility of acknowledging that even in acknowledging creativity itself we do not know what creativity is *as such*" (p. 521, emphasis in original). For a *knowledge*-based model of creativity and an explanatory science, such an ac*knowledge*ment would mean a major paradigmatic shift.

2.5.2 From entitative to relational theories of creativity

While creativity has been theorized mainly in entitative ways, in the following chapter I formulate an alternative framework based on the idea of a relational practice (see Steyaert & van Looy, 2010; Tsoukas, 2008). As has been shown, entitative models either emulate the post-Romantic version of an expressive artist or adhere to rational, that is cognitive, versions of a creativity associated with figures of the scientist or the engineer inventor (the grand "problem-solvers"). Either way, singular and active

creators are imposing autonomous works and solutions that are received by a passive audience.

I propose the aesthetic processes of artistic production as a role model for creativity as a social and organizational practice. According to Reckwitz (2012), "[n]ot the technical innovation of the inventor, but the aesthetic creation of the artist eventually provides the social model for creativity" (p. 17, translated by BM). To be more specific, for Reckwitz the role model for actual creative practice and its sociality is the contemporary artist's and designer's way of aesthetic creation as a form of appropriation and aesthetic-affective arrangement.

> The sociality of art is at its core neither one of a functional production nor one of intersubjective interaction or exchange. Centrally, it is about the *social process of fabricating sensual, semiotic and emotional stimuli and appeals for an audience*. (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 58, emphasis in original, translated by BM)

In the following chapter, I propose thinking of creative practice as a basically unpredictable and performative process that "interobjectively" (see Latour, 1996) revolves around the production, circulation and appropriation of aesthetics and affects. Affective relations thereby "center on the production and use of fascinating objects through fascinated subjects" (Reckwitz, 2012, p. 197, translated by BM). My previous problematization of *entitative* creativity theories as following a logic of active imposition adheres to Reckwitz' indication of the need of translating the *relational* and performative understandings of aesthetic-creative practices into a respective conceptual framework for studying creative practice.

With Latour (1999a, 2008a), we can understand the *entitative* and the *relational* paradigms as following two distinct modern narratives: one of *emancipation* – a centering of the subject as inherently powerful and creative – and one of *attachment* – a decentering of the subject as relying on its relatedness to heterogeneous mediators that can make (creative) action happen. As basic creativity traditions, the two narratives come with specific sets of values and passions: "one of emancipation, detachment, modernization, progress and mastery, and the other, completely different, of attachment, precaution, entanglement, dependence and care" (Latour, 2008a, p. 2).

Relational practices are thereby centrally characterized by their notion of *attachment*. This is the idea of a thorough entanglement with and a dependency on constraints and enablers, be they materials, techniques, doings or other co-subjects. As exemplified in avant-garde creativity techniques and design principles of appropriation and arrangement (see Reckwitz, 2012), creativity here appears as a trans-individual process

and a property not of individuals but of relations within situations. The notion of attachment therefore proposes positing the individual not as origin but as emerging within a situational, that is processual and materialized form of practice. For Latour (2008a),[30] the idea of creativity as attachment includes a specific set of attitudes: "modesty, care, precautions, skills, crafts, meanings, attention to details, careful conservations, redesign, artificiality, and ever shifting transitory fashions" (p. 7).

As a first yet still vague direction for creativity research, Latour therefore suggested that, from a perspective of attachment, creativity and design mean the "strange combination of conservation and innovation" (p. 11). The idea of attachment here highlights the basic "interobjectivity" (instead of interactivity) (Latour, 1996), foregrounding the mediatedness of all action through being enfolded within and attached to a myriad of human and non-human actants:

> [W]e need to consider any point as being a mediation, that is to say, as an *event*, which cannot be defined in terms of inputs and outputs or causes or consequences. The idea of mediation or event enables us to retain the only two characteristics of action that are useful, i.e.. the emergence of novelty together with the impossibility of ex-nihilo creation, without in the process conserving anything of the Western anthropological schema that always forces the recognition of a subject and an object, a competence and a performance, a potentiality and an actuality. (p. 237, emphasis in original)

Latour here points at a way to think about interactivity and collectivity, beyond the entitative scheme, as a basic form of mutuality. In developing a conceptual framework of creative practice and production, Chapter 3 therefore centrally posits creativity as a question of a performative and eventful composition *ex materia*.

I conclude this chapter with a number of conceptual questions that directly lead into the themes and ideas of the next chapter. Seeking alternatives to the dominant and problematic logics of entitative creativity research, the following conceptual questions are thereby informed by the idea of a conceptual framework that pertains to the relationality and performativity of an aesthetic-creative practice that is built on heterogeneous attachments.

- *How can creativity be analyzed in a way that does not seek definite models but acknowledges creativity's creative nature?*

[30] Latour (2008) speaks about "design," which I take to be a relational and attachment-based understanding of creativity.

- *How can creativity be conceptualized as a generative yet unpredictable process that relies on the affective role of materials and the (aesthetic) receptivity of creative practitioners?*
- *How is a fascinating performance fabricated? What is the source of the performance's affects and effects? How do we get fascinated? What makes us desire performances? Is there a kind of "spell"*[31] *at work? And how can we conceive the effort behind a performance as a collective process?*
- *How can creativity be conceptualized so it does not invoke feelings of lack and fear of inertia that are connected to the idea of creativity as a human resource?*

[31] Fascination derives from the Latin "fascinum," meaning "spell" or "witchcraft."

3 Towards Creative Practice as Pragmatic Taste-making

[I]nvention is a conjugation or connection of different flows.
(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 219)

What has escaped the attention of psychologists in their analysis of the inventive imagination is not so much the schemes or the forms or the operations of this faculty, those elements that spontaneously stand out in relief, as the dynamic ground on which these schemes confront and combine with each other, and with which they participate.
...
The participative relationship connecting forms to ground is a relationship that spans the present and disseminates an influence of the future on the present, of the virtual on the actual. The ground is the system of potentialities, of potentials, of progressive forces, whereas forms are the system of the actual.
(Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 32)

Sensemaking ... may be seen more fully as a continuous process of reconstruing meanings that are drawn simultaneously from the past and the future. It is this interplay between past and future that gives temporal continuity to actions in the living present. The ... possibility of anticipating different and alternative futures eases the bonds of our histories and opens up novel opportunities for further action. Without this future orientation, sensemaking is necessarily constrained to a convergent, retrospective process that perpetually reproduces history.
(Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011, p. 77)

How can we conceive creativity and the emergence of novelty without resorting to the *computational* or *miraculous* logic of *imposition* identified as being at the heart of hylomorphic models of creativity? This, I suggest, is one of the most pressing theoretical as well as ethical[32] questions of contemporary creativity studies and takes the discussion of creativity, as suggested by Styhre (2006), to ontological and epistemological levels. The conception of creativity as a form of knowledge and its respective logic of imposition is tied to substantialist and actualist ontologies and is shown to be based on the distinction of substance and form. Moving from *substance* to the *substantive* processes of *subsistence* (see Latour in Harman et al., 2011, p. 110), in this conceptual framework I develop alternative assumptions that do not start from substantial entities but from fundamentally creative processes of individuation (see Simondon, 2005) and subsistence. Without employing the lexicon of (inter)action

[32] As noted in 2.4.1, Simondon claims that hylomorphism "represents the transposition into philosophical thought of the technical operation drawn from labor and taken as the universal paradigm for the genesis of beings" (Simondon, in Combes, 2013, p. 71).

wedded so strongly to *entitative*[33] thinking I seek to link up the micro dynamics of experience, within a reality in the making, with the more solid and organized forms of social existence.

Studying creativity then becomes a question of how, in the broadest sense, an *activity of relation* (Combes, 2013) makes things and bodies gain, sustain or refine their existence and presence. This is to assume a "deep continuity of life and mind" (Thompson, 2007, p. ix) that situates creativity not within an entitative but *enactivist*[34] framework of *sensemaking* (see Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014; Stewart, Gapenne, & Di Paolo, 2011; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991). An enactive approach to creativity then posits creativity no longer as an action of an individual mind, but situates it within an ongoing, embodied and immanent sensemaking (see Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). What is at stake is the richness of the moment-to-moment engagement of experienced bodies with culturally meaningful materials within creative practice (see Bartels & Bencherki, 2013; Hutchins, 2011; Passoth, 2012).

When substance is superseded by notions of individuation and subsistence, the capacity of form, or better "in-form-ation" becomes a characteristic of materials (including the human "material") that are capable of in-forming each other. With this emphasis on matter as *material*, I develop a conceptual framework that, regarding questions both of imagination and the products of creativity, does not start with finished forms but *relational* processes of *formation*. Thus unfolds an ontology of becoming - an ontogenesis - that situates creative differentiation at the heart, or as Simondon puts it, the "ground" of being. This is the (non-)foundation (see Brown & Stenner, 2009) for thinking about creativity as emergent *ex materia*. And with this, new questions come to the fore: what is this phenomenon we call creativity when the becoming of the world itself is seen as inherently creative? How are different "creativities" related? What is the "dynamic ground" that Simondon (1958/2010, p. 32) talks about, and assuming that creation is a question of emergence, how do forms combine, via their ground, into new wholes?

In the development of this conceptual framework, I take on these questions by positing the basic assumption that (human) creativity is an effect and part of specific modes of

[33] The argument developed here mirrors the wider impetus in organization theory to move beyond *entitative* orientations towards inquiry and scholarship and embrace more *processual* approaches (see Elkjaer & Simpson, 2011; Steyaert, 2007; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

[34] Enaction is basically the idea that living, embodied beings create their own experiences through their enactments (actions). Within cognitive science, enactivism heralds an alternative and new paradigm that, compared with the predominantly computationalist and connectionist approaches, emphasizes the role of embodied experience and the mutual constitution of creative agents and their world in enaction as a basic form of sensemaking (see Di Paolo, Rohde, & De Jaegher, 2011).

relating to the primary process of creation. Gilbert Simondon, in the chapter's opening quote, gives a hint to what we are looking for here: a mode of relating to the potentials and progressive forces of the gound that is "participative," that activates a temporal relation of the "future on the present."

Revising the conventional ontology and epistemology within innovation and creativity studies, I draw on a "material-semiotic" (Law, 2009) frame for understanding the dynamics of the relation between practitioners and materials as a question of sensemaking. Key, here, is an understanding of the reality and the appearance of material as a *symptom* and *signal* (Innis, 2009, p. 134), which is pointing at the *expressive* and *affective* dimension of the object. Additionally, what is central to this endeavor is to account for the "dynamics of possession" (Debaise, 2008) involved in the mutual becoming of subject and object. The expansive power of "desire" and the contractive power of "belief" (Gabriel Tarde in Debaise, 2008) together constitute the micro flows that are confluencing within the relation of subject and object "in the making." As molecular forces (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), "desire" amplifies and follows movement while the apperceptive and appreciative force of "belief" consolidates movement.

The forces of "desire" and "belief," emphasising the aesthetic and affective dimension of materials and their *appeal*,[35] are constituting an experiential continuum which is topologically stretched between two poles - the *actual* and the *virtual* (Massumi, 2008). Experience is doubled and, depending on what is fore- or backgrounded, is dominated by the appearance of *actual* forms and a sense of instrumentality (tool) or interpretation (symbol), or by the dynamic register of affective tonality (symptom). This polarity is mirroring what in Deleuze's parlance is the conceptual dyad of immanence/transcendence, two distinguished but entwined modes of relating to the primary process of creation (see Cull, 2013), that along with Deleuze's work on the making of art can be called *experimentation* and *interpretation* (see Smith, 1996). Experimentation and interpretation are prototypical *modes of engagement* within creative practice that are yet not mutually exclusive, but rather tendencies on a continuum (see Cull, 2013).

Antoine Hennion's (2004, 2007) pragmatism of attachments can help us to specify the dynamics of experimentation and interpretation within creative practice. Creative practice is a movement of desire and belief that is stretched between the actual and the

[35] Appeal is a fortunate expression that denotes the "driving" character of materials that, once we attend to them closely, address us in certain ways (Latin appellare "to address," based on ad- "to" + pellere "to drive") (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010)

virtual. Practice can therefore be considered a matter of "taste" (see also Gherardi, 2009). This is the basic pragmatic configuration at the heart of the mutual becoming of practitioner and product that asks us to never separate creation from (e)valuation. Learning from Hennion's studies of amateurs and his conceptual development of the notions of attachment and taste, the relation of practitioner and product can then be specified as sequences of trials (tests of taste), where the process of making things arrive is indissociable from the process of making oneself appreciate them.

With his study of amateurs and taste, Hennion shows how the engagement of practitioner and material needs to be thought of as a *performance* that is always mediated through elements within its milieu. It is relying on, among others, methods, techniques, devices, sensible knowledge and skill and a lexicon of taste. The ecology of performance still further entails one's peers, communities and whole (artistic) movements. As such, the ecology of the performance involves events from other places and times.

At this point, we can therefore reappropriate the idea of creativity as a (human) competence, by emphasising the basic skill underlying any idea of performance (see also Ingold, 2001). For Hennion (2011), the amateur's basic skill is an "activity-sensibility" (*activité-sensibilité*). The amateur's skill of actively following and appreciating material must thereby be thought as an attainment[36] and an emergent property stemming from a sustained engagement with materials within a wider collective; they are the results of meaningful affective, aesthetic and normative collective labor. I therefore draw on Latour's (2005) notion of "plug-ins" (p. 205) – all the actants we rely on to engage with the material. As alternative to an essentialising discourse on competences, thinking in terms of plug-ins enables an understanding of the amateur's activity-sensibility, that is, a) to be attained through a history of personal and collective experiences, and b) as still being in need of being situationally actualized and accomplished through the mobilization of various materials.

Eventually, to understand creativity not only as a momentary event but within the development of a creative artefact over time, I mobilize the notion of *production* (see Callon, Méadel, & Rabeharisoa, 2002). The concept of production here refers then both to the momentary as well as ongoing *production* of the mutual *presence* and *existence* of both practitioner and product – a bringing forth of a tangible body or thing (see Gumbrecht, 2004) – through a sequence of mediations that change, refine or

[36] Attainment, from Latin *attingere*, from *ad-* "at, to" + *tangere* "to touch" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). The notion of attainment points to a history of experiences that involve "touch," the tangibility of being present and in contact with things.

sustain materials and their characteristics. I suggest production thereby to be realized through various *modes of engagement* that effect the generation, formation and stabilization of a product.

Finally, the research questions derived from this conceptual development are:

1) *What materials, practices, technologies etc. comprise the ecology of creative practice? How do the various plug-ins and attachments enable the performative engagement of amateur and material?*
2) *How are the generation, formation and stabilization of the product "theater performance" affected? What modes of engagement are thereby crucial? And how do these modes interact within CDT production?*

3.1 From innovation in the making to creativity in the making

Wanderer, your footsteps
are the road, and nothing more;
wanderer, there is no road,
the road is made by walking.
By walking one makes the road,
and upon glancing back
one sees the path
that will never be trod again.
Wanderer, there is no road –
Only waves upon the sea.
Antonio Machado (1912/1979)

What really exists is not things made but things in the making. Once made, they are dead, and an infinite number of alternative conceptual decompositions can be used in defining them. But put yourself in the making by a stroke of intuitive sympathy with the thing and, the whole range of possible decompositions coming at once into your possession, you are no longer troubled with the question which of them is the more absolutely true. Reality falls in passing into conceptual analysis; it mounts in living its own undivided life – it buds and bourgeons, changes and creates. ... Philosophy should seek this kind of living understanding of the movement of reality, not follow science in vainly patching together fragments of its dead results.
(James, 1909/1996, pp. 107–108, emphasis in original)

"What really exists is not things made but things in the making," writes William James. His pragmatist outlook posits life to be fluxing and fluid, constantly "budding and burgeoning, changing and creating." James coined the formula "things in the making" through his exchange with Henri Bergson, the French philosopher that promoted the *élan vital* of a world in constant movement of becoming real (*devenir réel*); it is James' shorthand for the non-deterministic, open and processual character

of the world as becoming – a characteristic that, as he affirms, is at the heart of any experience. James' ontology of becoming - favouring the principals of flux and change - is a processual and a relational ontology that, as an alternative to monism, envisions "a pluralistic universe" (James, 1909/1996). James imagined the "pluriverse" to be a world without exteriorities, yet filled with things and humans in-the-making, dispositives and distributed agency; a weaving without borders, a texture of partial, different and heterogeneous yet linkable networks (see Hennion, 2013a, para. 45). "In the making," if we "sympathize" with what is at hand, James asserts, we are facing a "whole range of possible decompositions," yet undivided and full of potential relations and associations. The immediate, kinaesthetic experience of living, which amounts to "a big blooming buzzing confusion" (James, 1909/1996, p. 50), means to meet the world half-way. While the world is granted some structure, it is not fully pre-formed.

Subjects as well as objects are from this view not naturally autonomous entities, but are rather only ever tentatively stabilized nexuses in an evolving and dynamic network of relations. Experience, as Alva Noë (2004) remarks, is not situated within an individual subject:

> Experience isn't something that happens in us. It is something we do; it is a temporally extended process of skillful probing. The world makes itself available to our reach. The experience comprises mind and world. Experience has content only thanks to the established dynamics of interaction between perceiver and world. (Noë, 2004, p. 216)

Seeking an alternative to both idealism and realism (see Protevi, 2010), both the phenomenologically inspired Noë as well as James situate experience "in the middle," that is, "in the making." Its limits, the actual world and the actual subject are only abstracted and reified poles of a co-extension.

"In the making," subject and object, or mind and life, are co-extensive. The world is not an object that is just given to us, it is rather by how we move, breathe, touch, feel, eat, hear, look etc., that is, by how we engage the world that we emerge together with a significant *Umwelt*.[37] This basic idea has been introduced into cognitive science by Varela et al. (1991) through the term *enaction*,[38] their shorthand for "embodied action"

[37] *Umwelt* is Jacob von Uexküll's (1926) term pointing at the embeddedness of every living being within an environment that is (made) significant. "*Niemand ist Produkt seines Milieus – ein jeder ist Herr seiner Umwelt*" ("Nobody is the product of one's environment – everybody is the master of one's Umwelt") (Uexküll, 1923, p. 266).

[38] Enactivism may be considered a "nonreductive, nonfunctional naturalism. It sees the properties of life and mind as forming part of a continuum" (Di Paolo et al., 2011, p. 36). As nondualist naturalism, enactivism can therefore be seen as attempting to link an ontological monism with an existential pluralism: living organisms do not originate with essential properties but are indissociably related to their milieu. It is through engagements and a basic form of relationality that the various forms and modes of existence arise.

(p. 173). In order to understand the dynamic performance of embodied cognition, the authors illustrate enaction with Antonio Machado's famous poem: enaction means "laying down a path in walking" (p. 237). "In the making," the subject (and its mind) and the world are mutually constituted. "Organisms are not passive receivers of input from the environment, but are actors in the environment such that what they experience is shaped by how they act" (Hutchins, 2011, p. 428).

Enaction can in this regard be equated with a very basic understanding of sensemaking (see Thompson, 2007, p. 158). According to Antonio Machado, humans, as well as other living beings are ambulant, wandering sensemakers; life is constant movement and "roads," as much as the wandering subjects, "are only made by walking." The metaphor of the waves on the sea thereby foreshadows a central question of this chapter: how to think the relation of parts and wholes; a theme that will meet us in various guises along "the road." Overall, as the road is made by walking, the world-as-experienced is made by doing. This is the basic idea of enaction-as-sensemaking (compare Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014; see Stewart et al., 2011; Varela et al., 1991) that I mobilize in order to specify the emergent processes of a "world-in-the-making."

Presupposing a "world-in-the-making" then means to think of organizational creativity as a process within a processual ontology - a worldview that posits relational processes rather than essences or fixed substances as primary phenomena. Rather than an ontology of *being*, we are here dealing with an ontology of *becoming* and *belonging* that attends to the "self-production of being in becoming" (Massumi, 2008, p. 38) and therefore grants relational becoming, as evolving temporality, its own ontological status. A fundamental process orientation thereby prioritizes activity over product, change over persistence, novelty over continuity, and expression over determination. Becoming, change, flux as well as creativity, disruption, and indeterminism are the main themes of a process worldview. Seeing process as fundamental, such an approach does not deny the existence of events, states, or entities, but insists on unpacking them to reveal the complex activities and transactions that take place and contribute to their constitution (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010, pp. 2–3). Subjects and objects are from this perspective abstractions or extreme cases of ongoing processes of organism-environment transactions.

The way I read enactivism, as a process philosophy, is to emphasize that to exist is to differ. Difference, in that sense, is the substantial side of things; it is what they have only to themselves and what they have most in common. One has to start any theory from here, including any theory of identity, which is often mistaken for a starting point. "Identity is but a *minimal* difference, and hence a type of difference, and a very

rare type at that, in the same way as rest is a type of movement and circle a peculiar type of ellipse" (Tarde, 1893/1999, in Czarniawska, 2009, p. 255). Process philosophy seeks to liberate *difference* from its subordination to *identity*, and assures "how it is in fact the movement of difference [or creativity] itself that produces the apparent stability of the world of fixed identities (of substances and essences)" (de Beistegui in Protevi, 2005, p. 151).

In thinking of creativity, this then is the primary lesson of a reality that is "mounting into living," where things are not already made and trajectories not already laid out but remain uncertain: "creativity in the making" is situated within the heat of the moment, it is neither a property of subject nor object but must be found, below the clear cut distinction of subject and object, within sympathetic engagements of becoming subjects and becoming objects. This requires a new thinking of *spatialities* and *temporalities* beyond Newtonian geometry and linear models of time, as I suggest in the next section.

Dealing with "things in the making" (versus with "things made"), we need to refrain from starting the analysis with the binary opposition of already made objects or subjects – an aesthetic artefact and a practitioner, for example. Conceptually, I therefore introduce a "material-semiotic" (Law, 2009) understanding of creativity in the making. Emphasising the importance of both material as well as semiotic aspects of "creativity in the making" and drawing especially on Antoine Hennion's work[39] on cultural and artistic practices, I thereby seek to develop a "technoaesthetic praxeology".[40] This is a framing of the "work to be made" as an inventive practice that relies on thoroughly embodied subjects and objects, as well as various material devices, (kin)aesthetic and semiological technologies. Talking of subject and object as if already existing is thereby misleading. One can only refrain from "taking sides" when situating the analysis "below" the binary opposition of subject and object. The reality of the work to be made precedes the dichotomy between subject and object, and cannot be grasped by dualist approaches and their logic of the excluded middle.

This, I suggest, is a central theoretical insight for studying creativity and innovation in the making: once moving below the static dualism of subject and object, the question

[39] Antoine Hennion has been doing research for the last 35 years at the Parisian École des Mines" Center for the Sociology of Innovation (CSI), well known for developing Actor-Network Theory (ANT) which renewed Science and Technology studies. In a distinct trajectory, Hennion developed a (cultural) sociology from a first empirical development with the music-society nexus. Steeped in his colleagues" sociology of translation and influenced by De Certeau, Hennion proposes a co-constitutive relationship between music and society that questions the traditional distinctions between active producers and passive consumers.

[40] In a different parlance, Tsoukas (2008) talks about the need of organizational theory to develop a "poetic praxeology."

of action and interaction is reappropriated by both spatializing and temporalizing the relation of "things in the making." The whole question of creativity and innovation hence needs to be posed differently in terms of the basic spatialities and temporalities involved. How can we understand creativity and innovation in the making without resorting to orthogonal models of space and linear models of time? Before turning to how this could be done and what it entails, I shortly rehearse the problems linked with entitative artistic or creativity research[41] that starts from already existing entities and is therefore forced to decide what comes from the subject and what from the object.

The *spatial* dilemma of most approaches to creativity and artistic making is that there seems to be implied a necessary choice of where to situate creative agency and to take sides with either an internalist or externalist position. When talking about the work of art, we are left with the choice between "what comes from the artist and what comes from the work" (Latour, 2011, p. 309). Bruno Latour (see also 2005) and Antoine Hennion[42] problematize the implied duality by showing that it actually forecloses analysis: when it comes to analysing "finished" objects, we are left with a work-taste duality, when it comes to analysing the making of aesthetic objects, we are left with a genius-taste duality.[43] Either we are dealing with an "internalism" that grants formal creative powers to the artist alone, and which later on has aestheticians attribute the power of aesthetic objects to the objects themselves. Or we are left with an "externalism" that explains away the aesthetic object (both in its making and when finished) to nothing but "the social factors 'hidden behind' them" (Latour, 2005, p. 236) and subdues all signs of genuine affection as mere affectation. Refuting any form of subjectivism, especially the sociological analysis of art has had little interest in genius, creation or the works "as such," and rather seeks to understand how these categories appear as the conventional products of a social activity. Within these approaches, "the work" eventually is portrayed as little more than a social construction.

In any case, we are forced to take sides in a reactionary game. The "externalism" of social explanation is historically a reaction to a previous "internalism" of formally aesthetic approaches to art. The anti-reaction is not far and thus we end up with mututally exclusive approaches, oscillating between "internalism" and "externalism,"

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41 See Chapter 2, and especially Rhodes' (1961) influential model of the 4Ps – person, product, process and press – which has influenced generations of creativity researchers and lead either to separate studies of one area or raised the question of "interaction."

42 See especially Antoine Hennion's thorough criticism of the sociology of art and his plea for a "new sociology of art" (Hennion, 2012a; Hennion & Grenier, 2000) that takes serious the "work of art" as a productive mediator itself.

43 This is a variant of the relationship between genius and work as one of "expression": the work is granted authority and power which has been imposed by the genius behind it.

formal and social explanations. Notwithstanding their differences in positioning the origin of an aesthetic vector, when it comes to understanding creativity, internalism and externalism both share an explicit or implicit hylomorphic model of creation: in each case creativity is a question of imposing form, or meaning, from outside onto basically passive matter. In terms of the spatial model implied, creativity is here only imagined within an Euclidian space of actually existing subjects and objects, with creativity having a definite origin and a unidirectional vector.

If *time* is made relevant in creativity research, we have to distinguish between turning creativity and therefore change into questions about temporally evolving phenomena, and *turning phenomena into evolving temporality* and thus to situate creativity and change at the heart of all phenomena. The former has been present in creativity research - just think of Wallas' (1926) famous four-stage-model of the creative process - and also in research on organizational change (see for example Van de Ven & Poole, 1995) already for a long time. It results in models with discrete stages or phases and a specification of linear or iterative developments. Most often, these models construct *difference* as a natural derivative of *identity*. This means assuming the primacy of stability and then positing the need for engaging this natural inertia within processes of creativity and change that show in terms of the definite difference between two things or states. This, I suggest, is a historical corollary of hylomorphic substantialism that can conceive of the (technical) operations within processes of creation and change "only as sequences of discrete steps, with a clear threshold marking the termination of each step and the commencement of the next" (Ingold, 2012, p. 433). As an alternative, and this is something else than just positing creativity to be a process of discrete steps, stages or phases, I propose to ground the thinking about creativity as a process within a processual ontology of relational becoming. This is a move from understanding creativity within, or as a temporally evolving phenomenon, to positing the world to exist as evolving temporality and situating creativity at its heart.

Taken together, creativity research situates creativity within a static territory and/or lined it up along clearly distinguishable phases.[44] Illustrated by Rhodes' (1961) influential framework, creativity has thus been domesticated within orthogonal models of space and linear models of time (see Chapter 2).

In the development of this conceptual framework, I then propose an alternative thinking of creativity as a relational phenomena of movement, that is, as a question of

[44] See Rhodes' (1961) influential framework and how it gave rise to respective studies that posit creativity to be an individual phenomenon and a traceable process in time.

circulation.[45] Within processual approaches to creativity, questions relating to interaction should therefore be put not only in a different understanding of time (see Nayak & Chia, 2011, p. 304), but also in a different understanding of space. This means an introduction of new topologies and temporalities into the discussion on creativity.

Actor-Network theory (ANT) (see Latour, 2005) within Science and Technology Studies (STS) is the first reference to examine when looking for examples of how creativity could be thought of within a framework of circulation. Within ANT studies, science and technological innovation[46] *in the making* has been traced through the pragmatist reversal of how to think action, relations and objects: action makes the actor and relation makes the object, and not the other way around. Scientific facts and technological objects both are only offer tentative results of a heterogeneous network of circulations, which permanently needs to be tried and experienced, tested and newly modelled to give rise to yet other objects, without really being able to make lasting distinctions between carrier and content, network and actors, products and uses, or even culture and technology (see Hennion, 2013a). *The central ontological suggestion is, therefore, to situate the question of creativity and its study in a relational reality preceding the binary oppositon of subject and object*.

The idea of circulation thereby helps to rethink the central question of "interactivity"[47] as a productive relation between subject and object *in the making*. With such a different focus on interactivity, or as Latour (1996) frames it, "interobjectivity,"

> understanding creativity does not require access to individual minds, but is displaced instead in the observation of the practices through which relationships are established (through series of conjunctions and disjunctions), which constitute the world in which we act and in which individuals are in their turn constituted. (Bartels & Bencherki, 2013, p. 33)

Attending to the conduits of how practitioners become able to do certain things is thereby questioning dualistic thinking in terms of a clear distinction between inside and outside. From a process-relational approach, "inside" and "outside" are replaced

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[45] To think creativity as a relational movement of circulation is thereby vastly inspired by the reformulation of the social as circulation within ANT (see for example Latour, 1999b, pp. 18–19).

[46] STS features a number of studies on technological innovations "in the making," e.g. on the first consumer camera by Kodak (Latour, 1990) or the Moog synthesizer (Pinch & Trocco, 2002). These studies re-analyzed the becoming of famous inventions by focusing on the entwinement of social, technological and discursive agencies, thereby producing non-teleological narratives of technological innovation. These studies never explicitly touched on the notion of "creativity."

[47] In the wake of Rhodes' (1961) creativity research framework, the question of how "person," "product," "process" and "press" *interact* has become the central question of late creativity research (see Kallio, Barry, Visscher, & de Weerd-Nederhof, 2011). For a thorough critique of an entitative notion of (inter)action in this regard, see for example Latour (1996, 2005) and Massumi (2008).

"by the circulation of plug-ins," as Latour (2005) asserts, suggesting that these "subtle conduits … allow us to *become* an individual and to *gain* some interiority" (p. 214, emphasis in original), including certain capacities important for the creative engagement with materials. This means both space and time should be thought of as thoroughly entwined: in the making, subject and object are bodies tied into and emerging from a dense yet traceable network[48] of circulating materials, devices, repertoires, technologies, criteria and know-how. From such a perspective, becoming is indissociably tied to the question of belonging, and vice versa.

It might be surprising that empirical ANT studies, although ANT has also been called the "sociology of innovation" (Bartels & Bencherki, 2013), never really cared about the notion of creativity.[49] Creativity, a concept that might connote too many problematic ties to individualistic and functionalistic approaches to be taken up by ANT scholars within STS,[50] has only been discussed in Akrich's, Callon's and Latour's (2002a, 2002b)[51] double article on the "key to success in innovation." The only two explicit references that connect ANT with the notion and study of creativity as such is Passoth's (2012) German review chapter and Bartels' and Bencherki's (2013) encyclopedic entry on "Actor-Network-Theory and Creativity Research."

In their double publication, Akrich et al. (2002a, 2002b), working within the Parisian *Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation* (École des Mines), for once addressed explicitly the narrow notion of invention as found within innovation studies. By drawing on the insights of STS about the ways technoscientific objects come to exist and subsist, Akrich et al. object to the classical "diffusion model" of innovation and suggest a "model of interessement," which binds the success or failure of an innovation not only to its intrinsic properties but ever more so to "the active participation of all those who have decided to develop it" (Akrich et al., 2002b, p. 208). An innovation, the authors argue, "is only taken up if it manages to interest more and more actors" (p. 203).

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[48] The notion of "network," as developed within ANT, does not denote a structure made from durable substances, but a "trace left behind by some moving agent" (Latour, 2005, p. 132). In light of the persisting critique on the mistakable notion of "network," Latour therefore also proposes to not speak about networks but "fluids" (Latour, 2005, p. 65; fn. 72).

[49] The distinction between invention and innovation mirrors the division of creativity and innovation studies that is made on a criterium of scale: creativity is seen as a micro phenomenon and innovation as a meso and macro phenomenon (see for example Ford, 1996). While I don't share the distinction on the basis of assuming it to be about different scales, I follow a simple analytical distinction between creativity (or invention) and the formation and stabilization of a product.

[50] I suggest that creativity belongs to the "much subtler phenomena which earlier had to be stocked, because of their apparent subtlety, in the subject's inner sanctuary" (Latour, 2005, p. 205), but which are amenable to study in the way proposed in this thesis.

[51] This twin publication had originally been published in French in 1988.

Doing so, the authors address the specific spatialities and temporalities not only of innovation but also of "invention," the creative part of innovation. Concerning the spatial distribution, both invention and innovation are understood as collective activities by reappropriating and translating individual concepts like "individual qualities of insight, intuition, sense of anticipation, quick reactions, skilfulness" into "the language of the organization" (see Akrich et al., 2002a, p. 189). This is, as such, nothing new, as we have seen in the many efforts to understand invention and innovation as a question of "interaction, permanent comings and goings, [and] all types of negotiation which allow for rapid adaptation" (p. 189). Notwithstanding all the talk about notions of adhocracy, interaction, de-compartmentalization etc., Akrich et al. argue that what is missing is a conceptual grasp and a respective methodology as to how interaction takes place in the heat of the moment (*in the making*) and what decisions this involves. To understand invention and innovation "in the making" therefore asks for "a theory of innovation [and invention] which is closer to the actors and their experiences" (Akrich et al., 2002a, p. 191). The challenge for innovation and creativity research is to conceive of a methodology and adequate analytical concepts that allow for a better understanding of the mundane activities and happenings through which creativity and innovation come into being. The central demand is therefore to refrain from analytical concepts that support a retrospective explanation (reading creativity backwards), which would often censure, evaluate or ridicule the factors that were considered important at the time of the actual making. This means to respect the work that goes into the making of things, and that this work is the result of a conjugation of heterogeneous aspects. Akrich et al. (2002a, 2002b) as well as Bartels and Bencherki (2013) posit that to study creativity, or invention, means "the study of the way new relations or connections are established between elements in order to make up new beings or bodies – in the broadest sense of these words" (Bartels & Bencherki, 2013, p. 29).

Calling on Tim Ingold's (2010a, 2011) work in the anthropology of making, I suggest that to understand creativity *in the making* means to "read forwards" invention and innovation as thoroughly processual, as well as relational phenomena. To do so would then mean to follow creativity in "the movements that give rise to things, rather than backwards from their outcomes" (Ingold, 2011, p. 7). Ingold therefore situates creativity within the "moment-by-moment inventiveness of practice - that is, in its improvisatory quality - as it carries on, in the midst of things, always responsive to what is going on in its surroundings" (p. 7). The "action of making," as Bunn (1999) asserts, "is a working *with* rather than a doing *to*" (p. 15, emphasis in original). Practitioners deal not with finished objects but rely on "live" material - the potential of

form-atted matter for further acts of creation and transformation. This means to "refrain from taking sides."

Ethology and mesology are two sciences that developed rich conceptual and methodological approaches that we can draw on when seeking to "not take sides." ANT's insights on innovation and creativity as well as Ingold's anthropology of making can thereby be framed as specific translations of very general ideas found in the non-dualistic variants of ethology and mesology. Both ethology and mesology are sciences that seek to study living beings, once in term of time (ethology) and once in terms of space (mesology). Ethology is for Deleuze (1988) the study of living beings in terms of their capacities of affecting and being affected. Mesology[52] is the study of the coupling of individual and *Umwelt* as pioneered by Jacob von Uexküll (1926). It is a non-dualist ecological view of embodied human beings as being structurally coupled within an aesthetic-affective, symbolical and technical milieu. Individual and *Umwelt* are thereby understood as co-constituting themselves within a concrete experience.

Applying the lessons of ethology and mesology to my field of interest, I therefore propose that creativity in the making has to be understood as a thoroughly *relational* and *processual* affair. Practitioner (artist) and product (art work) only exist and subsist in ongoing performances on the basis of the affective relations between them. Souriau (1956) therefore proposes to understand the artist and the work as a *l'oeuvre a faire,* a mutual "work to be made." The next section takes this as a guiding question, and asks for the whats and hows of the invention of a cultural product like a CDT performance. Following the example of Science and Technology Studies, which talk of their objects of study as "technoscientific beings," I will unfold the basic idea of the product (as well as practitioner) as "technoaesthetic being."

3.2 The material-semiotics of the "work to be made"

> *How can we come to terms with the "work to be made" (l'oeuvre à faire)*
> *if we avoid the necessary choice between what comes from the artist*
> *and what comes from the work?*
> *(Latour, 2011, p. 309, emphasis in original)*

This question, taken from Bruno Latour's recent work on the French philosopher of aesthetics and metaphysics Étienne Souriau, I take as the central question guiding the

[52] Mesology is a former term for the science of ecology. Deriving from ancient Greek (*mésos* "middle" and –*logia* "branch of study" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010)), mesology is literally the "study of middles." Augustin Berque (2004) revives it in his translations and work on Watsuji Tetsurô's theory of milieus (*fudô*) and relates it to Deleuze's uptake of von Uexküll's basic differentiation between *Umgebung* und *Umwelt*.

following exploration of creativity and innovation as "work to be made." What is the work to be made? And how can we, as researchers as well as practitioners come to terms with it? While the question multiplies, it also points at a first answer. With the expression "the work to be made," a translation of Souriau's (1956) peculiar expression *l'oeuvre à faire*, the question contains in seed form a pivotal assumption of what characterizes the making of a technoaesthetic being. With the distinctive expression of "the work to be made," Souriau emphasizes the literal meaning of the notion "work" which, as much as its semantic neighbours of "oeuvre," "opus" or "production," evokes both an ongoing process or task, and outcome or result (see Hennion, 2012b, 2014). It might seem banal on first sight: an artistic object, and ever more so a theatrical performance, is a "work," which, in its literal meaning, implies both a mandatory task and a continuing process of a work to be made (Hennion, 2014).

A work needs to be enacted. This basic premise is the starting point for the coming conceptual developments. I will come back to this within the last section (3.2.7). In line with the equation of enactment and sensemaking introduced in 3.1, I therefore assume the work to be made to be a question of *sensemaking*; an ongoing need to engage with the material and enact it by the central means of our bodily senses and sensorimotor skills – ranging from perception and experimentation to interpretation – to experience it time and again anew.

Such a perspective objects to the strict distinction between process and outcome found in conventional creativity and innovation research, where, to avoid circular arguments, the object is only appearing as an outcome. Crossan and Apaydin (2010) for example state that "in line with our definition, we intend to delineate the difference between innovation processes and outcomes: the former clearly precedes the latter and should be separated to avoid circular arguments" (p. 1156). In contrast, to understand creativity within the wider question of the work to be made means to emphasize an *empirical circularity* where "the work" is actively taking part in its own formation.

To account for the specific relationality and empirical circularity of "the work" necessitates to specify the ontological and epistemological status of practitioner (subject) and work (object) and their properties in the experience of organizational practice. How can we think the properties and capacities of practitioners and materials *in the making*? How do practitioner and material engage and "make sense" of each other in creative endeavours?

I tackle these questions by offering a "material-semiotic" (Law, 2009) framing for understanding three central facets of the sensemaking processes involved in the work to be made: *expression*, *affection* and *symbolization*. Assuming that especially the

former two have been neglected in creativity frameworks (see for example Glăveanu, 2013), I therefore concentrate on working out the ontological and epistemological assumptions around questions of "expression" and "affection."

The material-semiotic framing developed in this study seeks an understanding of signs as expressive *symptoms* and affective *signals*. These are the conceptual figures that I return to regularly in seven sections that are, consecutively, *spatializing*, *dynamizing*, *dramatizing*, *virtualizing*, *aesthetisizing*, *intensifying* and *modifying* the work to be made. For now, I start with the proposed "material-semiotic" framing.

As alternative to the problematical ontological and epistemological assumptions (see Chapter 2) within innovation and creativity studies, I draw on a "material-semiotic" (Law, 2009) frame for understanding the characteristics of practitioners and materials and subsequently the dynamics of their relation. I therefore posit that to approach the work as a question of "material semiotics" means that semiology is "not something one applies to works, but what works display" (Hennion, 2014, p. 172). Semiotics after Saussure, especially in its "postmodernist" versions, has pronounced the linguisticality of experience (DeLanda, 2012, p. 47) and furthered regimes of interpretation that "equate signs with signifiers, meaning with a position in a signifying chain" (Bonta & Protevi, 2004, p. 4). As an alternative to post-Saussurean hermeneutics, which are tied to meaning as (merely) a question of *signification*, a "significant hermeneutic" posits signs to become triggers of material processes, and therefore ties meaning pragmatically to a question of *significance* (see DeLanda, 2012, p. 47):

> Signs are no longer limited to linguistic entities that must somehow make contact with the natural world, and sense or meaning need no longer be seen as the reference of signifiers to each other. Rather, the "meaning" of a sign is a measure of the probability of triggering a particular material process. (Bonta & Protevi, 2004, p. 4)

If we apply this kind of material-semiotics to late creativity frameworks (e.g. Glăveanu, 2013), we can see that they limit themselves to the mechanical and functional or symbolical understanding of the relation of practitioner and product.[53] I suggest that this "semiology of the object," which emphasizes the instrumental (the object as definite *tool*) and the connotative and interpretative (the object as *symbol*) dimension of the work (as sign), is only half complete. It fundamentally lacks the recognition of the reality and the appearance of material that is not only a tool or symbol, but also symptom and signal (see Innis, 2009, on the aesthetic theory of

[53] Analysis thereby oscillates between realist positions, pointing at the mechanical and functional relations, and idealist positions, emphasising the symbolical, interpretative work.

Susanne Langer), which convey significant "feelings of form" (see Langer, 1953). The sign as symptom or signal is not approached with a linguistic understanding of meaning as signification, it does not primarily answer to the wish for signification:

> People who look for symbolic meanings fail to grasp the inherent poetry and mystery of the image. No doubt they sense this mystery, but they wish to get rid of it. They are afraid. By asking "what does this mean?" they express a wish that everything be understandable. But if one does not reject the mystery, one has quite a different response. One asks other things. (René Magritte, in Gablik, 1985, p. 11)

Rather, the sign as symptom and signal responds to questions of significance and valence.

According to a pragmatist notion of enaction, the experienced world is not a given, immutable, independent and fixed, but rather co-emerging with living beings that select particular features of their *Umwelt* on the basis of affective and aesthetic criteria. It is our attention which, always already itself a cultural practice (see Ingold, 2001), shapes our world by attending to certain sensations. James thereby maintains "that we notice only those sensations which are signs to us of *things*" (James, 1890/1950, p. 274, emphasis in original). Sensations become signs of "things" when specific bundles of sensible characteristics practically or aesthetically interest and affect us. Depending on our engagement with things, they shine forth as symptoms, signals or symbols.

The semiological distinction between the sign as symptom, symbol and signal goes back to Karl Bühler's (1934/1990) language theory. With his symptom-signal-symbol triad, Bühler distinguishes the conative[54] (*Appell*), expressive (*Ausdruck*) and representational (*Darstellung*) functions of language. I further draw on this basic model in order to specify the material-semiotic dynamics between creative practitioner and work.

The task ahead is therefore to come to an understanding of the conative, that is affectively "appealing"[55] (from the German *Appellfunktion*), and the expressive functions of the work. Heeding Souriau's (1956) call to refrain from taking sides when seeking to understand the work to be made, this is however not an understanding of the work *an sich* (*as such*), but of its expressive and affective reality *inter se* (see Latour, 2008b, p. 22) – the "material-semiotics" of signals and symptoms is a relational

[54] Conation denotes volition or "the mental faculty of purpose, desire, or will to perform an action" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). Psychology sometimes distinguishes between affective, cognitive and conative functions. While, in short, cognition deals with thoughts, memory and intelligence, the affective is concerned with emotions and conation accounts for how one acts on those thoughts and feelings.

[55] The notion of "appeal" here denotes the "driving" character of materials that, once we attend to them closely, "address" us in certain ways (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

function only. The first intuition of the expressive and affective dimension of the work to be made rests on Susanne Langer's uptake of Bühler's semiology of "natural signs" (see Innis, 2009). In drawing on Gabriel Tarde's (1895/2012) *naturalist* ontology, the argument to be made is that it is "natural signs," or, from now on, "living beings" that are bearing symptoms and perform as signals.

3.2.1 Spatializing "the work"

In order to understand the expressive and affective dimension of the work to be made, in a first step I draw on Gabriel Tarde's (1895/2012) naturalist ontology.[56] Not assuming any major distinctions between philosophy, the social and the natural sciences, Tarde likens all phenomena ("monads" in Tarde's parlance) to *living organisms*. Not unlike Uexküll (1926), Tarde thereby develops a specific relational (or ecological) approach to understanding individual organisms and objects in terms of the *milieu* in which they emerge. This, I propose as a foundation for assuming the material-semotics of creative practitioner and work as a question of "symptom" and "signal."

The starting point for this is to think subjects and objects *in the making* as thoroughly embodied organisms that, just as "natural signs," are always "part of a greater event, or a complex condition …, [or] a state of affairs" (Susanne Langer, in Innis, 2009, p. 37). As such, as Gabriel Tarde proposes, living organisms can be regarded as "societies": "*[E]verything is a society*, … every phenomenon is a social fact" (Tarde, 1895/2012, p. 28, emphasis in original) .[57] Tarde's naturalism proposes the metaphor of society

[56] Gabriel Tarde's (1893/1999) naturalism can be situated as one particular strand of various philosophical attempts to link an existential pluralism to a form of ontological monism (see Debaise, 2012). He can thus be placed into a debatable philosophical lineage starting with Spinoza and Leibniz over Tarde's contemporary William James and then continuing after Tarde with Whitehead, Souriau, Simondon and Deleuze. Tarde's own approach is, partly through its Deleuzian promotion (Deleuze, 1994; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), enjoying a renaissance within Latour's ANT (Latour, 2001, 2005, 2008b), economical theory (Latour & Lepinay, 2009), micro-sociology (Barry & Thrift, 2007), the anthropology of innovation (Wydra, 2012) and organization theory (Bencherki & Cooren, 2011; Czarniawska, 2009). We can see varieties of this thought also in William James' (1909/1996) work and how it has recently inspired the philosophy of embodiment (Johnson, 2007; Latour, 2004).

[57] Tarde's proposal to understand organisms as "societies" (Tarde, 1895/2012, pp. 28–29) is objecting to the conventional understanding of the notion of "organism" (see also DeLanda, 2006). According to DeLanda, the classical view of the body as organism is a structuralist thought that understands the body as a harmonious whole, a structure that is the sum of its parts (organs) and that functions according to negative feedback in service of a homeostatic equilibrium. This, for example, makes it very difficult to explain sudden or massive changes of objects (as well as subjects). As an alternative, the organism as society, or in Deleuze's and Guattari's thought as "assemblage," is likened to a "radical existential pluralism." What Tarde as much as Deleuze and Guattari sought is a non-dualistic ontology that understands pluralism as monism and vice versa (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 20). Here the whole is an emergent property of relations that are also involved in positive feedback dynamics and therefore being more open to drastic change and creative feats. See also the metaphor of "organism" in organization theory in comparison to metaphors of "brain" and "flux" (Morgan, 2006).

without seeking to either naturalize human societies or "humanize" natural organisms. He rather promotes both as emerging from a "radical existential pluralism" (Wydra, 2012, p. 95), and thereby promotes an image of the body not as a closed organism but as an activity of differential relations.[58] Tarde's originality is in positing that "everything is individual and yet there is no individual in the etymological sense of that which cannot be further divided" (Latour, 2010a, p. 157). The task will be to show that this conjuncture is only a paradox when elements and structure are opposed. The metaphor of society then is a non-Euclidean way of thinking emergent socio-spatial formations. Societies are provisional, emergent wholes contingently and continually assembled from heterogeneous elements. As such, societies are not static formations but rather ongoing activities of formation.

To explain further, first, the common feature and task of all societies is to maintain and develop their existence. Societies are not defined or supported by some substrate or substance that make them exist. Rather, existence is a question of *subsistence* (Whitehead, 1925, in Latour, 2008b, p. 16, fn. 7) – the work of maintaining existence over time. The notion of subsistence points both at the fundamental collectivity of any individual - it is "standing from below",[59] that is by support from others - and its need to maintain its existence by continuously associating with others. To subsist means to forge new associations, a labor of recruiting, mobilizing, enrolling and translating other beings. In contrast to the classical notion of *conatus*, where some essential substance allows for the persistence of being,[60] Gabriel Tarde promotes a view that suggests that beings persist through a movement of imitation and invention in light of their primary *difference*. As a society, every being "needs new associations in order to persist in its existence" (Latour, 2005, p. 218). Life, as Massumi (2009) notes, thereby "maintains itself at the brink" (p. 42), moving from one fragile and tentative equilibrium to the next:

> Life lives on a moving threshold of metastability, of fragile, provisional equilibrium that is subject to constant perturbation, from whose jaws it must repeatedly snatch its homeostasis. The living thing is an individuation that has no choice but to continue its invention, or face dissolution. Its

[58] Tarde's idea of beings as societies is traced in Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of "assemblage" (*agencement*) (1986, 1987) and "rhizome" (1987) as well as the notion of "network" within ANT and "assemblage" within an "after" actor-network theory literature (see Latour, 2005 for an overview of the development within ANT). In late developments of "assemblage theory" (see for example Anderson & McFarlane, 2011 for an overview on actual developments), various uses of "assemblage" constitute decidedly non-Euclidean ways of spatial thinking, whereby very generally "heterogeneous elements come together in a non-homogeneous grouping" (p. 125).

[59] Subsistence, from Latin *subsistere* "stand firm," from *sub-* "from below" + *sistere* "set, stand" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

[60] In psychology, conation thereby emphasizes individual volition *sui generis*.

> homeostatic equilibrium is not a simple self-maintenance, but an ever-renewed achievement. (Massumi, 2009, p. 42)

Subsistence, as a form of metastable equilibrium, is an ongoing achievement of individuation which means a continuing invention. The image of the society must here be further refined as denoting not so much a static network but a "circulating fluid" (Latour, 2005, p. 13). A society is fluid with associations, translations and mediations that both afford and constrain the ongoing invention of "societies within societies." The fundamental message of Tarde is thereby that a society's continued existence is achieved "through the exploration of new types or degrees of difference" (Latour, 2008b, p. 16). Tarde puts it succinctly: "*exister c'est différer*." Overturning a historical construction that posited difference as a derivative of identity,[61] Tarde writes:

> To exist is to differ; difference is, in a sense, the truly substantial side of things; it is at once their ownmost possession and that which they hold most in common. This must be our starting point, and we must refrain from further explaining this principle, since all things come back to it – including identity, which is more usually, but mistakenly, taken as the point of departure. For identity is only the *minimal degree* of difference and hence a kind of difference, and an infinitely rare kind, as rest is only a special case of movement, and the circle only a particular variety of ellipse. (Tarde, 1895/2012, p. 40, emphasis in original)

For Tarde, the dynamics of difference are at the basis of all things and of evolution as such. His naturalism has been influential for a social science and philosophy that is "founded"[62] on an ontological premise of "difference." To posit difference as primary and not subordinated to a principle of "identity" is the basis of a world *in the making*, a world constituted as an intricate weaving of interacting "bodily" processes of incessant creation.

Assuming identity to be "a kind of difference" is thereby going beyond a conventional understanding that was able to conceive of difference only between two already and univocally existing things. Rather, what Tarde, and then later Deleuze (1994), proclaim is that the seeming steadiness of a world of fixed identities is emerging from a movement of differential creation. There is no "repetition" (Deleuze, 1994) or "imitation" (Tarde, 1895a) without difference. In contrast to social sciences that operate by and seek principles of generality, that is, generally valid laws of the social,

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[61] In his time, Gabriel Tarde openly objected Durkheim's assumption of an a-priori society or collective self (see Latour, 2005).

[62] See Brown and Stenner (2009) for the paradox of "founding" social science (or, psychology, in their case) on the "non-foundation" of "difference."

according to Tarde there is apart from relational becomings[63] no individual and hence no social existence. The radical difference of subjects and objects *in the making* is thereby the precondition for their creative association and mutual constitution.

Thus, this conceptual framework's basic task is developing a mode of thinking that relates both the phenomena of change, and therefore what we conventionally call "creativity," as well as stability to this primary process of creative differentiation. The purpose then is to ground embodied beings in an ontology of becoming that is always also an ontology of "belonging," or, as Tarde would have it, not a conventional ontology of being but a "philosophy of Having" (Tarde, 1895/2012, p. 53). For Tarde, "*being* is reducible to having," as being "is never conceived except as the *property* of something, of some other being, which is itself composed of *properties*, and so on to infinity". Being, hence, is conceived as a "relation of possession" (p. 52, emphasis in original). A being "can exist because it *has* other entities," "it is by *having* each other that entities can give birth to a new one" as Bencherki and Cooren (2011, p. 1586, emphasis in original) note in their appropriation of Tarde's ontology in organization theory. To say that beings are societies is to assume that at the basis of each being we find other beings (or parts).

The practitioner and the work are entwined in a relation of "mutual possession" (Tarde, 1895/2012). They are mutually dependent in their existence. Beings must be thought as gaining their existence through the dynamics of "reciprocal" or "mutual possession;" a dynamic where "the possessed becomes … a possessor and the possessor a possessed" (p. 51). Within a "philosophy of having," existence is not a digital opposition of "to be or not to be" but an analog "how (much) to be." In contrast to a "digital" ontology of being, which only allows for existence or non-existence, an "analog" ontology of having, which conceives of beings not as organisms but as societies, and thinking of existence as a gradual phenomenon, resulting from "having more or less" (Tarde, 1895/2012, p. 53). A society is not so much ruled by questions of either existence or disappearance, but by gradual questions of "*gain* and *loss*, of acquisition and divestment" (p.53). Existence is not extensive or digital, a binary of zero or one. Existence, as Étienne Sourieau argues, is "intensive," it is a question of "more or less" and can take on, or move through various "modes of existence" (Souriau, 1956, 2009).

Tarde's metaphysics of "possession" then considers the question of existence as a question of power. And with this reappropriation of being, new questions emerge:

[63] It is, among other things, in this way that Tarde is summoned by Bruno Latour as the "grandfather" of Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2001).

> In a given situation, is the possession unilateral or symmetrical? Does the possession tend to amplify and intensify or, on the contrary, to loosen and break down? In what ways does it spread and how far does its grip reach? (Debaise, 2008, p. 221)

A being's existence and presence is promoted by relations with other beings that affect it and raise its capacity to do or feel something. As "societies," beings achieve more existence and therefore valence[64] only through empowering or "pro-motive" "*attachments*" (see Latour, 1999a); a being, especially a "being of innovation" needs to enter alliances to gain strength and support (see Akrich et al., 2002a). An innovation in the making is becoming stronger, and thus moving into a specific kind of more permanent existence, only when it acquires enough "allies." A simple instructive example of this: as long as a theater performance is not fully assembled and put on stage, it is always at risk of "perishing;" just as the artist involved in its making. The "dynamics of possession" and its implication of an intensive existence therefore include the possibility of collapse and failure. A living being is always at risk of diminishing and eventually perishing. In society, this is always a phenomenon involving various elements. To think of existence as intensive hence highlights a being's fragility as well as the work of care that is needed for a being to come to a fuller existence and subsist. Existence needs to be produced, that is, it is an act of "bringing forth," time and again, a tangible body.

What then, does the conceptualization of living beings as societies engaged in ongoing (de)composings contribute to the task of specifying the material-semiotics of creative practitioner and material? First of all, to think of beings as societies engaged in the task of coming into or maintaining their existence specifies the relation of practitioner and work as a question of "mutual possession." As embodied beings, both are spheres that involve each other and that need each other to exist. Their association needs to be thought of as driven by a primary process of differentiation. Tarde helps us to understand that beings are constantly entering into relations that afford them crucial differences to extend their existence. This means respectively that, in order to produce creative differences, embodied beings have to tie them into their quest of subsistence. The peculiar material-semiotics of expression and affection only make sense once we understand that the relation of practitioner and work is not static or inert but a

[64] Bodies seek to raise their *valence* (Latin *valentia* "power, competence," from valere "be well or strong" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010)). In chemistry, valence denotes the power of an element to enter into relations, and in linguistics the amount of grammatical elements with which a specific word combines within a sentence. Beings increase in their valence through making connections and forging alliances. Latour therefore speaks about emancipation and empowerment as a matter of being attached (Latour, 1999a). It is surely not only the quantity but the performative capacity of the relations that specify a situational change of valence.

"dynamic of possession" which is an ongoing circulation of "doing" and "undergoing," as we could say with Dewey (1934/1980). Living beings are activities of differential relations that express and signal potentials of further existence (subsistence). As symptom and signal, a being is conceived and related to in its sensible force of "having us" or "being had." Symptoms convey the living presence of a being in its affective reality and its virtual potential of possession. As such, beings need to be conceived as affective and passionate activities.

In a next step, thinking "having" or "being had" as a verb, I seek to expand on the dynamic aspects of the work to be made.

3.2.2 Dynamizing "the work"

The priority of having over being implicates the priority of the relation of having over the elements involved. "Societies," and therefore bodies, must be regarded as active relations of mutual possession. They are constituting and being constituted by processes of *composition*. In his tentative "Compositionist Manifesto," Latour (2010b) proposes the notion of *composition* as an alternative to what is widely known as *constructivism*. Like Tarde with his notion of "society," Latour seeks to propose a socio-spatial form of relationality that "underlines that things have to be put together (Latin *componere*) while retaining their heterogeneity" (pp. 473-474).

The idea of composition highlights two important points for developing our understanding of the work to be made and therefore the relation between practitioner and material. First, it helps to draw attention to the active work that is involved in subsistence and proliferation. We move away from the irrelevant distinction between what is constructed and what not, and start attending to the "crucial difference between what is *well* or *badly* constructed, *well* or *badly* composed. What is to be composed may, at any point, be *de*composed" (p. 474, emphasis in original). Second, the notion of composition, having "clear roots in art, painting, music, theater, dance," is associated "with choreography and scenography" (p. 474). That is, thinking in terms of composition opens up the aesthetic and affective dimension of the work to be made: we "compose (with) sensations," as Deleuze and Guattari (1994, p. 166) remark.

Altogether, composition is the name of the overall activity of bodies[65] that allows for the emergence of beings. Bodies thereby have to be thought both as support and

[65] In light of the central position of the human body in the making of CDT, I here follow a line of thought that posits objects-as-bodies and human bodies not as fundamentally different. As embodied beings, humans and things are, as William James concedes, made out of the same material or weaving ("*de la même étoffe*," as Hennion (2011, p. 98, fn. 14) quotes James).

medium at once, indeterminate, resistant and (re)active; bodies change those who engage with them, and those who engage them change them by engaging with them. As such bodies are seen not as fixed subjects or objects – "things made" – but have to be thought as verbs[66]; they are both *actants* (see for example Latour, 2005) and *patients* (see for example Hennion, 2011).[67] Bodies are dynamisms of relations.

Thinking the living being as a society then not only means spatializing but also dynamizing being: "The individual is not a being but an act. … Individuality is an aspect of generation, can be explained by the genesis of a being, and lies in the perpetuation of this genesis (Simondon, 2005, p. 191 in Barthélémy, 2012, p. 213). Individuality has to be achieved in an ongoing genesis, and this genesis involves others. The radical ontological stance taken here is to posit that there is *no difference* between things, as bodies, and their effects. Bodies are hence not being approached in terms of their factual outline (see Deleuze, 1988), but in terms of their relational capacity of affection,[68] of "doing" and "undergoing" (see Dewey, 1934/1980). Behind this "democratization" of "properties"[69] and capacities lies a "flat ontology" (see Hennion, 2013a; Latour, 2005), a reality where humans and non-humans are not substantially different in terms of their basic capacities of affection.

To understand bodies as affective goes back to the Stoics and their reappropriation within Spinoza's basic conception of affect, as Deleuze (1981) discusses.[70] As an actant, a body is granted a (re)active indeterminacy and resistance. Its limits are distinguished not by the outline of its figure but by the reach of its actions. In this sense, Deleuze relays that the Stoics asserted that "things are bodies" and, in a second step, that "things are actions." Deleuze thereby relates a simple but compelling example used by the Stoics: asking how far the action of a seed goes, he answers that "[a] sunflower seed lost in a wall is capable of blowing out that wall" (n. p.). As such, a body is defined in terms of its capacity to affect; to understand a body, we have to know what it can do and how it can be moved:

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[66] An adequate verb form for the body as verb could thereby be the old Greek middle voice; a grammar structure that expresses an active passivity (see for example Latour, 1999a).

[67] Hennion (2013a) points at the influence of William James' (1912b, 1909/1996) notion of *pragmata* for this development. *Pragmata* is the term James chose to denote the plurality of things-in-the-making, that is, in experience: things-in-the-making are things in need of being made while at the same time making us (make them).

[68] Affection is here meant in the archaic sense of "the act or process of affecting or being affected" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

[69] Remember Tarde's definition of being "as the *property* of something, of some other being, which is itself composed of *properties*, and so on to infinity" (Tarde, 1895/2012, p. 52, emphasis in original).

[70] According to Latour (2008b), Deleuze was crucially influenced by Gabriel Tarde's naturalist metaphysics in *Monadologie et Sociologie*. Deleuze himself again, especially with his uptake of Spinoza's conception of affect has been a major influence in the works of Latour and Hennion, although he is rarely cited due to his imaginative and speculative language, as Hennion (2013a, fn. 11) conceded.

> We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 257)

In this famous quote, Deleuze and Guattari condense their understanding of things as bodies "in the making." Bodies only exist in and through their affections, and thus only relationally.

In one of his few direct allusions to art and aesthetic theory, James (1890/1950) gives us an idea of the way bodies might be affected within aesthetic encounters, for example when we get "excited":

> A glow, a pang in the breast, a shudder, a fulness of the breathing, a flutter of the heart, a shiver down the back, a moistening of the eyes, a stirring in the hypogastrium, and a thousand unnamable symptoms besides, may be felt the moment the beauty excites us. (James, 1890/1950, p. 470)

The work to be made is a compositional process involving the circulation of affects between bodies that are always both, actants and patients. In the making, actions and passions are exchanged or combined, eventually leading to an *invention*, the composition of "a more powerful body." A central question so far, not explicitly addressed, is thereby how this "con-stellation" and "com-bination" of bodies has to be thought of over time. Is the work to be made a merely accidental "con-junction" of bodies? What makes bodies reach out and seek to possess or be possessed by other bodies? Tarde's answer to this question is that bodies have to be understood as "rays" (Tarde, 1895/2012). Bodies are "avid" (p. 59), they are infused with appetites and desires. As such, bodies must be understood as flows or vectors, bearing tendencies that reach out for other bodies and also configure how they can be seized.

3.2.3 Dramatizing "the work"

After having spatialized and dynamized the work, in this section I expound on how creativity must be thought as part of what, after Gabriel Tarde, we can call a nexus of imitation and invention. This, as I will show, means to *dramatize* the work to be made as a compositional process bearing ongoing micro imitations and inventions. The relation of practitioner, material and emergent invention thereby touches upon the key metaphysical question of the relation of parts and wholes, or, "the interplay of objects and relations" (Harman, 2009, p. 159). What is the status of the practitioner and work in respect to their relation? In Tardean terms: what is the status of individual bodies in relation to their being as society? And in Simondonian, or Deleuzian terms: what is the

generative process that encompasses virtual differences and an actual relation with emerging properties? Deleuze (1994) draws on Raymond Ruyer (see Alloa, 2014a) to use metaphors of theater and stage to frame the relation of parts and whole as a question of *dramatization*. "According to Ruyer, drama articulates the relation between a 'role' that depends on a theme that it plays and a 'theme' that exists only in the variations that instantiate it" (p. 156).

Zooming in on the question of invention, I therefore frame the work to be made as a form of "drama": the drama of invention is a question of the relation between the bodies (human and non-human) that depend on the work to be made, and the work to be made that exists only in the bodies that materialize it. The specific "drama" of invention that Tarde (1895a, 1898, 1895/2012) envisions, is hinted at through the various relational metaphors he employs to account for the dynamics of possession (Debaise, 2008). With a "dramatic" gesture, Tarde likens an organism at times to an "army" or to a "convent" (Tarde, 1895/2012, p. 64) and respectively mobilizes "dramatic" metaphors ranging from politics and warfare ("ambition," "conquest," "annexation," "duel"), to religion ("marriage," "devotion," "apostolic propaganda"). As "army" or "convent," we can understand an organism to be fully engaged in movements of composition that seek to raise their valence (see above), aggregating in various forms of "take-overs," "persuasions," "capitulations" etc. Taking this idea back to our question of the work to be made, we can understand practitioner and work as two spheres of influence and interest that, within their wider milieu, form a com-pound being which is both agent and "theater" of invention.[71] Practitioner and work co-individuate through ongoing inventions.

To more specifically understand the "dramatic" characteristic of the work to be made, we have to take a closer look at Gabriel Tarde's understanding of *imitative invention* (see Tarde, 1903/1962, 1895a, 1898; Barry & Thrift, 2007; Djellal & Gallouj, 2014; Wydra, 2012).

Tarde develops a (micro-)sociology that conceives of the social as a weaving of processes of imitation and invention: "*Tout n'est socialement qu'inventions et imitations*" (Tarde, 1895a, p. 21). The basic social dynamics of imitation and invention are thereby effected through the dynamics of possession (Debaise, 2008) that Tarde specifies as reciprocal movements of "penetration" (Tarde, 1895/2012). Bodies are oriented towards the outside world and "penetrate" each other (and have each other "penetrated"). Invention for Tarde, therefore, is situated within the dynamics of

[71] Simondon (1992, in Styhre, 2010) characterizes "[t]he living being [as] both the agent and theater of individuation" (p. 118).

interpenetration and composition that broadly show as various forms of competition and collaboration. He therefore specifies the "three social laws" of "repetition," "opposition" and "adaptation" (Tarde, 1898): societies, that is, embodied beings, "have to repeat themselves in existence, to oppose one another in order to proceed forward, or to adapt to one another by differing from one another no matter how slightly" (Latour, 2008b, p. 16).

Invention is an effect of the relationships of interpenetration, collaboration and competition that are all different dynamisms of repetition, or "imitation" (in the social sphere). Imitation is the key mechanism whereby phenomena are conceived in their similarity as well as difference, it explains growth and increase as a nexus of imitation and invention. Repetition for Tarde is hence never mechanical, but product of variations and differences. Whether the phenomena of imitation are specific words or concepts, practices or rituals, technologies or mechanisms, they are modified in the course of "imitating" them within another milieu (state, organization, family, group…). It is in this way that Tarde conceives invention as resulting from a conjunction of imitations. Through imitation, inventions become successful innovations.

The terms imitation, invention and innovation, as put forth by Tarde, can be perceived as follows: imitation and invention are the constitutive building blocks of innovation[72] (Wydra, 2012). Inventions produce novelty that become innovation only through imitation which again reconfigures the original invention. Invention is thereby never an annihilation but a mediation of existing phenomena; invention for Tarde means to reassemble in a different way existing phenomena. He stresses the combinatory characteristics of invention, which is seen as a possible outcome of a chain of conjunctive imitations, and hence other inventions. "Invention is always, by its very nature, an intersection of imitation rays, an original combination of imitations" (Tarde, 1902, in Djellal & Gallouj, 2014, p. 9). Inventions thus build on each other: writing had to be invented before printing was possible, and similarly Arabic numbers had to be invented before mathematics could flourish (Wydra, 2012, p. 99). Tarde therefore proposes a conception of the emergence of novelty *ex materia* without taking recourse to hylomorphic models that, as discussed in Chapter 2, maintain transcendent models of creation featuring an individual genius:

> In a society no individual may act socially without the collaboration of a vast number of other individuals, most often ignored. The obscure workmen who, through the accumulation of small facts, have prepared the apparition

[72] In Tarde's parlance, "innovation" stands for "social change" (see Wydra, 2012).

> of a grand scientific theory formulated by a Newton, a Cuvier, a Darwin, compose, if one may say so, the organism of which this genius is the soul; their obscure works are the cerebral vibrations of which this theory is the conscience. Conscience *means cerebral glory*, so to speak, of the most influential and most powerful element of the brain. Left to itself, a monad is powerless. This is the most important fact, and it leads immediately to explain another one: *the tendency of monads to aggregate*. (Tarde, 1902, p. 28, emphasis in original)

Imitation is an expression of the tendency of bodies ("monads") to possess each other and to aggregate. To speak of tendencies therefore means to acknowledge that we never imitate individuals; we rather "imitate flows that traverse individuals … [I]nvention arises from the imitation of flows, which are conjoined in a new manner *in* the inventor (and not, properly speaking, by him, as if he were the author)" (Combes, 2013, p. 52, emphasis in original).

The inventive encounter of heterogeneous bodies must be thought as a "confluence" – literally a "flowing together." Deleuze and Guattari (1987), directly referring to Tarde, note that "invention is a conjugation or connection of different flows" (p. 219). To talk of bodies as flows then means to account for the *vector quality of experience*. Latour (in Harman et al., 2011) underlines that "no matter how small the point we study, it actually has a vector quality" (p. 100). In the making, practitioner and (art) work have to be thought as "bodily flows," that is, as temporal and spatial vectors of experience. To talk of bodies as vectors then is another way of stating that bodies are not static but always have to be thought as lines, flows or trajectories. Everything has descendants and antecedents, as Latour (p. 110) notes in this respect. "Since being is having (*avoir*), it follows that everything must be avid (*avide*)" notes Tarde (1895/2012, p. 59, emphasis in original) accordingly. Bodies are avid, they have to be seen as infused with appetites and desires.

To account for bodies as avid flows or vectors, Tarde specifies the "dynamics of possession" (Debaise, 2008) and therefore what we so far thought of as an exchange of actions and passions. Tarde recognized that an empiricism founded on a distinctly individual category of sensation offers no satisfying basis for thinking the association of individuals (see Davis, 1906/2013, p. 19). His argument is that sensations are only "measurable" (see Latour, 2010a), and therefore form a basis for association, through the beliefs and desires attached to them. "Possession" (*la possession*), "desire" (*le désir*) and "belief" (*la croyance*) are therefore Tarde's key relational notions to code the interpenetration of bodies in dynamics of opposition and adaptation (or competition and collaboration). After all, both "belief" and "desire" are relations

between sensations, "a relation that does not change while its terms change"[73] (Tarde, 1895b, p. 24). Drawing on Leibniz' distinction of "apperception" and "appetition," Tarde respectively posits "belief" (and "disapproval) and "desire" (and "repulsion"), as the "two powers of the soul" (Debaise, 2008, p. 225) that allow for the association of bodies. Belief and desire thereby never arrive singularly, they are always connected. Together, they are constitutive of and are being expressed by all social and psychological phenomena. "*I desire*, *I believe*, therefore I have" (Tarde, 1895/2012, p. 52, emphasis in original) is respectively Tarde's alternative to Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*. Tarde thus promotes a view of bodies as affective and passionate activities of relation. Bodies are emergent properties of differential relations propelled by affect, passion and belief. In short, Tarde posits that the affectivity of "belief" and "desire" is mediating sensation and action.

"Desire" and "belief" should yet not be thought of as exclusive human and psychological forces; Tarde has in mind rather the basic "contractive" and "expansive" movements that constitute "mutual possession" (Debaise, 2008) from quantum to astronomical "societies." Desire and repulsion form the active side of a body reaching out for or driving back other flows. Belief and disapproval then form the receptive side of a body affirming or denying other flows. This means actively allowing for (not) being affected.

> How many entities can one entelechy reach? – That is *desire*. Mow [sic] many can they stabilize, order, fix or keep in place? – That is *belief*. No providence whatsoever can produce any harmony over and above the interplay of desire and belief in each monad, let loose on the world. (Latour, 2010a, p. 158, emphasis in original)

Again, we have to think "desire" and "belief" as an "interplay," inextricably linked up. The expansive power of "desire" and the contractive power of "belief" together constitute a "minimal, microscopic, agency of connection" (Debaise, 2008, p. 226). As molecular forces (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), "desire" amplifies and follows movement while the appreciative and affirmative force of "belief" consolidates movement. The dynamics of belief and desire therefore apply both to the present relations with other bodies as well as within a body's history and trajectory. "The past is what presses in the conflicts that enliven the monads and what continuously transforms itself according to the current dynamics" (Debaise, 2008, p. 229). Current

[73] "Je ne veux pas dire, malgré tout, qu'affirmer et nier, désirer et repousser, soient autre chose qu'un rapport entre des sensations ou des images; mais c'est un rapport qui ne change pas pendant que ses termes changent" (Tarde, 1895b, p. 24).

beliefs and desires are emerging from and constituting both the relation with other bodies and the relation with one's past.

Bodies have to be considered as flows, or vectors, because they both "enjoy" and desire existence. They enjoy and affirm, that is imitate, existing inventions and thereby fix or consolidate movement. At the same time they desire to expand their enjoyment, thus amplifying and changing movement. Bodies hence are vectors to the extent that they are *expectant*: they sense what they reach out for and on the other side set down conditions for what will seize them, that is, the ways in which they will (desire to) be sensed. It is in this way, that belief and desire are relational vectors linking both sensation and action as well as the contact with other flows.

The summation of Tarde's notions of desire and belief sheds new light on the question of invention and the work to be made. The key to understanding invention is nested deep within processes of subsistence and mutual concern where practitioner and (art)work, now turned into vectors of belief and desire, are resulting from and demanding for mutual existence. The aesthetic domain is imbued with and indissociably connected with the *appetitive*. James' (1890/1950) somatic naturalism formulates a respective position by asserting the continuity of aesthetic and moral principles:

> Aesthetic principles are at bottom such axioms as that a note sounds good with its third and fifth, or that potatoes need salt. We are once for all so made that when certain impressions come before our mind, one of them will seem to call for or repel the others as its companions. (James, 1890/1950, p. 672)

Artistic and palatable concerns are both based on a basic nexus of aesthetics and the appetitive. For Shusterman (2011), a chief commentator on James' pragmatist aesthetics, James posits a continuity between "more basic, appetitive pleasures and more abstract and refined forms. The sensuous pleasures of taste in food thus have an aesthetic character in essentially the same way as the formal harmonies of music" (p. 352). And again, the aesthetic character of auricular or palatable sensations is vector-like: it calls for or repels certain associations – the third or fifth of the note or the salt for the potatoes.

Alfred North Whitehead offers a further link between the nexus of aesthetics and the appetitive within the work to be made. Whitehead (1929/1979) asserts that the appetitive vector quality of experience bears "the germ of a free imagination" (p. 32). By reappropriating Leibniz' notion of *appetition*, Whitehead links subsistence and invention via the very idea of "appetition." All experience, as Whitehead suggests, "is

accompanied by an appetite for, or against, its continuation" (p. 32) With Whitehead, the "dramatic" work to be made therefore turns from a question of war and religion into a more mundane, yet still existential question of "appetition." Experience, he proposes, involves "appetition," which "is immediate matter of fact including in itself a principle of unrest, involving realization of what is not and may be" (p. 32). This form of appetition is, for Whitehead, at the heart of invention as it carries the basic potential for creative associations. Whitehead provides a simple example of "the appetition of self-preservation":

> Thirst is an appetite towards a difference – towards something relevant, something largely identical, but something with a definite novelty. This is an example at a low level which shows the germ of a free imagination. (Whitehead, 1929/1979, p. 32)

Both practitioner and (art) work are infused with "appetites," and as "vectors of appetition" their "tendances towards the other can be followed as they fan out" (Souriau, 2009 in Latour, 2011, p. 318). Invention, the work to be made, I therefore propose, should be understood as a *conjugation of vectors of appetition*.

As much as "society" (in both the conventional and the Tardean meaning), so is also "the work" organised around competing or converging appetitions that either oppose and substitute each other or adapt and accumulate. In each case, this "dramatic" constellation can be productive of inventions. Djellal and Gallouj (2014) sum up the following two mechanisms:

> 1) the *substitution* of one discovery or invention (that is of a need or a belief) by another, a process that Tarde denotes by the term logical combat or duel ; 2) *accumulation*, that is the addition of one invention or discovery (that is of a need or belief) to another. This process of mutual reinforcement is described by Tarde as a logical union or pairing (or even combination). (Djellal & Gallouj, 2014, p. 6, emphasis added)

Invention is then situated in both mechanisms of substitution and accumulation: a conjunction of "vectors of appetition" is generative of an emergent alternative that either displaces or adds up to existing inventions.

The *dramatic* nature of invention then is closely tied to, as what has been discussed earlier, existential questions of subsistence. The question of invention is "dramatic" to its extent of touching upon the being's capability to raise its valence. It is upon this dramatization that I propose that invention is wedded to an immanent ethics. To talk of appetition in the Whiteheadian sense therefore includes both "desire" and "belief." The vector quality of bodies means that any actual invention is an event and also a mode of valuation. Erin Manning refers to Whitehead when asserting that

> how an event comes into itself is a mode of valuation in itself. Any actual occasion for Whitehead is a mode of valuation: the question is, how does the event value its own mode of existence, how does it enjoy its own existence? (Brunner, Massumi, & Manning, 2013, p. 138)

When we talk about invention or creativity, the idea that any actual occasion is a mode of valuation turns creativity into a work born from necessity:

> There has to be a necessity …; otherwise there is nothing. A creator is not a preacher working for the fun of it. A creator only does what he or she absolutely needs to do. (Deleuze, 2007, p. 318)

Situating invention and creativity alongside a mode of valuation, we enter a borderland between imagination, facticity and normativity. The signposts in this borderland are bodily vectors, as indicated earlier, they are the *symptoms* and *signals* which express and ask for a *future* existence; they are "an urge towards the future based upon an appetite in the present" (Whitehead, 1929/1979, p. 32).

The next section draws on Gilbert Simondon's view that invention must be understood as "an influence of the future on the present, the virtual on the actual" (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 32). Simondon points at the movement of experiencing oneself out of all the virtual and actual properties that make a body come to a momentary existence. The forces of desire and belief, emphasising the aesthetic and affective dimension of bodies and therewith both their *appeals* and *appetites*, are constituting an experiential continuum which is topologically stretched between the pole of actuality and the pole of virtuality. The tendances and tendencies of bodily flows must therefore be situated in what Simondon calls the virtual or the "preindividual" ground of beings.

3.2.4 Virtualizing "the work"

> *What has escaped the attention of psychologists in their analysis of the inventive imagination is not so much the schemes or the forms or the operations of this faculty, those elements that spontaneously stand out in relief, as the dynamic ground on which these schemes confront each other, combine with each other, and with which they participate. ... The participative relationship connecting forms to ground is a relationship that spans the present and disseminates an influence of the future on the present, of the virtual on the actual. The ground is the system of potentialities, of potentials, of progressive forces, whereas forms are the system of the actual.*
> *(Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 32, emphasis added)*

> *[T]he difference is not at all between the social and the individual (or interindividual), but between the molar realm of representations, individual or collective, and the molecular realm of beliefs and desires in which the distinction between the social and the individual loses all meaning since flows are neither attributable to individuals nor overcodable by collective signifiers. Representations already define large-scale aggregates, or determine segments on a line; beliefs and desires, on the other hand, are flows marked by quanta, flows that are created, exhausted, or transformed, added to one another, subtracted or combined.*
> *(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 219, emphasis added)*

"Virtualizing" the work to be made, I propose, is to think of reality as a continuum stretched between two realms that, along with Simondon and Deleuze and Guattari, we can call "virtual" or "molecular" and "actual" or "molar." This distinction situates the vector-like quality of experience within the molecular and dynamic ground of forms. The key idea to follow here is that the vector-like quality of experience means a trajectory where "the pastness of experience – [molecular] reality – creates the potential for future connections" (Manning, 2008, para. 21). The temporal characteristics of invention are effected by a specific relationship that connects "forms" to "dynamic ground." Drawing on James, Whitehead, Simondon and Deleuze, Brian Massumi (2008) helps us to understand the relation between practitioner and work as a virtual and immanent relation. What for Simondon (1958/2010, p. 32) is the "influence of the future on the present," Massumi (2008) frames as a molecular conjunction of flows based on an affective causality. Novelty is here thought to emerge through the affectively causal relation between virtual ground and actual form. Actual and discontinuous forms – materials, words, thoughts, emotions, gestures etc. – are conjugating in a process of affective "fading-in" and "fading-out" that makes for experiential continuity and allows for invention to take place.

Directly referring to Gabriel Tarde's notions of "belief" and "desire," Deleuze and Guattari (1987) introduce the far-reaching distinction of the molar and the molecular realm of reality. This, they argue, is the far more important distinction as the usually argued differentiation between the individual and the social. Massumi (2008) gives an

illustrative reading of this crucial difference. The molar realm of representation is a *discontinuous* dimension of *content*; here we find "large-scale aggregates" like actual thoughts, words, gestures, things etc. These molar "forms" are yet occurring within a molecular, experiential and *continuous* dimension of "presentational immediacy," a Whiteheadian (1929/1979) term that denotes the experience of the affective "ground" of forms. With Langer (1953), we can see the linkage of "feeling and form"[74] at work, which Massumi (2008) calls *moods,* that he states can be considered

> the weather patterns of our experience. They're not actual contents of it. The contents are precipitation, drops of experience, a rain of words and gestures in the micro-climate that is life at this moment. (Massumi, 2008, p. 24)

Like two sides of a coin, "content" and "mood" express the dual nature of reality in between the discontinuity of actual, molar "forms" and the continuity of their molecular, "affective" force.

Simondon (2005), with his interest in the question of individuation, frames the crucial differentiation of the molar and the molecular realm as follows: on the one side we find the reality of the "individual"[75] – human or thing – that is *made*, and on the other side the experiential reality of the individual *in the making*, the individual is thought of as bodily flow and thus as a verb. Simondon therefore distinguishes a "preindividual reality" from the relative "individuated reality" of the individual (Simondon, 2009). Ontological primacy is thereby granted to what Simondon calls "individuation," the ongoing and never finished process of becoming an individual (body), which is hence stretched between the molecular and the molar realm. He asks us to consider

> as primordial the operation of individuation from which the individual comes to exist and of which its characteristics reflect the development, the regime and finally the modalities. The individual would then be grasped as a relative reality, a certain phase of being that supposes a preindividual reality, and that, even after individuation, does not exist on its own, because individuation does not exhaust with one stroke the potentials of preindividual reality. (Simondon, 2009, p. 5)

The preindividual is "a level of reality prior to that of things and individuals, the source of their creation" (Debaise, 2012, p. 4). It is the immediate event of experience and thus the "primary unit of real" (Brunner et al., 2013, p. 135). "Being" as such is not one, it precedes any individual, therefore Simondon calls it "preindividual." It

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[74] Langer's book on theory of art is titled "Feeling and Form." She thereby crucially draws on Whitehead's (1929/1979) idea that "primitive experience is vector feeling" (p. 163).

[75] In Simondon's parlance, the "individual" is the "relative" reality of a "body" in relation first to itself as *in the making* and second to its dyadic ("societal") being as "individual-milieu." As such, the "individual" is in both respects "always more than one" (see Manning, 2010).

would yet be mistaken to conceive of the preindividual as temporally preceding the individual. Rather, the preindividual ground is *both* antecedent and remaining contemporary to the individual. The individual emerges from it without exhausting its preindividual reserve. If this were not so, there would be no sense of continuity in experience. The actual individual subject and the actual world have to be considered as abstractions; they are "limit cases of completion for always ongoing processes" (Protevi, 2010, p. 430).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, it is the preindividual, molecular ground where we have to situate the affectionate flows of "belief" and "desire." Here, that is, in the experiential flow of "living forwards," the distinction between individual and social does not hold any more as flows of appetition have no definite point of origin and do not cohere easily to collective significations. Yet, and this is the central argument that both Deleuze and Guattari as well as Simondon make, and which is key to any further understanding of invention, when we talk about invention being the conjunction of flows, and when we situate these flows within a preindividual, molecular ground, then this implies that actual, discontinuous "forms" (words, materials, thoughts, gestures etc.) as such cannot associate.

Actualist approaches situate the real in actual appearances (realism) or constructions (idealism). The relation between actualities is thereby thought and experienced as a form of direct or, to say it in Whiteheadian terms, *causal efficacy* (see Massumi, 2008). Therefore actualist approaches employ the vocabulary of *(inter)action* (see also Latour, 1996) to fathom how things actively relate. "Causal efficacy" hence denotes the experience of a series of actual and discernable subjects and objects and their respective (inter)-actions.

> Now, you have to take interactivity at its word. Its flow is a flow of action. It's true that the flow is two-way. But the back and forth is of action and reaction. It always comes back to causal efficacy, instrumentality, affordance. … This backgrounds the qualitative-relational aspect – even when it is supposed to be all about social relation. By putting relation so fully into action, interactivity backgrounds its own artistic dimension. That's the dimension of relationality in its own right, as opposed to a particular relating-to, for this or that already determined purpose. (Massumi, 2008, p. 7)

From the perspective of a virtual approach, the focus on actual subjects, objects and their interactions neglects another, more fundamental mode of experience that Whitehead calls "presentational immediacy." It is the mode of experience related to the realm of virtuality; the "artistic dimension" (p. 8) of experience – qualitative, affective and dynamic. With these two modes of experience are connected two forms

of relations: "causal efficacy" pertains to an instrumental and particular "relating-to," while "presentational immediacy" bears a "dimension of relationality in its own right" (Massumi, 2008, p. 7). The two modes of experience are thereby inextricably entwined, like two sides of a coin that are asymmetrically distributed in different situations.

> You can't have one without the other, but presentational immediacy tends to disappear into the flow of causal efficacy. We see with and through it to the affordances we take as the actual form of things. Only rarely do we do the opposite – see with and through the actual form to the dynamism of life. (Massumi, 2008, p. 7)

In our everyday life, presentational immediacy tends to be submerged by our awareness of causal connections and their "use-value." When it comes to understanding invention and creativity, presentational immediacy is key for attending to the peculiar "affective causality" (p. 23) operating within the virtual and dynamic ground of forms and its "event-value" (p. 14).

Forms are not actually but virtually continuous. This phenomenon is illustrated by William James' metaphor that "experience comes in drops" (in Massumi, 2008, p. 11). A series of drops reveals that on the level of content, experience is discontinuous. A form, an artefact, a painting, an image, a gesture, a word, a thought, how do they relate? Thoughts as such, for example, would not provide for our continuous experience of thinking but stay a "disconnected series of scattered representations" (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 34). Yet, as James asserts:

> Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows around it. With it goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it came to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead. (James, 1890, in Shotter, 2013, pp. 50–51)

In the case of dance, Susanne Langer therefore distinguishes between actual and virtual gestures and between motion and movement respectively. If concentrating on actual gestures only, dance would be nothing but an assembly of discontinuous chunks of material. Attributing dance a general "gestic character," for Langer it is only the "vital movement" (Langer, 1953, p. 174) of a virtual gesture that can provide for the vital sensations of dance as movement. Thus, when we are able to see the actual gesture *and* its double, the virtual gesture, we see a *movement* that flows through a *motion*. The "watery" metaphors of William James suggest that a mere focus on content and its interactions neglects the flows and ripples that are part of a "drop in the pool of life" (Massumi, 2008, p. 11). Within the metaphor, these flows and ripples convey the "virtual continuity" and relationality of actual content.

The affective tonality of the preindividual and molecular dimension of reality provides for a virtual continuity and allows for the association of bodies. In short, forms only relate immanently and virtually. Brian Massumi, an avid commentator on Simondon and Deleuze asserts accordingly that

> formations communicate only *immanently*, at the points where they live themselves in, or at their self-embracing fringes. They only virtually relate. All relation is virtual. … It is only because relation is virtual that there is any freedom or creativity in the world. If formations were in actual causal connection, how they effectively connect would be completely determined. They might interact, but they would not creatively relate. There would be no gap in the chain of connection for anything new to emerge from and pass contagiously across. There'd be no margin of creative indeterminacy. No wriggle room. (Massumi, 2008, p. 23, emphasis in original)

The dynamics of imitation and invention, and therefore also the capacities of creativity and change, are only possible within the virtual realm of affective flows. Actual forms as such cannot be "created, exhausted, or transformed, added to one another, subtracted or combined" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 219; see quote above). It is only in their molecular existence as flows that a creative conjunction can lead to invention. This is possible because the molecular reality of affective flows is preceding and at the same time accompanying any processes of "form-ation." Simondon notes that

> the determining factor playing an energizing role is not forms but what supports forms, namely their ground; marginal as it may always be in terms of attention, the ground is what harbors dynamisms; it is what gives existence to the system of forms; forms interact not with forms but with their ground, which is the system of all forms or, better still, the common reservoir of the *tendencies* of forms, even before they exist separately or are constituted as a specific system. (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 32, emphasis added)

"Forms interact not with forms but with their ground," because the ground harbours the molecular flows of appetition. It is the "common reservoir of the *tendencies* of forms" that "energizes" an ongoing process of affective "form-ation." The ontological status of forms and their capacities is therefore akin to that of virtual *tendencies*.[76]

[76] As dynamic "form-ation," bodies at any point of time express and signal a number of actual capacities and latent tendencies (and tendances). They are "deficiently real," meaning that they are not inherent in any substances, but virtual. This makes them no less real. But it means they cannot be determined beforehand or numbered, because they are only ever relationally activated and revealed. As we only know a body's capacities when we know its amplifying and affirming affections (and "possessions"), most capacities of a body may therefore remain unknown when the adequate object of affection is not present (see Posteraro, 2014; Protevi, 2010).

To think of bodies as bearing virtual tendencies and actual capacities means to endow matter, or material, with morphogenetic powers. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) pitch their understanding of the morphogenetic forces of tendencies ("singularities") and capacities ("affects") against the classical hylomorphic model, which

> [a]ssumes a fixed form and a matter deemed homogeneous. It is the idea of the law that assures the model's coherence, since laws are what submits matter to this or that form, and conversely, realize in matter a given property deduced from the form. (p. 407)

Referring to Gilbert Simondon's (2005) thorough criticism of hylomorphism, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) then offer a new reading of the classical Aristotelian example of the work of the wood artisan:

> Simondon demonstrates that the *hylomorphic* model leaves many things, active and affective, by the wayside. On the one hand, to the formed or formable matter we must add an entire energetic materiality in movement, carrying *singularities* or *haecceities* that are already like implicit forms that are topological, rather than geometrical, and that combine with processes of deformation: for example, the variable undulations and torsions of the fibers guiding the operation of splitting wood. On the other hand, to the essential properties of the matter deriving from the formal essence we must add *variable intensive affects*, now resulting from the operation, now on the contrary making it possible: for example, wood that is more or less porous, more or less elastic and resistant. At any rate, it is a question of surrendering to the wood, then following where it leads by connecting operations to a materiality, instead of imposing a form upon a matter: what one addresses is less a matter submitted to laws than a materiality possessing a *nomos*. One addresses less a form capable of imposing properties upon a matter than material traits of expression constituting affects. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 408, emphasis in original)

The artisan is not encountering passive matter but material that is in-formed with tendencies and capacities that are activated in the course of the operations of (de)formation. As noted before, to be embodied, that is, to be materialized means to exist in and as ongoing variation. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) therefore note that "materiality … is matter in movement, in flux, in variation, matter as a conveyor of singularities and traits of expression" (p. 409). Materiality is therefore a "matter-flow" (p. 451). Along with Ingold (2010a), I propose to stick to the simple term material, instead of "matter-flow", as material is a standing term in artistic and creative contexts. [77] As discussed throughout, it is pivotal to think of materials as "flows," or,

[77] In artistic contexts, the notion of material, as opposed to matter, refers to those natural and artifical fabrics that are intended for further processing. As material, fabrics and objects are subject to transformation by workmanship, and can be considered the feedstock of any artistic making. While the term material is often opposed to to the notions of form and idea, I think materiality as being thoroughly "in-formed."

more precisely as “vectors.” It is these vectors, or tendencies, that allow for a virtual relation and thus continuity of experience; they allow that “something continues, thought-felt across the gaps” (Massumi, 2008, p. 24).

The affective tonality of molecular bodies is not a cause, but rather a continuous process of “dissolve,” full of “carry-overs.” It carries across “the qualitative nature of what happens. It gives an abstract, purely qualitative background continuity” (p. 24). Returning to the image of the drops of water and their ripples in a pool, one can say that the association between actual content is a continuous dissolve, an ongoing “fading-in” and “fading-out” full of “virtual potentials.” The movement of a previous event - through its ripples, is tinging the event of the next drop, whose movement itself is again prolonged through its ripples. The event of experience thus entails a first stage which Whitehead calls “re-enaction” and Massumi names “reactivation”: “It’s a direct, unmediated feeling of what past events have left in the world for the coming event to take up as its own potential.” The vector-like quality of experience, that is, the virtual tendencies of forms exhibit a suggestive feeling of potential, a “thinking-feeling in the immediacy of what’s coming” (Brunner et al., 2013, p. 135).

On the molecular level of affective tonalities, being is rendered a mutant force, brimming with potential being and thus always “in excess over itself”:

> Being is constitutively, immediately, a power of mutation … because being contains potential, and because all that is exists with a reserve of becoming, the non-self-identity of being should be called more-than-identity. In this sense, being is in excess over itself. (Combes, 2013, p. 3)

Being is never completed and remains in a state of becoming. Therefore the virtual potentials of the preindividual ground are both anterior and *a praesenti* to the regimes of individuation. The more-than of being accompanies yet surpasses every resolution, every occasion. The field of experience is thereby brimming with tendencies, tendances, cues, germs, or “lures.” It is in this way that Simondon talks about the “participative relationship” of forms and ground spanning the present and bearing the germs of future trajectories. “Time loops,” as Erin Manning (2013, p. 33) suggests. The novelty of invention is never a denial of the past but “the quality of the more-than of the past tuning toward the future. The new is a qualitative difference, already felt in the will-have-been” (p. 33).

For the case of movement and dance, Manning (2009) details the excessive and affective nature of being by distinguishing between phenomena of “preacceleration” and “overarticulation.” Preacceleration means the building and densifying of a movement’s tendencies to become an actual movement. Situated at the beginning of a

displacement, preacceleration hints at the "felt experience of the not-yet in the moving" (p. 225, fn 14). Manning further notes that "preacceleration refers to what has not yet been constituted but has an effect on actualization. In the context of a movement, it is the virtual experience of a welling into movement that precedes the actual displacement" (p. 5). Overarticulation is the "vibratory resonance of a movement's excess" (p. 40). It is

> the surging forth of the potential of a movement's unfolding. It is the post of its preacceleration. It is the excess of the displacement, the making-felt of the expressive micromovements that populate all movements in the making. (Manning, 2009, p. 39)

Overarticulation then is the suggestive movement potential that comes (and lasts) with all actualized movement and thus "fades" over into preacceleration for the continuing movement taking place. Together, preacceleration and overarticulation constitute the virtual, affective vectors of actual and discontinuous contents. It is through them that materials, words, thoughts, emotions, gestures etc. can be related in a process of affective "fading-in" and "fading-out" that makes for an experiential continuity.

The conjugation of flows that is at the heart of invention means the conjunction of vector-like preaccelerations and overarticulations The distinction of reality as a compound of virtual tendencies and actual capacities thus emphasizes the constitutional play of difference and happenstance. The affective tendencies of preindividual bodies thereby provide a "margin of creative indeterminacy" (Massumi, 2008, p. 3), a reservoir of forces that potentially exceed, surprise, disrupt, subvert, escape and change ongoing actualizations. "Affect moves" as Manning (2009, p. 5) asserts. It constitutes the event of becoming and hence of invention.

Affectivity is the membrane that links practitioner and work within their wider milieu. Just as the affective vectors of appetition are situated in between sensation and action, they are also mediating the contact between individual and milieu.

> Affectivity, the relational layer constituting the center of individuality, arises in us as a liaison between the relation of the individual to itself and its relation to the world. As such, it is primarily in the form of a tension that this relation to self is effectuated: affectivity, in effect, puts the individual in relation with something that it brings with it, but that it feels quite justifiably as exterior to itself as individual. Affectivity includes a relation between the individuated being and a share of not-yet-individuated preindividual reality that any individual carries with it: affective life, as "relation to self," is thus a relation to what, in the self, is not of the order of the individual. Affective life thus shows us that we are not only individuals, that our being is not reducible to our individuated being. (Combes, 2013, p. 31)

The milieu cannot (only) be conceived in spatial terms. "It is an affective attunement more than a space, a field more than a form" (Manning, 2009, p. 26). For Simondon, a proper account of a body "in the making" therefore does not separate the individual from the system of reality in which the individuation occurs. The associated milieu, as Simondon calls it, is thereby

> active with tendencies, tunings, incipient agitations, each of which are felt before they are known as such, contributing to a sense of the how of the event in its unfolding. (Manning, 2009, p. 3)

A body, as Erin Manning proposes, therefore has to be thought not as an individual form, but as an ecology of processes:

> More-than its form-taking, "body" is an ecology of processes (and practices, as Isabelle Stengers might say) always in co-constellation with the environmentality of which it is part. A body is a node of relational process, not a form per se. A body is a complex activated through phases in collision and collusion, phasings in and out of processes of individuation that are transformed, transduced - to create new iterations not of what a body is but of what a body can do. What we tend to call "body" and what is experienced as the wholeness of a form is simply one remarkable point, one instance of a collusion materializing as this or that. (Manning, 2013, p. 19)

The body is an ecology of processes and practices, a densified complex of relational process and not a form as such.

Drawing from Simondonian thought, we thus approach an understanding of relationality beyond individualism or holism: neither is it a question of belittling the environment as mere background, or context,[78] nor a question of explaining the individual as deriving from its milieu, fully defined by its relations. It is rather a question of explaining both – individual and its milieu – as emerging from and staying connected to a preindividual reality. The dyad individual-milieu preserves a preindividual share that allows for perpetual individuations. An individual never exists alone, it is surrounded by its enabling and constraining fields, regions and regimes that mediate and allow for the individual's continuing becoming. The milieu is the affective "ecology of the event" of becoming (see Manning, 2009).

I sum up this section by once more situating the conceptual work done within the question of "material-semiotics." Like two sides of a coin, content and mood – or form and feeling – point towards the "material-semiotics" of forms that appear and operate as symptom, signal and symbol. Forms, or signs, appear on the one side as clearly

[78] Rem Koolhaas (in)famously proclaimed that "context stinks" (Koolhaas, in Latour, 2005, p. 148). It could be said that he did not denounce the notion of context as such, but its connotation in terms of subordinating the contextual to the actual and of understanding it in mere substantialist terms.

discernible and discontinuous content - the *symbolic* realm of *signification* and representation. On the other side forms, or signs, turn into *symptoms* and *signals*, expressing a specific *mood* – the affective tonality of an "embracing atmosphere" which "qualifies the overall feel" (Massumi, 2008, p. 24) – and, due to their *significance*, demand for a certain future. Symptoms and signals, as mood, are expressing a "vector feeling-tone" (Whitehead, 1929/1979, p. 119).

As such, the semiology of symptom and signal could be said to be "materializing an expression devoid of an object, which the movement of the work activates" (Hennion, 2014, p. 172). Not *showing* or representing any particular content, a symptomatic is rather *pointing* at the welling of a process of becoming, expressing its vector-like feeling-tone. A symptom is thereby pointing at the "preacceleration" and "overarticulation" (Manning, 2009) of the movement of individuation. As signal, the work demands a gesture as much as it is obliged by it. Hennion (2014) in this respect talks about the dual nature of the work (of art):

> [I]t is as a result of their very scope, rather than any artifice in their analysis, that works of art are dual in character, being absolutely symmetrically and indissociably structured around the *appeal* they make to their audience and the necessary answer of those who *respond* to this appeal, allowing themselves to get caught up in it, captivated, and emotionally – but also physically – moved as a result of the significant work of re-interpretation [-presentation; BM] they have undertaken. (Hennion, 2014, p. 172, emphasis added)

The material-semiotics of symptom and signal are the relational performance of practitioner (as audience) and work. What can appeal and express appetites are the virtual, vector-like feeling tones of both practitioner and work, at any moment entangled within their wider associated milieu. Practitioner and work cannot directly communicate or relate.

Invention is only possible as virtual, immanent relation of affective flows, expressive of a movement of "living forwards." The body's relational capacity for affection – expressed in relational movements of expansive desire and contractive belief – is thereby key. This requires that we never dissociate bodies from the flow of affects of which they are composed and thus think bodies in terms of preindividual movements of action and passion, of appealing, desiring, responding and undergoing.

The next section seeks to specify the work to be made, and thus the appeal and appetites of the work, as a question of aesthetics and as an "analog" relation between the formations of practitioner and work.

3.2.5 Aesthetizising "the work"

[I]t is actually not the geometrical proportions of the temple that lend it its appeal, but the fact that it exists in the world as a compound of stones, coolness, darkness and stability, which impart in an antecedent, pre-perceptional way a new direction to our capacity to will or desire, our fear or our drive [élan]. The qualitative charge integrated into the world turns this block of stones into a motor of our tendencies.
(Simondon, 2012a, p. 178, translated by BM)[79]

On the path which leads to that which is to be thought,
everything begins with sensibility.
(Deleuze, 1994, p. 144)

There is a certain artfulness in every experience.
(Massumi, 2008, p. 7)

So far, I have qualified the "appeal" and "appetite" of living forms[80] by drawing on various authors adhering to a virtual or "immanent naturalism".[81] Seeking to resist a pervasise anthropomorphization in social sciences in general and specifically in creativity studies, the categories normally reserved for human experience or capacities were thereby cast back into a world of materials. "The work" thereby turned into an engagement with a world full of expectations, desire, tendencies, values and importance and a circulation of subjects becoming objects becoming subjects. With Tarde, bodies turned into relational flows of (micro) "desires" and "beliefs." With James, Whitehead, Simondon, Deleuze and Guattari and their commentators Massumi and Manning, I situated these vector-like feeling tones within the virtual and molecular reality of "direct experience." Within the overall "material-semiotics" (see Law, 2009) of forms as symptoms and signals, the affectivity of a molecular relationality was specified as expressing overall trajectories, pointing at and demanding possible future existences. Affectivity was further particularized as a membrane stretching between the preindividual and the individual and therefore relating both past and future as well as the individual and its milieu. I suggested that affect thereby centrally mediates sensation and action.

In what follows, I ask once more about the appeal of things. What is the "qualitative charge" of living forms? What is the "content" of "moods," what "the motor of our tendencies" of desire and belief? Can we further define the basic forces of expansion

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[79] This and the following quotes are translations taken from the German version (2012a) of Simondon's "*Du mode d'existence des objets techniques*" (1958/1989). As work-in-progress, the English translation (Simondon, 1958/2010) used so far does not entail the parts refered to in the following.

[80] "Form" here stands as proxy for the so far employed notions of "body" or "being."

[81] Connolly (2006) labels Deleuze's philosophy a form of "immanent naturalism': "It is *naturalistic* in refusing to embrace dualism or supranatural forces. It is *immanent* in identifying protean forces - forces that can disturb the "actuality" of relatively stable things, beings, processes, systems, etc." (p. 70, emphasis in original)

and contraction marked by desire and belief? How much "sensation" is in a "feeling tone?" Drawing on Simondon and others, I suggest that "the work," after having been spatialized, dynamized, dramatized and virtualized, eventually also needs to be "aesthetizised."

"Every sensation is affective" asserts Strati (2007, p. 64), suggesting to not divide comprehension from appreciation. Having strongly focused on affect sofar, in this section I read Strati's assertion from back to front; it reminds us to not forget that "every affect is aesthetic," or, as Deleuze would say, that "percept" and "affect" are indissociably linked (see Smith, 1996). It is in this sense, taken literally, that Gilles Deleuze asserts in a decidedly empiricist tone: "On the path which leads to that which is to be thought, everything begins with sensibility" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 144). Whether Deleuze talks about sensibility, Simondon about the aesthetic, or Massumi about the "artfulness of experience," what they point at is the sensible substrate of affect.

To follow this intuition, I turn to a form of "techno-aesthetics" (see for example Simondon, 2012b) that situates aesthetics as a basic aspect of relationality that straddles the divide between "dynamic ground" and actual form. For Simondon, aesthetics is not a question of explicit aesthetic objects but a distinctive mode of relating to the world. He therefore develops a theory of aesthetics that revolves around aesthetic impressions, rather than the aesthetic object, and a form of "techno aesthetics," rather than any notion of natural aesthetics (see Michaud, 2012, p. 131).

Any aesthetic object, in its literal sense of being "objective," is for Simondon (see 1958/1989) only the endpoint of a genesis that infixes and inserts aesthetic objects into human and natural reality. A work of art for example, distinguished from a tool or instrument, which are detached from the world, is for Simondon a continuation of the world that is closely attached to its local conditions. The aesthetic object does not exist without its surroundings, it is inserted into a living reality. An aesthetic work, according to Simondon, thus does not copy the world or the human being, but continues them and engrafts itself onto them. Thwarting any sense of substantialist thinking, Simondon thereby emphasizes that it is not the object as such that carries distinctive aesthetic properties, but the encounter that is happening on the occasion of the object between a real aspect of the world and a human gesture. As such, aesthetic reality is the outcome of an encounter, an experience that is neither located in the subject or the object alone but in their coming to be in the moment of perception and participation. What is experienced is the continuation of a living reality that makes an aesthetic object "appealing," calling forth a human gesture. We heard Hennion (2014) in this respect talk before about the dual nature of (artistic) objects.

What then is the object's appeal and what does it, in Simondon's (2012a) words, continue? And what is the gesture, the response to this appeal? The object's appeal stems from its "qualitative charge" (p. 178), its affective tonality and its potential to affect, incite and prompt our response. In the example given in the beginning quote, Simondon compares the technical drawing of an ancient Greek temple with the experience of its actual remnants. Both exhibit different aesthetics. The aesthetics of the temple, as a living form, is based on its assemblage of "stones, coolness, darkness and stability." The expressive (symptomatic) and appealingly urging (signalling) character of the temple, "a distinguished form of aliveness" (p. 179), is made possible by it's specific material aesthetics, its sensations.

We do not experience forms as such but "sensations." A conventional understanding of perception revolves around questions of recognition and interpretation and a respective image of thought. In Deleuze's theory of sensation (see Smith, 1996), the idea of "sensation" yet proposes an alternative to perception's idea of representation. "Sensation" is the experience and encounter of a "sign." To be sure, "whether through words, colours, sounds, or stone, art is the language of sensations" (p. 176) assert Deleuze and Guattari. But words, sounds, colors, movement or material have to pass into sensation. We compose sensations. And in both production and consumption, sensation is not situated within a recognizable object but an encountered sign. Within the material-semiotic frame developed, I thus propose sensation as encountered sign, of symptom and signal. The idea of the symptom and signal then presupposes a sensible relational encounter, and this, for Deleuze, constitutes the basis for any possible aesthetics. The symptom and the signal are not recognizable objects nor specific qualities of an object. Each rather "constitutes the limit of the faculty of sensibility," it is "the being *of* the sensible" (Smith, 1996, p. 34, emphasis in original). Deleuze thereby affirms the encountered sign – the sign as symptom and signal – as the primary element of sensation.

What then makes for the dynamic sentience of symptoms and signals? What are their sentient "activation contours" (see Stern, 1985)? Drawing on Deleuze's theory of sensations, I propose first of all, they are to be understood as compositions of forces. Deleuze here mobilizes Leibniz' example of the different sub-sounds of the waves converging into the swoosh of the ocean (Deleuze, 1994, p. 253). The preindividual notion of "percept," as opposed to perception, is Deleuze's and Guattari's key term for this. A percept "makes perceptible the imperceptible forces that populate the world, affect us, and make us become" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 176). What Deleuze and Guattari call sensations are basic forces. In the case of painting, to paint sensations therefore means "to paint forces" (p, 176.)

It is in *kinetic* terms that we can therefore describe the basic dynamic patterns of sentient forces. With Tarde, I defined the basic forces of desire and belief as powers of expansion and contraction. With a closer look at their sensible substrate, these forces can be specified as vectors with specific speeds and intensities. What kind of movement qualities does a sensation possibly hold? Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to the durational quality of "forces of gravity, heaviness, rotation, the vortex, explosion, expansion, germination, and time" (p. 176). Massumi (2003) draws on Daniel Stern's concept of "activation contour", "a continuous *rhythm* of seamlessly linked accelerations and decelerations, increases and decreases in intensity, starts and stops" (p. 144). And Susanne Langer (1953) draws on the tonal structure of music as expressing a basic "pattern of sentience":

> The tonal structures we call "music" bear a close logical similarity to the forms of human feeling - forms of growth and of attenuation, flowing and stowing, conflict and resolution, speed, arrest, terrific excitement, calm, or subtle activation and dreamy lapses – not joy and sorrow perhaps, but the poignancy of either and both – the greatness and brevity and eternal passing of everything vitally felt. Such is the pattern, or logical form, of sentience; and the pattern of music is that same form worked out in pure, measured sound and silence. Music is a tonal analogue of emotive life. (Langer, 1953/1991, p. 68)

The musical vocabulary of tonal dynamics is expressive of some of the pervasive patterns of our sentience. Its "elusive qualities are better captured by dynamic, kinetic terms, such as "surging," "fading away," "fleeting," "explosive," "crescendo," "decrescendo," "bursting," "drawn out," and so on" (Stern, 1985, p. 54).[82] The kinetic terms we find in the musical language speak of basic dynamics of life. While music and other, especially time-based arts like dance, theater and cinema "move us by the expressions of vitality that resonate in us" (Stern, 2010, pp. 3–4), they are expressive of basic patterns of sentience. For Smith (1996), "the work of art is a functional 'machine' that *produces* effects of vibration, resonance and forced movement" (p. 47). The basic principles of sensation constitute the principles of the creative composition of works of art, and conversely the artistic product reveals these conditions (see Smith, 1996). As much as music is a tonal analog of affective life, dance is a motional and painting a visual analog.

It is in this way that Massumi (2008) speaks of a "certain artfulness in every experience" (p. 7), that Simondon (1958/2010) speaks of a "strong kinship between

[82] Daniel Stern (1985, 2009, 2010), an experimental development psychologist and psychoanalyst draws on Susanne Langer's (1953) (and therefore Whitehead's (1929/1979)) idea of the "feeling of form" to suggest that an infant's meaningful experience is based not on actual and representable forms but what he first called "vitality affect" (see Stern, 1985).

life and thought" (p. 33) and that Stern (2010) generalizes as "forms of vitality" continuing to operate in adult life. Stern assumes a

> fundamental dynamic pentad of movement, time, force, space, and intention … to be a basic, natural Gestalt that applies to the inanimate world as we observe it, to interpersonal relationships as we live them, and to the products of culture as we experience them. This seems to be the way the mind was designed to grasp dynamic happenings. (Stern, 2010, p. 7)

The kinetic, that is "force-ful" and dynamic contours of sensation are, in Simondon's terms aesthetic to the extent that they continue the "qualitative flow" of live matter. Simondon (2012a) here refers to a pre-subjective and pre-objective qualitative existence that "awakens the urge of our tropisms, our primal existence in the world before perception, as a being that does not yet realize an object but directions, ways that lead to some height or depth, to darkness or light" (p. 179). Simondon points at the qualitative existence of an object when it is meant as eliciting certain tendencies, and is in its strict sense not an object but an encountered symptom and signal:

> The aesthetic reality is pre-objective, in the sense in that it can be said that the world is before any object; the aesthetic object is object at the endpoint of a genesis that lends it its stability, that cuts it off the world and raises it from the world; prior to this genesis there exists a reality that is not yet objective, although it is not subjective; it is a distinguished form of aliveness, of being in the world, that comprises appeal structures, directions, tropisms in the literal sense. (Simondon, 2012a, p. 179)

As object, the aesthetic object is only the endpoint of a (morpho)genesis that stabilized it. The genesis yet depended on the aesthetic object in a pre-objective state of being symptom and signal, a vital reality that - neither objective nor subjective - entails appeal structures, directions and tropisms.

In turning into symptoms and signals, encountered signs interrupt and make us feel or think, "as if the encountered sign were the bearer of a problem" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 32). When Van Gogh's sunflowers move us in any way, this is not because we experience sunflowers but because Van Gogh was able to harness the sensations of sunflowers, that is, he made his material - colours and lines – pass into sensation while painting and going through the sensations of sunflowers himself. Deleuze and Guattari in this respect talk of "becoming", as O'Sullivan (2006) noted: "Van Gogh becomes sunflower in painting the sunflowers, we become sunflower in beholding, in encountering, Van Gogh's painting. "We become" meaning we go through sensations" (p. 56). Becoming does not mean that one term becomes the other, but that an encounter between two terms is possible on the molecular level of sensations. The becoming is thereby a "third," a milieu, in the middle and outside its two terms.

Invention, which involves a mutual becoming of terms, is based on *aesthetic analogies*. It is "by virtue of their nonsensuous similarity of their activation contour" (Massumi, 2003, p. 7) that diverse forms can be linked. Stern (1985) for example shows that communication between baby and caretaker happens on the ground of sentience patterns that can be mapped across various senses (a high-pitched and piercing cry becomes answered in a soothing stroke, a glance and a smile becomes attended to through a tonal modulation, e.g. a long-drawn "hey hey" with a rising pitch). The same cross-modal mapping is assumed to take place in our ability to turn sound into movement (dance), to find a visual expression for a story, smell or motion (painting) etc. In this sense, Massumi asserts that

> [t]his linking can operate nonlocally across great distances in objective time and space bringing, through its resemblance to itself, an extreme diversity of situations into qualitative proximity with each other. (Massumi, 2003, p. 5)

The basic principle of the association of forms is an "analog contagion between different but resonating formations" (Massumi, 2008, p. 23).

For Simondon, analogy is the principle that allows for relation to figural elements on the basis of their dynamic ground. The analog relation is specific in its capability to connect beings without interfusing them and without the necessity of a material continuity between them, because it perpetuates their sentient dynamics. A quote from Simondon (2012a) helps to elucidate his thinking on analogy as a form of relation that preserves and perpetuates a differential form of identity:

> Analogy is the foundation of the possibility of passing from one term to the other without one term being negated by the other. Père Bruno de Solages has defined it as identity of relations, in order to distinguish it from resemblance, which is only, in general, a partial relation of identity. The complete analogy is more than the identity of the internal relations that make up two realities: it is the identity of figural structures, but it is also the identity of the grounds of both realities; it is the identity in the interconnection of figure and ground in two realities. (Simondon, 2012a, p. 176)

For Simondon, the complete analogy is only an ideal, and it is important to understand the implied difference between an *operatory analogy* and a *structural analogy* (see Barthélémy, 2012). We find here two different ideas of identity at work. Structural analogy is for Simondon a question of exterior design and a relation of mere resemblance. Along his interest in forms and their material manifestations in relation not "to their logic but, as one could say, their physiology," their "material and energetic agency" (Schmidgen, 2005, p. 17), the *operatory analogy* is for Simondon

the possibility to relate forms on the basis of their foundational qualities, their informed energies. The idea of *operatory analogy* thus denotes the relation of structurally different forms on the basis of their affective and aesthetic qualities.

As I have discussed throughout, when it comes to creativity and invention, the lesson to be learned is that forms can only be related by virtue of an operatory analogy of a form's "sensation." This, as I suggested, is a question of encountering the "work" in specific ways. In a next step, I therefore propose to qualify the figure of the practitioner. I suggest that the conceptual figures of *amateur* and *aficionado* are designated figures in this respect.

3.2.6 Populating "the work"

When objects turn into expressive and affective symptoms and signals, how can we name the changes it has on the subject? What is a practitioner to do who is no longer thought to just impose at will a form onto passive matter, but to "surrender to the material" and "to follow where it leads"? Deleuze and Guattari (1987) in this respect draw on the figure of the artisan, "as one who is determined in such a way as to follow a flow of matter …. The artisan is *the itinerant*, *the ambulant*. To follow the flow of matter is to itinerate, to ambulate. It is intuition in action" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 409, emphasis in original). Artisans and craftsmen are the experts[83] that, for Deleuze and Guattari, understand the virtual tendencies and actual capacities of materials: out of an active material, they procure a form. Rather than controlling matter and imposing a predetermined form, they intimately engage with their material in a process of co-constitution leading to a final product. Having adopted the notion of material for an understanding of a "thing in the making," I will draw on the conceptual figures of the "amateur," and *aficionado* to describe the "practitioner in the making." An example of such is characterized by Hennion (2012a):

> [T]he amateur (in the broad sense of art lover) is a virtuoso of experimentation, be it aesthetic, technical, social, mental, or corporeal. She is the model of an inventive and reflexive actor, tightly bound to a collective, continuously forced to put into question the determinants of what she likes. She is as self-aware about pieces and products as about the social determinants and mimetic biases of her preferences; about the training of her body and soul as about her ability to like music, the technical devices of appreciation and the necessary conditions of a good feeling, the support of a

[83] Simondon talks about skilled practitioners as experts. Experts, in the etymological sense, are practitioners that have become experienced, that is, they have acquired an acute sense of the properties, potentials and needs of their material. Simondon notes that "they share the living nature of the thing they know, and their learning is a participatory learning, profound and direct, that requires an original symbiosis, involving a kind of fraternity with a valued and qualified aspect of the world" (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 52).

> collective and the vocabulary progressively designed to perform and intensify her pleasure. (Hennion, 2012a, p. 258)

Amateurs are experimenters within a collective. This description points to important characteristics of the creative practitioner that, when addressed as "subject in the making" similarly must be regarded as affectionately involved in the work at hand. As such, I also propose the conceptual figure of the *aficionado* – an "expert of affections" – as another helpful figure to understand the characteristic of artistic practitioners. The practitioner-cum-amateur is an *aficionado* in terms of being skilled and passionate about an activity or a certain subject in respect to the affects involved.

After having attended strongly to the material of creative practice so far, populating "the work" with amateurs and *aficionadas* is a crucial step towards a conceptual framework that develops an alternative vocabulary for denoting its various aspects. Amateurs and aficionados are practitioners that engage their material with "love and affection" and therefore make it yield. They are virtuous experimenters.

The next section then attends closer to this idea of experimentation and suggests to differentiate certain prototypical *modes of engagement* between amateur, or *aficionado*, and material.

3.2.7 Signifying "the work"

Percepts and concepts interpenetrate and melt together, impregnate and fertilize each other. Neither, taken alone, knows reality in its completeness. We need them both, as we need both our legs to walk with …
[T]o understand life by concepts [alone; BM] is to arrest its movement.
(James, 1911/1996, pp. 52–53)

Art is composition, but the technical composition of the material is not the same as the aesthetic composition of the sensation …. The question that must therefore be posed to a work of art, argues Deleuze, is not "What does it mean?" (interpretation) but rather "How does it work?" (experimentation).
(Smith, 1996, p. 47)

Invention is a taking charge of the system of actuality by the system of potentialities, the creation of a single system from those two systems. Forms are passive insofar as they represent actuality; they become active when they are organized in relation to their ground, thus introducing earlier potentialities to actuality.
(Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 33, emphasis added)

Art is at the same time aesthetic poise and work; the work can only exist as performed and enacted …. Art consists of the artistic activity and the objectivated, actualized work; in this sense there is mediation because there is celebration.
(Simondon, 2012a, p. 180, emphasis added)

Within a last take on the initial question of the work to be made, I finally specify creative practice in light of its material-semiotics as a matter of *sensemaking*. This means returning once more to the initial premise of this framework, understanding the work to be made as a question of *enaction*.

How do we *make sense* of a work in the making? Addressing this issue, I first revisit the pivotal perspective of *sensemaking* as *enactivist epistemology* (see also 3.1). Then I proceed by discussing the material-semiotics of symptom, signal and symbol in light of James' (1911/1996) non-dualistic semiotics that posits concepts and percepts[84] to be co-extensive. This serves as the backdrop for turning the question of creativity and invention into a holistic kind of sensemaking that rests on the interplay of percepts and concepts. The specific sensemaking of the work to be made mainly asks "*how does it work*?" and proceeds by "taking charge of the system of actuality by the system of potentialities" (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 33). This, according to Simondon, is a question of organizing forms in relation to their ground – an organizing that, as he

[84] The terms concept and percept are proxies. James (1911/1996) interchangeably uses the terms "idea," "thought" and "intellection" for the notion of concept and the terms "sensation," "feeling," "intuition" and "sensible experience" for the notion of percept (see fn.1, p. 48).

asserts, is a question of *celebration* (Simondon, 2012a, p. 180, emphasis added), of appreciating and honoring[85] one's materials.

Making sense of the work – a question of enaction

As Gilbert Simondon (2012a, p. 180) asserts, the work to be made is a question of enactment, or *enaction* (see 3.1). Creative practice, just as any other viable conduct, means making active discriminations and enacting actual forms and concepts against an unarticulated, preindividual (back)ground.

Enaction means the embodied action of actualizing forms. Its "ground," as Simondon calls it, is thereby "without foundations" (see also Brown & Stenner, 2009):

> Groundlessness is the very condition for the richly textured and interdependent world of human experience. … All of our activities depend on a background that can never be pinned down with any sense of ultimate solidity and finality. … Groundlessness is revealed in cognition as "common sense," that is, in knowing how to negotiate our way through a world that is not fixed and pregiven but that is continually shaped by the types of actions in which we engage. (Varela et al., 1991, p. 144)

Varela et al. here point at the peculiar reciprocity of ontology and epistemology in an "immanent naturalism," where living beings continually engage in an auto-epistemico-ontogenesis: we are feeling our way forwards on the basis of a "common sense" or "sensible knowledge" (Strati, 2007) that is informing and being informed by ongoing experimentation. Knowing-how and ontogenesis are inextricably linked in the reciprocity of a mutual shaping of embodied back-ground and milieu.

Against the background of a basic indeterminacy of a processual reality, our everyday as well as scientific acts of sensemaking are both forms of inquiry and embodied acts of "world-making." I therefore propose an *enactivist epistemology* (see Stewart et al., 2011; Tsoukas, 2008) that fundamentally assumes that sensory experience is contingent upon bodily activity. This basic idea extends to an understanding of "sensible knowledge" (Strati, 2007). Concepts, as Hutchins (2011) puts it, "are created and manipulated in culturally organized practices of moving and experiencing the body" (p. 429). While the proponents of enactivism within organization science so far mainly draw on existential phenomenology (see for example Holt & Cornelissen, 2013; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014; Tsoukas, 2008), I propose a pragmatist approach to

[85] Celebration stems from the Latin verb *celebrare*, from *celebr-* "frequented or honored" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010)

enaction that posits that sensory experience[86] is contingent upon embodied and skilled tests and trials, that is, experiments that engage with matters of concern.

The more general pragmatist position then seeks *sense* inside the experiential flux of a world in movement rather than outside in some static, abstract and transcendental sphere. "Living is a process of sense-making, of bringing forth significance and value. In this way, the environment becomes a place of valence, of attraction and repulsion, approach or escape" (Thompson, 2007, p. 158). The relational and holistic character of sensemaking within an *enactivist epistemology* does not severe "sense" from "action," or "interpretation" from "creation" but rather assumes the continuity of action, comprehension, feeling and appreciation. It is crucial to understand that the continuum of experience does not mean that we could step out of "living forwards." Set against a basic condition of "groundlessness," we negotiate or feel our way through a world "in the making" that is enacted as a place of valence and significance. Enaction, as a form of basic biological cognition, must hence be considered a "viable conduct" (Thompson, 2007, p. 158). As such, enaction equates the ongoing and partly "immanent sensemaking" (see Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014) of concerned and oriented practice.

Enaction is the basic sensemaking of a living organism striving for subsistence and driven by its appetites and desires. It proceeds along three lines: "sensibility as openness to the environment, signification as valuing, and direction as orientation of action" (Protevi, 2010, p. 425). From a pragmatist perspective, enactive practice therefore is characterized through the "activity-sensibility" of the organism (see Hennion, 2011) and the vector-like quality of appetition that primarily equates sense with pragmatic significance and not with linguistic signification (see DeLanda, 2012). Significance is therefore situated in the affective realm of (human) desires, needs, hopes and fears.

Substantive and operatory dimensions of conceptualization

In his account of sensemaking, James (1909/1996, p. 244) distinguishes the reality of immediate experience from its conceptualization and representation in language. In practical coping as well as abstract interpretation, the reality of immediate experience is enacted – it is discriminated, labelled and represented – in order to render intelligible and organize our everyday experiences. James' pragmatic understanding of conceptualization thereby situates it within an oriented and concerned practice:

[86] Experience is etymologically related to the notion of experiment via Old French from Latin experientia, from experiri "try." Experience, experiment, expert and expertise form a semantic nexus.

conceptualization is done *in* and with experience, it is discriminating and naming what is significant within an ongoing flow of experience.

William James' (1911/1996) view on concepts helps us to specify the role of conceptualization – sign-based thoughts and ideas – within the work to be made. While analytically differentiating percepts and concepts, James posits that they are not different in kind but rather coextensive aspects of an ongoing becoming of continuity. This distinction, and the way percept and concept need to be thought as interpenetrating, impregnating and fertilizing each other (pp. 52-53), sheds new light on how symptom, signal and symbol and their relationship can be understood.

James differentiates between the *content* and the *function* of concepts. This he calls the *substantive* and *functional* aspects of a concept (pp. 58-59).[87] The substantive part comprises the symbolic expression of a sign in language (e.g. "s-o-f-a") or in another symbolic form (e.g. gesturing a sofa), and the image or sensory presentation that is elicited by this respective sign (our proto-sofas). The functional part of a concept appeals to the embodied experience the concept affords us in a specific situation by affecting action or thought-feeling: what sofas afford us in terms of affective engagements with them, such as that they allow us to lay down and rest, hide and be safe, jump on or over for fun, relax, sleep, have sex, etc. It is important to note that functional does not equate instrumental here. James rather points to the significant affective affordances connected with a concept, which are more affective vectors than definite things or actions (see also Posteraro, 2014).

As such, the substantive and the functional part of a concept can be likened to what in 3.2.5 I drew from Simondon (see Barthélémy, 2012): the differentiation between the structural and operatory dimension of a term. Taking up the latter from the Simondonian terminology, in the following I therefore will speak about the *substantive* and the *operatory* aspects of concepts. The link of the substantive and the operatory aspect of concepts to the differentiation between symptom, signal and sign then is as follows: when a concept is shining forth as symptom or signal its operatory aspect is coming to the fore. As symbol, the concept is conceived in its substantive aspects.

Within Simondon's reappropriation of Gestalt theory, we could say that "[w]e're seeing double" (Massumi, 2008, p. 3), namely (conceptual) form and (perceptual) ground. Massumi here alludes to the duplicity of forms, being at the same time actual

[87] Work on "neural modes of self-reference" proposes to distinguish between an "experiential" and a "conceptual" mode of self-reference (Farb et al., 2007). This is a promising link that I however cannot explore further here within the scope of this dissertation.

and virtual. The same we can apply to specify our understanding of concepts: the actual, substantive form and its virtual, operatory potential of affection are inseparable.

According to James' (1911/1996, p. 60) *pragmatic rule*, the decisive part of a concept's significance rests in its force to make us move, to affect us. He writes that the important, pragmatic aspect of a concept lies "either *in the way* of making us think, or *in the way* of making us act" (p. 60). What is affected by the operatory aspects of a concept is not something definite but "a way," a direction in thinking-feeling or acting. The virtual, operatory aspects of concepts opens up their sensible, affective dimension that induces a sense of movement. This is why James warns of the "abuse" (p. 75) of concepts that, when taken only in their substantive dimension, may "arrest life's movement" (p. 244).

Summing up, the role of conceptualization in the work to be made is indissociably linked with a sense of *movement*. The idea of movement here points at the viability of the work as technoaesthetic being that is approached in its affective, and thus transformative capacity. Depending on whether and when concepts are activated in their virtual, operatory aspects or not, they afford operatory analogies and hence inventive mediation.

Organizing for and activating the operatory dimension – an epistemological task

While being in continuity with each other, the operatory and substantive dimensions of forms and concepts are not always present with the same intensity. We do not automatically encounter forms as symptoms and signals, that is, content in its affective, operatory contours. Sometimes, only seeing forms and their substantive features, we rather operate with symbols, potentially arresting the creative movement.

Whether the operatory or the substantive dimension is fore or backgrounded is a question of *organization* and specific *modes of engagement*. It is again Simondon (1958/2010) that emphasizes that forms and concepts need to be *organized* in relation to their dynamic ground, that is, their virtual, operatory aspects. Only then, as Simondon asserts, can we "introduce earlier potentialities to actuality" (p. 33).

The organization of forms in relation to their ground then is an epistemological task. Within invention, how can we organize a mode of "knowing" and engagement that activates forms? In other words, how can we organize the encounter and experience of forms in their (kin)aesthetic and operatory reality as symptoms and signals? I return to an empirical analysis of these concepts in Chapter Five and Chapter Six. For now I will detail the specific modes of engagement that are linked with the operatory and the substantive dimension of forms. Drawing on Smith's (1996) synthesis of Deleuze's

work on the making of art, I propose to distinguish two primary modes of engagement and their respective organization: *experimentation* and *interpretation*. Smith thereby differentiates the *aesthetic composition* of the material (as sensation) and the *technical composition* of material (as object). These are two distinguished but entwined modes of engaging materials. Experimentation and interpretation are not mutually exclusive, but rather tendencies on a continuum (see Cull, 2013). Experience is doubled and, depending on what is fore- or backgrounded, is either dominated by the appearance of *actual* forms and a sense of *instrumentality* (the form as tool) or *interpretation* (the form as symbol), or by the *virtual* and dynamic register of affective tonality (the form as symptom and signal) and a sense of *affection* and *experimentation*. Creative *experimentation* foregrounds the "artfulness" of experience and its operatory dynamics – the "dynamic, ongoingly relational pole" (Massumi, 2008, p. 7) of an experiential continuum. *Experimentation* means an immanent, "sympathetic" and appreciative "working *with*" materials (Bunn, 1999, p. 15, emphasis in original). Experimental modes of engagement "organize bodies in relation to their ground," thereby "activating" them. Everyday interaction and *interpretation* is dominated by a substantive, object-oriented, representational and instrumental pole. *Interpretation* then is a seemingly transcendent "doing *to*" (p. 15), an authoritarian imposition of meaning or form and a judgment. Overall, experimental and interpretive modes of engagement effect distinctive forms of sensemaking that seek to either engender and accelerate or to arrest, stabilize and consolidate movement. When it comes to invention and creativity, the dynamics between experimentation and interpretation then need to be further specified.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) formulate an experimental and experiential (see footnote 86) hermeneutic that seeks to "combat the mechanisms of interpretation" (p. 138). From their perspective, invention only takes place within experimental modes of engagement. "Experiment, don't signify and interpret" (p. 139) is their radical dictum; rather than an interpretation *of* texts, they seek a mode of engagement marked by experiencing and experimenting *with* texts. Experimentation and experiencing here "entails performing an encounter between the text, the speaker and the force relations in which they are entangled: an exploration of the relations and conditions of possibility between differen**t** elements" (Wezemael & Hillier, 2012, p. 317).

Deleuze's and Guattari's (1987) radical dictum to refrain from interpretation must be seen as set within their writing against a predominant interpretive hermeneutics that implicates an imposition of meaning on passive matter and to which they object. Rather, from a pragmatist and performative perspective, "interpretation" must be understood as part of the pragmatics and therefore the experimentation and experience

of practice. “Calling things names” or imposing authoritarian judgments are enactions that firstly require specific devices and technologies to be effective, and that secondly have to be understood in their pragmatic functions – they are part of experience and experimentation.

In practice, that is, empirically, experimentation and interpretation[88] can never exist by themselves. We are constantly engaging in interpretations, trying to make sense of our experiments and experiences. Connolly (2006) therefore proposes that

> it is through creative movement back and forth among experience, reflection on it, experimental observation, reflexive awareness of such experimentation, and the cautious application of specific techniques … that the most promising and dangerous possibilities emerge. (Connolly, 2006, p. 72)

What stays central in the continuum of experimentation and interpretation are the dynamics of sensemaking that aim to both uncover and follow the affective associations of discursivities and materials as well as to fix them temporarily in place.

I suggest that together, experimentation and interpretation form a nexus of “making sense” and “sensemaking.” Creative practice moves in-between the unthought and the thought, in-between virtual ground and actual figure and thereby *making sense* as well as effecting *sensemaking*. *Making sense* denotes the primary skilled, embodied, immanent and *experimental* engagement with things that is productive of relational events of sensation. This I understand as the basic *poēsis* of practice which is first and foremost a dynamic and relational process, oriented by sensible *significance* (as relevance, importance). As a form of *prospective sensemaking* (see Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014), by experimenting, *aficionados* sense and feel their way forwards, following *significant* traces and cues from and into the future.

The second modality of *sensemaking* is found in the perpetual conceptualization and *interpretation* of experience by an ongoing (re)creation of retrospective *significations* that tentatively enframe and solidify our experience by creating more or less clearly delineated entities. This form of sensemaking, closest to the conventional understanding of sensemaking within organization studies (see Weick, 1995), can therefore be already regarded a “second order” sensemaking, a making sense of the primary, immanent sensemaking of practice (see Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014).

Drawing on the coextensiveness of concept and percept as introduced above, the function of conceptual forms of sensemaking depend centrally on their way of

[88] From now on, I propose to understand “interpretation” within a pragmatist framing as a specific form of enaction and experimentation.

foregrounding or backgrounding the substantive or operatory dimensions of concepts. The key question within the experiential modality of *making sense* is *operatory*: "*How does it work?*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1977, in Smith, 1996, p. 47). The key question for a *sensemaking* that focuses primarily on the *substantive* dimensions of forms then is representational: "*What does it mean?*" (p. 47).

Overall, the work to be made encompasses both aesthetic poise (appeal) and the amateur's gesture and activity. I therefore assume the work to be made to stretch between an operatory and substantive mode of engagement and a respective form of sensemaking. While a *substantive* approach conceives of entities after their process of becoming, and hence as an interaction of entities and their actual functions, an *operatory* approach attends to the mutually constitutive exchange of pre-individual energies and forces in formational processes. By virtue of the *operatory analogy* between forms, inventive mediations thus become possible within operatory modes of engagement. Both, substantive and operative modes of engagement thereby equate a specific form of organization.

3.3 Resumee: the intensive hermeneutics of creativity and the work to be made

The preceding sections have formulated what I propose to call an "intensive hermeneutics of invention." In line with the "immanent naturalism" proposed, invention and creativity were suggested to be part of "intensive hermeneutics": a relational process where in the making, amateur and work, in a reciprocity of appeal and response ("doing" and "undergoing"), express and follow significant differences in order to arouse each other into existence. Invention thereby turned into an ubiquitous process of intensive material-semiotics. And the creativity of invention became to reside neither in the subject nor object of invention but in their very relationality. Crucial for this reappraisal of creativity as a hermeneutic phenomenon, as discussed throughout, is the distinction of beings and bodies (signs) as either symptoms and signals or symbols.

The sign as symptom, is "part of a greater event, or a complex condition, and to an experienced observer it signifies the rest of that situation of which it is a notable feature. It is a *symptom* of a state of affairs" (Langer, in Innis, 2009, p. 37). The symptom only is a symptom for "an experienced observer," someone who has attained the expertise to see it as such. The idea of the symptom hence marks a double relation. It indicates for "an experienced observer" a "state of affairs," that is, a greater event.

As such, I posit that the sign as symptom is itself an event. It centrally denotes a "happening",[89] an event, that is, a living presence that "expresses" a certain state or, as I suggested, a certain vector of an affair. The sign as symptom is an event that is expressive of a trajectory, a becoming with virtually active antecedents and descendants.

To understand the sign as *signal* builds on the sign as symptom. As *Appellfunktion*, the sign as signal must be granted an "appeal" (see Hennion, 2014). In their "appelative" character, signals address us by means of their significance. Signals affect us by opening up potential lines of action and feeling indicated by the sign as symptom. Signals indicate appeals and appetites of bodies in the making. It is in this way that signals press for a potential future existence. As signal, the work demands a gesture as much as it is obliged by it. Such is the peculiar, reciprocal relation of amateur and work. With experience and skill only, the *aficionada* learns to be affected by the materials' expressive and conative character which is indicating and signalling potential ways how to proceed.

Symptom/signal and symbol are two sides of the same coin we call experience. And experience, topologically stretched between the polarities of actual symbols and virtual symptoms and signals, is the currency of invention. Symptoms don't express a single, actual object and neither do signals indicate the appeals and appetites of an actual object. In the making, situated in the relation of a subject-to-be and object-to-be (within an associated milieu), they rather speak of a preindividual and therefore preobjective aesthetic reality. It is on this *intensive* level of appeal structures, directions and tropisms that Simondon (1958/1989), Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and eventually Massumi (2008) propose that the association of forms and hence also the creative engagement of practitioner and work must be situated. The substrate of symptoms and signals thus is not an actual object, but what Deleuze calls "sensation," the "being *of* the sensible"(Smith, 1996, p. 34). Deleuze asserts that the encountered sign – the sign as symptom and signal – is the primary element of sensation. Deleuze's notion of sensation is in close proximity with Simondon's definition of the aesthetic as temporal relation between the symptoms and signals of the preindividual experience and its surge towards a future existence. Eventually, I suggest that we do not automatically encounter signs or material as symptoms or signals. First of all practitioners need a certain "expertise" and secondly a specific experimental mode of

[89] The word *symptom* is based on Greek *sumptōma* "chance, symptom," from *sumpiptein* "happen" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

engagement in order to open up the always present but not always foregrounded reality of the symptom and the signal.

Overall, by spatializing, dynamizing, dramatizing, virtualizing, aesthetizising and signifying the work to be made, I arrived at an understanding of invention within a continuum of modes of engagements, spanning between experimentation and interpretation. Having arrived at an alternative understanding of materials and amateurs helps to further specify the central question of the work to be made.as an encounter of amateur (embodied form) and material (in-formed body). The wooden material is not encountering an active form but an embodied amateur and aficionada that bears specific tendencies and capacities of her own. It opens up a perspective where the material, besides its conventional role of "patient," is "one of the actors involved in the drama of its own making" (Becker, Faulkner, & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2006, p. 6). At the same time, the amateur, besides being an actor, appears also as one of the "patients involved in the drama of its own making." Both sides are endowed with form-ational tendencies and capacities. They don't exist as inherent traits, but as virtualities and intensive affects that result from the operation, make it possible and continuously alter it.

This is the first crucial part of my endeavour to ground "[c]omplex forms of theorizing organizations … [within an] *open-world ontology*, an *enactivist epistemology* and a *poetic praxeology*" (Tsoukas, 2008, p. 197, emphasis added). The ontological and epistemological assumptions of a world *in the making* with its nexus of imitation and invention in the following connect to and feed into a further conceptual framing through more empirically minded approaches. The aim of the next section then is to situate an understanding of experimentation and interpretation – and therefore invention and creativity – within a "poetic praxeology." This means to connect creativity to a flow of doings and happenings without resorting to conventional theories of action. To come to an alternative understanding of creativity not as an individual competence but a relational achievement, the key ideas of "mediation," "attachment," "performance", "event" and "skill" move center-stage.

3.4 Taste-making and a poetic praxeology

Having laid out the ontological and epistemological foundation of creative practice, I now turn to more empirically minded approaches that will help me to formulate more concrete analytical concepts guiding the formation of my research questions and the empirical research. How can the rich assumptions developed in the previous section

inform an empirical study interested in organizational life? What are the analytical concepts that allow for the study of practices of organizational creativity?

Following the relational and experiential understanding of creativity and invention developed so far, I turn to Bruno Latour and especially Antoine Hennion's pragmatism of attachments (see Hennion, 2013a). With their *performative* understanding of the work to be made, they further the previous emphasis of thinking amateurs and materials as affective bodies. At the same time they offer a rich vocabulary and methodological sensitivity that will eventually help to frame the dynamics of experimentation and interpretation as questions of performance, mediation, attachment, taste and ethics.

I first suggest that the intensive hermeneutics of invention only makes sense if we assume that any technoaesthetic being needs to be performed. There is no concrete, fixed (aesthetic) object. Albeit being somewhat of a truism when it comes to studying theatrical performances and their making, what is important is that a performance demands a gesture as much as it is obliged and enacted by this gesture. This means that the "work as work" is always a double work to make present to each other subject and object within the creative process. the work to be made thus involves the co-creation of a technoaesthetic and a human being: the work and the *aficionada* need each other in order to exist, the work must be *performed* as much as the amateur needs to *relive* it (Hennion, 2014). It is a mutual "*making exist*" (Latour, 2011, p. 310), a co-constitutive becoming which cannot be reduced to causes and ends. This, as I propose in the following is a question of the pragmatics of *attachment* and *mediation* (see Hennion, 2014).[90]

Mediation is the law of the "included middle",[91] two bodies are always mediated by a third. Mediation, as I will propose, is the key principle that links the material-semiotics of invention as developed before with the understanding of creativity as thoroughly relational and distributed phenomenon. "What does one have to go through to be"

[90] The concept of "mediation" has in Hennion's cultural sociology of music taken the place of the notion of "translation" in classical ANT studies on science and technology (see Hennion, 2013a). While the latter emphasized the social fabrication of a scientific or technological "fact," the notion of mediation served Hennion to grant music – a cultural object quickly reduced to nothing more than a social and human artifact – its own agency. As mediator, music was given back a certain "objectiveness" in the form of the capability to transform and disturb its listeners. As such, while ANT studies on science and technology sought to move from the unquestioned object to the social, Hennion's work on cultural practices sought to move in the opposite direction from the social to the "objective," yet without assuming an autonomous object. With their work on "amateurs," Hennion and colleagues (Gomart & Hennion, 1999; Hennion, Maisonneuve, & Gomart, 2000) then further focused on the reciprocity of mediation: amateurs do active work on their attachments to get transformed by them. Attachment is a performative dynamic that brings together an element of inertia, attachment is something that retains, and element of mobility, as it is the support that propels us into motion.

[91] This is a deliberate alternative to the well known "law of the exluded middle" which is classical logic's principle of non-contradiction between two terms.

respectively asks Hennion (1995, p. 235) when approaching the artistic work to be made as a question of mediation. Neither amateurs nor materials are anonymous and transparent intermediaries, since each is a medium, an affective middle: each body is itself a mediator. And as such, each mediator carries the potential for disturbing and changing the transportation of forces from one point of reality to the next.

To understand the relation and interactivity of subject and object "in the making," the rich concept of *attachment* makes us move beyond a theory of action towards an idea of mutual existence and presence. Beyond the dualism of voluntarity and compulsion, attachment accounts for phenomena of change and creativity within the "middle ranges of agency" (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 13), where activity and passivity enable each other (see also Latour, 1999a). The idea of attachment is thereby specifically helpful in formulating an alternative to the classical concept of "competence." Thinking in terms of attachment and mediation, action is only one event among others. "Making exist" is as much a question of performance as of arrivals, and hence the question "who acts?" has to be reformulated as "what occurs?" (Gomart & Hennion, 1999). This then is "the weird rule of a pedagogy of affect: you always move to be moved," as Steyaert (2009, p. 465) notes. As such, I assume that the production[92] and the appreciation of aesthetic objects are inseparably connected.

Practice as such, and therefore also creative practice is a matter of performance and "taste" (see Gherardi, 2009; Hennion, 2004, 2007), here understood as basic form of "activity-sensibility" (see Hennion, 2011). Creating is linked to sensitivity, and both creating and sensing are tied to performance and making. This is the basic pragmatic configuration at the heart of the mutual becoming of practitioner and product that asks us to never separate creation from (e)valuation. *The process of making things arrive is indissociable from the process of making oneself appreciate* (see Hennion, 2011, p. 108). "[W]hat do we do with art …, and what does it produce, emotionally and collectively," is for Hennion (2012, p. 251) therefore the central question when seeking to come to terms with the work to be made.

I therefore propose to understand creative practice as a nexus of aesthetics and ethics. When looking at the subject's side of the relation between subject and object, the work to be made can be understood as "living labor":

> Art, as we have said, is labor, living labor, and therefore invention of singularity, of singular figures and objects, linguistic expression, invention

[92] The notion of production is here used as proposed by Gumbrecht (2004) "according to the meaning of its etymological root (i.e. latin *producere*) that refers to the act of 'bringing forth' an object in space" (p. xiii, emphasis in original).

> of signs. There, in this first movement are lodged potenza of the subject in action, the subject's capacity to deepen knowledge to the point of reinventing the world. (Negri, 2008, p. xii)

The work to be made, as "living labor" is productive, both affecting the generation of novel forms as much as the becoming subject's capacities to sense and to act. "We are the offspring of our works" writes Latour (2013, p. 246), and thereby points at the political and ethical dimension of aesthetics and the work to be made. To understand the work to be made as living labour zooms in on the embodied dimension of the making of a technoaesthetic being. Becoming adept at any kind of technical mode of invention or imagination relies on the maker's embodied co-individuation with his or her material.

In the following sections I further ground and explore this argument by explicating the relation and the question of action within a socio-material approach to the question of creation as being centrally about *attachment* and *mediation.*

3.4.1 Three is the magic number – on mediation, performation and the event

> *Mediators are fundamental. Creation is all about mediators. Without them nothing happens. They can be people – for a philosopher, artists or scientists; for a scientist, philosophers or artists – but things too, even plants or animals (...). Whether they are real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you have to form your mediators... I need my mediators to express myself and they'd never express themselves without me: you're always working in a group, even when you seem to be on your own.*
> *(Deleuze, 1995, p. 125)*

What are the *means* that make something happen and take shape, or dwindle and die? This is according to Hennion (2014, p. 167) the central question of mediation.[93] In our course of trying to understand the work to be made, mediation, as the basic principle of relational becoming, helps us to understand how amateur and material surge into presence and existence. Mediators and mediation are thereby fundamental. Such is the first hint and reminder Deleuze offers for our understanding of mediation as ontological principle of "creation." Existence is never substantial but always mediated; it is relationally "brought forth." "Without mediators nothing *happens*," notes Deleuze, and therewith points out that mediation has to be thought as an event of becoming, a relational "bringing forth," a "making do" which is uncertain in its effects. The productive reading of mediation I pursue here thereby always involves the creative

[93] Mediation has, in one form or the other, featured as a central concept in the works of Gilbert Simondon (see for example Simondon, 2009), Michel Serres (see for example Brown & Stenner, 2009), Bruno Latour (see 2005) and especially Antoine Hennion (1995, 1997, 2012a). Deleuze does not mobilize the notion of mediation or mediator frequently and uses the French term "intercessor" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 171) instead, which in the quote above has been translated with "mediator."

emergence of a third – a middle, medium and milieu[94] - that did not exist before and that *en passant* modifies two elements. "Two actors are always mediated by a third; this is the ultimate lesson of the circulation of reference" writes Harman (2009, p. 77) in his praise of Latour's ontological contribution. In this way, Deleuze's quote on mediation could be said to lack a more explicit mentioning of the emerging properties of the work to be made. The artist and the scientist, when becoming mediators for each other bear a "work" – an "expression" which could be a gesture, a thought, a conversation or something else – that multiplies and modifies its constitutive elements. The work to be made means the mutual engagement of amateur and material to be emergent, to give rise to a presence within material and amateur and even more to "the work" which is between them. Yet, and this is the second sense in which the work to be made is a mediation, the mediation of amateur and material is itself mediated by all sorts of productive means. With Deleuze's example above, we can think this form of mediation in terms of the various mediators that might mediate the presence and contact of amateur and material: mabye a cat sitting on the amateur's lap, or his studio which is full of plants and flowers that make him feel relaxed and open for an engagement with the material. "Three make a group," and it is in this way that Deleuze asserts that "you're always working in a group."

Mediation is always an event. It is always productive and uncertain, as "[m]ediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (Latour, 2005, p. 39). And, as noted before, action is only one event among others. The principle of mediation, thought as an event, therefore is central for developing an understanding of the becoming of amateur and material as "something that happens," which involves doings and arrivals. Latour (1996) asserts that

> we need to consider any point as being a mediation, that is to say, as an *event*, which cannot be defined in terms of inputs and outputs or causes or consequences. The idea of mediation or event enables us to retain the only two characteristics of action that are useful, i.e.. the emergence of novelty together with the impossibility of ex-nihilo creation. (Latour, 1996, p. 237, emphasis in original)

Positing mediation as an event revises our whole idea of action. The hylomorphic idea of (inter)action, as having a definite point of origin - either in the almighty subject or the almighty object - is superseded by the idea of "interobjectivity" (see Latour, 1996). While interactivity means thinking relations within the subject-object dualism, "interobjectivity" means to attend to relations as contemporary with becoming and

[94] The term mediation derives from Latin *medius* "middle." All three notions (medium, middle and milieu) have a say when it comes to understanding the notion of mediation as suggested here.

thus as preceding the full constitution of subjects and objects as individual entities: individuals emerge from relations and not the other way round.

The notion of event denotes the "slight surprise of action" (Latour, 1999c, p. 281), the "escaping edge of any systematisation" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 20) that comes with any mediation. "[E]vents are primary in a world in which the background is open to modification and in which diverse material bodies are constantly being brought into relation" (p. 20) From this perspective, action, which is always mediated, bears a fundamental creativity of mutation: "I never act; I am always slightly surprised by what I do. That which acts through me is also surprised by what I do, by the chance to mutate, to change, and to bifurcate" (Latour, 1999c, p. 281).

We are from here on dealing with phenomena where what was once called activity and passivity now need and enable each other. Deleuze's assertion that "one has to actively form one's mediators" has therefore to be read not as a linear sequence but as a nexus of activity and passivity: it is an active engagement with other mediators that in the course of events bears a new possibility for existence.

To think of mediation as such implies an empiricism that grants a relative, or relational reality to all sorts of beings – human and non-human. Artists, artefacts, airports, viruses, muses, or, in my case a dance performance, are "beings of relation," they are "assemblages" that are made to become present and to act or, as Deleuze puts it, "express themselves" (1995, p. 125). The radical empiricism, as introduced earlier, also holds here: the idea of mediation formulates a pragmatist theory of experience; it is a method of attending to the recurrent actions and passions as well as filaments co-constituting (aesthetic) experience. Any entity may thereby be understood as an "activity of relation" (Combes, 2013, p. 19) - it is at once what acts in the relation (I help others to express themselves) and what results from it (I need the mediators to express myself). Amateur and material are mutually obliged. Such a double logic of mediation further specifies the spatiality and temporality of amateurs and materials alike: both have to be considered as mediators (a *medium* in the phase of becoming) and as mediations (a *middle* that emerges from the former).[95] Amateurs or materials are not the source of action but are mediators that rely on other mediators; such is the basic understanding of affectivity (in the Spinozan sense) at the heart of mediation. This entails a very specific understanding of power, not as a power over, but a "power to make do" (see also Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). From this perspective amateurs as well as materials are understood as relationally constituting themselves within

[95] Again, this is not to be thought as a temporal succession of phases but as a "doubling" of being (see also Massumi, 2008).

dynamics of recurrent causalities. Any actor - human or not - can only "'proceed to action' by association with others who may surprise or exceed him/her/it" (Latour, 1996, p. 237). Such is the double work of mediation: *to do is to make happen,* as Latour notes, and, we can add, *to happen is to make do*! When following mediation upstream or downstream, we will find … more mediation. In a way, there is no outside to mediation.

The work to be made is a question of "making do" and "making happen." Antoine Hennion respectively speaks about the work as permanent "performation" (see Hennion, 2014) – a neologism that denotes the indissociable nexus of "performance" and "performativity." Performation[96] is the uncertain act of bringing forth, that is, making present and reliving, or, as Deleuze (1995, p. 125) puts it, expressing a form. Without definite causes and ends, the existence and presence of "the work" is always mediated within ongoing "performation" (see also Hennion, 2013a). While developing this idea in proximity to the case of music, Hennion (2014) seeks to develop a model pertaining to all kinds of technoaesthetic beings[97]: his basic premise is that artistic objects are dual in nature in that they, "in order to exist, must be performed and relived" (p. 168); they "are absolutely symmetrically and indissociably structured around the appeal they make to their audience and the necessary answer of those who respond to this appeal" (p. 172). This is a pragmatist specification of the technoaesthetic being as only existing as and within processes of *performance* – the work of performing - and *performativity* - the work that performances "do" and that they have its audience (including the performers themselves) do.

Performance within performance art reminds us of the simple truth that the work to be made is always in need of being done: only when danced, gestured, rendered, recited or staged does the work exist. It is therefore pointing at notions of virtuosity and improvisation, highlighting all the work – staging, lighting and technical skill facing a difficult exercise – that goes into a performance. The notion of performance itself is always in danger of turning into a quasi-sportive concept, accounting for the agility or rare skill of a performance. While the work to be made surely involves such a sense of performance it is also marked by performativity. Performativity "refers to the work that the audience (*and also the artist*) do in order to make the work surge within them"

[96] Performation: the first syllable "per-" (forward; through) hints at the stepping forward of performance, which is always an uncertain endeavour and thus entails a sense of putting oneself at risk.

[97] Hennion (2014) objects to a binary split within the arts between performative and non-performative arts, and rather proposes a continuum where different arts are distinguished according to their varying "internal need for performance" and their "varying degrees of fixedness" (p. 170). Contemporary Dance Theater thereby surely has to be situated on the far end of the continuum, towards a high need of performance due to a low degree of fixedness.

(p. 170, emphasis added). As such, the notion of performativity, heavily relying on the importance of the body, points "to an alternative theory of the work, by understanding it as a 'relation,' that is as a 'work in progress' which does not exist until those who perceive it have appropriated it, relived it, and made it their own" (p. 171). Taken together, performance and performativity "tend to reinforce each other": "a good performance is not possible without a good audience" (p. 173). While Hennion mostly refers to audience in terms of an external audience in a performance situation (e.g. a live concert), he concedes the artist herself is her own audience and that the double work of performation applies to this situation as well. Hence, when looking at the relation of amateur and material, the idea of performation highlights the specific mediation that is happening when a technoaesthetic being starts to "work," that is, when it is performed and at the same time demands to be received and to prolong its own tendencies and movements.

When we apply this idea again more closely to what is happening in the work to be made, the double work of mediation becomes clear and offers analytical insights. As a first example serves a short description of the creative process from Souriau, as rendered by Latour (2011). Souriau characterizes the work to be made as a double mediation that he expresses with the notion of "instauration":

> [S]aying of a work of art that it results from an instauration, is to get oneself ready to see the potter as the one who welcomes, gathers, prepares, explores, and invents the form of the work, just as one discovers or "invents" a treasure … But take careful note: … without activity, without worries, and without craftsmanship there would be no work, no being. Therefore, it is certainly an active modality. (Latour, 2011, p. 311)

The potter's work demands a gesture as much as it is obliged and enacted by this gesture. When the potter engages her material, we have to think it as a performance, an active modality resting on a tight network of collective competences, sensibilities and techniques (craftmanship) as well as concerns and necessities (worries) and possibly other mediators (e.g. animals or plants). This is the first sense of mediation implied: a performance is an active making that requires specific mediators. At the same time, when potter and material become present to each other, the active performance needs to be thought as performative: the material is allowed to disturb and transform, to demand, to arrive, and the potter is asked both to welcome and invent (Latin: "come into") the form of the work. This is the second sense of mediation implied in the work to be made: technoaesthetic beings change those who engage with them, and those who engage with them change them by engaging with them.

As introduced earlier, in the case of music, Antoine Hennion posits: to understand the work of art as mediation means firstly to "review the work in all the details of the gestures, bodies, habits, materials, spaces, languages, and institutions that it inhabits," and, secondly, directly mediated by the first, to "recognize the moment of the work in its specific and irreversible dimension; this means seeing it as a transformation, a productive work, and allowing oneself to take into account the (highly diversified) ways in which actors describe and experience aesthetic pleasure" (Hennion, 2012a, pp. 251–252). On the one side the work is seen with a capacity to affect, that is to us *do* or *feel* something, on the other side the performance of the work is an active modality that relies on craftmanship, devices and technologies. Antoine Hennion's approach then is original in joining these two aspects in a "positive conception of mediation," aiming at a "positive analysis of all the human and material intermediaries of the "performance" and "consumption" of art, from gestures and bodies to stages and media" (p. 253). Hennion grants an active role to the work of music itself, the inventive use of music and ways of listening, and the vital aesthetic experiences of the music consumer (Hennion, Maisonneuve, & Gomart, 2000, pp. 28–31). Music cannot be fathomed outside of the experience of those who play it, listen to it or otherwise engage with it, for example when dancing. Music is hence for Hennion "the art of mediation itself" (Hennion, 1995, p. 238), it is "nothing without everything on which it can rely. Better still, it is everything on which it relies" (Hennion, 2001, p. 6): bodies, sensations, emotions as well as "technical objects, material supports, carriers and instruments, but also discourse, practices, performance devices; all which a durable art requires" (Hennion, 1997, p. 416). This is neither to diminish the work nor the artist, but to understand that mediations are pragmatic: all the devices, technologies and artistic know-how are productive mediators that effect the performance of the work and, accordingly, its performative capacity to affect us.

> Mediations are neither mere carriers of the work nor substitutes that dissolve its reality; they are the art itself, as is particularly obvious in the case of music: when the performer places a score on his music stand, he plays that music, to be sure, but music is just as much the very fact of playing; mediations in music have a pragmatic status – they are the art that they reveal, and cannot be distinguished from the appreciation they generate. (Hennion, 2012a, p. 253)

The double work of mediation finds creation and "the art itself" in the various mediations taking place.

Overall then, the idea of mediation is an analytical resource for investigating the cumulative appearance of a work and its reception; it is an instrument for reopening the work-subject duality and to come to an understanding that sees amateur and

material as mutually constitutive. When it comes to the making of music or other cultural products, the notion of mediation suggests that the work to be made neither derives alone from the practitioner side – be it from an individual idea or vision or as the result of a general social process – nor from the work's side. Deleuze, Latour, Hennion and the new sociology of art hold to another premise: artworks are gaining existence through chains of material semiotic mediations, performed by the manifold and heterogeneous actants (human and non-human) taking part in the work to be made.

Mediation's implication for our understanding of creativity is tied to it being an *event*. Thinking mediation as event opens up for the new potential for thinking, doing and being that events may bear. The concept of event thereby "allows the emphasis on the contingency of orders to morph into an explicit concern with the new, and with the chances of invention and creativity" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 19). Attending to events in the context of creativity then opens up a further set of questions about how to *create* and *sustain* events, "how to bear and extend the potential that events open up, the sense of promise and futurity that they may hold? How, to put it differently, to relate to the future without capturing it and neutralising it before it happens?" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 23). Or, in terms of mediation: how might the idea of mediation help us to account for creative practice that is attending to its own mutability and its potential of the "not yet"?

With the concept of event, practice is further spelled out as entailing chance, contingency and unpredictability. This is ever more so when turning to creativity and artistic practice, where even common sense tells us that creativity can't be willed, or made and commanded but more often rather happens or occurs, as Crouch (2010) writes: "Creativity can happen unexpectedly in the ordinary and mundane because each of these is open to accident, variety, disruption and change" (p. 24). And with this an immanentist position allowing for creativity opens up – "in the immanence of possibility creativity happens" (p. 25). In practice we don't know what will be happening and we can only act into an uncertain future. "Creative acts do or do not take place. They can be enticed into being through work or enthusiasm, and above all through both, but they cannot be forced" (Bröckling, 2006, p. 514). Yet, *we can come to terms with the work to be made if we understand that the mediation of amateur and material is an event which itself has to be mediated.*

3.4.2 Attachment and plug-ins – of meaningful materials and devices

Creativity within a model of mediation cannot be situated at any specific place for good. The theory of mediation as laid out rather proposes creativity to be a thoroughly

relational, processual and material phenomenon. It must be understood as an uncertain effect of specific socio-material and technological configurations and practices. The focus on mediation thereby rehabilitated especially the agency of the work to be made: the work, while being thoroughly constructed and performed, also "acts" and demands to be relived. Following on from the double work of mediation, in this section I trace the question of invention and creativity from the perspective of the amateur and the central modes of engagement.

What is the work to be made from the perspective of the *aficionada*? And what is the *competence* that makes both for the performance and the appreciation of its performativity. How are the central modes of engagement (as laid out in 3.2.7) enabled? What are the devices of engagement? For responding to these questions, I propose to draw on the rich grammar of *attachment* (French: *attachement*).

The concept of *attachment* has been mobilized especially by Antoine Hennion and Bruno Latour (see Gomart & Hennion, 1999; Hennion, 2013a; Latour, 1999a) to follow up on the Foucauldian and Deleuzian thought (see Weiskopf, 2002) that insists on an affirmative reading of power and knowledge as desirable means of *subjectification*. The idea of attachment denotes the necessity of *becoming* as being mediated through a form of *belonging*. To think in terms of attachment thereby opens up the difference of whether something is "subjecting or subjectifying you" (Latour, 2005, p. 230). Just as "freedom is getting out of a *bad* bondage, not an *absence* of bonds" (p. 230, emphasis in original), so our competences, or better, *skills*,[98] also have to be thought as an accomplishment emerging from various attachments. After having specified the role of mediators, a focus on attachments will thereby complement a conceptual framework that references creativity as the production of novelty *ex materia*.

Conceptually as well as methodologically, the "sociology of attachment"[99] has developed material-semiotic sensibilities in the footsteps of Actor-Network Theory. Stressing the ontological effects of mediated operations for the subject-in-the-making, Antoine Hennion draws on Foucault's positive reading of power (Gomart & Hennion, 1999) and especially James' pragmatist conceptions (see Hennion, 2013a) to formulate a "medial anthropology".[100] As such, the idea of attachment has been developed as a

[98] See Ingold (2001) for a critical discussion of the notion of competence as being tied to entitative thinking.

[99] Antoine Hennion (Gomart & Hennion, 1999), Bruno Latour (1999a) and Michel Callon (1999) developed the idea of attachment in differing contexts – from economy (Callon) over cultural practices (Hennion) to the question of emancipation and freedom (Latour). The idea developed its main thrust in Antoine Hennion's work (see Hennion, 2013a, for a history of the concept's development).

[100] Hennion might subject to this characterization as he emphasizes how the turn to pragmatism means to go beyond any notion of human practice and action (Hennion, 2013a). This seems to be partly motivated by the

conceptual figure complementing the central image of the "network" or assemblage within ANT (see Hennion, 2011). Extending ANT's vocabulary and turning from "object-networks" to "subject-networks" (see Gomart & Hennion, 1999; Hennion, 2011), attachment, as especially developed within Hennion's work, which insists on the bodily engagement of "amateurs," covers a wide semantic field of meanings. Very generally, the idea of attachment can be said to denote various modalities of being related, joined and affected. Attachment thereby denotes both the fact of being attached and the thing one is attached to. It thereby goes beyond any mechanical or overly functional idea of linkage as sometimes connoted by the notion of "network." Looking into an English dictionary, we find two distinctive meanings that are joined in the concept of attachment as introduced here:

- *The attachment between child and caretaker*. More generally, the meanings of attachment in this sense span from various grades of emotional as well as physical relatedness over forms of appreciation, attention and engagement to forms of being captivated, enthralled or dependent. Central is an affectionate bond – a form of sympathy or fondness with a person, a thing or a place that is affective and (kin)aesthetic;
- *The email attachment*. In this sense, attachment denotes various forms of adjuncts, additions or appendices, that is, extensions that perform a particular function.

Taking the two meanings together, the idea of attachment specifies mediation first of all in its "passionate" dimension. It sharpens our view for the living being's positive dependence on all sorts of "life-support-systems" (see Latour, 2008a). In analogy to the distributedness of objects, the idea of attachment assumes a distributed subject and posits that its competencies and capacities emerge from the tactics and techniques of entering a "*dispositif"* (see Gomart & Hennion, 1999). This positive reading of Foucault's ideas on power and discipline, allows the authors to attend to the

> tentative techniques of preparation to produce … "active passion," this form of "attachment" which we attempt to describe as that which allows the subject to emerge – never alone, never a pristine individual, but rather always entangled with and generously gifted by a collective, by objects, techniques, constraints. (Gomart & Hennion, 1999, p. 220)

The notion of attachment attends to practices that are characterized not by activities alone but even more by the performativity of what has been put in place. I suggest that questions of creativity and invention can therefore be formulated in a new way by

need for distinguishing the pragmatism of attachments from other French sociologies (e.g. of Thévenot and Boltanski) that claim the adjective "pragmatist."

drawing on an idea of attachment that underlines the decisive part of that which arrives and demands to be articulated. With his work on amateurs, Hennion focuses on situations and phenomena that are centrally performative, that are events, and therefore require a specific competence of "active passivity." By understanding attachment (the attachment of amateur and material) itself to be a question of other attachments (relying on a collective, objects, techniques etc.), it opens up an alternative to classical action theories and interactionist accounts, enabling us to ask in a more differentiated way about the "how" of creativity in the relation between subject and object within a collective. In this way, the idea of attachment helps to specify the twofold sense of mediation in the work to be made.

First, understanding the relation between amateur and material as a form of attachment emphasizes the close link of subsistence and creativity (see 3.2.3). It opens up the work to be made as a significant and meaningful engagement, as a "matter of concern." Amateur and material are co-dependent within an affectionate and (kin)aesthetic bond marked by passionate engagement and appreciation.

Attachments are all the beings and materials that could be said to have a certain allure or appeal, the quality of being powerfully and somewhat mysteriously attractive or fascinating. The mediation of attachment might then be better described as entailing processes of seducing, attracting, inspiring, persuading, coaxing, enabling, inciting, luring, begging, tempting, enticing, bewitching, enthralling. These are relational phenomena that are neither about activity or passivity, they are kinds of inter-actions, but targeting their opposite: overflowing boundaries and being moved by the other. Attachment is a relational dance where activity and passivity enable each other. Studying creative processes, we enter a world of phenomena that do not belong to the lexicon of action, although they might be described in this way. It involves phenomena like affections, fondness and attraction that cannot be captured with terms like cause, intention or determination. Being fascinated, captivated or liking something, following hunches, feeling compelled to do something or bound to certain ideas or tastes; all these are happenings and experiences that don't necessarily belong to the side of action only; all these occurrences are rather brought forth from an active-passive or patient bearing of the human actor.

To think creative practice as a work on and with attachments is to emphasize that the work "matters." It is of concern because the material that is sought to be refined and extended has "personal" consequences. The notion of attachment can thus be specified as meaning all the mediators we care about, that we have a concern for because they allow us different modes of expressing both them and ourselves. I take the notion of

attachment thereby to be specifying mediation in its aesthetic and affective aspects. We are attached to things and bodies that make us feel and sense in a meaningful way. Attachments are closely related to matters of valuation and evaluation, they are matters of concern that we care about. The work to be made can thus be further specified as an intricate work that amateurs call on and employ in the moment and over a long time (see Hennion, 2007) to become sensitive, both in the materials and themselves, to the differences that matter. It is a work needed to let appear and surface the differences that can only be made experienceable by the people that appreciate and value them. For an understanding of creativity, this means that *the process of making things arrive is indissociable from the process of making oneself appreciate*.

In this regard especially the insightful parallel between music lovers and drug users (Gomart & Hennion, 1999) offered a view on the workings of attachments as complementing ANT's effort of returning agency to the objects. By reversing the gaze and applying the relational-materialist logic to the subject, which then becomes a subject-as-network, Hennion seeks to return "patience to the passionate" (Hennion, 2011, p. 98). Together, with the objects' agency reinstalled and the human actors equipped with patience, that is, the capacity to "suffer," to be overcome by something else, hitherto neglected questions of what otherwise might be called "human competence" were taken on.

Second, attachments – here thought as carriers and resources of practice – mediate the work of becoming "actively passive," of making present to each other amateur and technoaesthetic being. Work on one's attachments needs other attachments, add-ons or plug-ins, as Latour (2005) calls them, that enable us to be able to engage with our material. Beyond an activity, creation is first of all an event. Relying closely upon opportunities, places and moments, creativity is "oversensitive to the problematic relationship between – as they nicely say – a combination of circumstances" (Hennion, 2012a, p. 258). In this regard we can learn from Antoine Hennion and his studies on music lovers or drug consumers, who all seek to be surprised,and to be "taken." Hence they engage in so-called "ceremonies of pleasure;" they "stage-manage" a set of conditions (determinants) likely to evoke a pleasurable (listening) experience, actively seeking, in rituals and routines, an instance of sheer passivity, "of surrender to the music" (Loosely, 2006, p. 346). This "elusive moment of helpless transportation" (p. 346) is what Hennion calls "passion." Just as mediations rely on other mediations, the affectionate bond between amateur and material is reliant on all sorts of adjuncts. The second notion of attachment thus specifies all the practice resources and carriers that we lean on, that we rely on so subject and object become present to each other in engaging the material and something "may happen." As such, the notion of attachment

can help us to attend to what can be called the "ecology of the event" (see Manning, 2013, p. 76).

Antoine Hennion's work on the amateur's activity sketches the ecology of creative practice as a tissue, a fabric of tight linkages that form and enable the central activity-sensibility "competence" of the amateur. From within Hennion's pragmatism, the analytical concept of attachment therefore opens up a view on the various materials that, as objects and nuances, know-how and repertoire, criteria and techniques, common histories and contested evolution (Hennion, 2011, p. 108), constitute the domain of creative practice. Amateurs cannot do much, but this is neither little: they can only again and again activate the determinants of an event ecology that make possible to enter, again and again into the experience and event of perfomance. In this way, the idea of attachments as "plug-ins" (Latour, 2005) offers an alternative to the essentialistic notion of competence in creativity studies.

The notion of competence is an overburdened term (see Ingold, 2001), and the way it is reappropriated in the following might leave little intact of what we conventionally understand as competence. In most creativity research (see Chapter 2), competences are treated as personality-related traits. I assume, here, that the relational competence of activity-sensibility "opens itself to fieldwork" when it can be "peeled back layer after layer" (Latour, 2005, p. 207). The way I reappropriate competences is thereby first to turn competence into a question of "performation" (Hennion, 2014) – the nexus of doing and being affected by the "doing's doing," and secondly by understanding the competence of performance – be it the performance of making to or listening music or the performance of making rational decisions as a consumer[101] - as thoroughly distributed. This means to open up the blackbox of creativity.

What was once a question of interiority, now becomes replaced by the circulation of what Latour (2005) calls "plug-ins"[102] (p. 205); all the "bits and bytes," or "patches" and "applets" that allow for the emergence of locally competent and skilled creative performers. When it comes to software, "plug-ins" are devices that extend the functionality, e.g. of an internet browser. In order to see something or to be able to do certain things, one needs to download various plug-ins. Sometimes the plug-ins are then firmly installed, becoming part of the original program's body, and sometimes they need to be downloaded time and again. In any way, both variants are eventually

[101] "The perception of differences and their evaluation, a dual operation that constitutes the exercise of judgment, implies a consumer immersed in a socio-technical system of which the different elements will each, in its own way, participate in the implementation of that dual operation" (Callon, Méadel, & Rabeharisoa, 2002, p. 203).

[102] The metaphor of "plug-in" refers to a program or piece of software designed and written to fulfill a particular purpose of the user.

about gaining specific competences in order to be able to see and or do something at a specific site. The notion of plug-in is hence a metaphor describing that certain (psychological) competences are effected through "add-ons," extensions and prostheses that we either, through mobilization and repetition, have incorporated over time and that have become "second nature," or that we not carry with us at all but "download" time and again in certain situations and settings. The analytical concept of plug-ins is a way of making more present what the performer leans on. As alternative to an essentialising discourse on competences, thinking in plug-ins hence enables to understand the amateur's competences a) to be attained through a history of personal and collective experiences; b) as still being in need of being situationally actualized and accomplished through the mobilization of various materials.

When it comes to the making of technoaesthetic beings, the central "competences" that such a focus on attachments brings to the fore are "taste"[103] and "passion".[104] Taste and passion are modalities of attachment which are inextricably linked within what Hennion calls the amateur's *activity-sensibility* (French: *activité-sensibilité*) (Hennion, 2011, p. 108): the skill to actively become present to aesthetic beings, and thus, in a dual operation, to perceive and (e)valuate differences. The skill to generate and to assess material is the fruit of meaningful affective, aesthetic and normative collective labor.

3.4.3 Taste-making and creative practice – of appetites, taste and presence

After having proposed to understand bodies as *vectors of appetition* (3.2.3), I now sketch creative practice as fundamentally being a question of *taste*.[105] Hennion's development of a pragmatist conception of taste is moving beyond a Bourdieuian (see Hennion, 2013a) or Adornian (Hennion, 2001) notion of taste[106] as a socially determined "game" of differentiation. Instead, Hennion posits taste to be an accomplishment, a production and performance that takes serious the actual materiality of taste. Such an idea of taste is at the heart of re-thinking the attachment of bodies and things. To understand creative practice as a matter of appetite and taste therefore means to attend to the embodiedness of amateurs. An amateur's body and its

[103] See (Hennion, 1997, 2001, 2004, 2007, 2015).
[104] See (Gomart & Hennion, 1999; Hennion, 1993).
[105] The idea of taste, as developed here on the basis of Antoine Hennion's work, links up to Tarde's notion of desire/belief via Whitehead's and Souriau's understanding of *appetition*.
[106] As Tarde and Whitehead both draw on Leibniz" idea of "appetition," it might be said that this is a tentative attempt to establish a line of thinking stretching from Leibniz over Tarde, Whitehead and Souriau to Hennion's "pragmatism of attachment."

capacities and sensibilities need to be appreciated as precious attainments,[107] a sensible expertise stemming from a history of tasting.

With Whitehead, we have understood appetition to be a temporal relation "involving realization of what is not and may be" (Whitehead, 1929/1979, p. 32). He asserts that appetition means an "appetite towards a difference." For Whitehead such an idea of appetition is at the heart of invention and creativity as it bears "the germ of a free imagination" (p. 32). For Hennion, taste is respectively a "machine" "that reveals difference" (2004, p. 142) and "generates differences" (2015, p. 50). Hennion especially stresses the spatial, that is, relational aspect of taste, as it denotes both the taste *of* and our taste *for* a specific "body." Taking both together, we have to think flows of appetition as temporal and spatial vectors. As such, it is on the basis of "vectors of appetition" that invention and creativity fundamentally revolve around *following* "tendances towards the other … as they fan out" (Souriau, 2009, in Latour, 2011, p. 318).

The conception of appetition I have proposed is a "dramatic" link between subsistence and invention. The things we have appetite for in a very basic way are existential in that they, by making us feel or do something, raise our valence. Any actual invention is an event, born from a conjugation of vectors of appetition, and at the same time a mode of valuation. Antoine Hennion in an analog way seeks to think a relation of bodies and things (or bodies and bodies) previous to the dualism of subject and object which is marked by what he calls a "situated evaluation" (Hennion, 2011, p. 106). To clarify the terminology used, in the following I will distinguish the notions of *valuation* and *evaluation* as follows: valuation refers to an immanent mode of valuation which is the sensitivity to (un)pleasurable intensities and affects within an experience, while evaluation is the retrospective judgment and interpretation of an experience. As such, *valuation* is the mode of (micro)judgment of an experimental mode of engagement. And *evaluation* is the judgmental mode proper to interpretation. Hennion characterizes "situated evaluation" as an ongoing valuation which he positions in the midst of experience and which is accompanying a course of trying and testing. It therefore confers with Whitehead's idea of valuation.

Both aspects – the thirst for difference and its appreciation – are crucial for understanding the key role of appetite and taste in creative practice. Taste is, in Hennion's words an "activity-sensibility" (activité-sensibilité) (Hennion, 2011, p. 108)

[107] Attainment, from Latin *attingere*, from *ad-* "at, to" + *tangere* "to touch" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). The notion of attainment points to a history of experiences that involve "touch," the tangibility of being present and in contact with things.

that links the process of making things arrive with the process of making oneself appreciate. *Activity-sensibility* is the amateur's skill of actively following and appreciating material and must thereby be thought as an attainment and an emergent property stemming from a sustained engagement with materials within a wider collective; they are the results of meaningful affective, aesthetic and normative collective labor.

If we attend to the amateur's body, we can realize all the intricate work - on the self, the body and the spirit - that amateurs call on and employ in the moment and over time (see Hennion, 2007) to become sensitive to differences that they learn to appreciate. It is a work that allows the differences to surface which can only be made experiencable by the *aficionados* that appreciate and value them. The disinterested do not recognize differences. For Hennion, taste, the things and the passionate are thereby intricately interwoven and co-constitutive: it is taste that needs to be produced and that simultaneously brings forth a domain of objects and their lovers. Forming tastes is hence a co-contruction, as the word "taste" already alludes to. Things have a taste as well as we are having a taste for things. Neither is given and they only "discover" (co-constitute) themselves in the act of testing (Hennion, 2011, p. 108). The substrate of appetites and taste thereby is sensation (3.2.5). We don't savor or desire things as such but the conjunction of their possibilities of making feel and our kinaesthetic sensitivity.

From an attachment perspective, the amateur's activity-sensibility is resulting from a tightly knit fabric of individual and collective experiences. And these experiences are reciprocally defined by and defining a domain and field brimming with objects and crucial differences, sensible knowledge and repertoires, techniques and (aesthetic crriteria), joint histories and contested developments (see Hennion, 2011).

Taste and its activity-sensibility therefore concurrently sustain and refine the body and its objects of attention. As contingent upon past individual and collective experience within a community of practitioners, this activity-sensibility must be regarded as a question of performation (see 3.4.1). This means that tasting, although being bound to sensibilities developed, does not become a mere repetition. Understood as enabling constraint, the weight of past experiences animates taste. Only through our history in tasting are we able to detect, examine, negotiate and share the qualities of objects. Hence tastes need to be re-enacted each time, as the word performance indicates. And along with taste, objects need to be re-enacted each time as well, as things are not resting upon any external, atemporal or fixed criteria.

This is what performation means. It implies that there is no exteriority; that things do not rest upon any stable, atemporal, external criteria.

Being a performance - neither a repetition nor a creatio ex nihilo - taste is hence able to incessantly produce something unpredicted, an event. Taste must be constantly put to the test, challenged or questioned (Hennion, 2011, p. 108). Hennion's amateurs thereby teach us that it is demanding to enter these experiences. It is imperative to put oneself under the right condition(s), anticipate and mobilize attention and reinvest in the object to make it work and occur again, differently (p. 109).

Thinking creative practice as a matter of appetite and taste turns the work to be made into a question of "making the differences of object and subjects speak" and therefore for amateur and material to become present to each other. As process of "presentification" (Gumbrecht, 2004), this means as much a form of bodily work as a working up of materials. We find here the empirical circularity of the virtual and actual tendencies and capacities of forms which are shaping and relying on the practitioner's sensitivities (see Hennion, 2010).

Gumbrecht (2004) proposes a spatial concept of presence, which he develops to be denoting a tangible relationship with the world and its things. The characteristic mark is "tangibility," the capacity to (be) touch(ed) by the senses, to be felt in some way. "In the making," existence is measured by presence, which is, like existence, intensive, a question of more or less: "the (spatial) tangibility effect … is subjected, in space, to movements of greater or lesser proximity, and of greater or lesser intensity" (Gumbrecht, 2004, p. 18).

How do beings achieve presence, more or less? It can again be very generally said that a being's presence is always a question of being made present. Presence is here directly linked to the question of attention. Attention is, for Hennion (2014), "a measure of the greater or smaller presence to the other world" (p. 174) of the material. Being there, that is, being present and attentive is thereby not given; it is "not a simple datum" (Gherardi, 2012, p. 40) but an attainment depending on the "presentational" capacity of the media (Gumbrecht, 2004) or modes (Souriau, 2009) involved as well as a history of "being in touch." The work to be made thereby involves a "touching" as much as a "being touched." In the case of music, Hennion notes that "if music is to be located anywhere, it is in the in-between – between sound and phrase, between productive gesture and produced effect" (Hennion, 2014, p. 167). Presentification is therefore the work of both aesthetic poise and responsive gesture. It is a reciprocal dynamic of a mutual making present to each other of practitioner and work within various kinds of encounters.

3.4.4 Production and the formation of technoaesthetic beings

To approach the work to be made as a question of amateur and technoaesthetic being as mutually constituting each other's existence, is to think of technoaesthetic practice in terms of "individuation" (see Simondon, 2005) – the ongoing and gradual formation of beings. It means to assume a theoretical and analytical position that understands existence, that is, being as a question of becoming and takes up a position which is preceding a dualism of fully individualized subjects and objects. Analytically, such a position hence takes interest in the phenomena happening between "input" and "output" of a creative process. As such, the focus is on the individuation of a technoaesthetic being which I understand as a process of continuing formation, that is, a *morphogenesis*, a movement through different modes of existence – from abstract (ideas) to concrete (results). Form is neither taken as starting nor end point, but, as a process of ongoing form-ation, a conduit and mediator of an advancing process of morphogenesis.

A focus on creativity as a process of morphogenesis thereby objects to the strict distinction between process and outcome found in conventional creativity and innovation research, where, to avoid circular arguments, the object is mainly appearing only as an outcome: "[I]n line with our definition, we intend to delineate the difference between innovation processes and outcomes: the former clearly precedes the latter and should be separated to avoid circular arguments" (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010, p. 1156). To the contrary, I suggest that a processual view on the work to be made needs not to exclude but to account for the *empirical circularity* found in processes of morphogenesis, where "the work" is actively taking part in its own formation.

To think the creative process as advancing through an *empirical circularity* means that the genesis of an object "is part of its being" (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 7). For Simondon, as demonstrated with the evolution of technological objects like the automobile engine, a (technical) object is a "unit of becoming" (p. 7). This means that for Simondon, what is of interest is not a singular object, but a series, a "philogenetic lineage" of objects. This is a way of thinking the object in terms of its past, present and future, as part of an evolutionary development.

> The petrol engine is not any particular engine produced in time and in space, but the evidence that there is a sequence or continuity from the first engines to those we know and to those that are still in evolution. Consequently, as in a philogenetic lineage, a defined stage of evolution contains within itself structures and dynamic schemes that are at the beginning of any evolution of forms. The technical being evolves by convergence and by adaptation to itself; it is unified from within according to a principle of internal resonance. (Simondon, 1958/1980, p. 7)

In a similar vein, in the context of artistic endeavours, Becker et al.(2006) assert that artworks "have lives and careers" and that the "artwork is one of the actors involved in the drama of its own making" (p. 6). Works (of art), or aesthetic objects, have "careers and lifes" and never stand alone. This is why I call the aesthetic object a "technoaesthetic being." It means to take seriously the existence of a work of art as resulting from a progressive process that involves numerous transformations effected in and through specific, that is, "technological"[108] operations.

To think of the work to be made as a process of morphogensis means to understand creativity not only as a momentary event but within the development of a technoaesthetic being over time. To account for this, I mobilize the notion of *production* (see Callon et al., 2002). The notion of *production* (Latin *producere* "to lead forwards") is first of all taken to assert that "[t]he intentionality that powers the practice is found in the action itself, in the merging of movement and sensory awareness, in *pro*-duction" (Ingold, 2011, emphasis in original). As living labor, creative practice therefore always means a joint production of subject and object, mutually constitutive. Thinking the work to be made as a question of existence and presence as presented before is then the germinal requisite for thinking the becoming of a technoaesthetic being as a production.

The idea of production as developed by Callon et al. (2002) then means a bringing forth of a technoaesthetic being from moment to moment, but also across those moments, along a series of events that see the material concresce through various media and modes. The authors differentiate a "good" from a "product" by reappropriating the latter as a processual concept: "The product is thus a process, whereas the good corresponds to a state, to a result or, more precisely, to a moment in that never-ending process" (Callon et al., 2002, p. 197). As process, the product thereby needs to be understood in terms of a "sequence of transformations" (p. 198); it is "an economic good seen from the point of view of its production, circulation and consumption" (p. 197). A series of technological operations "transform it, move it and cause it to change hands, to cross a series of metamorphoses that end up putting it into a form judged useful by an economic agent who pays for it. During these transformations its characteristics change" (p. 198).

The production of a CDT performance, just any other aesthetic artefact, is aiming at the congifuration of a bundle of qualities that eventually, in the moment of

[108] Technological is here meant in a very wide sense, meaning that aesthetic work involves engaging with the material in specific ways (they can be reported) that possibly effect certain transformations. Technology does not equate controllability here.

performance, can provide the socio-material and technical capacities of affection that are constitutive as one side of a relation between performance and audience (see 3.4.1). The qualities or properties of technoaesthethic beings are not just observed, they rather need to be "revealed" (p. 198). The notion of production thereby directs our attention to the *tests* and *trials* that, involving interactions between various agents (single and collective) and the goods to be qualified, disclose and make experiencable the performance's qualities. In each stage, the work needs to be made present and come into existence again; "the inherited material must be reworked in order that it may play itself out again and be recreated, like another layer of necessary presence" (Hennion, 2014, p. 174). At every stage, "the work" of a theater performance, which is circulating through various media and "modes of presentation" – e.g. sketches, narratives, images, sounds etc. – has to be recreated. The concept of production therefore refers both to the momentary as well as ongoing production of the mutual presence and existence of both practitioner and product – a bringing forth of a tangible body or thing – through a mediating sequence of tests and trials that change, refine or sustain materials and their qualities.

The idea of production further specifies the becoming and subsistence of a technoaesthetic being as questions of (im)mobility and (im)mutability. When are ideas and material allowed to "travel" and proliferate, to generate new material? And when are things to be held in place, are in need to be reproduced so as to be recognizable as "the same"? As ongoing process aiming at the concrescence of a technoaesthetic being, the socio-technical and material configurations at the heart of invention and creativity are hence marked by specific spatialities and temporalities (see also Mol & Law, 2001). Callon specifies the product as an (economic) object within the triad of production, circulation and consumption. Products move, they circulate and transform within joint regimes of production and consumption. Production, circulation and consumption are thereby not only to be thought as stages within the career of an innovation, but as basic, interwoven principles that make for the development, implementation as well as diffusion of an innovation (see also Hennion & Méadel, 1989). Callon et al. (2002) mobilize the notion of production in order to account for the various productive translations that make for both the invention as well as the subsistence of a product. As I am primarily interested in what I so far called "invention," I take the notion of production to specify the becoming of a technoaesthetic being as consisting of sequences of activities, happenings and transformations that change and concretize materials and their characteristics.

Eventually, I suggest production to be realized within the continuum between experimental and interpretive *modes of engagement* (see 3.2.7) that effect the

generation, formation and stabilization of a product. The trajectory of production means the concrescent qualification of a good through the double movement of divergence and convergence, which is effected through a sequence of activities, happenings and transformations that immanently generate and concretize materials and their characteristics.

The "organization" of production then needs to be understood as an *experimental apparatus*, a collective set-up of a *performance* and *event ecology*. The experimental apparatus thereby entails the practitioners, the performance material and an *associated milieu* that jointly harbour *poetic practices* and their *occasions*.

3.5 Research questions

My thesis is about collectively making CDT performances. It started from an interest in simple questions about creativity in the context of cultural production. Therefore I studied a number of creation processes in the realm of CDT, asking myself: *how do new theatre performances come into being?* Or, as I came to learn through my investigation: *given all the degrees of freedom and possible troubles involved, how are complex and "good enough" performances collectively "made to work" - through doings and occasions?*

With the backdrop of the basic conceptual framework laid out before, I then re-cast this question for analytical purposes in two chapters (Chapter 5 and 6).

1) *What materials, practices, technologies etc. comprise the ecology of creative practice? How do the various plug-ins and attachments enable the performative engagement of amateur and material?*
2) *How are the generation, formation and stabilization of the product "theater performance" affected? What modes of engagement are thereby crucial? And how do these modes interact within CDT production?*

In summary, in order to examine and conceptualize emergent forms of performance and organization, this study offers an analytical framework that directs attention to everyday practices, associations and processes of assembling. Unlike more conventional approaches it does not dissect the messy richness of the empirical material into neat variables, theory-driven deductions or structural, social, cultural or other "outside" explanations. Instead, the study explores the organization of a becoming performance at the level of practices and associations.

4 Methodology and Research Design

In this chapter on methodology and research design, I start with an overview of the research design. Then I introduce the empirical resarch setting of Contemporary Dance Theater (CDT) and the specific sample of this study. After that I continue with two background sections asking for the basic methodological possibilities and requirements of studying creativity as such, before finally further detailing the research design and the methods employed.

In this work, seeking to answer the research questions as laid out before, I studied the *production of Contemporary Dance Theater* (CDT) based on and further developing a *practice*-based understanding of *organizational creativity* as a matter of *taste-making*. The conceptual framework as developed in Chapter 3 thereby demanded a *methodology* centrally capable of registering and accounting for the micro dynamics of experience and its link with the more solid and organized forms of social existence. I thereby centrally posited *practices* and not people or structures to be the basic unit of analysis. For this, I decided to devise a research design following a *praxeographic approach* (see also Krämer, 2012; Schmidt, 2012) to studying creativity. In contrast to a methodological ambition of accurate theory building, a praxeographic approach is rooted in the theoretical and methodological call not for explanation but for a rich *description* (see Latour, 2005) of practice and its various constituents and connections (see Gherardi, 2012, p. 49). This meant to consider the conceptual framework not so much as a new (social) theory but as a methodological sensitivity and "infra-language" (Latour, 2005, p. 49) (see 4.2.3) enabling the researcher to produce rich descriptions of practice and its constituents. The praxeographic methodology as proposed here is thereby *collecting* data by *following forwards* (4.3.1), *analyzing* data by *reading creativity forwards* (4.3.3) and *presenting* data by *writing forwards* (4.3.4).

The praxeographic approach informed an *ethnographic* study of the making of Contemporary Dance Theater. Following up on the conceptual framework outlined before, my research design relied on an empiricist methodology based on a multi-sited and focused organizational video-ethnography (Mohn, 2002, 2008; Ybema et al., 2009) adhering to a comparative embedded case design (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2003). Organizational ethnography in general aims to discover and describe the ways in which people in particular organizational settings come to make sense of, account for and take action within their day-to-day organizational lives. It entails an immersive approach of the researcher who, not unlike a jazz player (see Humphreys,

Brown, & Hatch, 2003), is involved in a fundamentally creative, exploratory and interpretive endeavor to make sense of the sensemaking of organizational members.

Ethnographic studies rely on "doing ethnography" within *fieldwork*. In the course of this research project, I followed five different CDT production processes during 6 months of fieldwork in 2010 and 2011. Three months I spent within a middle sized Swiss theater house where I followed in parallel five smaller production processes. Another three months I spent with a small dance theater company in Buenos Aires. Altogether, my fieldwork produced around fifty field notes ranging from 200-1500 words and more than 10 hours of audio-visual material. In addition to observations, I conducted seventeen ethnographic interviews within or around the rehearsal process, had informal discussions with the organizational members in different situations and collected various organizational documents and media material. Twenty-one retrospective narrative interviews were conducted with the key research participants after the production processes.

"Following forwards" (see Langley, 2007) creativity within fieldwork meant to attend to creative practice as a vector, where only through following forwards the contributions of the past and present could be made sense of in their contingency. The praxeographic approach as suggested within this work thereby asked me to become "radically empirical"[109] in the terms of being faithful to experience and taking serious all the bodies and beings that somehow are made relevant by the people and things studied. In relation to questions of creativity, this meant to "not take sides" and stay open to where and how creativity is situated and effected. For me as a trained psychologist, it meant to refrain from intuitively looking for creativity in people's heads. Instead I was taking serious whatever actants the performers mobilized in their accounts (e.g. candle light and loud music at night). Concerning my own observations, I was then asking for and looking out for the materials, spaces, devices and techniques that were involved in creative activities and events. Working with the video camera as ethnographic device greatly enhanced my capability to do so. Among other things, it allowed to follow forwards and then retrace certain processes in their development. Overall, studying creative practice required to develop a relational and processual sensibility, a sense for the unfolding of creative practice (e.g. in rehearsals) in respect to its various constituents – from bodies and their repertoires to spatial features, the role of materials, devices (video camera), disciplinary norms and standards etc.

[109] See William James' "radical empiricism" (for example 1912a) and its contemporary uptake in methodological works taking serious the notion of "experience" (see for example Brown et al., 2011).

Turning my fieldwork into data and analyzing it accordingly, I followed the premise that thorough and in-depth descriptions are important for opening up the "black box" creativity. Fieldnotes and audio-visual material I treated as raw data that, for analysis, needed to be assembled into vignettes and situational descriptions mixing written and visual material. For the latter, I worked with photographic stills extracted from the video material. Data from interviews and field notes were fully transcribed. With the help of a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis system ("ATLAS/ti"), the transcribed data was first coded inductively in order to enable an inductive theorizing (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Punch, 2005). In an iterative process the variety of "pre-codes" were compared and contrasted, checking for redundancy, central themes and distinctive variations. The central unit of analysis was a *site* and its central *practice* – a situational arrangement arising from the dynamic connection of social, material and technological aspects that yet link to other, extemporal and dislocated sites. Taking serious the situated as well as extemporal and dislocated character of site and practice "necessitated" to produce accounts for all the work that goes into the conjunction and disjunction of "heterogeneous relations." I thereby remained on a detailed analytical level of description "until" more concrete themes emerged from reading, writing and watching field notes.

According to Steyaert's circular research model (1995), theoretical concepts and empirical concepts co-evolve through an iterative process of theoretical reflection and empirical immersion. As such, the conceptual framework presented up-front actually emerged from the research process itself. It was part of the findings of this study and constitutes the first part of a "theory narrative" (see Bansal & Corley, 2012) that was elaborated along and with the empirical material and lead to the theoretical developments found within Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

Within analysis, *reading and writing creativity forwards* were closely linked. Attempting to understand creativity as an uncertain and event-ful process I sought to develop empirical accounts that could perform accordingly. Reading and writing creativity forwards meant to trace and present a non-teleological process; a task of writing a narrative that could convey the successive and emergent development of materials that were hardly intended at the outset. Renarrating a process where every step would become visible as indeterminate mediation for further steps proved to be a challenging and uncertain task. It is upon the reader to decide whether and how these "risky accounts" (Latour, 2005, p. 121) work.

Overall, the analytical procedure was guided through Nicolini's (2009a) practice-oriented methodology. Within his praxeographic approach, Nicolini distinguished and

proposed an analytical movement of "zooming out" and "zooming in." Within this study, zooming out then did not mean to shift to detached abstraction, but rather became a tracing and trailing of the relevant attachments (see 3.4.2) that constitute the socio-material ecology of CDT productions. Zooming in turned into an in-depth investigation of the process of production over time and the central modes of engagement involved in making CDT work.

4.1 Sample and empirical research setting

The choice of the empirical research setting (CDT) and the specific sample of this study (a Swiss CDT company within the institutional setting of a theater house) is related to my overall research objective and the research questions posed at the end of Chapter 2.

The first part of fieldwork was conducted between early December 2010 and April 2011 at a mid-sized theater in Switzerland. The focus of my work was the local Contemporary Dance Theater (CDT) company in their development and production of a performance evening called "Sharp Cutz".[110] Sharp Cutz was a format where the dance company – consisting of 14 dancers, one choreographer and the choreographer's assistant – let the performers themselves develop short choreographies and performances in groups from three to six persons. The ensembles thereby differed in their distribution of choreographic roles and responsibilities. While some ensembles were lead by one choreographing dancer, other ensembles features one or more dancing choreographers, that is, performers that would dance and perform in their own piece (see table 2). In the end six dance and theater choreographies, one short film, one installation and one performance were tied together for the two-hour Sharp Cutz format.

Doing fieldwork within Sharp Cutz was a felicitous choice for two reasons: it allowed me to follow in parallel five different production processes and ensembles each with differing distributions of formal choreographic responsibilities. Table 2 provides an overview of the different ensembles and its members as appearing in this study.

[110] "Sharp Cutz" as well as all the following names of groups, places and performers are aliases.

Ensemble	"Circus"	"Voltage"	"Kill your darlings"	"Green sofa"	"Buried alive"
Ensemble members	*Andrea*[111] *Ruth* *Jeff* Laura	*Mark* Marie Henry Ben Ingrid	*Marie* Andrea Ruth	*Zoe* Emmanuel Henry Ingrid	*Emmanuel* Henry Ben Mark Laura Ole
Further characters	Tom (performer) Julia (performer) Mario (company director) Peter (Mario's assistant) Thomas (director of the musical theater division, Mario's superior) Ralf (dramaturge) Rob (stage technician)				

Table 2: Overview of ensembles and characters appearing in this study[112]

The second part of fieldwork was conducted between August and November 2011 with a small, independent CDT company in Buenos Aires. This study was originally thought as a comparative case between CDT production within an institutional setting and within the so called "free scene." Eventually, this dissertation only featured data from the first fieldwork. Consisting of different cases itself, it proved such a rich material that the comparison with another case was not needed. In hindsight, the experience of spending another three months with in-depth investigations yet proved to be important for developing the ideas presented in this work. It also served to validate and calibrate the data generated within the fieldwork on Sharp Cutz.

Studying Contemporary Dance Theater (CDT) production, as noted in the introduction, means studying a very specific empirical setting. Contemporary Dance Theater production is a project-based work of choreography happening within group rehearsals. This makes it *conceptually* prolific for an organizational perspective on creative practice that is interested in team-based creativity and innovation as a collective model of creativity (see Bilton, 2007, p. 39).

Choreography is a collaborative artistic practice. It means the joint creation of a performance work by artistic, technical and administrative practitioners within temporally defined projects. The idea and the practice of choreography have undergone substantial changes over the last 100 years (see Allsopp & Lepecki, 2008;

[111] Italics mark performers with official choreographic functions within their ensembles.
[112] All names are pseudonyms.

Gehm, Husemann, & Wilcke, 2007; Lampert, 2007). Within ballet, it had been invented "in order to structure a system of command to which bodies have to subject themselves … into the system's wills and whims" (Allsopp & Lepecki, 2008, p. 3). As part of the development of contemporary dance, the idea and practice of choreography transformed from being "an apparatus of capture" (p. 3)[113] to harnessing the improvisational capacities of an ensemble[114]:

> Contemporary dance discovers choreography as the polarizing performative and physical force that organizes the whole distribution of the sensible and of the political at the level of the play between incorporation and excorporation, between command and demand, between moving and writing, as those central elements for all performance composition. (Allsopp & Lepecki, 2008, p. 4)

The production mode of choreography and rehearsal within CDT follows a *devising approach* (Barton, 2008; Mermikides & Smart, 2010). Choreography and rehearsal are not recapitulating set forms; they rather proceed by means of collaborative research and experimentation that playfully shift between performances of moving, enacting, showing, watching, discussing and sketching. The making of CDT thereby differs from other types of theatrical productions like for example opera work. In the beginning of any opera production stands an inert text that needs to be transformed into a live performance. The director plays an important role in setting an interpretive framework and the performers, as interpreters, "have to find the moment-by-moment ways of turning ideas into concrete actions, and texts into performance" (Atkinson, 2010). This is a basic difference to CDT where in the beginning of a production there is most often no original text or script yet therefore also more possibilities and uncertainties. Indecision and diffidence abound in the early phase of a production. *How are we going to start? What will evolve? What do I want to develop? Where do we want to go?*

Conceptually, studying the making of CDT offers a number of interesting possibilities that are related to CDT's *performative* and improvisation-based nature (see Gehm et al., 2007; Lampert, 2007). Research encounters with dance and choreography offer opportunities for attending to and accounting for the following aspects (see also Slutskaya, 2006; Slutskaya & De Cock, 2008): firstly, the role of *affect* and *embodiment* in creative processes; secondly, the *collectivity* of collaborative creative practice; thirdly, the *temporality* of practice and how it is continuously sustained,

[113] Allsopp and Lepecki (2008) remark that "the dancers in the French *corps-de-ballet* are called *sujets*" and that this would be "the appropriate naming of those freely falling into the apparatus of capture called choreography" (p. 4, emphasis in original)

[114] See Sauer (2009) for talking about "ensembles" instead of "groups" or "teams" when researching the performing arts.

refined and transformed within activities that oscillate between *performative* and *representational* modes of engagement; and lastly, the relation between the *actual* (the lived) and the *virtual* (the abstract). Choreography is an artistic practice that engages the unknown where experience and insight, the sensual and the intelligible, doing and undergoing coincide.

Concerning the latter, choreography is an intriguing area to discover how organization engages with both the unknown and uncertainty. Theater making is a precarious process, as many practitioners can affirm:

> Theater is an art like warfare and a gamble like roulette; nobody knows from the outset how it will end. Not only at the premiere, but evening after evening it is a wonder that there is a performance at all, and if there is a performance, that it lasts all the way to the end. A theater piece does not materialize through simply following a plan, but through persistently overcoming uncountable and unforeseen obstacles. (Capek, 1925/2012, p. 8, translated by BM)

Learning about choreography in CDT is thereby potentially revealing about late organizational possibilities and challenges of engaging with tentativeness and a lack of conviction. In their "book of recommendations," the choreographers Klien, Valk and Gormly (2008) claim that

> [t]he way our culture has choreographed dance has always been reflective of the larger tendencies of how we, as a society, deal with the unknown, the unframable, the foreign, the spiritual and the animal. (p. 28)

Studying CDT production is a case of team-based creative practice that reaches beyond its limited theater setting. I therefore take choreography and its various enactive rehearsal practices as prolific models for "creative thinking and team-based innovation," as suggested by Bilton (2007, p. 29). Flexible, creative and self-organized team-work is promoted as a role model for successful work in late modern societies. Team-based creative practice is thereby a pivotal unit of activity not only within the production of CDT but also "in creative industries such as advertising or games development as well as in the research and development and new product development departments of mainstream businesses" (Bilton, 2007, p. 39). As CDT is itself part of the creative industries, the study of team-based CDT production processes is therefore enabling a precursory description of organization at the nexus of creativity and economics (see Krämer, 2012, p. 109).

Methodologically, the field of CDT proved to be a good choice for the following reasons. First of all, the production of CDT mainly takes place within allotted rehearsal times and spaces that made it convenient to plan my fieldwork schedule.

Secondly, field access was easy to negotiate. CDT is a somewhat neglected division within the hierarchy of a theater house and the local company was happy to get attention from outside. The choice of CDT further proved to be lucky for my intended method of video-based ethnography. The performers for once are used to having other people watch their rehearsals and often work with video themselves.

4.2 How can creativity be studied?

> *Practice has a logic which is not that of the logician. This has to be acknowledged in order to avoid asking of it more logic than it can give, thereby condemning oneself either to writing incoherences out of it or to thrust a forced coherence upon it.*
> *(Bourdieu, 1990, p. 86)*

> *Doing research that acknowledges the productiveness of practice and takes serious the event-ness of the world … requires different styles of thinking through, and with, the worlds we find ourselves in.*
> *(Latham & Conradson, 2003, p. 1902)*

Devising an empirical study on creative practice raises fundamental epistemological questions regarding knowledge production. This includes, among others, basic questions pertaining to the status of knowledge and science when studying creative practice. *How can we gain knowledge about creativity? How to study creative practice and its micro dynamics of experience*?

These are methodological questions I engage with in this chapter. Methodology, as "[t]he philosophical stance or worldview that underlies and informs a style of research," can hence be regarded as "the philosophy of methods" (Sapsford, 2006, n. p.). It comprises epistemology – establishing the basic possibility of scientific knowledge – and further, an ontology which designates the "objects," as units of analysis for investigation, from which conclusions may be made.

What is at stake in this section then is to devise a methodology capable of accounting for the *logic* of creative practice. This is foremost an epistemological project which acknowledges and deals with the difference between conventional logics of scientific observation and the logic of observed practices. More specifically, it is between the *explanatory* logic of theoretical models and the *experiential* and *experimental* logic of practices that are fathomed by these models (see Bourdieu, 1990).

The respective methodological choice then has implications for thinking about the role of the researcher, the status of data, the way that access is obtained and the relationships that are established with the research participants. Eventually then, methodological choices guide a respective research design that assembles and aligns

the methods – the actual tools used to do the research – and the ways in which they are employed.

Mainstream creativity research is mainly based in methodologies of scientific knowledge that seek to explain and faithfully represent creativity in a quest for ever more accurate or encompassing theories (see 2.3.2). Yet, as suggested in Chapter 2, creativity's basic unpredictability asks for a methodological perspective that makes "it possible to describe this immersion of the work in the uncertainty of its end" (Menger, 2006, p. 43). For this to happen, we need to move away from a *knowledge*-based science of creativity by *acknowledging* creativity and invention to be an uncertain event (see 3.2.4) effected within an experimental and therefore experiential engagement with materials.

I suggest that the research questions and their conceptual treatment demand a methodology that is centrally capable of registering and accounting for the micro dynamics of *experience* and its *event*-ful character as well as its link with the more solid and organized forms of social existence. Analog to the way creativity has been conceptualized as situated within the continuum of experimentation and interpretation, so these same principles hold true in formulating a respective epistemology. As such, scientific knowledge production needs to be situated in between an experimental and interpretive engagement with its material. What are the material-semiotics of creativity research? How are we, as researchers, engaging with our data? When does our data emanate as symptom, signal or sign? And how do we express these different modes of existence? Before turning to answering these questions, the central question we need to address is how to inquire into and account for the experiential dimension of creativity and invention.

In order to answer these questions, I set about establishing the following framework for discussion. First, I draw on a literary example from Edgar Allen Poe that suggests the quest we set ourselves is not an easy one at all (4.2.1). He laments the scarcity of processual and relational accounts that take serious the experiential basis of creative processes. His example points at the difficulty of the task: as soon as we open up the black box of creativity beyond the narrow confines of human knowledgeability, we are facing an uncertain circulation of heterogeneous elements and filaments.

As such, I suggest that studying creativity in the making asks us to develop a relational and processual sensibility. Following the proposition of Stefan Zweig (1938/2013) in his essay "The Secret of Artistical Creation," I suggest that this form of sensibility can be found in an unlikely ally of creativity research, namely *criminology*. Both creativity studies and criminology, as I come to suggest, very basically take to the task of

investigating as well as describing the course of actions and happenings that lead to an "event." We can thereby learn from criminology that the primary methodological principle is not explanation but *description*, and that the various methods of observation, participation and in(ter)vention as well as description in criminology might inform creativity research.

From criminology, I then take the methodological discussion further by seeking for a research approach that takes serious the demand to study creativity and invention *in the making* (4.2.2). As we have seen so far, this implies that creative practice needs to be accounted for in terms of *experience* and in terms of *events*. Becoming "faithful to experience" (Latour, 2005, p. 240) therefore asks us to adopt a *radically empirical*[115] stance that takes serious all the bodies and beings (and the respective ontologies) that are made relevant by the people and things we study. In relation to questions of creativity, this meant to "not take sides" and stay open to where and how creativity is situated and effected. In the course of doing empirical research this idea translated primarily into a specific stance, where I sought to not give in to quick explanations of where creativity would be situated while still taking serious for example the accounts of performers that pointed out effective agencies.

To understand the event of creativity, a radical empiricist approach proposes to attend to the ecology of the event and its practical unfolding. The central *units of analysis* are therefore "site" and its central "practice" – a situational arrangement arising from the dynamic connection of social, material and technological aspects that are linked to other, extemporal and dislocated sites. The sciences of *ethology* and *mesology* (see 3.1) can thereby teach us the respective methodological stance (4.2.2.1). I then turn to the figure of the researcher. I suggest that for a researcher to be able to account for the logic of practice, he or she needs to bodily engage with a practice in forms of participant observation to be able to "infer from analogy" (4.2.2.2). Eventually, I frame theory as a conceptual tool and "infra-language" (Latour, 2005, p. 49) enabling the researcher to produce rich descriptions (4.2.3).

Overall, I therefore propose a form of creativity research that follows not an explanatory but a *suggestive* logic stemming from rich accounts of creative practice and processes of composition.

[115] See fn. 109.

4.2.1 The difficulty of studying the uncertain event of creativity – lessons from criminology

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would – that is to say, who could – detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his compositions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say – but, perhaps, the autorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers – poets in especial – prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy – an ecstatic intuition – and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought – at the true purposes seized only at the last moment – at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view – at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable – at the cautious selections and rejections – at the painful erasures and interpolations – in a word, at the wheels and pinions – the tackle for scene-shifting – the step-ladders and demon-traps – the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary histrio.
(Edgar Allen Poe, 1846, p. 163)

How do we access the uncertain practice of composition? How should we analyze the compositional process which, according to Edgar Allen Poe (at least in the literary field), entails vacillating movements of and strenuous fights with vague thoughts, volte-faces and erasures etc.? Such questions were troubling Poe already in the middle of the 19th century. He admittedly addresses the seemingly individual process of literary work. As shown in the problematization of current research in Chapter 2, the dearth of research on organizational creativity as process shows that the issue raised is yet still a pertinent question.

According to Edgar Allen Poe (1846), writing on "The philosophy of composition," the reluctance to describe the process of composition has been an issue for a long time already, and one can only wonder why. Maybe, as Poe so vividly describes, it is because the process is rather erratic, an itinerant movement, alive and full of unforeseeable happenings and arrivals? Following Poe's self-revealing account, how can we research what appears to be a meandering process of trial-and-error, involving, among many other things, raw thoughts, wavering, (un-)decisiveness "in the heat of the moment," a plethora of glimpses and "phantoms," despair, frenzy, evaluation – selecting and rejecting material, pain, mechanisms and equipment? In this way, and by example of his own poem "The Raven," Edgar Allen Poe explodes the mostly black boxed creative process into a concatenation of heterogeneous phenomena - emotional, cognitive, technological and material. While Poe here speaks about an individual artist, one can only wonder at how a collective creative process might unfold.

Taking seriously the rather chaotic and unforeseeable nature of the creative process poses serious challenges to a researcher interested in studying creativity as a practice and a process of composition. First of all, due to its elusive nature, creativity, like many other subjects of study never seems to happen when the researcher is around. On numerous occasions, I was approached by performers that told me that I should have been there just one day, one hour, one minute ago, when "it" happened. Yet this shouldn't mean that the researcher should refrain from doing a forward reading of creativity. It simply means that we have to accept that we cannot record and describe everything that happens and that we have to resort to research methodologies that come to terms with an unforeseeable and eventful process.

While Edgar Allen Poe nicely sets the stage for understanding this process, it is Stefan Zweig, another literate, who steers us toward a more suitable approach to studying creativity. In his treatise on creativity, Stefan Zweig (1938/2013) proposes the use of *criminology* as a possible inspiration for creativity research. Why criminology? For the study of criminal events, a methodology has been developed which includes various approaches and technologies to both retrospectively "find out what happened" and presently attend to the actions and happenings which may possibly have lead up to a criminal act. In both cases, criminology mostly has no direct take on criminal events but is dependent on observable traces, marks, clues or evidences. The same might be said of creativity research. Be it a criminal or a creative "happening," both, criminology and creativity research are in search of information and understanding of events which are rarely directly "witnessed." These events need to be carefully reconstructed through participant interviews, witness statements, along with observation of sites, instruments, traces. In this project, this meant to treat the sites studied (rehearsals, meetings, informal gatherings) as "crime scenes," where ample bodies of evidence and instrumentalities (material, technologies, etc.) could be found and witnesses or people involved could be questioned. In a wider sense, criminology involves both retrospective and prospective methods. The latter are further informing ethnographic research that, analog to undercover investigation, relies on a form of participative observation to monitor and assess the developments of an unfolding event. And just like an undercover agent is not only observing but actively participating and intervening into the respective criminal incidents, so is the ethnographic researcher in need of managing a double life, living in-between immersion and detachment.

Overall then, there are two aspects of criminology's methodology we can learn from and apply to creativity research: (1) *careful observation* and *description,* and (2) the *mapping of relations and associations*. These are basic criminologist methods for the

(re)construction of "unhappy events." Likewise, the investigation of creative processes and their events requires careful observation and description of actors, artifacts and their conditions, as well as the mapping of their relations and associations. In line with Edgar Allen Poe's references, a criminological analysis is thereby an especially helpful orientation for research that seeks to attend closely to artifacts and socio-material as well as historic conditions in order to understand "what might have moved someone to do something."

Summing up, a methodology for creativity research inspired by criminology should be able to attend to the subjective "fever curve" and experience of the composer(s) and carefully follow and reconstruct creative events by closely describing its actors, artifacts and social, historical and material conditions. The challenge is to conceive of a methodology and adequate analytical concepts that allow for a better understanding of the mechanisms and heterogeneous configurations through which creativity and innovation come into being (or not).

In the next section, I draw on the methodological lessons of Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2005) and William James' radical empiricism (1912b, 1909/1996, 1909/2008) to conceive of a methodology that implements the lessons from criminology as suggested above.

4.2.2 Understanding creativity forwards – towards a radical empiricist research agenda

> *We have to live forward, but we understand backward, said a Danish writer [Søren Kierkegaard]; and to understand life by concepts is to arrest its movement, cutting it up into bits as if with scissors, and immobilizing these in our logical herbarium where, comparing them as dried specimens, we can ascertain which of them statically includes or exclude which another. This treatment supposes life to have already accomplished itself, for the concepts, being so many news taken after the fact, are retrospective and post mortem.*
> *(James, 1909/1996, p. 244)*

Interweaving ontological and epistemological concerns, William James (1909/1996) differentiates two forms of understanding: "understanding backwards" and "understanding forwards." When it comes to the scientific work of forging conceptual frameworks, for James the conventional way of understanding backwards – taking recourse to retrospective and *post mortem* concepts – is deeply troubling. Especially when studying creativity, as we have seen in the problematization of a science of creativity that seeks to explain creativity, we easily adopt a mere retrospective perspective that, by the use of *post mortem* concepts, risks to "arrest life's movement" (see especially Ingold & Hallam, 2007). Styhre (2011) respectively notes: "The very

process of conceptualizing, of central importance to any theoretical pursuit, is thus a form of cutting up the world and excluding what is not accommodated by the concepts" (p. 113). James rejects this as an intellectualism that, while surely rendering a fluxing and fluid world more intelligible through its work of abstraction, is hiding the processes and dynamics of things in the making.

Therefore James couples his pragmatist ontology of becoming with the corresponding epistemology of "radical empiricism" (see for example 1909/2008, pp. 59–61). It is borne from the conviction that philosophy as well as social science are in need of complementing the common approach of "understanding backwards" with the capability of "understanding forwards": "Radical empiricism alone insists on understanding forwards *also*, and refuses to substitute static concepts of the understanding for transitions in our moving life" (James, 1912a, n. p.). The general pragmatist position then reads as follows: to seek truth and reason inside the experiential flux of a world in movement rather than outside in some static, abstract and transcendental sphere.

Therefore, though a psychologist himself, James objected to the conventional psychological attempts of conceptualizing experience. His critique has lost nothing of its urgency a mere 125 years later:

> What must be admitted is that the definite images of traditional psychology form but the very smallest part of our minds as they actually live. The traditional psychology talks like one who should say a river consists of nothing but pailsful, spoonsful, quartpotsful, barrelsful, and other moulded forms of water. Even were the pails and the pots all actually standing in the stream, still between them the free water would continue to flow. It is just this free water of consciousness that psychologists resolutely overlook. Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows around it. With it goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it came to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead. (James, 1890, in Shotter, 2013, pp. 50–51)

Traditional psychology "understands backwards," assuming static, "moulded forms" - reflecting basic hylomorphic assumptions. James then sought to further a conceptual framework and method that allows for the incorporation of the "understanding forward" we find in everyday practices of creativity and improvisation.

The lesson learned from James' radical empiricist methodology is for social science – psychology as much as sociology – to become able to account for *experience*. The conceptual framework I developed revolves around conceptualizing creativity and invention in the making. This is meant to emphasize the (direct) experience of creativity and invention. It is in the experience of mutual engagement that materials

turn into symptoms or signals and that practitioners – moved, attached or otherwise affected by their materials – turn into amateurs and *aficionados*. Within his comments on the sociology of art, Latour (2005) draws on James and argues that being "faithful to experience" (p. 240) is the crucial part of a (radical) empirical stance:

> Can we anticipate a social science *that takes seriously the beings that make people act*? Can sociology become *empirical* in the sense of respecting the strange nature of what is "given into experience"? … [I]f you are listening to what people are saying, they will explain at length how and why they are deeply *attached, moved, affected* by the works of art which "make them" feel things. (Latour, 2005, p. 236, emphasis in original)

Here, Latour points at a crucial prerequisite for studying a technoaesthetic being in the making; that is to take into account how subjects and objects both affect and are affected by their inherent capacities and desires.

Sociology has for a long time reduced cultural or aesthetic and artistic artefacts as simply the social factors that were supposed to be hidden behind them. With the same gesture all signs of genuine aesthetic affection were subdued as mere affectation. Once refraining from taking sides, what comes into sight is yet the ambulant flow of chains of affection.

> It is counterintuitive to try and distinguish "what comes from viewers" and "what comes from the object" when the obvious response is to "go with the flow." Object and subject might exist, but everything interesting happens upstream and downstream. Just follow the flow. (Latour, 2005, p. 237)

> No amateur ever alternated between "subjectivity" and "objectivity," so why force the whole sociology of art into this artificial quandary? (Latour, 2005, p. 240)

Within experience, especially when asking or observing "amateurs" (see Gomart & Hennion, 1999; Hennion et al., 2000), people that intimately and affectionately engage with the (aesthetic) matters at hand, there is no clear distinction and alternation between "subjectivity" and "objectivity."

The central methodological import from a radical empirical stance is to refrain from retrospective explanation (reading creativity backwards) alone, which would often censure, evaluate or ridicule the factors that were considered important at the time of actual events. In this study, this meant to take serious the uncertainty of creative practice as being contingent on actions and events as well as positions and motives that were mobilized "in the making." "The rule is to reconstruct the perspectives and projects of one and all without taking sides," by showing "sufficient tolerance and agnosticism" (Akrich et al., 2002a, p. 191). "To not take sides" is the radical empirical

position of studying creativity without deciding beforehand where to situate creativity. It asks us to respect the work that goes into the making of things, and that this work is the result of a conjugation of heterogeneous aspects.

Radical empiricism in a nutshell

In the following, I present the central epistemological and ontological guidelines drawn from William James' radical empiricism (see for example 1909/2008, pp. 59–61). This reading is based on various contemporary authors (see Brown, Cromby, Harper, Johnson, & Reavey, 2011, pp. 511–512; Massumi, 2008, pp. 39–40), who have explicityl appraised radical empiricism in its import for contemporary empirical studies.

First, radical empiricism treats any phenomenon – hence also creativity and invention – as an *event* or *occasion* that is irreducible to anything else. *Second*, it asks us "to take everything as it comes" (Massumi, 2008, p. 39). Ruling out the possibility to draw on *a priori* principles or criteria, radical empiricism does not pick and choose but values the experience of things and their relations as they are encountered. *Third*, this means that amateurs and materials, *aficionados* (see Chapter 3) and spaces as well as bodies and their capacities to affect each other, must be relationally defined. Relations are as real as the terms they relate and are also perceived as such. "[K]nowledge consists in external relations" (James, 1909/2008, p. 60), and this must be accounted for accordingly. *Fourth*, the major part of our knowing must be considered "as in transit and on its way" (p. 59). The terms and relations that allow for knowing are "nine-tenths of the time … not actually but only virtually there" (p. 60) and only rarely become conscious perceptions. Experience, in its virtual aspect, "is of variations of rate and of direction." *In the making*, signs shine forth as symptoms and signals (see Chapter 3) and make for an "experience of tendency" which is "liv[ing] in these transitions more than in the journey's end" (p. 60). For this study, this meant to attend to the various vectors and trajectories that characterize creative practice as a site of inklings and intuitions on the performer's side and the insistence of materials on the other side.

Overall, James' radical empiricism informed this study through its relational and processual sensibility for the relations and configurations that bear specific concrete experiences. Radical empiricism thereby proposes not *persons* and *actions* but *relations* and *events* as units of analysis.

4.2.2.1 "Site" and "practice" as a unit of analysis – inspiration from the sciences of mesology and ethology

Radical empiricism focuses on relations that are understood with reference to the "ecology of the event," that is, "a concrete *assemblage* or *action-complex* rather than a broad *context*" (Brown et al., 2011, p. 511, emphasis in original). The idea of context, just as the concepts of system or structure, is often used in an "eliminativist" way as a "shortcut and substitute for a more detailed analysis of how the conditions for actions came about" (Nicolini, 2013, p. 234). In this study, I did not seek to describe creativity by accounting for the different broad contexts (the "press" element in Rhodes' (1961) "4P" model (see 2.1.1)) in which they appear and that are vaguely thought to moderate them. Rather what was at stake was the task of "describing the particular kind of arrangement of relations which is in play in a given event" (Brown et al., 2011, p. 511). Widening the analytical gaze to attend to the ecology of the event then is an invitation to analyze the actual relations and practices, and their associations, that act as proposition to the event (see 3.2.4).

The conceptual unit of analysis is an *event* or *occasion* "rather than a generic *phenomenon*" (p. 511). James' empiricism asserts that it is specific *sites* and situated *practices* that produce the experience of our (organizational) reality - "it is practices all the way down" (James, 1898/1956, p. 104). It is within practices – as socio-material and technological *agencements* of actions and passions – that we feel and try our way forwards through a world *in the making*. And it is also within practice that creativity is practically brought forth. The empirical units of analysis thus are site and practice. Together they form a situational arrangement arising from the dynamic connection of social, material and technological elements that link to other, extemporal and dislocated sites. This, I suggest, can be understood through the sciences of mesology and ethology.

Creative practices and their bodies (see Chapter 3) exhibit a peculiar spatiality and temporality, and the combined epistemological power of *mesology* and *ethology* is needed to account for such bodies in the making. With a *mesological* optic, a body hence appears as an "ecology of processes … always in co-constellation with the environmentality of which it is part" (Manning, 2013, p. 19). The environmentality thereby encompasses more than the usual contextual variables taken into consideration. "[T]he physical environment is only one aspect of a set of relationships that may be combined to form different sorts of events or occasions, some of which may co-exist alongside one another" (Brown et al., 2011, p. 511). For this study, the mesological lesson meant to approach performers and their bodies not as individual

entities but as nodes of relations that extend well beyond the actual site. Hence, in Chapter 5, I for example asked about the way a performer's body is transformed over time into an active-sensible capacity through an intimate and performative engagement with others, explicit knowledge, techniques as well as standards and norms of CDT. The mesological premise of conceiving of organisms and environment as mutually constitutive then further allowed to account for example for how performers mobilized material, temporal and spatial attachments in order to make an improv session work.

The *ethological* perspective then suggests to engage in the study of "relations of speed and slowness, of the capacities for affecting and being affected that characterize each thing" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 125). Ethologists observe nature, especially animals, and attend to and ask, "that which corresponds to the thing; that is, they select what affects or is affected by the thing, what moves it or is moved by it … [w]hat does it react to positively or negatively? What are its nutriments and its poisons? What does it "take" in its world" (p. 125)? An ethological approach hence focuses on the amplitude of "relations and capacities," on "thresholds (maximum and minimum)," and on "variations" and "transformations" (p.125).

An ethologist of creative practice would then empirically account for the affections which lead to and are enabled by creative powers. Such an ethology would then counter any attempt to reduce the idea of creativity to a normative program or moral doctrine. Especially Gilles Deleuze, with his ethological attitude therefore serves as a role-model. "With his ethological attitude he has, so to speak, at least opened up the black box of creativity and taken a serious look inside" (Osborne, 2003, p. 515). For this study, the ethological lesson meant to take serious the passions and concerns that were exhibited or raised by the performers when enganging with materials or when talking about it.

In the next section, I suggest that the ethologist of creative practice has mediated access to experience and affection thanks to his own embodiment.

4.2.2.2 The role of the researcher – a resonant scribe

Rich descriptions are based on a recognition of the embodied nature of creative practice and our participation as researchers therein. The equivalence between experimentation and experience in the French expression "*faire une experience*" that counts for the amateurs also holds for the researcher (Brown et al., 2011, p. 512). It means that the clue to the presence and content of your experience is the affection of my body.

> What we can and do share … is our experiences of the external world as mediated by our respective bodies and bodily actions, and these experiences entitle us to infer at least some of the significant goings-on of each other's … world. (Crosby, 2013, p. 46)

James established the body as the basis for the researcher's pre-discursive affective and active communion with a world in the making. Researchers are resonant scribes. To inquire into experience, we therefore draw on our own bodies to infer by analogy when actively attending an ongoing event. Being somewhat experienced and knowledgeable about and in the field of study is thereby of advantage as Becker and colleagues (2006) note:

> Knowing the activity and the world of people and organizations and practices in which it takes place and being familiar with its typical products makes it much easier to invent interesting and researchable questions. You know what forms of collective activity are there to be studied, what the typical problems of participants in the activity are, what to ask people about, what kinds of events to be on the lookout for. You've already done a pilot study. (Becker et al., 2006, p. 15)

Not being tied to restrictive ideas of objectivity through personal detachment, being familiarized with the field of study was helpful for registering significant moments and differences. In this way we can infer by analogy with the help of our bodies. This is by no means a representational activity, as James (1909/2008) asserts, in that we never have direct access to somebody else's experience.

A radical empiricist methodology also does not assume representation to be at work when talking to research participants *about* their experience. The more or less conscious statements evoked within an interview situation are not representations of affective encounters, "but, rather, indications of the significance for the organism or system of what has happened in affect" (Ducey, 2007, p. 193). Signification (e.g. the labelling of an experience as "intensive") is here understood in service of significant changes of intensities or direction within experience. Events are comprehensible as events because they can be narrated and described. As much as events are enacted, are made to happen, so "the tellings or narratives about events are themselves performances (or social events). They too are enacted" (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003, p. 104).

In sum, to study the uncertain event of creativity, I propose that a respective methodology needs to depend on rich descriptions. Rehn (2009) suggests that staying "true" to the event first of all means "reveling in the surprise of the event and its capacity to overthrow things" (p. 254). Situating the event of creativity, as discussed, requires an observation of its socio-material and technical ecology (see 3.2.4), the

methodological consequences may lead the researcher to become comfortable with a more *suggestive* logic and leave behind an *explanatory* logic of creativity accounts. For this study, this meant to refrain from explaining creativity in a positivistic sense and rather produce rich *descriptions* and fabricate risky accounts (see 2.3.2) of domain and situation specific creative processes that suggest the complexity and event-fulness of creative practice. Theory and the specific analytical concepts thereby attain the status of an infra-language, a language that is enabling to account for the performativity of practice and to "become attentive to the actors' own fully developed meta-language" (Latour, 2005, p. 49).

4.2.3 Propositional concepts and theory as infra-language

In both participation and retrospective interviews the complex, elusive and indeterminate nature of experience impedes any attempt to fix experience as such. Rather, what is needed is the sensitivity to the concrete and specific relations, processes and affections in a given experience. The epistemological and ontological assumptions presented in the previous section thereby help to thwart our "tendency to think of experience as something personal, private, and stopping at the boundaries of our own skin" (Brown et al., 2011, p. 512). Radical empiricism thereby asks us to recognize the emergent, uncertain, and relational character of experience.

> In order to express that it will be necessary to go beyond what can be taped or recorded in order to describe the conditions of specific experiences. As such we will need to invent concepts "along the way" as tools to assist in this descriptive labour such that at any point we can make visible why we have chosen to circumscribe an event or occasion in a particular way. The point is neither to search for faux precision nor to engage in theoretical speculation for its own sake but rather to do justice to the complexity of embodied experience, however difficult that proves to be. (Brown et al., 2011, p. 512)

It is with the help of an ontological framework focusing on becoming that we can attend to experience in a way so as to go beyond what can be documented by tape or videocamera. The descriptive challenge is to attend to the "more-than" of experience that we can infer by attending closely to our own co-experience. In terms of analysing participant talk, this meant to read discourse as affective traces of significant differences within experience. When a recorded conservation or an interview for example featured positionings, valuations or other emotional or affective qualifiers, I treated them not so much as representations of an objective situation but as pragmatic, and therefore situated actualizations of affectively meaningful differences.

Brown et al. (2011) further suggest that describing an event is assisted by creating propositional concepts "along the way." "Concepts are used to illuminate *specific concrete experiences* instead of generalising the matter at hand to *a general type of experiences*" (Brown et al., 2011, p. 511, emphasis in original), so as to sharpen the concrete differences between specific occasions. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 therefore feature various propositional concepts that seek to speak of and from the specific experiences within the production of CDT in this study.

When engaging in the task of description, the status of theory has to be considered as an *infra-language*. As infra-language, theory consists of sensitizing concepts that guide the researcher in its main task of producing a rich and risky account of situated occasions and practices (Latour, 2005). In line with his pragmatist commitments, Latour (2005) seeks to employ theoretical concepts as probes that, as part of an experimental engagement with the field, either afford or restrain rich descriptions. Following Latour, to conceive of theory as infra-language means to develop a conceptual framework that is not a fixed theory or an *a priori* conceptualization of the specific "what" and "how" of creativity. It is rather to develop conceptual sensitivities that allow, within an ethnographic methodology, to follow, experience and observe things in the making and the respective "world-making" of the actors involved. In this respect John Law (see Law & Hassard, 1999) and Bruno Latour (1999b) understand Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (see 4.3.4) not so much as a theory but more as an ethno-methodology trying to enable "the actors to speak for themselves."

In line with the specification of creative practice including moments of understanding backwards and forwards, the requirements for a conceptual infra-language are then as follows: aiming at the rich description of "world-makings" and "wayfarings," it should allow for the meta-language of actors to express their own understanding backwards while at the same time enable for a following forwards of the improvisations and itinerations of everyday practice. Therefore, in this project, research was guided by this double option, namely to follow and read forwards the immanent sensemaking of creative practice and learn about this from the retrospective sensemaking of the performers themselves.

In short, an infra-language of creative practice should enable the researcher to follow and describe all the various actants forming and transforming the subjects and objects of interest. Latour's notion of infra-language must in this respect be regarded as a direct heritage of ANT's strong methodological influence of ethnomethodology (see for example Garfinkel, 1996).

When it comes to dealing with *discursive data*, the theoretical infra-language is sought to allow the "meta-language" of actors to speak. "An ethno-method is the discovery that members possess a complete vocabulary and a complete social theory for understanding their behavior" (Latour, 2005, p. 46). Following this assumption, "analysts are allowed to possess only some infra-language whose role is simply to help them become attentive to the actors' own fully developed meta-language, a reflexive account of what they are saying" (p. 49).

Yet in a more general sense, and beyond mere textual data, the researcher's infra-language should allow for the participant's "ethno-method" to show, so that the key active relations and (mobilized) agencies can be accounted for. The second requirement is thus to allow for an ethnographic movement of "following the actants" (Latour, 2005). In other words, "not to decide who is acting and how but to shift from a certainty about action to an *uncertainty* about action – but to decide what is acting and how" (p. 60, emphasis in original). Latour thereby proposes a number of sensitizing questions which should direct the analytic gaze: "Which agencies are invoked? Which figurations are they endowed with? Through which mode of action are they engaged? Are we talking about causes and their intermediaries or about a concatenation of mediators?" (p. 62). These sensitizing questions and concepts directly informed the analysis in regard to both research questions, as seen in Chaper 5 and Chapter 6.

In the following section I detail the research design and its key methods. They were centrally informed through an infra-language of organizational creativity that enabled the collection, analysis and presentation of the textual and audio-visual data of this study.

4.3 Research Design and Methods

> *[W]e are in the business of descriptions. Everyone else is trading on clichés. Enquiries, survey, fieldwork, archives, polls, whatever – we go, we listen, we learn, we practice, we become competent, we change our views. Very simple really: it's called inquiries. Good inquiries always produce a lot of new descriptions.*
> *(Latour, 2005, p. 145)*

The implications of exploring sites and practices as interconnecting bodies, affects and emotions invite us to consider the profound possibilities of comprehending organizational creativity as a circulation and weaving of bodies, performances, utterances, spaces and events. This is the starting and end point not for the ultimate theory of creativity but a rich *description* of the thorough entanglement of

heterogenous actants. As introduced earlier, opening up the black box of creativity "with" a radical empirical methodology does not start with *a priori* concepts or theory and it does not seek to account for finished things and endorse actor's reasons with *ex post* rationalizations. Latour's (2005) slightly polemical gesture thereby objects to any idea of explanation: "if your description needs an explanation, it's not a good description" (p. 146). Rather, "the business of description" seeks to take practice, and its participants, serious as capable of suggesting the logic of CDT production.

The research questions formulated at the end of Chapter 3 narrowed my general interest in organizational creativity within the *act of becoming* of CDT performances. First, focusing on the crucial relation of amateurs and materials, I asked: *what materials, practices, technologies etc. comprise the ecology of creative practice? How do the various plug-ins and attachments enable the performative engagement of amateur and material?* Second, with an interest in the production of a CDT performance and hence a processual view on organizational creativity, I asked: *how are the generation, formation and stabilization of the product "theater performance" affected? What modes of engagement are thereby crucial? And how do these modes interact?*

To answer these questions I heeded the general guideline that the researcher's task is first of all to "engage in the world-making activities of those they study" (Latour, 2005, p. 57) and thus "to be attentive to the concrete state of affairs to [then] find the uniquely adequate account of a given situation" (p. 144). Two questions therefore marked the beginning of the empirical study: how can I practically and technically engage in the world-making activities of my research participants? How do I collect, analyze and present data within the radical empirical mode of the "business of descriptions"? Answering these questions is part of this section on research design and methods.

The research design in qualitative research has to be regarded as the outcome of choices about the overall research strategy, the conceptual framework, and about data collection and analysis. Within the research process, these elements are mutually constitutive and thus interrelate, as depicted in the circular research framework developed by Steyaert (1995).

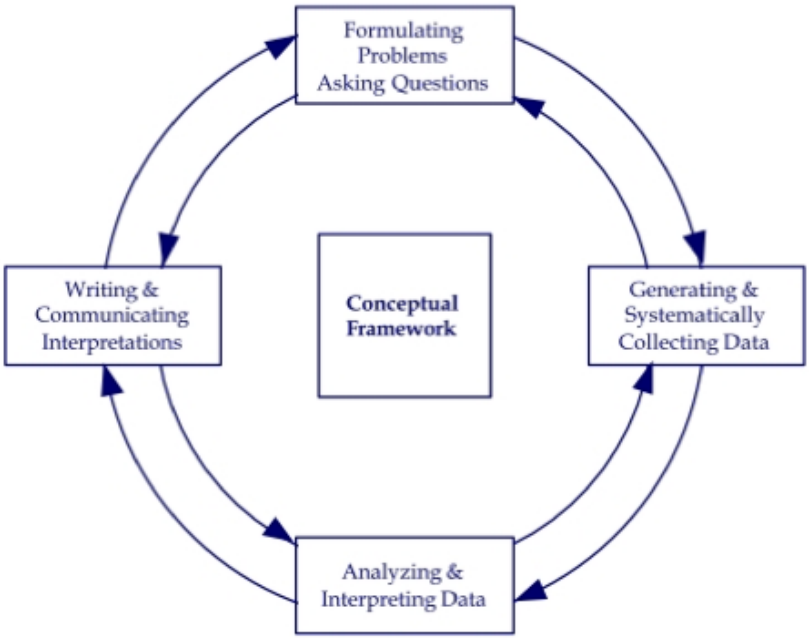


Figure 1: Circularity of the research process (from Steyaert, 1995)

Drawing upon this model, I understood my own research process as following a circular logic. The basic methodological ideas of this study were developed through an iterative process of moving in-between theoretical notions and pilot immersions in the field. For instance, the central differentiation of reading creativity forwards or backwards started to make sense once I realized the performer's reluctance of speaking about creativity within the idealized and normative discourses of creativity while struggling to find words that would resonate with their own experience of creative practice. Eventually, the radical empiricist methodology reflected the theoretical positions (see Chapter 3) that specified my procedures of *collecting*, *analyzing* and *presenting* data. When devising the methodology of this study as well as in the following, I hence attend(ed) to these crucial questions: *what* is to be studied? *Who* is to be studied and how was access obtained and the relationships with the research participants defined? *Where* is the site to be studied? *How* do I study it? *Which* research tradition and overall research strategy do I adhere to? What knowledge do I draw on? What is to be foregrounded or backgrounded, excluded or included? What are ethical and relational issues? And eventually, how do I present my findings, how do I write my research?

The following sections specify my research design that is based on collecting data by "following forwards" (see Langley, 2007) (4.3.1, 4.3.2), analyzing data by "reading creativity forwards" (see Ingold & Hallam, 2007) (4.3.3) and presenting data by "writing forwards," that is, producing "risky accounts" (Latour, 2005) (4.3.4).

4.3.1 Video-ethnography

In the previous methodology section, I suggested *site* and *practice* as the empirical units of analysis. Grounded in James' radical empiricism, this means an empirical turn that attempts to develop theoretical concepts in proximity to the empirical. Seeking to account for the experiential and experimental logic of practices, what is needed hence is a general research framework for studying practice. Schmidt (2012) thereby proposes a *praxeographic* approach.

A praxeographic approach is taking serious the situated as well as extemporal and dislocated character of site and practice by drawing on an *ethnographic method* that, in the ethnomethodological tradition, can account for all the work that goes into the conjunction and disjunction of heterogeneous relations. In line with an ontology of becoming, an ethnographic approach is mobile enough to be following forward (Langley, 2007), that is, attending to the unfolding of current actions and events into the future to understand the organizational activities and circumstances that gave rise to certain patterns and outcomes in the present (p. 5).

Organizational ethnography has lately taken an increasingly popular position within organization and workplace studies (see Cunliffe, 2009; Ybema et al., 2009; Zickar & Carter, 2010). Especially with an intensified interest in the study of practices, ethnography has often become the first choice (Nicolini, 2009b). The unique feature of the ethnographic method is that it generally emphasizes the immersion of the researcher into the field so he/she can develop an intimate feel for the social. Thus, in an oscillation of proximity and distance, the researcher can take advantage of oneself as an important "register" and/or "author"[116] of the social, alternating with distant analysis. With a concern for lived experiences and their (re)presentations, for performing and doing, and the "more-than-representational," I thus valued ethnographic methodologies that focus on direct experience and other means to access "felt worlds" (Anderson, 2006; see Anderson & Harrison, 2010; Pile, 2010). Pile (2010) suggested that three assumptions are key to the production of research focusing on the experiential and more-than-representational aspects of practice. This is "a specific ontology of relation, mainly involving a concern with fluidity; a valuation of proximity and intimacy; and a methodological emphasis on ethnography" (p. 5). Video-ethnography[117] has been additionally considered when the task is to help

[116] Depending on the model of ethnography and its immanent epistemological framing of "representation," one can find different variations. Some see the researcher's roles as "register" and "author" as mutually exclusive while others take a pragmatic stance and see them as alternating (Mohn, 2002).

[117] Video-ethnography, as a "performative approach to the visual" (Steyaert, Marti, & Michels, 2012) has been employed in sociology (see for example Gibson, Webb, & Lehn, 2011; Knoblauch, Schnettler, Raab, &

capturing, analyzing and communicating data rich in embodied, aesthetic and processual dimensions. Against the backdrop of the relational and processual ontology outlined in Chapter 3, my research design hence relied on an empiricist methodology based on a multi-sited and focused organizational video-ethnography (Merchant, 2011; Mohn, 2002; Ybema et al., 2009) adhering to a comparative embedded case design (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2003).

4.3.2 Data collection – following creativity forwards

Following the praxeographic approach and the premises of radical empiricism, data collection means gathering data that can account for the capacity of actors to "modify a state of affairs by making a difference" (Latour, 2005, p. 71). The methodological challenge was therefore to generate data that can make visible and "make talk" the groups, agencies and especially the objects that populate and participate in practice and that are so often silenced in well established methods.

Latour (2005) proposes three tricks or solutions to enable making "things talk" during field work. *Firstly*, the researcher needs to focus on innovation processes – as here "the making of an object" is center-place and "objects live a clearly multiple and complex life through meetings, plans, sketches, regulations, and trials" (p. 80). *Secondly*, he advised a focus on issues of archaeology, ethnology or learning – all sites where there is a distance visible to the things studied: "the most routine, traditional, and silent implements stop being taken for granted when they are approached by users rendered ignorant and clumsy by distance" (p. 80). And *thirdly*, attending to breakdowns or accidents is recommended, phenomena where "all of a sudden, completely silent intermediaries become full-blown mediators" (p. 81). Overall, Latour asserted that the "social [is] a fluid visible *only* when new associations are being made" (p. 79, emphasis in original).

Drawing from Latour's suggestions, the ethnographic focus for this study interested in learning about (creative) practice was to find the sites where "things are making a difference" and the organizational dimension of creativity would become visible. Only after some time did I realize that doing research within the CDT production of Sharp Cutz meets all three of Latour's criteria. The first aspect (a process of innovation) was obviously to be found within a CDT production. The second aspect (learning) and the third aspect (breakdowns, accidents) were further emphasised as the fieldwork within

Soeffner, 2009; Schubert, 2009), in visual anthropology (see Merchant, 2011; Mohn, 2002) as well as art/design research (see for example Pink, 2006) and is slowly becoming more popular in organizational and workplace studies (Hindmarsh & Heath, 2007; Iedema et al., 2009; Steyaert et al., 2012).

Sharp Cutz meant to study *novice choreographers.* The participants in this work were learners, not yet fully skilled in the craft. For this, the five production processes observed were sites of learning marked by controversies, struggles and problems. The novice choreographers' contact with objects, concerns, tools, artefacts, mediations, along with observations of the tension between creativity and normativity thereby helped making creative practice more "visible."

Data collection then followed a multi-method approach, including conventional participant observation methods – observation and writing of field notes, autoethnographic journal writing and ethnographic interviewing – and additionally employed video for the production of audio-visual field notes (see Mohn, 2002). After having gained field access, I took great care to show interest and respect for the performers and their work. This ensured that I was quickly accepted and even appreciated as an sympathetic observer. More and more I then started to also participate by taking part in the rehearsals, some training sessions and eventually also having a very small role in one performance.

Ethnographic research distinguishes between participant and non-participant observation and hinges on the criterion of interaction (see Gobo, 2008). In this study I changed between intense involvement and detachment in order to process the data. During my first fieldwork, I spent mornings, afternoons or complete days at the theater where I would film and sketch field notes on-the-go. As I still worked at the university at the same time, the reflection and writing out of field notes was thereby mostly relayed to weekends. As the development process of five parallel productions moved on relentlessly, I often took too little time for reflection and felt pressed to follow the unfolding production. In this way, I fabricated ample raw material that required disciplined data management. In hindsight, it would have been better to take more time to sharpen my focus while being in the field.

The aim of data collection was to register and follow the practices and events taking place in the field. As ethnographic accounts are thought to emerge from the circulation of both, human and non-human bodies, and hence are not only linguistic phenomena, ethnographic research is especially capable of enabling the researcher to register both the discursive as well as the non-discursive trajectories involved (see Gobo, 2008). Accordingly, I extended ethnographic participant observation by firstly drawing on established methods in organizational ethnography like narrative interviews (Czarniawska, 1998), and secondly by employing video-ethnographic methods.

Ethnographic narrative interviews differ distinguishably from other interviews in several features (see Gobo, 2008). Firstly, after or sometimes even while watching a

rehearsal, I approached the performers to ask directly about certain situations, reactions or gestures, thereby eliciting further reactions or clarifying a specific issue. These conversations were open, yet thematically focused ethnographic interviews. Secondly, I knew my interview partners rather well. On the one hand this enabled a conducive atmosphere for an open sharing. On the other hand, especially after I spent the first weeks with the company, it was also sometimes hindering as potentially interesting aspects of communication were not explicated due to my achieved insider-status. This showed for example in expressions like "Ah well, you know how it goes," or, "as usual." Thirdly, the ethnographic mode of fieldwork meant to not worry too much about "lost opportunities" to collect relevant data as further talks and interviews were always possible.

Interviews and many observations were recorded by video camera or audio devices. Research that seeks to register and reconstruct affective resonances (see for example Leavitt, 1996) started to appreciate the advantages of visual methods, e.g. as developed within visual anthropology (Merchant, 2011; Mohn, 2002). Mohn's (2002) approach of "Kamera-Ethnographie" is thereby especially reflexive of the paradoxical relationship between registering and authoring as a visual researcher. Mohn introduces Kamera-Ethnographie as the meeting of ethnographic work and a visual scientific culture, permanently producing productive entanglements of the paradoxes of documentation and visualization, knowing and not-knowing and perception and conception. Video ethnography hence turns into a creative method for producing audio-visually "thick descriptions" (see Geertz, 1973) and thick (re)presentations (Mohn, 2008) born from a dauntless engagement with the paradoxes of documentation as oscillating between registering and authoring. The visual and pictorial drafts of filming ethnographers originate "in situation," when doing participatory observation, yet they are all the same "home made," as they still are the descriptions of the describers and not the described. The video ethnographer faces, in analogy to the verbal "silence of the social," a "picturelessness of the social." Pictures are always made and are formulations that have to be created in correspondence to what the video ethnographer beholds.

In this study, I used a "mobile approach" to videography. Working with a camcorder, I changed between moving around freely with the camera and sometimes installing it on a tripod to then be placed at different spots in regard to the specific situation. In this way, the video camera decisively mediated my own practice of watching and observing. At the same time, my practice of watching was revealed through retrospectively seeking to understand the different moves I made within the field. Overall, the video camera became a "co-producer" of the narrative trajectories aimed for. It directed my attention to visual, embodied and overall non-discursive aspects of

practice. Especially with its suggestive function of zooming, it however also sometimes restricted my focus and sense for the whole situation.

During fieldwork, I devoted most of my time to observing rehearsals and trainings and then also participated in informal activities and meetings of all sorts. Within my more general interests in the organization "dance company" as an ethnographic site, I focused mostly on the organizational and creative work that went into the making of CDT. I engaged in extensive journaling and note taking for the production of autoethnographic and conventional field notes. After finishing the production process of each dance and theater performance, I further conducted semi-structured narrative interviews with key actors for a more systematic retrospective on the process. These interviews, focusing on stories and narrated experience, enabled an actualization of interactional intensities, individual sensemaking of the production process and hence captured relevant aspects pertaining to my research questions.

4.3.3 Data analysis – reading creativity forwards

The goal of description is to account for creativity and innovation "en train de se faire" (Hennion, 2013a, p. 2). To acknowledge and account for a generative creative practice, I thereby took recourse to Tim Ingold's work (Ingold, 2010a, 2010c, 2011; Ingold & Hallam, 2007). Ingold echoes William James' assertion that we need to understand forwards and claimed that creativity must accordingly be "read forwards."

Ingold distinguishes between reading creativity backwards – via its products – and reading it forwards – via its processes and its practices. Reading creativity backwards – assuming *creatio ex nihilo* – judges the creativity of action by the novelty of its outcomes, that is, by comparison with what has gone before and to its antecedent conditions in the form of unprecedented ideas in the minds of individual agents. To read creativity forwards – assuming *creatio ex materia* – invites us then to attend to processes of creating and hence to creativity as practice and practical concern, where person, product and press (see M. Rhodes, 1961) are not only interacting but inherently entangled and co-constitutive. A forward reading of creativity conceives of creativity "as an improvisatory joining in with formative processes" (Ingold, 2010c, p. 3) and situates the creativity of the work "in the forward movement that gives rise to things" (p. 10). What is at stake is the "intuitive, inventive component of skilled practice" (Ingold, 2011, p. 7) that is not properly explained by input-output-models. To do so would then mean to follow creativity in "the movements that give rise to things, rather than backwards from their outcomes" (p. 7). Ingold therefore situates creativity within the process of practice, the "moment-by-moment inventiveness of practice -

that is, in its improvisatory quality - as it carries on, in the midst of things, always responsive to what is going on in its surroundings" (p. 7). Reading creativity forwards assumes that in all cases of "making," practitioners deal not with finished objects but rely on "live" material – the potential of in-formed matter for further acts of creation and transformation.

Reading creativity forwards in this way relies on the following analytical principles (see also Flyverbom, 2011; Nicolini, 2009a) of an overall praxeographic approach research strategy:

> **Practice-orientation**: *Practices* and *sites* are the smallest units of analysis;
> **Relationalism**: Thinking in terms of associations instead of discrete entities;
> **Agnosticism**: "Follow the actors" without being conceptually bound to *a priori* settings;
> **Zooming**: Following the actors is done by an analytical movement of zooming out on the "texture of practice" that prefigures the practice of interest, and of zooming in on the situations as processual, that is event-ful unfolding (Nicolini, 2009a).

A key question for such an analytical approach seeking to read creativity forwards I take from Latour (2005). He proposes to approach the data with an interest in finding out what mediations take part in an unfolding event and to approach each potential actor by asking "does it make a difference in the course of some other agent's action or not?" (p. 71). Thinking together "significant moments."" (Van Manen, 1990) and "situations" (Clarke, 2005; Flyverbom, 2011) is thereby pivotal, allowing to study "events and their conditions as one, and thus capture the social formations, positions, discourses and other complexities of situations" (Flyverbom, 2011, p. xviii).

In this study, this meant taking inspiration but also reappropriating Nicolini's (2009a) analytical principle of zooming out to all the connections that "matter" – intermediaries that make a difference in practice. From a perspective that asserts that "[t]here is no "elsewhere" and there are no absolute essences, all there is, is what happens in contact with things, in objects, and in the tests and devices which hold them together" (Hennion, 2014, p. 167), zooming out is never a question of vertical distance, but of horizontal range. It is not an analytical move towards detached abstraction, but a tracing and trailing of the relevant attachments.

I employed two different analytical strategies for the evaluation of the discursive and audiovisual data produced.

4.3.3.1 Discursive and narrative data

The discursive and narrative data produced through observations and interviews, all containing fragments of narrative trajectories, were analyzed based on a reconstructive approach. As an affective-textual analysis focuses on narratives this approach brings together discourse analytical and conversation analytical concepts in order to emphasize the performative aspects of narratives and remain sensitive to emotions and affective traces in "situated lines of action" (see Cromby, Brown, Gross, Locke, & Patterson, 2010; Ginsburg & Harrington, 1996; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000). Narrative approaches are well fitting with a process perspective and have in this regard also been promoted in organization and management research:

> [R]ather than viewing organizations as static, homogeneous and consistent entities, narrative approaches demonstrate the processual characteristics of organizations and can render both the paradoxes and complex causal relationships inherent in organizational change open to analysis. (C. Rhodes & Brown, 2005, p. 177)

Hence, ethnographic research producing narrative data allows to produce performative "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) of creative practice.

All discursive (writable) data from interviews and field notes were transcribed verbatim. Concerning the interview data, I thereby relied on the discourse and conversation-analytic transcription system "GAT 2" (Selting, Auer, & others, 2011). As a transcription system used for the compilation of verbatim transcripts of talk-in-interaction, GAT 2 accounts for the wording and prosody of natural everyday speech. For purposes of presentation, the interview excerpts used in this dissertation were mainly reduced to normal text. Only where thought to be of relevance and benefit for a more lively understanding, some excerpts still feature CAPITAL words as representing the focus accent of a phrase.

The computer-assisted qualitative data analysis system ATLAS/ti (Kelle, 2000) was used to sort, edit and code the data. Employing thematic coding heuristics pertaining to the main research questions, the written data was first coded inductively in order to enable an inductive theorizing (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Punch, 2005). In an iterative process the variety of "pre-codes" were compared and contrasted, checking for redundancy, central themes and distinctive variations. Consistent data management within ATLAS/ti became crucial for developing a data repository that could be quickly assessed. This was the prerequisite for turning the raw data of initial field notes and interviews into working *vignettes* – short, episodic and evocative accounts of key activities and events within CDT production.

The process of writing out the data in various vignettes was very important as the analysis relied on and could only proceed with these detailed accounts. I first remained on a detailed level of description until more concrete themes emerged from reading and writing field notes. Then I began to oscillate between work on the conceptual framework and further work on the descriptions. As noted before when refering to the circularity of the research process (see figure 1), the conceptual framework and analysis co-developed. Analytical concepts informed my readings and helped me to develop empirical concepts as much as the latter asked for more detailing of the conceptual framework. This meant going through a number of iterations in writing and rewriting vignettes.

Data analysis not only concerned the textual data but also the audio-visual data gathered from my use of video recording. The next sections therefore feature how I worked with the latter and then also integrated textual and visual data into montage-like vignettes.

4.3.3.2 Audio-visual data

For the analysis of audiovisual field notes, I drew mainly on Mohn's (2002; 2008) methodology of *Kamera-Ethnographie* (camera ethnography). Video is a powerful method capable of capturing especially non-discursive practices and the visual and material dimension of the observed, hence providing a stage for artefacts and non-human actants (see Steyaert, Marti, & Michels, 2012). Video is thereby seen as an appropriate research method to study event-ful practices.

The video-ethnographic process of understanding and description within Mohn's Kamera-Ethnographie emphasises the active role of editing and cutting the raw material. Mohn (2002) proposes an iterative course of action where time in the field alternates with time at the digital cutting board, thus continuously refining the angle and aisle of one's way of looking. The following figure presents a sketch of the main research phases with the central concept of the "visual laboratory."

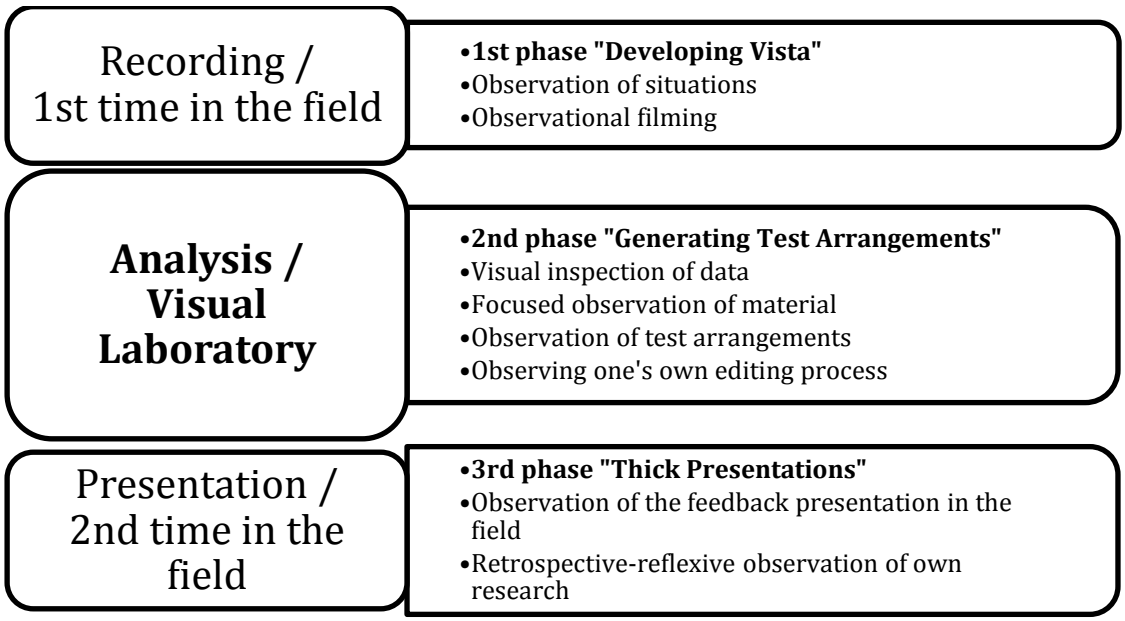


Figure 2: "Kamera-ethnographic" research phases (adapted from Mohn, 2002)

Mohn's idealized research process foresees three phases of visual research: recording, analysis and presentation. Within analysis, it takes recourse to the central analytical idea of so called "test arrangements" – thematic montages of audio-visual material – that are produced and then subsequently put to test in a visual laboratory. In Mohn's understanding, a visual laboratory is thereby a collective setting for trying out the test arrangements produced. As participatory approach, Mohn's research phases envisage returning to the field of study to present the material to one's research participants and thereby validate or question it.

In my analysis of the video data, generating test arrangements was an iterative and also itinerative process of producing small to medium sized (30s to 6min) montages of the material. The inductive coding of the video data, as described above, was thereby a prerequisite for being able to quickly assemble video fragments into simple montages. These montages thereby enacted first themes found within the raw data (e.g. on the role of materials and devices as well as specific techniques such as found within collective improvisation). Working with video had two unsurpassable advantages. In terms of reading creativity forwards, it firstly allowed to retrace the developments (activities and events) that contingently lead to certain phenomena of interest. Hence, the videographic method allowed to *retrospectively* read creativity forwards. Secondly, in terms of research reflexivity, it allowed to analyze my own movement within the field ("Why did I go or zoom here?") and then observe my own editing process, tracing the thematic developments and readings of the material. Seeking to work within different visual laboratories, I presented the montages at internal research

colloquia as well as conferences (Müller, 2012a, 2012b). This allowed for an inter-subjective validation of readings and for assessing the performance of the material.

Working for the first time with videographic data, the nature of videographic data thereby proved to be difficult. Video data, very different to written data, always showed more then I had in mind and encouraged the viewers to recommend looking at many aspects I hadn't yet considered. The visual laboratories therefore often produced more questions then they actually validated my initial ideas. Partly for this reason I also did not move on to the third phase of presenting my visual findings to the performers involved. Instead, I opted for an alternative where I used my second fieldwork stay in Buenos Aires to present and discuss the video montages coming out of the fieldwork in Switzerland. In this way I could present the data as tentative results and generate an insightful sensemaking from the practitioner's side.

Overall, working with video proved to be a highly prolific method, and yet it also came with a number of challenges and unresolved questions, especially in light of the final data presentation within the paper-based format of a dissertation. The most pressing questions were: how do I make use of the video analysis in the paper-based end product of a doctoral thesis? How can I make the audio-visual perform beyond mere illustrative functions? And how does the textual analysis relate to the visual analysis?

These questions needed to be answered once I reached the stage of presenting the data in the form of this dissertation.

4.3.4 Data presentation – writing forwards in risky accounts

When it came to data presentation, seeking to produce a *suggestive* account of creative practice, I found myself to be challenged to write *risky accounts* (Latour, 2005, p. 121). For Latour, risky accounts are attempting to trace the circulations and weavings, "the work, and the movement, and the flow, and the changes" (p. 143) that mark creative practice in the making. These accounts can be called "risky" because they seek to present and thus perform specific and concrete experiences. And, as I have suggested before (see for example 3.2.1), performances are always risky endeavors liable to fail. A description is a risky account because "it can easily fail – it does fail most of the time – since it can put aside neither the complete artificiality of the enterprise nor its claim to accuracy and truthfulness" (p. 133). What is at stake is not an accurate description seeking to faithfully represent an objective reality, but a description that stays faithful to experience and its event-ful character:

> The whole question is to see whether the event of the social can be extended all the way to the event of the reading through the medium of the text. This is the price to pay for objectivity, or rather "objectfullness" to be achieved. (Latour, 2005, p. 133)

To produce such a performative account relies not on accurately representing the active elements involved but on rendering the circulations of creative practice in such a way as to show how actors make a difference in an overall plot. My challenge therefore was to account for the work of materials, bodies, repertoires, spaces, techniques as much as standards and norms within the event of creativity and taste in such a way that the multi-layered experience of creative practice could be conveyed when reading it.

Combining heterogeneous data sources, in this study I brought the basic idea of a risky account to bear on a performative *montage* of written field notes and images extracted from the videographic material (see Schmidt, 2012, Chapters 5–7). Answering to the questions posed above, I used the videographic "raw" data in order to compose field notes that assemble, as a montage, textual and visual data. Working with video proved to be advantageous, as I could extract single frames, so-called *stills*, from the video material and combine them with text. Especially when working on the level of micro interaction, the videographic material afforded me to single out "significant moments" (see Van Manen, 1990) in their social, material and technological entanglement. Images are always made, as noted before (4.3.2). Not being interested in objective representations of actual people and situations, I therefore edited the stills and transformed them through digital image processing into pencil-like sketches. In this way their character of "being made" was emphasized. I constructed my field notes with a focus on sites, practices and their bodies in various configurations and was not interested in people as such. Foregrounding bodies, their affects and their configurations with other bodies, the alienated stills therefore emphasize the embodied and affective aspects of practice and at the same time respond to the need of anonymization. This way, the visual elements attempt to convey a sense of the materialities and affects of creative practice that are posited as crucial in the contingent development of a product like a CDT performance.

For the case of creative practice which, as I suggested (see 3.2.4), is stretching between virtuality and actuality, a risky account specifically attempts to describe mediators that are "rendering virtualities actual" (Latour, 2005, p. 155). Therefore I sought to describe the successive and emergent development of materials and forms that was not anticipated as such. Attempting a risky account here meant to forge accounts that could convey a development where every step and actant would become

visible as indeterminate occasion for further action and events. Overall, a risky account needs to focus on "the ability of each actor to make other actors do unexpected things" (p. 129). This is the rule of thumb for Latour on the question what entities to include in a rich and risky account.

> If I want to have actors in my account, they have to do things, not to be placeholders; if they do something, they have to make a difference. If they make no difference, drop them, start the description anew. You want a science in which there is no object. (Latour, 2005, p. 154)

The litmus test for any account is eventually the reaction of the reader. If the reader is becoming curious and wants to learn more about the specificity of a concrete experience and event, the account succeeds.

> A good text should trigger in a good reader this reaction: "Please, more details, I want more details." God is in the details, and so is everything else – including the Devil. It's the very character of the social to be specific. The name of the game is not reduction, but irreduction. (Latour, 2005, p. 137)

It is by way of thorough deployment of all the connections that explanations become redundant. "Deploy the content with all its connections and you will have the context in addition" (p. 147). Generally, to deploy for Latour means that

> the number of actors might be increased; the range of agencies making the actors act might be expanded; the number of objects active in [de]stabilizing groups and agencies might be multiplied; and the controversies about matters of concern might be mapped. (Latour, 2005, p. 138)

Risky accounts feature descriptions that speak of the lessons the researcher learned from the research participants. They must be conceived as the experts and teachers that we learn from. "You explain what they do to you for your own benefit, … not for them, who don't care one bit" (p. 151).

In this work, I split the task of a risky account into two chapters. Chapter 5, the first empirical chapter, focused mainly on expanding the agencies involved in creative practice by "zooming out" (Nicolini, 2009a) to its ecology. Chapter 6, the second empirical chapter, built on such an account where creative practice had been populated by a variety of agencies, and "zoomed in" on the processual aspects of CDT production. There I accounted for the development of a performance as an uncertain, event-ful and therefore unforeseeable process that yet in hindsight seemed inevitable.

5 Creatio Ex Materia – "Zooming out" to the Ecology of the Event

Making pieces is always a little like baking cake. You always look at what ingredients you have or what is at hand and then you look at what you can do with this. This is much easier than imposing things, you know.
(Jeff, conversation, 08.12.2010, translated by author[118])

Making contemporary dance theater (CDT) "*is always a little like baking cake*," says Jeff, one of the choreographing performers that participated in this study. With his analogy, Jeff formulates his theory of creativity and invention as a process of *creatio ex materia*: the making of CDT is relying on "ingredients," that is, materials. "What is available?" and "what do we do with it?" are, according to Jeff, the central questions for creative practice working with ingredients. These ingredients are the various attachments that turn creative practice into a work on and with materials. As pertinent question for the discussion of organizational creativity and my thesis, the notion of *creatio ex materia* therefore serves as a guiding principle for this chapter. Thus, in various ways, the following sections pose two questions: *what are the various "ingredients," the material(s) of creative practice? And how do they enable the intensive involvement of practitioners and materials?* This chapter therefore revolves around all the filaments that make the central activity-sensibility of amateurs possible. In making CDT as in baking cake, it is a matter of working with materials according to skills, likes and (anticipated) tastes.

Therefore, *creatio ex materia* always already means a form of taste-making. And accordingly, the following accounts and analyses revolve time and again around notions of taste and passion. Both are relational phenomena that, together with their respective "carriers," must be constantly tested, questioned and confronted, as Hennion (2011) reminds us. Such is "the work to be done;" and for this work, the amateur relies on a plethora of pragmatic, mediating attachments – from bodies and their various sense modalities and gestures to media, technologies, discourses and "stages."

The idea of materials, or "ingredients," needs to be understood very generally as the heterogeneous elements that amateurs draw on and make work when submitting themselves to an experience. To become more specific I shall work with and further

[118] All references to direct speech are in English. While some of the research participants spoke English, some spoke German. The quotations from the latter were translated by the author.

develop three concepts that differentiate the idea of material as follows: first, in 5.1, the idea of *repertoire* is taken to denote the body of aesthetic materials, which includes embodied repertoires of movement as well as cultural repertoires that amateurs work with. Secondly, in 5.3, the notion of *plug-in* is used to denote the role of technologies, devices and conduits that enable the intensive involvement of amateurs with the materials of their working repertoires. Thirdly, in 5.5, I mobilize the concept of *milieu* to elaborate the material role of the aesthetic community of practitioners as providing an affective, normative and aesthetic infrastructure for creative practice.

Following a logic of "zooming out." I therefore in this chapter specify the materials, the "plug-ins" and the role of the community in enabling and constraining the "work to be done," that is, the performative involvement of amateurs and "work." Analyzing data across various cases, I therefore focus on the texture or ecology of creative practice, what conventionally might be called "press" (see M. Rhodes, 1961) or context. The idea of "zooming out" as applied in this chapter is thereby inspired by Rem Koolhaas' infamous proclamation that "context stinks" (Koolhaas, in Latour, 2005, p. 148). Just as he did not denounce the notion of context as such but its connotation in terms of subordinating the contextual to the actual, so my understanding of context as ecology is inspired by a process-relational perspective that seeks an affirmative reading of *mediation*. The idea of zooming out in this chapter is based on the assumption that interactions are fundamentally "overflowing in all directions" (Latour, 2005, p. 202), which includes the various materials of practice.

The empirical analysis suggests three distinctive ways of how creativity is mediated differently by various sorts of materials: *creatio ex materia*, *creatio per materia* and *creatio in materia*. These three categories differ in how various "materials" – *repertoires*, *plug-ins* and the *associated milieu* of the human collective – constitute socio-technical arrangements (*agencements*) that enable specific aspects of creative practice. While the first one denotes the material to be worked with, the latter two pertain to the socio-material resources for making the material "work."

Creatio ex materia points at virtual and actual repertoires – from an incorporated movement language and style to the wider biographical and cultural repertoire that stems from an amateur's cultural literacy – which constitute the material for making CDT. These repertoires, attained[119] through a history of personal and collective

[119] From Latin attingere, from *ad-* "at, to" + *tangere* "to touch" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). The notion of attainment hence points to a history of experiences that involve "touch," the being in contact with things.

experiences, form the basis of the amateur's activity-sensibility, that is, his or her feedstock and capacity to affect and be affected, to react, associate and (re)produce.

Repertoires are inactive as long as they are not situationally actualized and performed within encounters and mediations through other "materials." The sections on *creatio per materia* and *creatio in materia* therefore pertain to the associated milieu of creative practice. Mediated through (*per*) "plug-ins" – devices, technologies and conduits – and *in* socio-material settings and atmospheres, the repertoires of practice (as explicated in the first part on creatio ex materia) are mobilized, enacted, relived and refined or extended. Together, "plug-ins" and the community of creative practice constitute the ecology of the event of invention and creativity. As affective, aesthetic and technological ecology, these pragmatic attachments further form the amateur's activity-sensibility. They enable practitioner and material to become familiar with each other and to explore new forms of existence.

Altogether, the chapter describes creative practice as a collective movement of mobilizing habitual attachments – repertoires and "mobilizers" – and itinerantly seeking to refine and extend one's materials by following lines and surface marks, becoming ever more sensitive to the differences that matter. As one of the central rehearsal practices is "improvisation" – collectively or individually – the following accounts refer time and again to the requirements, possibilities and happenings of deliberate improvisation.

5.1 Creatio ex materia – materials and their circulation

Responding to the question of "where things come from," the first part on *creatio ex materia* explicates how creative practice, and especially the "immediacy" of improvisation, leans on incorporated movement repertoires – shown as distinctive movement vocabularies and styles – and biographical as well as cultural repertoires. The creative process in CDT is always dependent on the life-work of performers within "normaesthetic"[120] collectives. I thereby analytically distinguish between the development of movement repertoires pertaining to certain, collectively negotiated, styles and tastes, the influence of "biographical repertoires" and the striving for cultural and artistic literacy.

Thinking in terms of repertoires is hence closely related to matters of *taste* and, in its processing aspects, the development of repertoires appears as a continuous *taste-*

[120] "Normaesthetic" I choose as a term denoting the confluence of normative and aesthetic aspects. Normaesthetic therefore points at the judgement of aesthetics in respect to certain norms.

making. While repertoires are dormant potentialities, they are always in need of being activated and mobilized in concrete situations.

5.1.1 Incorporated repertoires - movement vocabulary and style

I have collected things there in my body.
(Henry, interview, 22.02.2011)

In this first part, I focus on the body as the main material for a contemporary dance and theater performer. At the basis of "the work to be done," we find a literal incorporation of a movement vocabulary and style. I take up the language metaphor from the performers themselves talking about the ways movement is generated and assembled into "phrases" of movement from, for example, a basic "vocabulary" of movements. In the following, and in the light of "choreography" as etymologically a "writing" (Gr. *graphein*) of "dance" (Gr. *khoreia*) (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010), I hence take up the language metaphor as a helpful device when specifying the basic idea of repertoire.[121]

Performers come equipped with a vocabulary of movements that, having become incorporated, are presented as a basic practice resource. Mark, after having been asked about the process of improvisation, therefore makes the point that the practice (of improvisation) rests on a "*vocabulary of preferred movements*":

> You have a vocabulary of preferred movements, of movements that are familiar to you, that somehow feel good, which you somehow readily resort to. … Having to do with education and all, with physiology.
>
> (Mark, interview, 16.03.2011)

Mark specifies the "*vocabulary of preferred movements*" as "familiar movements" "*that somehow feel good.*" Thus Mark emphasizes the intimate and hedonic aspects of the movement vocabulary. And this vocabulary tends to reproduce itself as one "*readily resorts to it*." It is developed through "*education and all*" and experience and is further determined through one's individual "*physiology*."

While Mark is already hinting at the history of the movement vocabulary, it is Henry who tells about the process of "collecting things in the body" and thus about how from "having" a movement vocabulary, he "became" a special physicality:

[121] The notion of repertoire is first of all used non-metaphorically. It is a standing term in the performative arts, mostly denoting the knowledge of the trade's material - be it in music or dance - needed for collective action. The performers frequently use the term interchangeably with the notion of "vocabulary."

> The older you become, the more experience you get, the, the more things you COLLECT in your body, … I have collected things there in my body, a, a special color or a special physicality, that is also ME.
>
> (Henry, interview, 22.02.2011)

With time, "*experience*" and "*things*" are "*collected*" and accumulated in the body, amounting to an identity-relevant "*special color*" in his body. As Mark suggests, every movement is experienced as more or less pleasurable, and therefore, by and by, through a process of a life-long taste-making, preferred movements are repeated and thus solidify into a "*special physicality*," now inseparable from Henry's sense of self. Through one's whole life, from everyday life and movement-specific training as well as from participating in choreographed pieces with set movement phrases, a movement vocabulary is created through habitual repetition as much as specific physical characteristics and experimentation.

The structure of the material thereby varies, increasing from proto-movements over single movements to movement phrases in varying length. Complete movement phrases – as set pieces – are mostly fully structured assemblages of single movements. Single, specific movements, can then be seen as specific occurrences of certain proto-movements. Proto-movements are hence generic movement types – circular, following-lines, etc. – that can be seen being actualized in specific movements.

Over time, movement vocabularies settle and become recognized as a "*color*" or, in keeping with the language metaphor, as a "dialect" or "style," also designating a specific "*movement quality*" (Jeff, interview, 17.03.2011). The development of a vocabulary is thereby hardly designed or planned but results from the acquaintance of performers with other performers and heterogeneous sources of inspiration as well as experimentation. As in language acquisition, with time the performers build up, or collect, a distinct movement lexicon. The movement vocabulary is thereby not only something familiar but is literally incorporated,[122] having become second nature.

As repertoire, the movement vocabulary enables basic functions. Consisting of desirable and familiar movements, the movement vocabulary is framed by Jeff as a basic requirement for being able to engage in generative processes of improvisation. It is the repertoire "*that you always throw in when making combinations*" (Jeff, interview, 17.03.2011).

While the movement vocabulary is made relevant as a necessary resource, its propensity to reproduce itself and the fact that one "readily resorts to it" is often

[122] The German expression *Einverleibung* would be more adequate, connoting an identity-relevant quality of incorporation.

bemoaned. Why? Because the tendency of the movement vocabulary to form by repetition competes with the individual as well as the collective demand and desire to "be creative" and continuously generate new material. Mostly asked to improvise on the spot and with strong time constraints, Marie, for example, feels sometimes tired of being constantly under pressure to create "new" things while realizing that she "only" reproduces her "*patterns*":

> Everybody of course quickly falls BACK into his patterns. And because of TIME reasons, the first thing is taken. Then it's clear that the first thing that one comes up with is something that NATURally comes out.
>
> (Marie, conversation, 26.01.2011)

Marie once more asserts that the movement vocabulary and its patterns have become second nature and are thus the fabric from which the generation of material originates. Generalizing, Marie qualifies the vocabulary here as consisting of sedimentary "patterns" that performers automatically rely on under time-pressure. Yet the downside for her is that these "naturally" occurring patterns are mostly well known patterns and nothing new.

In a similar way, Henry, who is one of the oldest dancers in the company, at one point in the retrospective interview, when reflecting on the process, comes to talk about the current performance he is working at. He starts to bemoan how he is repeating certain movements or parts and how challenging it is to be asked to perpetually create new material. He thereby also details how the vocabulary is built over time and how it is deeply embodied in him.

> Henry: Well now I realize, now that I'm with Alcina's process, how things repeat, eh bodily well in in the vocabulary, what I now propose to Mario. It's many things that I, where I realize, my god, I have done that already in- in Sharp Cutz
> Interviewer: a movement repertoire has been built
> Henry: E- exactly! A movement repertoire has been built, and now it is very difficult, well, I really WANT every piece ((rubs his hands)) with something clean and new, just look, okay it's something new now. Eh let's see what- what one can do with this. But the older you become, the more experience you get, the, the more things you COLLECT in your body, and it is like this. It is just like this, eh, I would like to do something different every day, but this doesn't work.
> I have collected things there in my body, a, a special color or a special physicality, that is also ME.
>
> (Henry, interview 22.02.2011)

Henry deplores "*how things repeat*" in the making of the current production Alcina. He specifies that it is "*the vocabulary*" which is repeating as he "*proposes*" material

for the head choreographer Mario, and he laments how he has "*done many things already in Sharp Cutz*." The following interviewer's paraphrase that "*a movement repertoire has been built*" is readily taken up by Henry. Through the use of "*and*" he then quasi-causally links the idea of a built movement repertoire with a certain constraint ("*now it is very difficult*"). Yet before accounting for the actual difficulty, Henry discloses his subjacent desire to "*want every piece with something clean and new*." The strong desire to start afresh every time is for him at odds with the fact that he, over time, took on a "*special color*." Having become second nature, he argues that it is therefore difficult for him to easily follow his wish to "*do something different every day*."

Altogether, we can learn from Henry about two important issues related to the repertoire of materials. First, Henry asserts the basic struggle between the movement vocabulary's reproductive tendency and the desire to start afresh and new every time when doing a piece. Yet not for nothing does Henry bring up this episode in light of his current work with Mario, the head choreographer. Henry relates how he, while working with Mario and being asked to "*propose*" material, almost shamefully ("*my god*") realized that he repeats himself. Similar to Marie's allusion before, there is hence also a demand and expectation to be creative and be able to constantly propose new material.

Summing up this section, we can come to an understanding of the incorporated repertoire as being a dynamic phenomenon. On the one side the performers have "*things collected in the body*," familiar and preferred movements that "*somehow feel good*." This personal yet collective repertoire is in tension with the desire and implicit command "*to do something different every day*."

5.1.2 Keep moving - the circulation of repertoires

The repertoire as movement vocabulary has to be understood not as a static structure but as a dynamic circulation. The individual performer's movement vocabulary is a specific actualization of a wider pattern in process. Vocabularies and their specific forms circulate across time, space and various bodies. As seen with Henry, vocabularies and their parts are sustained and perpetuated through repetition. Henry realizes how he, when asked to propose material, comes up with movements and phrases that he knows from the previous production "Sharp Cutz."

The circulation of vocabularies and their parts imply that, although Henry emphasizes how he as performer developed a "special color or physicality," the performers also partly share and transfer parts of their vocabularies. Having gone through similar

trainings and belonging to a broad yet still recognizable group of CDT professionals, the performers combine partial vocabularies during the collective development of pieces.

Performance projects are sites and times for the perpetuation, refinement and extension of vocabularies. The process of an actual production entails mobilizing the dormant vocabulary, which then is actualized through the rehearsal process involving individual and collective research (see 6.3.3) into a confined set of movements. In a process involving mobilization, experimentation and consolidation, a general vocabulary is concretized into a *working repertoire*, which is eventually "*threshed into the body memory*." Mark employs this fierce image in a rehearsal at the beginning of the penultimate week before the premiere (24.01.2011), asking his colleagues if they would still need to amend things or if they could start to rehearse the whole choreography by frequently and meticulously repeating the various sequences and phrases. Like remembering a "good threshing," after having memorized the actualized working repertoire through repetition of the sequences - sometimes to the point of physical exhaustion, the performers will be able to recite certain phrases or whole sequences when needed. The development of vocabularies is therefore a process depending on habitual frequentation as much as physical specificity.

The circulation of vocabularies and their parts is a source of constant innovation. Vocabularies and their parts are not fixed entities or objects that do not change when being transported from one site or body to the next. Bodies are the strongest mediators, and hence sources of distortion, change and innovation, as all the performers underline. Bodies never allow for a one-to-one copy or reproduction. After preparing a solo part for her colleague Laura, Ruth explains to me that "*Laura makes her thing out of it*" and that she does not like and buy into the idea of "*copying*," as "*each body functions differently*" (conversation, 08.12.2010). In this way vocabularies and their parts will dynamically spread and thereby evolve in a non-linear and unpredictable fashion. This does not stop performers from actively pursuing a particular development of their vocabulary.

With advancing professional development, the performers become aware of the importance of their vocabularies and movement qualities as a form of repertoire and portfolio that, while initially not planned or designed, needs to be actively "managed." Therefore the performers actively seek the influence of other choreographers and performers – be it in intermittent productions or specific workshops. The performers are thankful when they are for once also "given material" (Marie, conversation, 26.01.2011). As professional amateurs, the performers desire a persistent process of

assembling while also knowing that for their professional development they need to develop a varied and versatile vocabulary and repertoire. Therefore vocabularies and movement styles, as important ingredients of the creative process, are dynamic construction sites. Video material of other performers and groups, easily available and circulating throughout the respective performer communities that also exist online, is thereby another important source of inspiration.

Movement vocabularies are not only felt on the "inside" as a specific "color," but are visible and recognized as such from the "outside." Performers recognize each other's movements and qualities:

> The performers are trying out different possibilities of movement for a certain part in the piece. Marie, while telling her colleagues that she would like to incorporate a specific part, performs a short movement sequence. Andrea immediately recognizes it and remarks "*nice, this one is your Pasolini*," referring to a piece they did some months ago.
>
> (Ensemble "Kill your darlings," rehearsal, 16.12.2010)

In this short sequence, a part of the vocabulary is discerned and appreciated as something tied to the developmental context of a previous project. The performers thus get recognized for their repertoires and styles through the recurrent use of specific movements and the development of certain movement qualities.

Recognizable repertoires and styles are what make performers join or be asked to join a certain project. This is for example the case when ensembles form around the desired basic "qualities" of individual performers. Henry laments being "tired with his own movement vocabulary," yet at the same time tells the story of how he was asked to collaborate in a project just because of his defined style:

> And then in one of the rehearsals, I said to Mark: "I'm TIRED with my own eh movement vocabulary. I would like to do something different." And he reckoned "NOOOOO, no, no, THIS is why I wanted to work with you, because you HAVE a movement vocabulary and I want to have it."
>
> (Henry, interview 22.02.2011)

Henry tells the short story of how, while performing in a group with Mark as choreographer, his movement vocabulary was seen antithetically by himself and Mark. Enacting direct speech and thus Marking the sequence as a relevant moment, Henry relates the interaction between himself and Mark as one where he was bemoaning himself as being "*tired*" of his "*movement vocabulary*" and "*wanting to do something different*." Mark however is depicted as resolutely objecting to Henry's statement, turning things around and claiming that Henry's specific movement vocabulary is very much desired for the choreography. While Henry commiserates his own vocabulary as

being hard to change, for Mark, Henry's "*advanced movement language*" (Mark, interview, 16.03.2011) is highly valued. As advanced movement language, Mark appreciates Henry's specific quality in the framework of his choreographic intention to mix various movement qualities. It is, among other things, because of his "*style*" that he wanted to work with Henry. The development of a visible and recognizable repertoire hence facilitates the participation in certain projects which may rely on a certain style. This is a double-edged sword, as the circulation of a vocabulary hence becomes further limited to a certain part; and this can, in Henry's case, become boring or even frustrating. A familiar phenomenon, I was told several times, is that a specific style and visible movement language then makes a performer become predestined for certain roles and jobs. This is regarded by many as ambivalent: on the one hand their well-formed movement repertoire secures them jobs, on the other hand they fear being overly defined by a too explicit style.

5.1.3 General preparation – the importance of a constant immersion in cultural activities and encounters

One theater teacher said: "You have to read man, it's very important!"
(Emmanuel, interview, 23.02.2011)

In rehearsals, the incorporated repertoire of a movement vocabulary is one important ingredient for the creative process. To thwart any idea of the performers only revolving around themselves, it is however essential to understand the importance of continuous contact with and influx of other "material" as well. *Because what is the source material performers work with? What are their themes and inspirations that they seek to articulate? Where do their ideas come from?*

Following these questions, I zoom out to how creative practice is connected and attached to the performer's life-world and their overall biographical developments. This shows especially when the performers are first determining an overall performance theme or when they are working out bigger or smaller parts within a performance. Within this context, the performers' conversations as well as their solitary sketches are imbued with a plethora of references to personally meaningful aspects of stories, artworks of all sorts – from movies to paintings to exhibitions – and other artistic performances.

The creative practice of making CDT is marked by a ceaseless circulation of references to cultural artifacts stemming from a *constant immersion* in cultural activities and encounters. In terms of competence, the performers thereby insist that cultural literacy is an important asset in creative practice. Emmanuel, for example,

frames the issue as one of "*preparation*"and affirms that constant engagement in "cultural activities" is a second important repertoire:

> I push a LOT myself no, like from when, when I start to, when I was twelve I hate reading and one theater teacher said: "You have to READ man, it's VERY important!" Okay, okay is important, so I don't like but I sit and obligation, and TATATA and one moment I start to enjoy like CRAZY and I cannot, with the MOVIES, with the MUSEUMS, with the PEOPLE, I mean, we, I think that as an artist we have responsibility about our, PREPARATION our, YES, we HAVE some responsibility. We SHOULD work a lot, STUDY a lot, yeah CREATE a lot, MOVE a lot, and sometimes take good HOLIDAYS and good PARTIES, and after RETURN AGAIN, no?
>
> (Emmanuel, conversation, 17.12.2010)

Talking about the creative process and the situation of himself as a professional artist, Emmanuel asserts the general "*responsibility*" and even "*obligation*" – he needed to "*push*" himself – to immerse himself in cultural activities – "*reading*," seeing "*movies*" and "*museums*" – and to just generally converse with "*people*" about these issues. For Emmanuel this is part of the "*study*" and "*preparation*" for creative practice. And with his emphasis on working, studying, creating and moving "*a lot*", he points to the need to continuously move with and within these materials. Emmanuel thereby further points at a wider rhythm of, on the one hand, periods of intense immersion and then of "*good holidays*" and "*good parties*," times of play and rest.

Cultural literacy is not a one time achievement but is an effect of a perpetual "streaming" of materials and their aesthetic appraisals. The performers are, so to speak, persistently "online," exposed to other forms of artistic products through their own experience and/or through conversation with their colleagues. For Emmanuel, this form of constant immersion is a required stimulation, preventing him from being too "*comfortable*" and "*working in the routine*," which for him is "*the dancer's specter*" and "*the enemy of art*" (conversation, 17.12.2010). Emmanuel points at seeking intensity and intimacy with things and people, a vehement way of working and living. "Not getting comfortable" is his motto. The perpetuation of an intense mode of involvement across various life situations is his way of not succumbing to "routine." As a by-product, Emmanuel amasses experiences that he can turn into performance-relevant material.

5.2 Analytical intersection: repertoires as affective capacities for improvisation

The circulation of movement vocabularies – across time, space and bodies, and tied to specific concerns of the professional amateur – is the wider movement underlying any actual performance project and creative practice as such. While not yet dance or performance, movement vocabularies are the incorporated repertoires needed for the actual work to be done. They extend the basic capabilities and potentials for the body to move, and although they are incorporated, this does not mean they are static. Yet, although they are always in development, this does not mean they are unconfined. As repertoire, they become crucial as affective capacities for action and reaction.

Considered in this way, repertoires are attachments – partly shared actions enabling collective action, movements preferred and appreciated, a stock of movements dreaded for its iterative tendency – that are actively engaged in the collective process of becoming a distinctive performer. Individually, the repertoire is thereby an enabling constraint that makes it more likely for similar movements to be repeated and at the same time makes it difficult to realize what else the body is capable of. On a collective level, when developed into a recognizable quality and style, the individual repertoire appears as a valuable asset and contribution in an ensemble of mixed repertoires. Due to their historical and collective developments, individual repertoires also show a certain family likeness. The incorporation of repertoires is not only a question of individual professional development. Any "unique" physical trait is the result of collective processes within situated aesthetic communities that are mediated by peculiar physiologies. Henry's "special color" is a variation of an overall color spectrum within his aesthetic community. Therefore movement repertoires and collaborative creative practice are co-constituent.

Repertoires are patterns-in-process which shape as well as are shaped by practice and its objects. Considered in this way as a process, repertoires are perpetually made and remade as performers come into, interchange, learn and teach the pertinent elements. A performative understanding of repertoires posits them as an embodied and relational capacity for (creative) action. The movement language, consisting of more or less set movements and the color, or style, of movement are activated in encountering other bodies – physical bodies, musical bodies, bodies of thought or language etc.

While repertoires are not yet dance or performance, they afford a *preparedness* for the making of CDT. It is specifically in practices of improvisation, as we will later see in more detail, that the repertoire, among other aspects (see Figueroa-Dreher, 2012), is a

constituent of the activity-sensibility that makes possible the situated, real-time process of composition taking place in improvisation. "'Immediacy' costs a lot" concluded Antoine Hennion in his foresighted study on the event of pop music (1983, p. 192). And the immediacy of improvisation is, among other things, mediated through the existence of a movement repertoire that enables the (re)actions of improvisation in the first place. It is the repertoire that allows for the creative interactions of (collective) improvisation. As such the idea of repertoire points to the importance of "preparedness" – the repertoire forms part of a "sensible knowledge" (Strati, 2007) preparing for collective (inter)action.

The amateur's repertoire is his or her *actual* and *virtual* potential for (collective) improvisation, one of the most central creative practices in the making of CDT. It is the embodied, that is, kinaesthetic and senseo-motor capacity for real-time "affection." The body and its possibilities thereby emerge as both a central resource as well as an ambiguous element of the creative practice: the relation of the amateur to her or his body implies the ambiguous task of re-working one's movement repertoire, which, as a basic attachment, concurrently enables and constrains the creative development of performance.

Working with one's own body as an "instrument"[123] thereby implies that the potential "malleability of form" (Berliner, 1994) is always an issue. Performers seek to develop an advanced and defined movement repertoire while allowing for the malleability of their material. To understand the what and how of collective improvisation in jazz, Hodson (2007) differentiated improvisations depending on the degree of pre-structuring of the material involved (p. 117). In a similar way, the movement repertoire consists of elements that differ in their degree of pre-structuring. As a rule of thumb, it can be said that the higher the level of pre-structuring, the more the material predetermines and organizes the actual interaction. The lower the level, the more the material is determined in the actual situation of improvisation (see also Figueroa-Dreher, 2012). Depending on the degree of pre-structuring, more or less improvisation is thus needed.

In any way, the degree of structuring of the repertoire's elements is crucial for understanding the capacity for change and invention inherent in the repertoire. As *actual* potential, the repertoire offers highly structured and clearly recognizable elements – like set movement phrases – that can be offered and employed when asked

[123] The body is to the dancer what the guitar is for the guitar player. It is an instrument as much as the guitar is part of the player's body. For both guitar player and dancer, it is eventually their body that is the actual instrument and hence carrier of materials and repertoires. The only difference is that the dancer lacks an "external" instrument and thus an additional layer of mediation.

for or offered material. As *virtual* potential, the repertoire, now understood as "color" or style (see also Spinosa, Flores, & Dreyfus, 1999), offers a basic "preparedness" for affection based on generic movement potentials. Taking both aspects together, the notion of repertoire suggests that while the body is a sheer inexhaustible virtual potential of movement possibilities, it still is also a constraining limit in searching for what a body can do.

In the next section on *creatio per materia* I present more concrete situations of improvisation, showing that the actual part of ready-mades and the virtual part of yet unknown possibilities (in their specific ways) require each other. Relying once more on the analogy of language, it could be said that improvisation often starts with highly standardized "small talk" – the interaction between highly pre-structured aspects of movement repertoire – before moving into a "real conversation" that is inventive and therefore uncertain in its outcome. The next section thereby further zooms out to all the "plug-ins" – devices, technologies and conduits – that further the engagement and transformation of passive repertoires into active forms and therefore activate the creative potential of a performer's virtual capacities.

5.3 Creatio per materia – skilled bodies rely on "plug-ins"

Repertoires make for a basic preparedness. Yet they need to be situationally actualized and performed within specific encounters and are mediated through other "materials." Creativity does not occur *ex nihilo*. Creativity rather relies on specific attachments. In this section on *creatio per materia*, I thus start focusing on the socio-material and technological ecology of creative practice.[124] The actual event of creativity and invention is closely tied to the amateur's activity-sensibility which is mediated through (*per*) various *plug-ins*: the different social techniques, performative theories, devices, and circulations that enable and mediate the generation, assemblage and transformation of material into a performance. The various plug-ins enable amateur and material to become familiar with each other and follow the "vectors of appetition" laid open. Specifying the different plug-ins found in the creative practice of CDT making, this section thereby seeks to answer the question of *how to become a skilled body* within CDT making.

In a first section (5.3.1) I describe the *tactics* (rituals, heuristics) of creative practice that seek to generate the specific quality of awareness that marks the activity-

[124] This section together with section 5.5 focus on the ecology of creative practice. While this section attends more closely to the socio-*material* and *technological* aspects, I later turn to the community of performers as *socio*-material and technological ecology.

sensibility of the amateur. The next section (5.3.2) illustrates the crucial plug-in of a *sensible syntax*, a theory-informed, sensible knowing-how. In the following two sections, I then attend to the particularity of *working inside out*, that is to organize the various capacities related to dancing and choreographing. In 5.3.3, I specify the importance of developing *bivalent vision*, the capacity to *see* differently as a dancer and a choreographer. While the dancer's vision is very much informed by the sensible syntax, the choreographer's vision needs to be organized by social techniques and specific devices (5.3.4). The fifth section (5.3.5) attends to the *conduit* of *taste talks*. Performers incessantly engage in evaluations of their own and other material and thereby develop a collective and normative *lexicon* of aesthetic appraisals while refining their sensibilities. All the plug-ins accounted for by then allow us to understand how to become a skilled body in CDT, that is, how the amateur's activity-sensibility is constituted. This is the prerequisite for the *articulation* of the material, which is described in the last section (5.3.6).

5.3.1 Active passivity – preparing with tactics and affective prompts

You have to just allow yourself everything.
(Jeff, on the conditions for improvisation, interview, 17.03.2011)

The generation of material is a process of citation involving the mobilization of movement and cultural as well as aesthetic repertoires. In this section I then follow the performers' accounts of what supportive conditions and resources make this more likely to be a felicitous process. Jeff and Ruth thereby teach us about *tactics* and their knowing how the force of *affective prompts* is a condition for advantageous improvisations. The performers work with certain *tactics* (see de Certeau, 1984) – involving, for example, ritualistic settings and heuristics like "creativity needs different spaces and times." These are more or less tested and proven sequences and setups that make the generation of creative work more likely. *Affective prompts* are the various plug-ins that amateurs rely on in these ritualistic setups in order to actively prepare themselves to become "open" and "passionate" in order to "allow things to happen."

The key dynamic for the performers, especially when engaging in improvisational processes of composition, revolves around the basic idea of "allowing for things to happen," as Mark explains:

> As soon as something comes in, something happens, bodily, and you process it in some form and that always finds a corporal expression. And just to see, to allow for this, this is already the whole trick.
>
> (Mark, interview, 16.03.2011)

For Mark, the "*whole trick*" is to actively suspend any intervening and "*allow*" the process to happen by itself, so "*it*" "*blazes*" a "*trail*." In a mix of activity and passivity, creativity and invention within improvisational processes is centrally about attending to ("*to see*") and then "*allowing*" "*it*" to find its own way. Jeff, pondering about his way of generating material, therefore starts a discourse around notions of "*freedom*" and "*openness*":

> And I believe, you have to just also allow yourself everything, you know? If you make yourself somehow the freedom, and this, one does, I believe, way too rarely, that you really place yourself in the ballet hall and say: "okay, actually you can do everything!" ... When you, well, like open yourself and just once let it all happen, then you can still throw things out.
>
> (Jeff, interview, 16.03.2011)

Jeff's account features a peculiar interweaving of active and passive agency constructions. For him it is a matter of "*allowing*" oneself "*everything*," a "*making*" of "*freedom*" which is aided through the positive self-affirmation of standing in the ballet hall and proclaiming that "*actually you can do everything*." Eventually, Jeff brings it down to the basic formula of "*opening*" oneself to "*just once let it all happen*," epitomizing the active passivity expressed throughout.

Jeff's portrayal of such a general attitude and stance is also something of an affirmative assurance for him. He knows that while "*actually*" he can do everything, often he does not live up to this promise. His experience is rather that it is unforeseeable; sometimes he spent "*just half an hour sitting around*" and sometimes he was "*for fifteen minutes in the ballet hall and then half the combination was done*." So for Jeff "*this is really always a totally weird game*," where all he believes is that "*you really ought not to force anything*." This is also why, for him, if other people are around, he feels "*put on the spot*" and if feeling "*obliged*" to be creative, then "*nothing goes*." Jeff underlines that the generation of material is a precarious process without any guarantee of success. And "success" in this regard does not mean to achieve an anticipated outcome but to produce ample material which can then, at a later stage, "still be thrown out."

While Jeff knows that forcing things is of no avail and while he also comprehends what conditions make it even more unlikely for him to be creative, he is also very mindful of all the prerequisites that might enable him to "allow himself everything." He lists a number of temporal and material conditions and preparatory practices that he for himself found out to be conducive for the elusive task to "*search step material*," as he calls it. For Jeff, if working on his own, such a session best takes place in the "*evening*," "*the later, the better*," "*10pm*" or "*11pm*," possibly going until "*one am*."

He says he needs "*the dark*" so he can "*settle in*" and "*feel comfortable*." Further he needs the certainty that "*no colleagues*" are around so that he is "*alone*"; therefore he also has to "*close the door*." Then, lastly, he needs "*some music I like*," mainly "*electronic music*," and he has to "*turn up the music very loud*."

Music is a specifically widespread device and affective prompt for fabricating a conducing ambience. Marie for example has various genres of music playing in her rehearsals. Asking her about this (conversation, 19.01.2011), she says that she prepared different play lists of music for the rehearsals according to the qualities of the fragments and sequences they are rehearsing; she eventually affirms that "*music affects a lot*."

Coming back to Jeff, in his account of practices of preparation, he is meticulously aware of all the supportive conditions that make it more likely for him to successfully generate interesting material. He thereby portrays himself as a "master of ceremony." His tale is one of a ritual, of setting a scene and preparing an atmosphere with attention to its affective prompts – the affective temporal and material aspects (late, dark, alone, closed and loud electronic music) that make him "open." As a ritual, his practice of preparation thereby performs a kind of boundary work, creating a tried and tested and therefore stable and reliable space-time that makes it more likely to "*open yourself*" for things to "*happen*."

From a perspective of plug-ins, the ritualistic character of Jeff's preparation is then akin to a situational downloading of tried and tested elements that enable the basic competence of "allowing oneself" and "opening oneself" to the happenings of the current moment. I suggest that Jeff's notion of "freedom" is best then understood as a certain quality of awareness. Contradictory to common understandings, Jeff thereby teaches us that his freedom does not mean being free from attachments, but being free by and through attachments. Far from mere contextual aspects, the ritualistic setting of a scene and its affective prompts mediate a conducive mode of awareness, an openness for the work and its vectors.

Ritualistic aspects - in terms of repeatedly employing tried and tested elements for enacting conducing atmospheres – are also widespread in other settings and situations.[125] Yet not all felicitous improvisations require such a specific setting. Sometimes, as Ruth (conversation; 08.12.2010) asserts, a conducive space for creativity and invention opens up not through meticulous preparation but in the least expected ways. She tells me about an episode where she, after an "*uninspiring*

[125] See for example the description of the ritualistic training of Contact Improvisation (see 5.5.1.2) and the general importance of an affective infrastructure.

rehearsal," accompanied her colleague Andrea to a dance lesson she was giving at that time at the local dance school. While Andrea gave her lesson, Ruth took a corner of the room where she, at the edge of the actual happening, was able to develop a solo. The generation of material is never limited to the ballet hall but can happen any place. And therefore Ruth is convinced that "*sometimes you need another time and space*" in order to – completing her sentence with Jeff's central claim – "allow yourself everything."

Summing up, Jeff, Ruth and Maria teach us that the ecology of the event involves affective prompts, often tied to temporal, material and musical aspects, that function as an affective infrastructure enabling a specific mode of awareness – tuned towards the present moment unfolding. The performers are aware of the force of these affective prompts to make them do or feel in a specific way that is conducive to the task of creating or inventing new material.

The lesson to be learned about the ecology of creative practice therefore now involves three different classes of "ingredients" – repertoires and tactics building on affective prompts: the skilled body and its repertoires are engaged and mobilized if the performers, through meticulous preparation and the creation of effective atmospheres, achieve a present-centered mode of awareness that relinquishes any idea of mastery or "forcing things" and allows for things to "happen."

5.3.2 Performative theories and a sensible syntax

Maybe there is a moment, a point of contact, between these two dynamics,
and these two realize it, and suddenly take up this energy, …
then things already move somewhere else
(Mark)

The next kind of plug-in is what I call a *sensible syntax*. After having introduced the movement vocabulary, the sensible syntax marks the sensible knowing-how that makes possible the creative engagement with materials in compositional processes. "You have to allow yourself everything" demanded Jeff in the previous section. Yet this does not mean that "everything goes." On the contrary, the performers come equipped with a sensible know-how that enables them to employ and recognize material in specific ways. The sensible syntax consists of theory-informed "techniques of relation" (Massumi, 2008, p. 14) that allow performers to make use of the material "in relation to their ground, thus introducing earlier potentialities to actuality" (Simondon, 1958/2010, p. 33). We hence trace here the performative force of theories that alter the way the performers sense and perceive bodies and gestures as *motifs*. The two central plug-ins are thereby *technologies of articulation* and *compositional*

heuristics. Both are forms of a procedural, that is "technical",[126] knowing-how of relating bodies and gestures in the making. It is a knowing-*how* because it informs the "how" of relational composition.

The performers are able to elaborate in detail on specific techniques. They exhibit a strong reflexivity about their practice, being able to tell accurately how they go about when for example generating material. Asking Mark how he went about generating material through improvisation, he comes to talk about a specific rehearsal where he asked his performers to work with specific tasks. Here is how he describes working with Ingrid:

> I said somehow she should produce certain, let's say, states of tension, or, eh ya elasticity states, muscular states in body parts. Eh here, the same, here and then play with these relations that emerge between two body parts! Like transferring the dissolution or alteration or, transform it into other things.
>
> (Mark, interview, 16.03.2011)

Mark elucidates the practical instructions he gave to Ingrid for producing new movements: create certain states of tension, relate them and then "*play*" with the relation between two body parts, for example transferring the dissolution or change of tension and the accompanying sensations into "*other things*," e.g. like other body parts or movements as such. In doing so, the notions of "*states*," "*relations*" as well as "*dissolution*" and "*alteration*" mark a specific semantic field of kinaesthetics – the flux of bodily sensation.

The kinaesthetic vocabulary indicates how Mark understands and instructs the body as a processing phenomenon, an assemblage of qualitative states and processes. The way Mark describes the process of guiding Ingrid, the absence of any indication that Ingrid had problems understanding him points at a shared understanding. Within the collective as an epistemological community, it is the shared vocabulary and an understanding of the body not as form but as taking-form that makes it possible for Ingrid to sense and recognize "*states*" and "*relations*" and their changes in order to "*play*" with them.

In this specific incident, Mark's instructions are informed by the technique of *transportation*, which formulates a number of simple rules and principles allowing for play and the production of movement through the transportation of bodily states and qualities from one body part to the next. Mark learned the technique of transportation

[126] With the notion of "technology" I here refer to the practical application of a theoretical knowing-how while I take the term "technique" to denote the skillfull execution of a specific procedure.

through his education and training with the well-known choreographer William Forsythe:

> It's this basic thinking of, well, now in this specific case, you transport physicalness or states into various things. Well, transportation, that is already a little bit Forsythish, you can say. So this equality of different body parts. In principle, you can use everything with everything, and form everything with everything, and all, all body parts into certain directions and have them do certain things. That is a bit the, this is the school that I went through. … Basically, his approach is of course also extremely intellectual, his research approach , movement approach.
>
> (Mark, interview, 16.03.2011)

Mark is highly reflective and fluent about the procedure of "*transportation*," allowing for the displacement of "*physicalness or states*" between body parts and between "*various things*" and body parts. Mark thereby situates this procedure within a "*basic thinking*," and hence a certain theory of the "*equality of body parts*" that he ascribes to "*the school*" of his former mentor William Forsythe and his "*extremely intellectual*" "*research*" and "*movement approach*." The basic "*equality*" premise then goes along with a very open stance and approach to movement, where "*you can use everything with everything, and form everything with everything*."

Mark's practical instructions to Ingrid are part of a highly theoretical knowing-how to research and produce movement that he learned as part of his education with William Forsythe. The basic theoretical premise of "equality" is thereby part of a knowing-how to establish relations between different body parts and other inputs.

Besides "transportation," the field of performance and physical theater is permeated by other theory-informed techniques employed in order to refine and extend movement repertoires and generate material. Henry, for example, who on the one hand deplores his repertoire's aptness to reproduce itself, experiments with a well-known movement syntax called "Gaga." Developed by acclaimed Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin, "Gaga" is a movement approach focusing on sensation and form and is taught world-wide as an approach to refine and "change movement habits by finding new ones" (Naharin, n.d.). Henry describes it as a non-representational approach exploring "body colours" and "body qualities" by employing inventive instructions[127] and relating movement to imagination. According to Henry then, while not being a "*sentimental*" approach, "Gaga" focuses on basic sensations of bodily movement. When developing

[127] Examplary "Gaga" instructions: "Imagine two snakes inside your body – one running along your spine and the other across the width of your arms. Lift your flesh away from your bones. Float, but feel the ground below your feet" (Namerow, 2012).

material for the work with Mark, Henry employs Gaga's basic principles and procedures in his own research work on the phenomenon of "tension."

Whether following Forsythe's principle and procedure of "transportation" or the principles of "Gaga," the performers develop through education and training a knowing-how to sense and then forge relations with different inputs or between different body parts in order to generate novel material and refine and extend their vocabulary.

The performers learn and develop various "techniques of relation" that aim at opening up the material to its virtually active potential. In their specific function, I therefore suggest understanding these techniques more broadly as part of a sensible technology of articulation. Transportation or *Gaga* are theory-informed techniques that perceive phenomena as bodies and bodies as affective sensation. They allow the performers to rethink bodies – human, musical, visual, conceptual etc. – in order to establish affective relations to and articulate all sorts of bodies.

While we are born with an innate ability to dance and therefore articulate music as movement, dancers are, through training and experience, more articulate. As the previous section on repertoires (5.1) showed, dancers are for one thing equipped with a more comprehensive vocabulary, but, as this section shows, they are also equipped with generative, sensible technologies of articulation. The notion of *articulation* (see also 5.3.6) in this regard points to two important aspects: first, articulation is a process of resolution, of bringing movement from a virtual, nascent level to something visible and articulate; second, articulation is always a translation through a "joint" (from Latin *articulus*), an active mediator shaping the displacement of movement. The conception ("equality of different (body) parts") and the task (e.g. "transportation") are thereby the joints that enable a specific articulation of movement across different media - image, music, body part, etc. A technology of articulation hence entails procedures of "doing" and regimes of sensing that co-constitute each other. This is the performative nature of sensible technologies: in order to do, we have to sense, and in order to sense, we have to do. Both entail a constant testing of the repertoire, revealing the performer's body as a reservoir of differences comprising but also stretching beyond the usual vocabulary. Therefore a technology of articulation is often applied in phases of "research," employed in order to generate material at the limits of a vocabulary, thereby refining and extending movement repertoires.

While "technologies of articulation" focus on the generation of material by establishing relations with different inputs or between different body parts, the seemingly immediate and intuitive process of collective improvisation is enabled

through yet another plug-in, namely *compositional heuristics*. The performers have learned and incorporated distinctive compositional heuristics that comprise a knowing-how to assemble and coordinate activities of two or more performers at once. Tom in this regard reflects on some of the knowing-how needed to "make an improvisation work":

> It just has to be in a certain BAlance. If something is TOO strong, then, then it will eventually, it comes aPART again. OR YOU HAVE SOMETHING, EH CONTRASTing. That functions then as well. So if for example, SEVERAL ELEMENTS in the room, let's say a DUETT, they just have a very, a movement quality that might be very FLUID. And another DUETT maybe on the other side that is also very FLUID. And they have also among themselves a little connection, so they play with each other. AND THEN THERE IS AN INDIVIDUAL who's like furiously TWITCHING about, eh like this, so a very CONtrasting element. THERE IS ALSO A TENSION BUILDING UP IN THE ROOM that is interesting in what, what HAPPENS now here.
>
> (Tom, interview, 12.10.2010)

Inspired by a recent rehearsal of collective improvisation, Tom talks about some basic choreographic and therefore compositional principles. He describes a specific spatial configuration (two duets on opposte sides of the room and a single element somewhere in between) and certain rhythmic characteristics (fluidity and bustle). Tom thereby refers to an idea of "*balance*" of the different "*movement qualities*" comprising the scene. Then he names and details the principle of "*contrast*" as one possibility of achieving a specific balance which expresses itself as a force or "*tension*" raising the attention of the participants and/or audience.

Detailing some of the basic principles of improvisational composition, Tom's depiction of an improvisational situation is built on the basic compositional and dramaturgical knowing how of spatial and temporal dynamics. These compositional heuristics inform improvised choreographies and form part of a knowing-how "to build up tension" and to make things "interesting," capturing the audience's attention. Tom further details what makes collective improvisation work:

> And then it means to be very cautious with the MOTIFS, the movement motifs, let's say an arm, goes up, does a circular movement, is a clear motif what YOU can take UP, what you can PLAY with, with CIRCULAR movements, right. But how do you get from a to b, how does this develop FURTHER, and how does from this DYNAMIC maybe something else develop? If we now for example have these two PAIRS and we have this INDIVIDUAL person, maybe there is a MOMENT, a POINT of contact, BETWEEN these two dynamics, and eh these two get, so these pairs realize

> it, and SUDDENLY take up this energy. And they BREAK their OWN ENERGY, and THEN, devel-eh things already move someWHERE else.
>
> (Tom, interview, 12.10.2010)

Continuing his account of a putative improvisation session, Tom describes how relations are built on the level of basic movement "*motifs*." Motifs like "*circular movements*" are according to Tom the sensible and ephemeral materials the performers "*can take up*" and "*play*" with. "*But how does this develop*?" asks Tom, posing the question of how improvisation develops from the basis of "playing with motifs." To answer his rhetoric question, he draws on the previous example of having two pairs and an individual performer on the scene. For Tom, "*things move*" if there is a play of "*energy*," a "*taking up*" and "*breaking*" with energies. Alluding to the choreographic parameter of rhythm and the basic principles of synchronization and contrast, Tom names two prerequisites for a "sudden event" to happen: "*a point of contact*" and a moment of "*realization*."

Again, sensing as well as seeing and doing are closely entwined: choreographic knowing-how is a functional nexus of concept, percept and affect. A "*motif*" evinces a refined knowing-how, an active conceptualization involving the recognition of distinctions within experience (circular dynamics as motif) resulting in a possibility of (re)action; for things to happen, choreographic knowing-how must inform aesthetic awareness so as to perceive a world of motifs in the form of affective states, dynamics and energies. This then is the basis for a collaborative play of motifs and a coordination of activities that further advances an improvisation on its uncertain trajectory. Basic compositional heuristics like "synchronization" or "contrasting" thereby serve as navigational devices when assembling various motifs into an affective assemblage, a composition of various movements and actions that enthralls and captures the participants as well as the audience. Tom thereby speaks about a process happening in the heat of the moment. Rather than depicting a conscious and rational acting and deciding of the performers, he illustrates a collective movement of motifs and their dynamics made possible through attentive and skilled body-minds.

As plug-ins, both the technology of articulation as well as compositional heuristics have become incorporated and together form a "sensible syntax." Taking the language metaphor further, I thus suggest that both plug-ins offer ways to assemble bodies-in-movement and even to engage, movement-wise, in "dialogue" with other performers. Therefore they constitute a sensible syntax allowing for "thinking" and "talking" in movement. While the actual movement vocabulary with its highly prestructured aspects allows for standard "small talk," it is through the plug-in of a sensible syntax

that a conversation and dialogue can unfold along unforeseen vectors. Technologies of articulation and compositional heuristics are thereby closely tied to the development of contemporary dance theater (CDT) as an art-form and the conceptual thinking of its progenitors (e.g. William Forsythe). Performers learn and incorporate these technologies and heuristics while going through their professional training and further development.

In this regard, technologies of articulation and compositional heuristics widely circulate in artifacts – books, videos and workshops – and are talked about among the performers, who exhibit a keen reflectiveness on these devices. As plug-ins they are thus kept alive and "downloaded" time and again and actualized in practice. For this reason compositional activities, and especially improvisational processes, requiring the competences of a repertoire and a sensible syntax, are also explicitly trained in regular "Contact Improvisation" sessions (see 5.5.1.2).

Whether training or actual rehearsal, compositional work, especially as a collective activity, thereby always forms material as well as syntax by requiring a situation of specific and adequate actualization. As with the material of the performer's repertoire, so also the sensible syntax is experienced and tested in practice, leading to sustainment, refinement or extension of repertoire and syntax.

5.3.3 Bivalent vision – working inside out

The eye of the dancer differs from the eye of the choreographer.
(Marie, conversation, 19.01.2011)

The development of a sensible syntax – a functional nexus of concept, perception and affect – goes along with evolving sensitivities, e.g. the competence to see a world of motifs. As the human organs and senses inevitably become included in all forms of organizing as basic resources, creative practice is therefore based on the development of certain ways of seeing. Performers, as choreographing dancers or as dancing choreographers, regard their work differently in respect to their predominant role. "*The eye of the dancer differs from the eye of the choreographer*" says Marie, and refers to a certain competence of performers I call *bivalent vision*, which is the capacity to distinguish between different ways of seeing and to employ them accordingly.

In respect to the sensible knowing-how involved, seeing must therefore be thought as performative, as a kind of world-making. Watching a performance, be it one's own or another, is constitutive of it and also its performers. Here we find the nexus of performance and performativity. The "work to be done" always involves an audience – be it the performer herself or some external observer – that co-constitutes the work by

way of attending to it. Taking seriously Marie's allusion to the dancing choreographer needing two eyes, two ways of seeing and therefore of (re)presentation, in what way then does "the eye of the dancer differ from the eye of the choreographer"? And how do these different ways of seeing participate in the making of CDT?

A personal experience warrants as a first rapprochement. After attending one of the rehearsals with Marie, Ruth and Andrea, I was approached by Marie, who made a remarkable comment.

> After joining Marie, Ruth and Andrea for an intense rehearsal where Ruth and Andrea are guided by Marie in generating an intimate duet, Marie approaches me as I stow away my camera and says frankly: "*thank you for having been with us today*." Then she explains that she is really happy how concentrated they could work today and that my committed presence helped in this. I am surprised, yet feel appreciated. It was indeed a special rehearsal, where I was often very close to the action with my camera and, although it was a very intimate duet they developed, I never felt like an intruder.
>
> (Ensemble "Kill your darlings," rehearsal, field note, 19.01.2011)

Watching and attending a performance can in a certain way support performers and material becoming familiar with each other, making a concentrated and very intimate working atmosphere possible. Nevertheless we find a form of watching that potentially intimidates, possibly even creates pressure and makes it difficult to "allow oneself everything." This is the form of watching performers like Jeff seek to avoid when creating spaces where "nobody is watching."

We find different ways of attending and watching within the making of CDT. A crucial distinction, linked to the differing eyes, is therefore the watching that is "inside" and the watching from "outside." Marie provides a first example. After her difficult rehearsal process as a single dancing choreographer with two fellow performers, she acknowledges: "*this [the performance] was so close to my face and inside of me and on me that I didn't have this external eye anymore ... and therefore critique was such a huge help, just to actually get a sense again what a spectator feels when watching this*" (interview, 09.02.2011). Marie here offers the distinction between "*inside*" and "*outside*," and that she lost the "*external eye*" which can "*watch*" and "*feel*" from the perspective of the "*spectator*."

In terms of plug-ins, the different ways of seeing are linked to an actual "taking position," of adopting a certain perspective. For choreographing dancers and dancing choreographers there is no clear division between the external figure of a choreographer and the inside figure of a performer. They are perpetually in need of

accomplishing a change of perspectives that allows the performance to develop by being "inside," doing and trying out, and by being "outside," evaluating and testing the performance-in-the-making as an audience (see 5.3.3). It is the distinctive configuration of project work in the making of CDT – a collaboration of dancing choreographers and choreographing dancers – that crucially demands "working inside out."

Creative practice takes place with a sense of audience, real or imagined, and therefore a constant interrogation of the current state of affairs. The notion of audience is thereby linked to the basic activity of watching. It would however be misleading to succumb to the simple division of inside and outside as respectively referring to the dancer's eye and the choreographer's eye. No, both are present inside and outside, yet as distinct composites. An audience,[128] in its etymological sense a congregation of "hearers," not only hears but also listens. The same goes for watching, which means *looking* as well as *seeing*. Listening and looking are active parts, they are listening and looking for something. Hearing and seeing however are more receptive parts, denoting that each activity also involves experiencing and sensing.

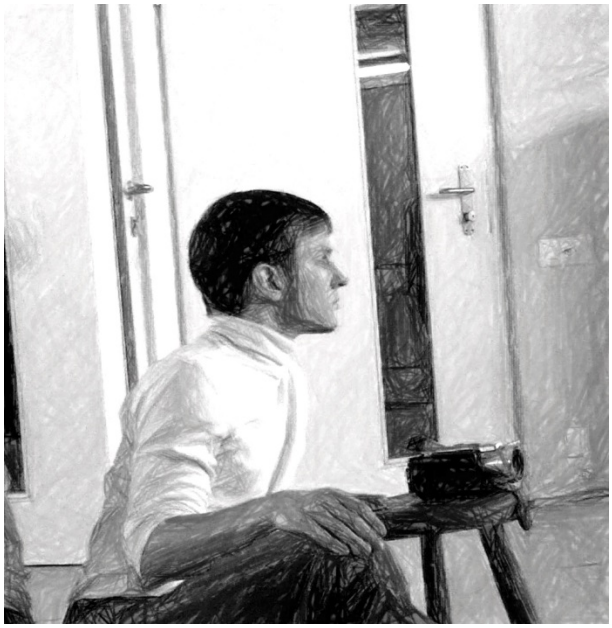
Now, when being "inside," as suggested in 5.3.2, performers have learned to *look for* motives, be it in their own movements or in the movements offered by co-performers. This is the looking that mobilizes choreographic and compositional knowing-how. And at the same time, performers also have to be attentive, *see and feel* themselves within an energetic flow of active forms. Hence "both eyes" are present, yet in such a way that the movement of the unfolding process is not disturbed.

From the outside, the choreographer's eye dominates. It is informed by a sensible knowing-how that constitutes the performance as an assemblage of, for example, various "*building blocks*," "*sequences*" and "*suspense arcs*," or more general, a "*dramaturgy*" (Mark, interview, 16.03.2011). As the audience's vision, it thereby resorts to the normative aesthetic criteria of one's peers (5.3.5). And yet, while such a perspective seeks to capture and derive form from a fleeting process, it nonetheless, as Mark asserts, requires a form of seeing that can derive sense on a kinesthetic level. When asking him how he as a choreographer decides about the material to be taken up, he therefore answers the following:

> How do I assemble this, how do I piece together the overall structure of this performance. And there, yes, just, put it to the test and then, I would say well, intuitively then said "okay" this works somehow for me concerning the suspense arc, the, the sequence, the, well, yes, dramaturgy in this piece.

[128] From Latin *audientia*, from *audire* "hear."

> ... And just said "okay," these, these transitions as well from the, individual building blocks I like a lot that can be left more or less. And there, I just don't like it, it doesn't make sense, it doesn't work.
>
> (Mark, interview, 16.03.2011)



Visual Fieldnote 1: Filming and watching a "run"

Mark describes how he, as a choreographing dancer, assembles the various parts of the performance. The key for him then is to "*put it to the test*," that is to assume the audience perspective and try out various phrases and their combinations. While he, with his choreographic and dramaturgical knowing-how, is looking for the "*suspense arc*" and the "*sequence*," he is also seeing and sensing, "*intuitively*" registering what he "*likes*" and what "*doesn't make sense*," what "*doesn't work*."

Another way of assuming an outside position is shown by Andrea, who is watching her colleagues with rapt attention:

> Rehearsal of the circus ensemble around Andrea, Ruth, Jeff and Laura. Andrea watches Ruth and Laura rehearse a solo that Ruth made for Laura. Andrea sits on the floor, leaning against the mirrored wall. Outwardly she stays motionless and her eyes rest on the two dancing figures. After the sequence is finished, Andrea declares that "*you need to absolutely keep this, it gives me goosebumps*." Her colleagues beam and nod.
>
> (Ensemble "Circus," rehearsal, field note, 08.12.2010)

After taking in the whole scene, Andrea gives her colleagues a feedback based on how she felt when watching. Her remark "*it gives me goosebumps*" thereby expresses the intensity she felt when watching. In its passive construction, it thereby denotes the sensation of "being touched," of seeing and sensing. As such, it is a very general qualifier which is not based on any specific choreographic element of the sequence.

Despite, or maybe even because of the lack of further justifications, Andrea's appraisal "*you need to absolutely keep this*" is met with beaming and approving faces.



Visual Fieldnote 2: Watching one's colleagues perform in front of the mirror

Altogether in creative practice, *looking* and *seeing* go together. Even when watching from the outside, Andrea is opening herself to be affected by the seen and is hence appraising the material from within. When Marie said beforehand that she needed to know how the audience "feels when watching it," then Andrea does exactly this by taking up such an audience position. The performers rely on their capability to assess the material and thus constitute the performance in different ways: first as made up of discrete and identifiable, dramaturgical building blocks, then as an affective movement in flux. These are two different ways of (re-)presentation that are both needed. The task of managing viewpoints is then dealt with more closely in the following section. First hints have thereby already been given by the images used above; they feature a mirror and a video camera, two important devices that, also as plug-ins, play a key role in organizing perspectives.

5.3.4 Organizing outside perspectives through mirrors and videographic devices

Can we just look at this?
(Ruth, in a videographed rehearsal,
asking her colleagues to change perspectives and look at the video)

The collaboration of dancing choreographers and choreographing dancers within the making of CDT crucially demands "working inside out." Together with its respective bivalent vision, "working inside out" is a capacity that is reliant on a sensible syntax

on the one hand and that is enabled through various plug-ins that *organize outside perspectives* on the other hand. Three crucial plug-ins thereby organize an outside perspective. First, *le regard extérieur*, the pivotal practice and role of attending to (one's own) work from a distinctive outside perspective that makes for a distinctive rhythm of creative practice. In French CDT the role of *le regard extérieur* is often formally institutionalized. The role is mostly granted to colleague friends that are neither choreographer nor dramaturge and not directly entangled in the everyday making of the project. Attending mostly to the overall effect of the performance, their task is "simply" to say what they see, make suggestions and ask questions. While the ensembles in this study didn't formally employ such a role, the general idea of organizing outside perspectives is the key and hence the central focus of this section. Someone or something always needs to be watching. Second and third, the following analysis details the material devices and technologies – *mirrors* as well as *videographic devices (*cameras and laptops) – that each mediate specific outside perspectives.

CDT has inherited a certain gaze which is closely entwined with the reality of the *mirror*. As a legacy of traditional ballet, the ballet hall with its prominent quasi panoptical layout - featuring mirrored walls on two sides - has enabled and forced the performer to double and become his or her own audience. In traditional ballet, the mirroring went along with an emphasis not on the formal but on the formalistic aspects of dance: the body is subjected with enormous discipline to a strictly regulated vocabulary. When Marie, in the previous section, speaks about the "differing eyes" of choreographer and dancer, then the unabating reflection of oneself in the mirror has its part in inculcating the fixed gaze of choreographic vision, piercing and objectifying the moving body.

As is the case in most contemporary CDT companies, the company I studied also still rehearses in a "ballet hall"[129] with mirrors. And while the mirrors still prompt a certain gaze, nowadays, with the importance of organizing perspectives and creating an affective space conducive to compositional processes involving not only the solitary figure of the choreographer, the performers need to decide how they want to employ the mirror, and hence what perspective and awareness they want to elicit.

> It is late afternoon and the winter light already so low that inside lighting is on. Laughter fills the room, which feels quite different today. Curtains are drawn in front of the mirrors and some ambient elevator music plays in the background, barely discernible. I ask Zoe, the choreographing dancer, about

[129] The fact that the main rehearsal space is still called "ballet hall" tells its own story about the importance of this legacy.

the curtains being drawn and she answers: "*I don't like working with mirrors. People concentrate more on form then. I'm more interested in working with energies*."

(Ensemble "Green sofa," rehearsal, field note, 14.12.2010)



Visual Fieldnote 3: "Having the curtain's drawn"

Zoe is clear about the effect of mirrors: "*People concentrate more on form*," she says. Yet she knows that there is another quality concentration needed for her kind of work. Thus she contrasts the notion of "form" with her interest "*in working with energies*." For Zoe, at least in her way of working at that stage, the mirrors divert attention away from the play of energies she is interested in. Drawing the curtains therefore disables an unwelcome objectifying perspective. This does not mean that at another time in the rehearsal process the mirrors would not be helpful. They surely are, but what this example demonstrates is the performer's reflexivity about various ways of watching oneself and how this relates to various modes of awareness.

The mirror is just one device that makes one to be seen. For a performer, being seen is somewhat constitutive of the performance. If, like in the example above, the curtains are drawn, then your peers are watching. If there is a non-dancing choreographer, he or she is watching. And, whether rehearsing on one's own or collectively, most of the time a video camera is running.

The *video camera*[130] then is the second pivotal device that mediates and organizes perspectives. It works in distinctively different ways from the mirror. While the mirror per se performs a synchrony of doing and watching, the video camera – and its central

[130] Video camera I employ as a generic term covering all sorts of videographic recording devices. The performers often also record with their laptop or mobile phone cameras.

activities of videographic recording and playback – is a central device that allows for the division of doing and watching. As such the video camera and its practice of documentation enable a peculiar rhythm of "working inside out."

> The "Circus" ensemble is exploring and experimenting with a new part of the performance. Just before starting, one of the performers asks: "*Should we film this already?*" Jeff approves by responding: "*When some shit happens then we got it taped and maybe can use it later then*."
>
> (Ensemble "Circus," rehearsal, field note, 08.12.2010)

The possibility of filming, that is documenting the rehearsal, relieves the performers of assessing their material-in-the-making. Knowing that the creation process is unforeseeable, videographic documentation, conserving the flow of events and capturing material without stifling the rehearsal's movement, allows the performers to focus on improvisational composition, to stay "inside" and not worry about the outcome. It is the videographic possibility of subsequent "time travel" that allows for the present-centered temporality of collective improvisation. Possible incidents, Jeff here employs the vernacular expression "*shit*," in this regard referring to some vague and unforeseeable occurrence, can be subsequently discovered and assessed.

The folllowing example attends to the employment of both, *video recording* and *playback*, within a rehearsal. It thereby illustrates how employing videographic devices multiply the sites of creative practice and grant the flexibility to work inside out according to situational demands.

> Marie, Ruth and Andrea work on a specific challenging sequence including Marie doing a rotated jump into Ruth's arms. Andrea sits on the floor near the stereo and laptop rack, watches from outside and coaches the two performers. After some corrections and trying it for a second time, they still are not satisfied with the way it works. Andrea steps in and tries to show an adaptation of the movement she deems helpful. All three stand still and watch each other. After three seconds Ruth turns towards the laptop, nodding her head she asks: "*can we just look at this*?" Marie had the laptop camera film the sequence and uses software that allows for instant re-vision of the filmed material. She turns on the playback mode (top left picture) and all three performers gather in front of the screen. Marie quickly locates the scene and lets it repeat a couple of times. Ruth tunes into the action and starts to perform, in sync, the movements she sees herself doing on the screen, thereby commenting on it and then trying out several variations (top right picture).



Visual Fieldnote 4: Working with instant video playback.

> At the end of this rehearsal, Marie, Ruth and Andrea again turn to the video in order to watch the last run they did with all the material gathered so far. Watching their own material, they seem enthralled; Ruth is chewing her lips and her finger while Marie is squinting her eyes and frowning every now and then. Intensive and concentrated gazes alternate with bursts of laughter, giggles and smiles. Again and again short comments from all three are thrown in: "*I like how we talk there*," "*I like that you kind of speak there. Can you not DO this?*" Sometimes short technical observations are shared: "*this has to be faster*," or "*this is also awkward, could you not grab her earlier?*" And then "live" propositions are made, as when Andrea says to Marie: "*maybe you can here first come alone, we go away and then join you later?*" Over and over, gestures or sounds from the video are repeated and hence affirmed by one, two or all three performers (bottom left picture). In a moment of silence, Ruth points with her finger towards the running video and exclaims: "*but THIS is good*!" (bottom right picture). "*YES, this is good*," responds Marie.
>
> (Ensemble "Kill your darlings," rehearsal, field note, 16.12.2010)

In the example above, through the use of equipment that allows for instant playback of just recorded material, the site of creative practice moves between being in the front of the camera and being in front of the screen. Eliciting a probing gaze, it literally enables a pointing out of important parts. This is further supported through the technology's capacity to pause, slow down or repeat movement, allowing for pointing at and picking out concrete aspects from an incessant flow of movement.



Visual Fieldnote 5: Pointing out elements on the screen.

In the example provided, Marie uses the technological capacity to repeat video fragments, thus enabling Ruth to attune to her previous attempts. At this moment another sort of doubling, distinct from the mirror's doubling, takes place. Here, in Ruth's live enactment, it allows for the concentration on technical, isolated aspects – arm movements – that can not only be repeated but can be altered and slightly improved. As she watches herself performing certain movements, equipped with the choreographer's gaze, she can discern and re-hearse[131] specific aspects. On-site video playback thus moves creative practice in front of the screen, where repetition can bring about the live testing of variations. Especially in ensembles where the choreographic responsibility is shared, like in the example at hand, video hence enables the collective constitution of the piece as consisting of small building blocks.

In this respect, videographic playback plays a key role in collective taste-making. Communication and negotiation about the performance can thereby either lead to affirmations ("*I like...*," "*but this is good*") and their validations ("*Yes, this is good*"), repeating and hence solidifying specific aspects. Furthermore, it can open up the material for further reenactments and proposals ("*maybe you can...*"), doing things differently during and after seeing them.

Summing up, documenting movement with the videocamera, or in this case with the laptop camera, is more than a neutral representation. It is an active mediation that possibly constitutes the object of practice in a different way and thereby also allows and invites other forms of collaboration. It exchanges the mirror's potential and risk of

[131] Rehearse etymologically means "to harrow again" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

instant scrutiny for the possibility of subsequent probing. The videographic capacity thereby not only enables engaging in critical activities without jeopardizing the spontaneity of the improvisatory process, but also opens a reflexive space and moves creative practice in front of the screen, where a probing of form can lead to more improvisatory experimentation and collaboration. This, I suggest, has to do with the conservational effects of videographic documentation. The possibility of repeating video fragments – "to see it again" – allows for different "eyes" or perspectives to be employed.

5.3.5 Taste talks! The development of standards and a lexicon of "normaesthetic" appraisals

This is not clean enough for "Posentanz."
(Ingrid, rehearsal, 27.01.2011)

What counts as creative and innovative in CDT? How do the performers assess their material and their compositions? Besides a specific kind of looking and seeing, the various outside perspectives that are mediated through mirrors and videographic devices also entail talk, or, to be more specific, *taste talk*. The discursive, mostly normative employment of aesthetic categories thereby enables and constrains the development of the work.

Taste "talks" not only in specific rehearsal situations but appears, as a permanent taste-making to figure in many conversations taking place outside rehearsal. Thus, one central *conduit* for the circulation of cultural artifacts and the development of *aesthetic appraisals* are all the little conversations taking place between the performers during and outside the rehearsals. *Have you seen "Broken embraces," the latest Almodovar flick? He went totally film noir, and I loved the glossy décor! Nice, this reminds me of an early Gerhard Richter, but somewhat less blurry! Hey, I've been to an amazing exhibition on Indian art and loved their depictions of dancers! So lively and juicy!*[132] Questions and remarks like these abound when performers meet and chat or when working on some part of the performance together. This means continuous stimulation and exposition to how one's peers have experienced certain cultural artifacts and, very important, how they appreciate certain kinds of creative work. This constant undercurrent of communicative and reflective taste-making taking place within the company and the ensembles is therefore important for developing a *lexicon of taste*.

[132] These are stylized phrases of hypothetical conversations. I overheard many similar exchanges yet never recorded them at the time being.

The circulation of aesthetic appraisals is both working on a general, quasi automatic level, and on a specific level. The former is done when, for example, performers time and again briefly comment on material – be it of their own or of others, or when they make references to other cultural artifacts – with the widely used expression "*I liiiike*." Pronounced very emphatically with a long drawn "i," this expression emulates the familiar Facebook reaction of "liking" things, and therefore is a device for quickly giving a general and not further qualified judgment of taste. Beyond this method of constantly but rather generally evaluating material according to "likes," the many conversations taking place further develop a lexicon of taste that is intensely aware of and rich in description of stylistic and aesthetic subtleties. This lexicon contains a large number of statements about the "sensational" and kinetic qualities of material which are applied cross-modally to all varieties of cultural artifacts; images are considered as "oily" or "bursting," movement phrases as "dark" or "fleeting," stage lighting as "soft" or "explosive," music as "hot" or "slow" etc.

One key aspect of *taste talk* is the development of *collectively shared categories* and *standards* establishing clear boundaries of what counts as proper CDT or a specific form within the various styles of CDT.

> Mark asks his colleagues if they still want to change anything, and Ingrid, referring to a certain passage, remarks: "*This is not clean enough for a "Posentanz"*.[133]
>
> (Ensemble "Voltage," rehearsal, field note, 27.01.2011)
>
> The "Circus" ensemble is collectively working on a sequence. After Laura proposes a certain movement, the others shake their heads and Ruth comments: "*No, this looks too much like modern expressive dance*."
>
> (Ensemble "Circus," rehearsal, field note, 17.12.2010)

In both examples, the performers produce "normaesthetic" appraisals about what belongs to which art-form, collectively negotiating the perimeters of what counts and what works. At the beginning of the 20th century, "*expressive dance*" was one of the progenitors of contemporary CDT and dance theater. Now the performers seek a development of forms that clearly differ from "the old stuff." The situated creative practice of making contemporary CDT is therefore connected to the wider development of art-forms and their differentiation.

Summing up, the constant employment and testing of aesthetic appraisals and qualifications of material means a collective negotiation and thus both sustainability as

[133] "Posentanz," literally a dance of poses, refers to a certain subgenre within CDT that seeks a non-dramatic aesthetic by focusing strongly on the physicality of dance, working with poses.

well as refinement of aesthetic standards that mark the aesthetic community of CDT. Based on a jointly developed vocabulary of taste and aesthetic categories, the *conduit* of *taste talk* therefore enables the performers both to enact a common "vector of appetition" as well as to keep agile and inspired by a world of "flavorful" material.

5.3.6 CDT (making) as communication – the role of productive articulations

The sensible syntax enables the continuous performance of the work. It is the prerequisite for the enactment, or what I come to call the *articulation* of the material, the central performative mechanism across the creative process.

A CDT performance only exists in its articulations. Across different modalities - from movement and gesture, to sound, music, talk, narratives, writing, description etc. – "the work" is made present and comes to exist and subsist. Articulation is thereby crucial for the collective work on ephemeral objects like movements and ideas. Through practically articulating ideas and movement into different modalities, they become *communicable* and open for further association and productive retranslations.

The situated interaction within collective composition entails performers being engaged in an unfolding flow of "moving along." It is an itinerant, vaguely directed process of searching for and finding a direction to take, of losing the path and then finding it, or another one again, and of picking up *signals* to orient by – *signals* that are often (re-)discovered only when moving along. It is the various articulations of movement – as in sounding, gesturing or naming movement – that become these *signals*.

The productiveness of articulation then lies in its enactments of "the work" within various modalities, which have to be regarded as mediations: they bear the potential for new aesthetic signification. Articulating the product "CDT performance" in different modalities effects a mediation I propose to call *transposition*, the "cross-placement" (transposition from Old French *trans-* "across" + *poser* "to place") and translation of aesthetic artifacts between performers and between sites, e.g. from the rehearsal room into the sketch book and back. Articulation thereby means a constant *production of difference*, making the "work" exist as *multiplicity*. In order to understand how a CDT performance comes into being, I hence describe in a first step the various practices of articulation and their "productive" effects, making for and allowing different dimensions and temporalities to take shape.

Sounding movement – dance as communication

> Marie and Andrea are working on a movement sequence they started developing some days ago as a duet. Ruth is watching while Andrea and Marie try to recap the movement's sequence. While slowly going through one movement after the other they often simultaneously articulate each discernable movement through a specific sound – "*whoom*," "*tshu!*," "*hepp*," "*tshhoooo*," "*whooooom*" etc. At the end of this rehearsal sequence, all three come together and Ruth comments that they should avoid having too many "*hepp*" parts in a row.
>
> (Ensemble "Kill your darlings," rehearsal, field note, 16.12.2010)



Visual Fieldnote 6: "Sounding movement"

The performers often articulate "the work" by *sounding movement*. They draw on *onomatopoeia* – the formation of a sound or word associated with what is named – to articulate the characteristic rhythmical and dynamical signature of the movements as sound. Sounding movement in this way is articulating the durational contours of a movement, and therefore organizes compositional work according to durational time. The bodily utterances "*whoom*," "*tshu!*" or "*hepp*" for example articulate short and explosive movements, while "*tshhoooo*" or "*whooooom*" mark stretched and flowing movements. Sounding movement is important in enabling the performers to communicate and connect with each other when engaged in collective processes of improvisational composition.

Dance (making) is framed by the performers as a form of communication, as we can learn from Tom's description of a collective improvisation:

> When I'm INSIDE, it's about going very CLEARLY into a CLEAR communication. It is mostly, the more CLEAR I AM myself, the more clear one can TALK to me. Well we kind of talk with each other on the level of movements. So, eh, FOR A COMMUNICATION TO HAPPEN, you have to just see exactly WHAT IS the OTHER DOING, what does the other SAY right now, so that one doesn't talk at CROSS purposes.
>
> (Tom, interview, 12.10.2010)

For Tom, dancing with others is a form of communication that depends on being as clear as possible oneself as well as attending – seeing, listening – closely to the other.

Coming back to the short sequence of Andrea and Marie, the sounds, often uttered simultaneously by Andrea and Marie while working on their duet, enable them, when needed, to "phase together" and move simultaneously. In other instances of group improvisations, performers need to constantly react to each other. Sounding movement thereby helps the dancers to form their reaction according to the sensible syntax they learned in the course of their training and their work: their embodied, artistic-choreographic knowing-how has performers either *confirming* (answering a "*hepp*" movement with a "*hepp*" movement), *contrasting* (reacting with a "*tshhooo*" movement to a "*hepp*" movement") or *varying* (answering with a "*whoom!!*" movement to a "*hepp*" movement") the movement of another body (human or non-human) within collective composition.

At the end of this vignette, Ruth reminds her colleagues that too many "*hepp*" movements in a row are not so good in that particular part of the performance. The articulation of durational time through sound hence eventually enables the performers to form an *aesthetic judgement* based on the artistic-choreographic knowing-how of their sensible syntax.

Summing up, the practice of "*sounding movement*" articulates ephemeral movements as discernable units, aiding connection and communication within the collective. Applying the material-semiotics introduced in Chapter 3, sounding movement can be seen not so much as a symbolic, but as a *symptomatic* rendering of basic durational movement contours. Through the sound-based articulation of movement, the performers can thereby identify, share, associate with and negotiate building blocks of bigger assemblages, enabling creativity to unfold along a broadly shared choreographic syntax.

Gesturing movement

> In the middle of the rehearsal the three performers come together sitting on the floor. Marie is doing the splits, in front of her lies her diary / notebook and a single sheet of paper. Ruth and Andrea are facing her. Marie bends

down and starts listing the existing movement sequences by trailing her notes and ticking off certain points with her finger, at the same time saying "*this we have, the chains we have, this one we have*" (top left picture of visual field note 2). She then suddenly claps her hands and shouts "*Ya! Hey hey*," looking at Andrea and Ruth with big eyes and a big smile (top right picture). "*This one we still have*" she exclaims excitedly, sitting and making a number of gestures and movements with her hands and upper body that perform the basic movement idea and dynamic of bodies rolling on top of each other. At the same time she also describes the movements – "*where you go over and under*" - to her co-performers (bottom left picture). Being very excited about this specific element, Marie is all smiles and eyes her colleagues. Ruth almost instantaneously reacts, widening her eyes and mouth: "*ohh and and and we still have the twirl*," or, as Marie immediately calls it, "*the beautiful one*."

(Ensemble "Kill your darlings," rehearsal, field note, 16.12.2010)



Visual Fieldnote 7: "Gesturing movement"

In this vignette, the three performers gather and Marie presents the "status quo" of the piece, reassuring and reminding herself and her co-performers of "what they already have." She names certain parts ("*chains*") and then, with a sudden burst of excitement, remembers a specific movement sequence that so far has not been named. This time, using her hands and upper body, she *gestures movement* while also adding some words of description.

Just as in sounding movement, this way of gesturing movement articulates the basic

movement dynamics. Gesturing yet further enables Marie to put all her obvious enthusiasm for the specific movement part into its articulation. It is the affective "performance of a performance" that moves and excites her colleague Ruth to herself remember a favourite movement part.

Naming movement

> Andrea and Marie arrive at a position where they halt with Andrea's hand touching Marie's head, facing each other and pausing for a second. Marie suddenly says: "*aahhh and then you had my head somehow*," initiating a circular head movement that takes along Andrea's hand. Andrea passively goes along and just at the end of the movement actively completes the movement with a specific gesture that is part of the movement material the three performers have so far developed. Marie nods at the end and says: "*something like that*." The two performers rerun their sequence, this time slightly different and arrive again at the position described above. They stop once more in this position and Andrea seems uncertain, raising her eyebrows and uttering a pressed "*fuck*." Marie starts saying "*and*" and Andrea immediately adds: "*Ah, now comes the fountain*."
>
> (Ensemble "Kill your darlings," rehearsal, field note, 16.12.2010)

Specific movements and short sequences in the emerging performance have acquired a name. "*Fountain*," in this case, is a processual and visual metaphor expressing (and translating) a certain movement dynamic – namely a vertically inverted movement where Marie's head first comes down and then goesup again, being paralleled by Andrea's leg. Like "*fountain*," Marie later utters a number of other movement-inspired names, e.g. "*the twirl*," "*the chains*" or "*the spider*." Some movement sequences are also given names referring to their provenance, e.g. when Marie identifies a certain movement of Andrea as "*your Pasolini*," thereby referring to a specific movement sequence Andrea had once developed when dancing a piece called "Pasolini."

Again, just as when sounding and gesturing movement, the notion of "*fountain*" is a *symptomatic* performance of basic durational contours. It is especially through such movement-inspired names that the sensible syntax, which has become tacit knowledge for the performers over the years of training and choreographing, can be articulated and put into action. Naming specific movement parts is the prerequisite for building a shared repertoire of movements that can then be more consciously remembered, communicated, cited, negotiated, contested, joined and assembled into bigger phrases. "*Naming movement*" thereby functions as an enabling constraint. On the one hand movement is thus crystallized and given a form, while on the other hand the alternative modality of the visual metaphor allows for new openings and connections to take place.

Inscribing movement

While sounding, gesturing and naming movement have, to different degrees, given "the work" and its parts a recognizable form, the various modalities have yet stayed part of the social enactments found within encounters. A last and pervasive articulation of the work is *inscribing movement*, the writing and sketching of movements and ideas on sheets of paper or in notebooks.

As seen in the vignette used in the section on gesturing movement, Marie's little notebook and the various single sheets of papers she carries within her notebook are an important repository and "catalogue," listing the potential movement sequences comprising the performance. As a means of *inscribing movement*, the notebook is an important mediator that performs the process in a distinct way, often functioning as a sort of *gateway*: the movements and sequences that are liked and favored make it into the book and are hence inscribed, more likely to be taken up again and further worked with.

In this way, "writing and listing movement" must be seen as a sort of *strong documentation* that, after a succession of solidifying steps – events, single movements, repetitions, sounding, naming – inscribes and materializes the "noteworthy" performance parts in a sort of index. Besides writing things down in the notebook, another prominent documentation practice is *videographing movement*, as illustrated in 5.3.4.

5.4 Analytical intersection: how to become a skilled body?

[I]t is necessary to work to become natural.
(Hennion, 2004, p. 141)

"Immediacy" costs a lot.
(Hennion, 1983, p. 192)

The previous section on *creatio per materia* detailed the socio-material and technological ecology of creative practice by illustrating the *work* and its *plug-ins* that are needed for a skilled body to perform effortlessly in practice. The skillfullness of creative practice is in this case not an inherent competency but a meta-skill of preparation and a "making available oneself" that is active "but contrary to an action, … is entirely turned toward an availability to what comes" (Hennion, 2007, p. 109). One does not at some point become skilled and then stay skilled forever and ever. The creative skills needed for CDT production are attainments that need to be actualized time and again through relying on devices, techniques, conduits etc.

In the first section I attended to the various *tactics* (rituals, heuristics) that seek to make use of conducive socio-material and spatio-temporal conditions (*affective prompts*) in order to generate the specific quality of *awareness* needed for creative work. The performers, through meticulous preparation and the creation of conducive atmospheres, achieve a present-centered mode of awareness that relinquishes any idea of mastery or "forcing things" and allows for things to "happen." Jeff for example talked about practices of scene-setting, that, in his case, amount to a kind of boundary work and "spacing" (Beyes & Steyaert, 2011), taking and making "place" for emergence and becoming. Jeff's allusions thereby illustrate "the weird rule of a pedagogy of affect: you always move to be moved," as Steyaert (2009, p. 465) notes. I emphasize that, as Gomart and Hennion (1999) write: "we do not take "passion" to describe the subject's instrumental mastery of things, nor her mechanical determination by things. Rather, passion is the abandonment of forces to objects and the suspension of the self" (p. 227). In this way, the spatio-temporalities and socio-materialities I have called *affective prompts* perform as *material anchors* for affective capacities[134](see Hutchins, 2005).

In the second section, I detailed the *sensible syntax* to consist of *technologies of articulation* and *compositional heuristics*. These are *epistemological agencies* that have, through training and work, shaped both the performers' faculties and perceptions and an "epistemic community" (Gherardi, 2009, pp. 544–545). As the effect of ongoing taste-making and sharing an aesthetics, individual capacities and disciplinary ways of sensing and seeing are crafted. The sensible syntax was thereby shown to be performative in allowing the performers to understand bodies as movements and patterns of motifs they can relate to in dramaturgically-informed ways.

The section on *bivalent vision* suggests that the performers rely on their skill to assess the material and thus constitute the performance. As Becker et al. (2006) note, "an important phase of an artwork's career is what happens when it is viewed. … [V]iewing (listening, reading, observing) a work is constitutive of it" (p. 5). The performers were thereby described as seeing the material in different ways: once as made up of discrete and identifiable, dramaturgical building blocks, once as an affective movement in flux. These are two different ways of (re-)presentation that are both needed: for the dancing choreographer to follow and see the vital contours of forms and at the same time capture and derive form from a fleeting process in order to think and move in motives; for the choreographing dancer to arrest forms and assess

[134] Hutchins (2005) developed a theory about the relations between conceptual and material structure. I suggest that affective prompts perform in a comparable way, just not in terms of conceptual but affective capacities.

the material in terms of its building blocks while also being touched by rhythms and durational temporality. The challenge for both, the dancing choreographer as well as the choreographing dancer, stays to deploy these skills in felicitous ways.

The performers need to distinguish between the two ways of seeing and attending, and need to know when to employ what. Three crucial plug-ins were shown to organize especially for an outside perspective: the (formal) social technique of adopting an instrumental outside perspective (French *le regard extérieur*) as such and the crucial devices of *mirror* and *videographic technologies* that mediate outside perspectives. The latter devices were described as modulating the different skills of seeing by offering specific reflexive affordances and enabling a *regard extérieur*. As *epistemological devices*, they make possible a synchronous or diachronous reflection of the performance which is affording different ways to know and to attend to the work. Mirror and video thereby offer distinct situations to mobilize and exercise the choreographer's as well as the dancer's eye. Depending on situational demands concerning the required mode of awareness and the representation of the performance as energy and as form, the performers then variably employ the mirror or video. While the mirror tends to elicit an objectifying gaze focused on outward "forms," the video playback potentially enables an engagement in critical activities without stopping the spontaneity of the improvisatory process. The technology of video playback allows for the peculiar rehearsal rhythm of working inside out, oscillating between performance in front of the camera and in front of the screen. Through its possibility of *triangulation* – the performers jointly relate to the performance as a "third." Rehearsing in front of the screen thereby particularly enables collective taste-making processes.

The last central plug-in was *taste talk*. An ongoing training in aesthetic appreciation, taste talk was shown to afford the amateurs to develop ever more subtle differences stemming from the intensive involvement with materials. I suggest that this serves creative practice in two ways: first, by verbalizing sensible qualities and their appreciation, amateurs refine their sensitivities to reveal the differences within and between materials. They are thus enhancing their capacity to affect and be affected by materials, which has a direct impact on their capacity for creative involvement. Secondly, by collectively negotiating these qualifications, the conduit of taste talk enables the performers to enact and collectively negotiate "vectors of appetition." Overall, taste talks hence crucially contribute to the sustaining as well as elaboration and refinement of creative practice and its objects.

Overall, in the first sections (5.3.1 - 5.3.5) I detailed the social techniques, performative theories, devices, and circulations that constitute and modulate the activity-sensibility of the amateur, a specific kind of awareness and presence vis-à-vis the material. In light of the basic idea of *enaction*, the last section (5.3.6) then complemented this view on the skilled body. Taking the idea of communication to a more general level, as raised repeatedly by the performers when talking about dance (making) as communication, this section then entailed examples of how CDT making is contingent on multiple articulations of the material within different modalities. While the plug-ins listed enable the skilled body to articulate material across different modalities, articulation again relies on the collectively shaped faculties and perceptions to be taken up within the communication of CDT making.

5.5 Creatio in materia – the affective and normaesthetic milieu of a complicity

Studying the various ensembles within the project "Sharp Cutz" meant following the various human collaborators involved in the project. After having introduced the *repertoires* and *plug-ins* of creative practice, I shall now attend to the *community of performers* as the *associated milieu* of creative practice. To understand the collaborative, *socio*-material aspects of collective creative processes, the relationship between the performers therefore moves center stage in this section on *creatio in materia*. Still interested in the *ecology of the creative event*, this section therefore consolidates the previous descriptions by returning again to compositional processes like collective improvisation. This time however I seek to understand them as set with*in* the *affective, aesthetic* and *normative milieu* constituted by a *community of professional amateurs*.

I shall first attend to the wider collective of the CDT company as such (see 5.5.1 and 5.5.2), then move to the "team-level" of the ensemble (see 5.5.3) and eventually bring both together in a section on the ecology of collective improvisation (see 5.5.4).

Seeking to characterize the specific modes of relation found in the studied collectives, the first two parts describe the collective as an affective and "normaesthetic" (normative regarding aesthetics) community of professional amateurs which I picture as an *Elysian ghetto*, an exuberant and inspirational and at the same time overbearing and confining place and state.

The third part focuses on the individual performance groups, each consisting of three to six performers. Special attention is also granted here to the ecology of collective

improvisation. In respect to the specific mode of relation marking improvisational composition, I thereby propose to understand the performance groups as *complicit ensembles*. This means specifying the notion of community within creative practice as a form of *complicity*. It is a specific mode of relationship characterizing creative ensembles: a project-based collective of individuals, a *congregation of accomplices*, that engage in a highly affective and charged effort to "make something work" – a work not towards the criminal (in legal terms) but the artistic event of performance and invention.

The last part then revolves around the possibility of collective improvisation, one of the main compositional techniques employed in the making of CDT: the event of creativity and invention can never be traced to a singular or main origin, instead the notions of *complicity* and *conspiracy* emphasize that many "partners in crime" need to "con-spire" (Latin *conspirare* "breath together") for "the work to be done."

5.5.1 The aesthetic and affective congregation of the "Elysium"

In this first part I follow various on- and off-sites and times - from a bonfire to a 6th January sharing of a King's cake to the training of "Contact Improvisation" - to learn about the relationship between amateurs. The analysis thereby focuses on the affectionate and amiable attachment between "amateurs," that is, performers that "love" what they are doing. A *leitmotif* for presenting the specific *spirit of the troupe* is the idea of the collective as an "*Elysium":* an aesthetic and affective congregation of amateurs, a "place of the blessed" and a state of collective exuberance and inspiration.

5.5.1.1 An Elysian community beyond institutional confines

Questo è il cielo di contenti, questo è il centro del goder;
qui è l'Eliso de' viventi, qui l'eroi forma il piacer
-
This is the heaven of the contented, this is the middle of joy;
which is the Elysium of the living, where desire forms heroes.
(Choir fragment of an Alcina aria, sung by the performers at a bonfire)

I kept contact with the group after the actual performance had been staged and they moved on to the next project. The following field note was written at night after returning from a bonfire I was invited to by Tom. This was one of the first and then also last occasions where I spent dedicated leisure time, beyond the theater and the performance making process, with the performers.

> The lights of my bicycle don't work and I can hardly see a thing. I'm panting. "Keep following the forest road all the way up," Tom's description of the way to the bonfire keeps reverberating in my head. It's Monday

> evening and I got invited to a spontaneous bonfire party of almost half of the dance company up on a hill overlooking the city. And now I wonder if this steep path is really the proper route. Two minutes later the wind carries strains of some distant choir and I have to smile. It must be the group! Their notorious passion for singing reveals them. As I approach I can hear them singing at the top of their voices: "*Questo è il cielo di contenti, questo è il centro del goder; qui è l'Eliso de' viventi, qui l'eroi forma il piacer*" ("*This is the heaven of the contented, this is the middle of joy; which is the Elysium of the living, where desire forms heroes*") I have heard this before as this is part of the aria the company has to sing as a choir in one scene of their latest performance, the opera Alcina. Arriving, I can see them impersonating opera singers as they go for a last round of the refrain, before breaking up into laughter. Sitting round the huge bonfire are Zoe, with her one year old son, then Tom, Julia, Ben, Ole, Emmanuel, Marie and Laura. I am welcomed to the round and offered the remainders of a barbeque. Happily I sit down as they keep on singing and accompanying the songs with a guitar and a harmonica. Tom holds a song book and they go through the bonfire classics: "My Bonnie," "Hotel California." Emmanuel and Zoe keep on intonating Spanish songs and passionately join in with each other. All the while, Zoe's son is happy on different laps and later, as it's quite chilly, gets his diapers changed close to the fire.
>
> [At home] I'm a little drunk and filled with mixed feelings. I was happy to be invited and to get to know the performers even better through a more informal get-together. We like each other, and sharing songs, food and drinks while warming ourselves at the fire made me feel even closer to them than before. At the same time I felt slightly uneasy and uncertain in my role. Am I crossing a line, becoming more friend than ethnographer? What is my position?
>
> (A group of performers at 11pm at a bonfire on top of a hill, field note, 11.04.2011)

I realized that I was worried by a blurring of lines and roles that for the performers does not seem to exist in such a way. They often explicitly stated that they, as artists, have a hard time distinguishing between work and life. Being a performer in this company means spending approximately ten months a year together in an intensive and intimate way, without a proper "*private space*," as Laura recounts:



Visual Fieldnote 8: Exercise of being "buried alive" I

> I mean once we were just lying VERY VERY, ah under a table, underneath a table ALL of us. So it was very NARROW, [like crammed] ya ya, we were like SQUEEZED there together, and then we were lying there for like, fifteen minutes, just to FEEL what it FELT like. … Of course we're also very used as dancers, you're very USED to be very CLOSE to people, and to be like THIS ((alternately putting her palms and the back of her hands together like pancakes)), and doing PARTNERING and, so you DON'T REALLY have this private SPACE anymore so. It actually, if just for lying like fifteen minutes it doesn't get that uncomfortable.
>
> (Laura, conversation, 27.01.2011)

The performers are used to being physically in touch with each other; be it in exercises, like the one described above, or in actual performances. The performers engage in duets and group acts that involve close physical contact, e.g. when lifting, holding and carrying each other. Not only this, they actually seek other bodies and as an everyday habit it shows in the many embraces and touches that are frequently exchanged between the company members. For some, like Laura, becoming "*one*" with another body is actually "*fun*" and makes for "*nice working moments*." The performers hence develop a professional intimacy that results, without grudge, in a loss of "*private space*."

While giving up any sense of "private space" at work, that is within the practice of making a performance, the performers also tend to spend quite a lot of their "free time" together. Invitations, eat-overs and small parties abound when time and energy allow, for often the performers report being very tired after a day at the theater. The lyrics of the Alcina aria, while sung ironically at the bonfire, nevertheless reflect at least a wishful and, for me, also somewhat notable characteristic of the collective as an affective milieu. The central metaphor of the collective as "Elysium" details the significance of the collectives in the project of "Sharp Cutz." In Greek mythology, the

Elysium is an idea of a special afterlife for the mortals chosen by the gods, the heroes and the righteous, all enjoying a fortunate and happy afterlife on the "island of the blessed," indulging in whatever artistic or noble occupation they had relished in life. In Georg Friedrich Händel's opera *Alcina*, the Elysium is the bewitched "house of pleasures" of the sorceress Alcina. An intermediate realm of desire, not of the dead but of the living. In both versions, the Elysium stands for an utopian place and a "community of the contented," where "heroes and heroines are formed by desire."

Notwithstanding all the hardship of a performer's life, the company is for many members a utopian "place of the blessed" (Elysium), a parallel world where "desire forms heroes and heroines," shining through for example when Marie expresses her thankfulness, being "*so lucky*" to be part of this particular company as it allows her "*to somehow also connect passion with my occupation*."

The project of "Sharp Cutz" then appears as the opportunity to engage in a "hero's quest," to be formed and form material by desire. Especially the final two weeks of the "Sharp Cutz" production are thereby characterized by a partially maniac tendency - in its prolific as well as calamitous effects, carrying the performers through an all encompassing production process where utter physical exhaustion and the need for sleep are sometimes the only things that can stop them. Emmanuel, when asked in a retrospective interview what comes to his mind when thinking about the project, laughs and replies:

> Ehh BEDS ((laughing)) and MATTRESS all the time ((laughing))! Because that was of everything, for my piece a very important place for ME. In the process of Sharp Cutz I was so busy all the time … thinking in the bed, about the PROCESS or about some CORRECTIONS. … I think that the MATTRESS was the the PLACE, I mean the BED, the the the balance between, ah try to take REST, and try to to RELAX and THINK. It is a good PLACE for all this.
>
> (Emmanuel, interview, 23.02.2011

It must be mentioned that Emmanuel works with mattresses as central artifacts in his performance. So he literally moves back and forth between the mattress at work and the one at home. He is "*so busy all the time*" and the little time at home he spends on his own mattress, trying to rest, relax and then "*think"* "*about the process or about some corrections*."

The performers' exhilaration and involvement thereby noticeably reaches beyond the confines of the company members. The production process develops an intensity and involvement that spills over, affects and mobilizes other theater professionals, artist friends and family as well as me.

Looking back, I was personally affected by this absorbing atmosphere in a distinctive way: by and by, I very much enjoyed spending time with the performers and hanging out with them sometimes until late in the evening at the theater. Working on aesthetically interesting and demanding material, collective experiments, then laughter, jokes, short and intense discussions, sometimes also fights; yet everything in movement, feeling very vital and exhilarating. It was alluring, and the more time I spent with them, the more we became friends and I was welcomed and even awaited. "*I could have become a performer and lived a life like this*," was a thought that crossed my mind more than once during these days. Of course I knew I was romanticizing things, yet still this "world," built around the strong utopia of an exuberant artistic collective working on personally and collectively meaningful material, was compelling.

Four out of seven performances within the "Sharp Cutz" project also involve the collaboration with people from outside the confines of the actual dance company. Here we find partly semi-professional, partly professional musicians and actors, a camera man and a sculptor as well as dramaturgical, costume and lighting advisors that have become a part - from minor to very central - of the performances. It is noteworthy that all of these collaborations are based on amiable relations. For their "Sharp Cutz" projects, the performers mobilize artistic friends, flat mates and even their partners. As the group's budgets are small, the collaboration is definitely not built on financial terms, but rather is based on an affectionate attachment - the promise of sharing an artistic project and thus enlivening the relationship - and the possibility of being part of an enviable project and performance. The project "Sharp Cutz" is therefore an interface between the professional sphere of the theater and the semi-professional sphere of the local music and performance scene, which is mobilized to contribute to the performances. Therefore the aesthetic and affective congregation - the Elysium - that is assembled within the process of Sharp Cutz is not confined to the company members, but includes various external members.

The effects of the production on other theater professionals become visible in the technical, scenic, lighting, costume, makeup and requisite department. They sometimes do extra hours for the ensemble's projects and also enjoy getting infected by the performers' enthusiasm:

> Rob, head of the technical workshop and responsible for stage constructions, is installing a manual rope structure that Emmanuel invented for quickly letting down parts of the stage construction for his piece. I ask Rob how the cooperation with the performers goes and he briefly pauses. My question provokes an affectionate grin and with a long drawn "*well*" he

> looks at me and then lowers his voice, almost whispering (maybe because so many performers are running around?): "*they are so motivated*" and "*don't just count the hours!*" Next he explains how he started working in the "*independent scene*" and how the theater is "*nice and all*" but a bit boring compared with the independent scene. I ask him whether this means that he enjoys working with the performers now. "*Yes, sure!*," then he looks at me again and, raising his eyebrows, adds one more word with a strong emphasis: "*Drive!*" before getting back to fixing the rope around a hook.
>
> (Rob, conversation, 28.01.2011)

Rob enjoys working for and with the performers as their enthusiasm, showing in their neglect to "*just count the hours*," reminds him of his time working in the "*independent scene*." In one word, the "off-scene spirit" for Rob is about "*drive*," an expression that is symbolic of the strong impetus propelling the production. Rob and others therefore eagerly "join the ride," an opportunity to enliven the run-of-the-mill of everyday procedures and routines at the theater.

The theater management not only welcomes but even expects this "drive" to work. Giving the performers free rein to try out what they can make possible, is capitalizing on the effects for the whole organization, as Thomas, the musical director, remarks:

> Well, inhouse it is one thing to request the departments to go along with this experiment, which is of course for Swiss departments extremely difficult … to do something outside of the norm. But on the other side the DANCERS learn that one can utilize, well that one can USE the set structures and that one can even bend them a little, that with CHARM, with DILIGENCE, with GOODWILL and with artistic conviction, one can GET people in all different places to contribute to a creative process where they thought in the beginning: "no, we don't want that, we don't know that, we don't do this." It's a give and take. … Especially the TECHNICAL departments, costume and make-up, eh lighting, all the one's that, allotted to production weeks, are there for the respective pieces within very stringent work procedures. There was so much GOODWILL at the end, I found that totally TERRIFIC! From ALL departments that then said, NO MATTER if it is outside the NORM or beyond the BUDGETS, we still do this now and somehow it will work out. Of course this again forms a strong bond within the company, WITH the house and the departments.
>
> (Thomas, interview, 09.02.2011)

Sharp Cutz is expected to and, according to Thomas, eventually also does set free the "drive of the Elysium." By means of "*charm, diligence, goodwill and artistic conviction*," the performers' entrepreneurial thrust is carried into the other departments, mobilizing the "*goodwill*," time and energy of the other professionals. From the management side, this is a win-win situation: getting an extra production

done without providing extra resources including a positive and welcomed side effect: the forming of strong bonds among different departments.

Recapitulating the vignettes above, I shall in the following attend to the Elysian spirit's implications for the figure of the performer and the practice of making CDT as such.

First, within the project of Sharp Cutz, the collective of performers is built around the utopian aspiration of the "Elysium," an affectionate, exuberant and inspirational community "where desire forms heroes and heroines." For the project "Sharp Cutz," this interweaving of personal artistic interests and the desire to work collectively with "friends" is an important aspect of the ecology of creative practice. As an aspiration and a dream, the Elysium is thereby capable of mobilizing a lot of energy and time from the people involved; a "drive" which lets people work without "counting the hours" and which resounds with the idea of the amateur, the practitioner that works for the love of it.

Second, the Elysium means the constitution of an affective and aesthetic community beyond the confines of the actual company. The various performance projects thereby disclose a collaborative network of performers involving amiable relationships with artistic friends, flat mates, lovers and, in my case, a researcher. The collaboration with other partly semi-professional freelance performers is thereby established on the basis of affectionate and appreciative attachments; on the one hand promising the chance of partaking in an enviable project and performance and thus a possible positive reference for one's artistic portfolio, and on the other hand offering inspirational work relationships with artistic friends that offer greater expertise in a certain area - music, light, costume, dramaturgy - against the background of shared taste and hence trust. In this way the practice of making CDT within the project Sharp Cutz is made possible by deep rooted attachments not only within the company but also beyond institutional confines. The affective and aesthetic congregation of the Elysium therefore bridges the institutional and professional sphere of the theater and the independent, and mostly semi-professional, sphere of the local music and performance scene.

5.5.1.2 Contact and cake - developing co-presence in formal and informal interactions

> *Here it [improvisation] works well because we're such an awesome troupe! (Ruth, explaining the link between the group and the practice of improvisation)*

While at work, it is then in their specific activities and their everyday encounters that the *Elysian spirit of the troupe* shows. In organizational activities like "contact

improvisation" (CI) and in informal situations, e.g. when sharing cake, we therefore find an ongoing enactment of a specific kind of *co-presence*.

The following field notes recount the end of a special training unit of "Contact Improvisation" and how the group shares Zoe's homebaked cake.

> I'm running a little late as I still had work to do for the institute. Hence I only arrive for the last five minutes of the "contact improvisation" training. As I enter the rehearsal space, I sense a very concentrated atmosphere: there is no music, everybody is sitting in a circle on the floor and in the middle Tom and Henry are engaged in a graceful duet. The only things to be heard are the sounds of the sliding and rubbing of bodies on the floor and against each other, accompanied by intermittent breathing. The others keep very still and just watch. I stay standing at the door, not daring to disturb this scene. Then a final move, and the room is filled with applause and cheering. Tom, who is a participant and trainer at the same time, eventually verbalizes a final remark: "*We need to work on the small things (...) and concentrate*."
>
> (Ensemble "Green sofa," rehearsal, 06.01.2011)



Visual Fieldnote 9: Contact Improvisation

While the performers still go through a classical ballet training every week, their schedule also foresees a number of alternative training units. At the present time, once a week the performers either did some sort of yoga or the above-mentioned "Contact Improvisation" (CI). Once or twice a year some guest teacher also comes and gives workshops that for example contain aikido[135] elements or that feature certain improvisation methods or approaches. All these approaches share a basic goal: to

[135] Aikido, a Japanese martial art form, is in the context of dance regularly employed to train the skill of taking up and redirecting another body's impulse or force.

develop a feeling for the unfolding moment or movement through heightened awareness of oneself and others by focusing on kinaesthesia.

CI itself is thereby specifically regarded as a training of basic movement improvisation skills and is hence a very specific form of presence-centered awareness. It is a method of dance improvisation developed in the early 1970s and guided by only a few central guiding principles: points of physical *contact* offer a starting point for actively exploring potential movements through *improvisation*. As described in the vignette above, it is a method that asks the participants to engage with another body on the mere premise "to see what happens" when direct contact is sought and sustained. As such, CI provides a general training of kinaesthetic perception - a "*work on the small things*" - when seeking contact and generating a movement out of this contact. At the same time, many performers in the company work intuitively or explicitly with CI at the heart of their improvisation processes. In this way, CI is also a specific training of the basic "method" used in normal rehearsals.

> After the training the performers scatter on the floor, chatting with their colleagues in small groups or pairs, some of them stretching and flexing their bodies or massaging their colleagues. Some performers are teasing each other and intermittent laughter fills the room. Zoe has baked a cake and now starts distributing a piece for everyone, myself included. It is January 6th and she imparts the Spanish tradition of sharing a cake with a small king figure baked inside. Almost everybody is hugging Zoe and, just like children, they are quite excited and curious to know who will be "queen" or "king" for the day. I'm astonished how, although there are of course various groups of people, somehow all of them take part, sharing smiles and chat. In the background Zoe and Henry sing and hum parts of a classical piano piece. And Peter, Mario's assistant, is running around from person to person to check organizational and administrative issues with them. He is happy to be able to catch them all at once to solve some issues and tells me: "Normally, the best thing is when grabbing the performers in the canteen or the corridors."
>
> (Ensemble "Green sofa," rehearsal, 06.01.2011, continued)

This vignette tells of the rare moments when the whole company has a little free time after the training. I was intrigued by all the bonding activities taking place: chatting, making jokes and laughing, singing together, hugging and even massaging each other, sharing cake (and thus traditions from home) and thereby playing a game together. All these are activities that (re)produce attachments – the affectionate bond with fellow performers – that necessarily go beyond the actual scene, yet decisively carry the practice of making CDT. The performers know how important a good "spirit" of the group is when working centrally with improvisation methods:

> Mario and five performers sit together with my PhD supervisor, a number of MBA students we invited for a showing of Alcina and a subsequent talk with the performers and me. The talk turns to the topic of improvisation and one of the MBA students asks whether improvisation is not also a question of personality, having to do with high risk affinity and so forth. Immediate disagreement is expressed by the performers, objecting that it totally depends on the group and the conditions. Ruth asserts: "*Here it works well because it's such an awesome troupe!*," and Ingrid adds: "*One can learn it ... it's a technique*."
>
> (Company members and MBA students gathering after a show, field note, 11.05.2010)

Far from having anything to do with a personality trait, the performers insist that improvisation is a practice in need of a specific ecology – including the Elysian spirit of the troupe and certain conditions - as well as technical training (see also 5.3.2), as it for example happens in classes of "Contact Improvisation."

While organizational activities like "contact improvisation" institutionalize and train the habit of improvisation, the everyday activities of the group, in a no less important way, not only reveal but also create an atmosphere of a welcoming and joyful co-presence.[136] This *spirit of the troupe*, as I shall present later in the section on collective improvisational composition (5.5.4), feeds a basic resource and capacity to be attentive and alert to the unfolding moment and its possible encounters with other performers and materials within "the work to be done."

5.5.2 Ghettoization - the normative and performative confines of a professional community

The image of the Elysium presented the community of amateurs as an exuberant and inspiring, aesthetic and affective milieu for creative practice. Yet the following analysis illustrates that the attachments between amateurs is actually more ambivalent. To present this ambivalence we should picture the community as an "*Elysian ghetto*," a place and state not only of collective exuberance and inspiration but of normative and performative currents. It is through ongoing taste-making that (professional) subjectivities and aesthetic communities are fashioned together. The Elysian collective of performers is therefore not a place where "anything goes." Rather, the intensive and intimate work of the collective involves ongoing trials and evaluations. The term *ghetto* was originally used by Jeff who thereby foresaw the downside of the affective pull of the Elysium: as amateurs, the performers tend to be so involved in their work that they hardly get out of it anymore. I hence take the notion of ghetto to further

[136] As ethnographer, I was intrigued by the notable atmosphere. It made my field work a very enjoyable time.

express the overbearing emotions and the strong sense of confinement that potentially arise from the peculiar nexus of intimate and joyful collective work and ongoing (aesthetic) standardizations.

5.5.2.1 The institutional double logic behind the project "Sharp Cutz"

I take the idea of an *Elysian ghetto* to first of all point to the joyful yet also overbearing institutional setting of the dance company and the project "Sharp Cutz" as such.

The dance company is situated as an institutional unit in a formal and strict institutional hierarchy of the theater. From being a mere "ballet service provider" for the prestigious opera and music theater division, the company was allowed to develop over the last ten years into a more active unit with a distinguished shift of dance towards more contemporary and "post-modern" styles. This independence however was never reflected structurally and hence the dance company formally still resides as a subunit within the musical theatre & opera section of the theatre. Hence the dance company is not a fully independent section and therefore Mario, the head choreographer, is in a typical middle-management "sandwich" position. The previous choreographer only lasted out about 1 ½ years at the theater and malicious gossip has it that Mario was partly taken on because he does not grouch. As such, the company has some fervent supporters as well as rather critical opponents in the institution, with the main question being about how "arty" and independent the dance company should work.

In any case, as part of a commercially operated theatre in the context of fierce competition for cultural resources and audiences, the company is expected to perform. To put it in the words of Thomas, managing and artistic director of the section "music theater" and thus also responsible for the dance company: "*the DANCE company is surely NOT ONLY here for experimental self-realization*" (interview, 09.02.2011). By employing a litotes, a pointed understatement for an ironic effect, Thomas conveys a double message: while acknowledging the need for liberating creativity alongside the epi-phenomenal "self-realization" effects of the company's "experiments," he at the same time belittles them; surely, the company is expected to perform. Mario thereby sees his challenge in coming to terms with a logic that heavily measures time as investment, where all that counts are results: "*They want first of all to have the numbers here*" (interview, 21.12.2010).

From this perspective, Sharp Cutz, the investigated project of the dance company, is caught in similarly contrasting logics. On the one hand, Mario emphasizes that "*we*

need to score particularly well this year, so that it becomes a good evening," while he at the same time portrays the whole project as a unique possibility for the dancers to try things out and present "*intimate*" and "*disclosing*" material on stage (conversation, 01.12.2010). And while most dancers are excited and thankful for this opportunity, Laura, one of the few dancers that did not herself choreograph, is also wary of the pressure involved in making a piece:

> You know it's, it's a CHANCE for you to do something on your OWN, but at the same time it's SOOOO much PRESSURE it's NOT really ALLOWED to NOT do a good thing ANYWAYS, so it's [hm] and of course somehow you have to start TRYING but, yeah.
>
> (Laura, interview, 07.04.2011)

In its setup, the dance company, as well as the project Sharp Cutz, is hence marked by the tension between a) being promising in allowing to create personally meaningful pieces and develop as a choreographer and dancer while b) not being allowed to fail. The trajectories of "self-realization," which we will soon come to see what it means in the context studied, and the performative demands of the institution are ambiguously related by co-constituting each other while at the same time belittling "the other."

From an organizational perspective, the ambivalence of the format is communicated unofficially. Similar formats to Sharp Cutz have been popular among institutionalized contemporary dance companies for some years. Often claimed and communicated as a promotion of young choreographers and an organizational development tool, according to Peter (conversation, 09.12.2010), Mario's assistant, they are also a convenient intervention to mobilize the dancers towards the end of the season to do another project without the main choreographer really needing to do something him/herself. Peter however concedes that Mario's intentions are more sincere and that he is really interested in fostering and developing the company as a whole and the individual dancers. It is thereby noteworthy that, compared with other institutionalized dance companies, quite a few of the dancers have stayed with Mario and the company for their whole career or for a very long time. Peter attests Mario a strong interest in the development of his dancers and according to Laura, Mario is "*living for his work*" and "*the company is his family*" (interview Laura, 07.04.2011). For Mario, Sharp Cutz is therefore an opportunity for the dancers to change sides and create something personal and meaningful while also experiencing the difficulty of making a piece themselves.

Following this institutional focus on the work of the dance company and within the project "Sharp Cutz," the next section offers the perspective of the performers themselves on their work and its effects.

5.5.2.2 Professional amateurs – setting boundaries

The Elysium as a community of amateurs constituted a passionate engagement that did not clearly distinguish work and leisure time. The performers rejoice in and appreciate such a method of working, yet are also painfully aware of how the Elysium can quickly turn into a *ghetto* (Jeff, conversation, 13.12.2010). It is at these times that the performers also emphasize their roles as professionals, backed up by unions and equipped with clear contracts, and assert their professional rights concerning recuperation time.

On the performers' side, "not counting the hours" means working a lot, often on the verge to being physically and emotionally exhausted and drained. I never heard any of the performers complaining, as they choose to do so themselves. Yet this does not mean that the performers are according with everything their job brings along:

> Tom comes storming into the office and looks obviously annoyed. He addresses Peter, Mario's assistant, who is responsible for working out the weekly schedules for the company, detailing and allocating all the trainings, rehearsals and performances. "*I'm not coming in later for this dress rehearsal*" he declares blankly, and further: "*the labor union grants us four hours of rest before an evening performance*." Peter is slightly irritated and just starts replying with a "*Yes, but...*" when Tom cuts his speech and asserts with emphasis "*I can show you in our contracts!*," whereupon he turns around and wanders off, leaving Peter with an incredulous look on his face. Turning towards me, Peter whispers: "*Something like this would have been unheard of in my days!*"
>
> (Mario's office, field note, 14.12.2010)

> Peter and Mario are discussing the fact that the rehearsal space has been unused for the last two hours. Mario is displeased and rants and raves that there is altogether so little time for preparation and that it is impossible to have the rehearsal space not used efficiently. "*With such a production the dancers have to turn a blind eye*," he remarks reproachfully and adds: "*it doesn't work like this!*." Peter responds that the timing of the rehearsals didn't fit in with the labor union's legally determined rest period and the daily working hours. Mario looks at him wide-eyed and shakes his head in disbelief.
>
> (Mario's office, field note, 16.12.2010)

The performers are well aware of what they are entitled to and, notwithstanding all their passion for what they are doing, in certain moments also pragmatically and

confidently assert their rights.. They are aware of the "other side" of the Elysium, which for Jeff, alluding to the detrimental effects of being together all the time, can feel like a "*ghetto*" (conversation; 13.12.2010). If not working in opera or theater performances together with actors and musicians, the performers, working long hours and often staying all day in and around the theater, only circle around themselves. And then, sometimes a break or change is needed and sticking to strict working hours is watched carefully.

5.5.2.3 Elysian standards - colleagues are the real audience (and the toughest critics)

I think colleagues are the toughest critic!
(Andrea, about the uncertainty and pressure
when presenting one's material to colleagues)

Working within the CDT company over a length of time involves joint productions and weekly trainings, exchange and discussion about "fantastic," "ok" and "boring" pieces; a constant developing, sustaining and refining of taste. The collective of performers is the benchmark for evaluating other's and one's own work, and one's peers are the most important audience. For Andrea, "*colleagues are the toughest critics*." The Elysian community is an aesthetic community that constantly negotiates its aesthetic standards and appreciations.

Laura makes it very clear that she is not working by herself, in a vacuum. And thus Laura speaks about the product of her work depending on her peers' appreciation.

> Last spring I had a duet with a guy, and then he got injured. So they cut the duet away, and everything was away and from this- and then you also have to think about that; ya I mean you STILL have the nice- it it's NOT gonna be on STAGE – but you still had the nice moment of CREATING it, and of , SHOWING it , to the COMPANY, and be like PROUD of it...
>
> (Laura, conversation, 26.01.2011)

Having the duet cut out from the final production didn't bother Laura too much as the most important audience – her peers – have favorably appreciated the fruits of her work. Andrea considers her colleagues therefore "*the toughest critics*":

> Andrea: I think colleagues are the toughest critics. I mean, I wasn't even half anxious to show it to the actors as when my colleagues eventually watched. Well, what means anxious...
> Interviewer: I noticed this and was quite surprised!
> Andrea: Yes, because they are really the toughest critics. They also just come and say: eh, I think this sucks. And nobody else does this. All the

> others are always like: yes, quite nice already, maybe you could here or there. And then, with colleagues, you really get frightened!
>
> (Andrea, interview, 23.02.2011)

For Andrea, the expected appraisal of her colleagues is daunting. In the days leading up to the final rehearsals, where feedback rounds are to be expected, I therefore recognized a rising pressure and noticeable edginess. It comes with no surprise that Ruth, after a test run of the performance, expresses her huge relief upon hearing a very positive and encouraging feedback:

> Ohh, I'm so relieved now! One is so stressed that it eventually wouldn't work! Because then it is quite embarrassing, no? When it is not well made, then it turns out to be really bad!
>
> (Ruth, in a conversation with Peter, 19.01.2011)



Visual Fieldnote 10: Feeling relieved after a positive feedback

To hear that "it works" from one's colleagues is the greatest appreciation possible, as the performer's peers turn out to be the actual audience. This is where fame is built or obscurity determined, where one can be proud of a created piece even when it never reaches the stage afterwards, or where one can remain shattered and demoralized after hearing one's peers verdict.

The evaluation of one's doing ("creating") and its results ("showing") within an aesthetic community is a central mediator when it comes to individual and collective taste-making. Within the Elysian, aesthetic community of performers in this study, attachment is linked to individualization: the activities of "creating" and "showing" are irrevocably associated with both, forming a sense of belonging to an aesthetic community and a personally relevant sense of being. In terms of taste, Laura's account thereby suggests that taste is performative in seeking appreciation of the relevant arbiters, namely one's own peers. They need others to reflectively form tastes and hence to become part of and at the same time to shape a specific aesthetic community as a professional group. In other words, taste-making at the same time fashions (professional) subjectivities and aesthetic communities. Thus the collective of practitioners can be regarded as a normative infrastructure that is a strong mediator for generating and choosing the material to assemble into a performance.

5.5.2.4 "Let me out" – the confines of the Elysian "ghetto"

You can work quicker ... but you just stay in your own world.
(Marie, about the advantage and downside
of staying with one company for a long time)

Spending time with colleagues and repeatedly doing projects together, or with the same choreographer, leads to the development of vaguely shared aesthetic appreciations. The normaesthetic community of performers provides the aesthetic standards that have a direct impact on the generation and assemblage of material. This has very ambivalent implications. This means an aesthetic confinement that on the one hand helps to generate material quickly and with a certain predictability. On the other hand it thwarts the performers' strong desire to refine and extend their repertoire.

Marie, who has been part of the dance company for the last three years, openly speaks about the mixed blessings of working with one choreographer for a longer time. She names an obvious advantage: "*that you know him, you know what he wants and you can work quicker on a scene*" (conversation, 26.01.2011). "Knowing the choreographer and what he wants" thus means for Marie to know what to expect and also what she is expected to deliver. Thus, the acquired repertoire and sense of "what needs to be done" and what is fitting, enable her to work efficiently and quickly when

she is asked to work on a scene, which means to improvise and create material. A vaguely shared taste affords a smooth work process without much explicit negotiation. The aesthetic community of performers "knows" what "needs to be done" and "what works."

The downside and tension of developing collective tastes thereby appears as a predicament. It foreshadows the slightly dissonant attachment between performer and performer in an ensemble. While "*you can work quicker on a scene*," "*you just stay in your own world and don't properly DEVELOP YOURSELF any more … For ME as an artist it is just important that I also ADVANCE*" affirms Marie (conversation, 26.01.2011), asserting her individual duty and need to "*advance*" as a professional performer.

From this perspective, the community appears even more to be an "Elysian ghetto." Sought after, needed and yet feared for its potential to arrest the movement and development that all performers emphasize as being important. For this reason performers go along to workshops with other choreographers, or external choreographers are invited to do at least one piece per season as guest choreographers. Marie explains that

> they [the performers] are grateful when they for once also receive step material and say "ohhh, now I can just mh, lean back," or not lean back, but just not constantly, yes constantly need to spit out material, because you always also repeat yourself with the movements that you anyway know.
>
> (Marie, conversation, 09.12.2010)

For Marie, this situation means that she eventually would also leave the company and work with another choreographer and group. Hence the attachment between performers is problematic and ambiguous: on the one hand they feel drawn to work with people they already know, and where they can anticipate that a background of moderately congruent taste serves an almost trouble-free process. On the other hand, as professionals they feel concerned about not just repeating themselves within neat boundaries.

5.5.2.5 Fighting for resources

I couldn't do this all year round.
(Jeff, about the pressure within the project Sharp Cutz)

The normative and affective infrastructure of the community as an Elysian ghetto is potentialized in the project Sharp Cutz. As a project where the performers work parallel on pieces to be included into one evening performance, and where

choreographic talents are furthered and sought, Sharp Cutz also means a time of extra pressure, where one's colleagues are needed as support yet feared as critics and opponents. In his retrospective interview, Jeff states clearly that he couldn't do "Sharp Cutz" all year round:

> I couldn't do Sharp Cutz all year round, as this would, I believe, as everybody somehow turns a bit, well everybody defends his piece und everybody wants another stage rehearsal and everybody wants into the rehearsal space, and "I still haven't got one." This is just a little with elbows. And then "yes but I have," "and I want," "and I need" and so on. What I can also understand. Everybody wants the best for himself. And now, as this is gone again, then one is also relieved from something, as nice as it was.
>
> (Jeff, interview, 17.03.2011)

Jeff here alludes to another aspect of the ambivalent bond between performers, where peers are the affective supports for practice and at the same time the real audience and even rivals in the challenge to secure the resources for one's own group.

The next section will further investigate this dynamic on the level of the specific group and the practice of collective improvisation, which is marked by concurrent collaboration and competition.

5.5.3 Ensembles - from community to complicity

In this third part of my analysis on the attachments between professional amateurs, I focus more on the specific "team-level" of *ensembles*, each consisting of three to six performers. How do ensembles group together? How are they actually made to work?

Looking at actual ensembles moves a specifc mode of relationship center stage: ensembles are performance groups that engage in a "work to be done," that is, they are out to make events (work). As such, creative ensembles are a very specific collective or community. I propose to call them a *complicity* – a *congregation of accomplices*. A complicity is a project-based collective of individuals that, for the duration of their "project," engage in a highly affective and intensive work that seeks to "make something happen." A complicity might involve a leading figure, a "boss," but the term should emphasize that the resulting creativity and invention has no definite origin but is only ever brought to life through a variety of accomplices.[137]

[137] For now, the term complicity means a congregation of human accomplices, at a later stage, I seek to extend its meaning to encompass also the active material as accomplice.

The analysis then describes how complicit ensembles form a group on the basis of previous working experience and against a background of shared taste and humor, while individual performers also follow their own artistic trajectories. In the process, the complicit ensemble as well as the performance are thereby co-constituted. Hence I suggest that the creative process of making CDT in Sharp Cutz is centrally dependent on whether individual desires and trajectories can be enrolled and engaged into a working complicity. If positive, the rehearsals are marked by a "coopetitive"[138] ethos, if missing, "things don't come together."

5.5.3.1 "Partners in time" - Attracting accomplices

You do not choose people you do not like.
(Andrea, about the decision whom to work with)

For the creative process in a "project-based" field like CDT, one of the first defining steps is the forming and establishing of the ensemble-to-be. Who are going to be "partners in time." Attracting accomplices for the "work to be done" is a crucial prerequisite for a successful project.

For Andrea, Ruth and Jeff, all experienced dancers in their late twenties, there was no question that they would team up and collectively devise a piece. The three had been working together for a while in the present and also in the last company and are pretty much best buddies, Andrea and Ruth even being in an intimate relationship and sharing a flat. I asked Andrea and Ruth why they all worked together:

> Andrea: well Jeff made a piece for Marie, Ruth and me in "City" and ah we worked SUPER nicely together, like making steps but just everything what happened around it and ahm one could, well it CLICKED nicely, so he liked what we proposed and we really digged what HE did and and then it was pretty much clear.
> Ruth: and we ALSO always have the same HUMOR;
>
> (Andrea and Ruth, interview, 21.02.2011)

Andrea assesses previous work experience in a positive way, employing the metaphorical construction "*it clicked nicely*." She hence focuses on a certain rhythm of work, a positively described pulse constituted through the relationship of the choreography-specific practices of "*proposing*" and "*liking*." For Andrea, it obviously "*clicks*" nicely when propositions are met with approval or even excitement. According to Andrea, the three performers like what they have been doing before and how they have been doing it, indicating that the experience of practice itself - here

[138] Coopetition is a neologism coined to describe "cooperative competition."

expressed as experiencing a certain fluidity of practice - is also relevant. Eventually, Andrea emphasizes the importance of a mutual consistency in taste which, as Ruth explicitly adds, is noticeable also in shared "*humor*."

Correspondingly, Mark tells the story how he recruited his ensemble members. When I ask him (interview, 16.03.2011) about the criteria for choosing his members, he first alludes to the notion of "*style*" - defined as a positive answer to the simple question "*do I like this?*" Then he further mentions that with his way of choreographic working ("*research*"), he only asked people where he knew that they would "*have an easy access*" to this, "*be interested*" and "*could cope with this, as they have more experience in this area*." For Mark, these two aspects are important in regard to the choreographic process, where looking back he affirms that "*just from the easiness of the process, I didn't want to make it even more difficult as it anyway was*."

Therefore, when it comes to forming a project-based ensemble, positively described work "*experience*" - either from having previously accomplished something together or from knowing and being interested in a certain approach to choreographic work (e.g. "research") - and a shared sense of "*humor*" or "*style*," representing a collectively shared taste, together offer reliable predictions for future work situations. Being able to rely on at least vaguely shared aesthetic judgments and a collective sense of taste can hence be seen to be a magnet, attracting the ensemble members as they expect the work to unfold within a reasonable amount of naturally occurring quarrels and obstacles. In this way the ensemble forms, in anticipation of a certain process and rhythm of working that they know is crucial for accomplishing the "work to be done."

5.5.3.2 "Partners in crime" - Individuals working together

Being three, you dare more.
(Jeff, about the threesome work of choreography)

We all have different pictures.
(Andrea, about the competition of ideas in the group)

Within CDT ensembles, "partners in time" are "partners in crime." A complicit ensemble is characterized by special kinds of relationships. As "partners in crime," the performers frame the setting of an ensemble as an advantage: for Jeff, "*you dare more*" in a group (of three), as "*you spur yourself on*" (Jeff, interview, 17.03.2011). In this expression lies all the dynamic of "the work to be done," which, while pointing at a mutual orientation is nevertheless always also characterized by a strong personal investment and individual desires. Hence, the collective making of CDT, while being widely recognized as a collaborative process, must at the same time be regarded as a

process of bringing together a multitude of conflicting desires and ideas of what and how to develop.

In many choreographic projects, often starting without an original text or script and rather vague ideas, the sheer possibilities and uncertainties lead to indecision and even "*helplessness*," as Henry recalls:

> The first rehearsal with Mark, where we just didn't know – didn't know, okay, where we, with what do we want to start? … And then of course, into the UNKNOWN, one fully, as, one knows NOTHING about what HE WANTS, one neither knows what what, well I didn't know what I MYSELF eh, WANTED to DEVELOP in this, in this WORK. … Well that is always the same with each rehe-, with each creation process, eh, at the beginning one just anyway feels so HELPLESS, really HELPLESS!
>
> (Henry, interview, 22.02.2011)

Henry gives voice to the many questions that abound at the beginning of a new choreographic process: how are we going to start? What will evolve? What do I want to develop? Where do we want to go? Every new production is a new chance for the ensemble as well as the individual performer.

Occasionally, creative practice then turns into a competition of ideas and pictures, where everyone "*wants to see one's own picture through*," as Andrea explains while sitting with her colleagues outside for a short break in-between a difficult rehearsal:

> Rehearsal break on the little backdoor terrace of the main rehearsal room. Andrea and Jeff are smoking and further discussing the evolvement of the performance. I ask about the current scene they are working on, and Andrea tells me that they share a vague idea of doing a part of the choreography on and around a small meadow of artificial grass patches. "*We all have different pictures*," "*and of course everybody wants to see one's own picture through*." While still sitting, she suggestively performs a short series of gestures and movements that convey moments of proposition. Hands open, palms facing each other yet fingers turned outward, smilingly she cocks her head from side to side and enacts a situation where she charmingly suggests some choreographic elements, saying "*don't you think like this, or like this?*" to an imaginary vis-à-vis. Then she switches back into conversational mode, focuses on me and quickly adds: "*it becomes difficult if the people don't have the same sense of humor*."
>
> (Ensemble "Circus," smoke break, field note, 08.12.2010)

This field note renders the choreographic process as being very much about multitudes of ideas and pictures competing with each other. For Andrea, a shared taste must still allow disagreement and differences stemming from a preference for individually

cherished ideas or images. Especially collective improvisation then appears as a practice that is characterized through an interlacing of cooperation and competition.

For the ensemble members this means that they inhabit the ambiguous roles of being simultaneously both, collaborators and competitors. The field note thereby already hints at two central activities present in the choreographic process: deliberate reasoning and discussion outside of the actual rehearsal space, as when sitting outside and discussing the piece, and performing new propositions while rehearsing, as presented in Andrea's short enactment of how one might win over one's colleague through proposing alternatives.

When it comes to collective processes of improvisational composition, the more performable way of assessing proposals and proposing alternatives becomes the central issue. Here the role of the "assessor" and its practice is liberated and distributed among the performing collaborators, so that activities of proposing and evaluating cannot be so clearly distinguished anymore.

> Jeff, Laura, Andrea and Ruth are exploring different ways of walking that could fit in with a musical fragment. First Laura proposes a certain walking rhythm, then a second, asking: "*so, or so?*" Standing next to her are the others, watching her. Eventually Jeff attunes himself to Laura's rhythm and style of walking and joins her in doing it. Andrea and Ruth are still watching them silently. It looks like they are still searching for some other movement. Then Jeff and Laura stop walking while Jeff keeps on tapping the beat with a whip he has been carrying as a requisite. After some moments, Ruth all of a sudden starts performing a third walking rhythm while the others watch her undecidedly (visual fieldnote 11, top left picture). This time Jeff joins her almost immediately (top middle picture), followed first by Laura (top right picture) and then by Andrea (bottom left picture). For some seconds they synchronize their movements and their direction (bottom middle picture), and then turn towards the mirror, watching themselves while still doing the walking and then finishing their small enactment with a circus-like final pose (bottom right picture) before breaking up into laughter and smiles. Without further discussion the four performers then move on to the next part of the music, silently agreeing on the improvised fragment.
>
> (Ensemble "Circus," rehearsal, field note, 08.12.2010)



Visual Fieldnote 11: Collective improvisation and "decision-making"

Proposition follows proposition and each improvisation is at the same time a reaction – an evaluation – and a new impulse. The first propositions of Laura are not taken up until Jeff eventually attunes to her way of walking. Yet this does not convince Ruth and Andrea, who keep on watching in silence. Reacting or not, "one cannot not evaluate" the other's proposition: staying silent and unmoved is as *contesting*, as attuning to and joining a certain performance is *attesting* to a proposition. At the end, agreement is signaled by first individually and eventually collectively attuning to Ruth's proposed walking rhythm and joining her performance. Different, previously concurrent movements are brought into phase and the finishing move marks the sequence not only as being finished but as "working," as being accepted for themselves and an imagined audience (probably also themselves). The accomplices thus come to an agreement and, at least for now, this way of walking is set.

For the "Circus" ensemble, working with modes of collective improvisation requires keeping open criticism at bay at the moment when material is being generated. The wish for a fluid working rhythm is afforded through a capacity to operate in a "Yes, and / or..." mode, where propositions are met with further propositions, either refining or suggesting alternatives to the previous performance. At the end, and for that moment, the process of generating material in collective improvisation seems to be a "survival of the most performative;" by performing one's ideas and pictures, one's

colleagues can be convinced. The alertness necessary to improvise in that way is then nourished by an implicit and shared sense of humor and taste, developed and refined over years of "performance-making." Collective improvisation thrives on active participation. Two questions are thereby present in the rehearsal space: "*Does it work*?" and "*Do I like it*?"

All in all, the collectivity of the concrete collaboration and the development of first material is mediated by trajectories of desire and attachment as well as of accompanying feelings of uncertainty and helplessness. And as before, the performers, the practice and the object of practice thereby appear as mutually constitutive movements.

In the next section I suggest that not only the beginnings of CDT productions therefore demand a dynamic and productive balance between maintaining a common orientation while exploring the multiplicity of trajectories and possible lines demanding to be followed.

5.5.3.3 "Partners in line" - Making a complicit ensemble work

Lots of action and very little reaction.
(Ruth, about the method of working in the ensemble "Kill your darlings")

The complicit ensemble and its coopetitive mode of relationship is not a fixed structure but an ongoing achievement. It requires an ongoing balancing of needs and desires, getting "*partners in line*," in the interest of the project's goal of assembling a performance for the fixed date of the premiere. It is Marie and her ensemble that provide an example - ex negativo - further highlighting the potential as well as the challenge of aligning ensemble members.

> The Friday before the beginning of the last week of general rehearsals I find Marie talking with her colleague Julia about her creative process. Marie feels stuck with the process as the different parts she so far developed with her colleagues somehow don't seem to relate well with each other, and the overall story is so far "not working" properly.
>
> Sitting next to them, I just turn on the video-camera as Julia tells Marie about a comparable experience, where she, in another production, also felt stuck shortly before the premiere. She explains how her co-performers were "*blocked*," how she just decided "*Ok, let's do a run*" and how from this improv session "*all the sudden appeared what you needed*." Marie nods approvingly and affirms this experience, albeit with an intonation conveying a certain detachment: "*That is also the nice part, as soon as the scaffolding is UP, and you have somehow trust in the MOVEMENT you're doing, that you then really only arrive at the freedom to PLAY, and by this also find the CONNECTIONS with the others*."
>
> (Marie, in conversation with Julia, field note, 28.01.2011)

Marie speaks of the challenge of assemblage, of fitting things together and making them work. Julia asserts that it is not an uncommon experience to feel stuck even only a few days before the premiere. In her anecdote, the solution was to rely on the group and activate their potential to make the missing connections by doing another collective improvisation. Julia's remark then leads Marie to impart some of her knowledge of how choreographic processes ideally unfold: once the "*scaffolding*," the minimal structure and thus the security and "*trust*" needed, is in place, then one can "*play*" with the necessary "*freedom*" required to "*find the connections with the others*." However the way Marie intonates her comment marks it as not really corresponding with her current situation.

> Julia then confronts Marie with the possibility of already having the "scaffolding up" by posing the rhetorical question: "*But the movements are there, not? You see this in the-*." Marie, becoming apologetic, stammers: "*BUT only in the last rehearsals have we, BEFORE we were for a long time, that we more or less always* ((she gets up and starts performing)) *"EH, what COMES, not?"* ((with a puzzled face)*)* "*How to GRAB you*?" ((performing a failed grab with an imaginary co-performer)).
>
> (Marie, in conversation with Julia, field note, 28.01.2011)

Marie is faced with the question why she hasn't yet started doing what she actually seems to know - namely building connections between all the existent parts by engaging in playful improvisations with her colleagues Andrea and Ruth. Marie's answer is that the group has until late been busy with technical details, dabbling with questions of what comes when and how to physically interact with each other.

From Andrea and Ruth's perspective (interview, 23.02.2011), this "*dry*" and "*technical*" way of working was characterized by, as Ruth calls it, "*lots of action and very little reaction*":

> Andrea: With Marie one had to be oneself. You didn't have a character that is just so strange that you could just go for it. To the contrary, it is Marie, Ruth and me, with the added problem that the piece is like Marie, her character. But this is not us, this is not our private nature. And then to play something we shouldn't play but just be, that is extremely difficult. ...
> Ruth: This was a bit difficult with Marie, as we didn't have any proper characters. That's why it is lots of action and very little reaction.
>
> (Andrea and Ruth, interview, 21.01.2011)

For Marie's co-performers Ruth and Andrea, the problems with the piece had to do with the piece being very much built by and for Marie, modeling her "*character*." This meant, on the other hand, that very little involvement of Andrea and Ruth as "characters" as well as idea givers took place; in the end there was "*very little reaction*."

Two issues thereby played a role: first, Andrea and Ruth were choreographing their own piece and naturally devoted more time to this, leaving less time for collective rehearsals especially in the sensitive phase of generating material. Secondly, Marie from the beginning was very eager to "*do things she always wanted to do*," starting the process with strong images and ideas she was rather reluctant to change. In Marie's overall story of assemblage, of how to deal with uncertainty, it thus might have been too little space and time for the activation and inclusion of her colleagues' inputs. Hypothetically, going back to the conversation between Marie and Julia, Julia also points in a similar direction:

> Marie expresses her bewilderment and confusion why the group hasn't yet got into a mode of rehearsing that, based on well rehearsed bits, starts to connect things and performers. There is a long pause while both performers stare at the set building activities going on on stage. Then a slight smile appears on Julia's face and she turns towards Marie, starting to say: "*Maybe you have to*." At this moment she begins chuckling and continues "*cook for them a little soup tomorrow or*"; by that time her chuckles turn into empathic laughing, and she adds: "*you need to tell them.*" Marie nods, and utters a brief "*yes*," while her gaze turns inwards.
>
> (Marie, in conversation with Julia, field note, 28.01.2011)

For Julia, there is a close link between "building connections" between the group members and the capacity to "build connections" between the material of the piece. Therefore, her way would possibly include "*cooking a soup*" for her team members and talking to them. Julia thereby hints at the very general need for creating spaces for

communication and attunement to take place - either in rehearsals, where things can develop through the input of everybody, or informally, e.g. when gathering for a dinner or a bonfire.

Turning to another example, Emmanuel, as a choreographing dancer, employed games and arranged collective experiences to allow for the attunement of the ensemble members.



Visual Fieldnote 12: Exercise of being "buried alive" II

> Visual field note 12, a set of three pictures, depicts scenes from a "*game*," or exercise, Emmanuel designed for his performers. He sought to make them both experience a quality of being "buried alive" as well as allowing them to develop a "*deep connection*," as he called it. "The game" involves the four dancers cramming onto a mattress and inside a small bed frame.

> Over the course of fifteen minutes, with the dark and slightly eerie music of their piece playing, Emmanuel first covers the dancers with mattresses and linen, then crawls on top of this pile to squeeze them further and finally "unearths" them to tug their immobile bodies to their respective starting places for the rehearsal of the performance.
>
> (Ensemble "Buried alive," rehearsal, 28.01.2011)

Emmanuel had employed this and other "games" at the beginning of the development process and then again only one week before the premiere. Emmanuel and the performers confirmed that the "game" helped to develop the connectedness and awareness that was deemed useful as an affective prerequisite for the performance of the piece itself. It attuned and aligned the performers.

All in all, the complicit ensemble and its co-operative mode of relationship is a result of the historical development of CDT, which tended more and more towards a strongly participatory practice. As the examples above show, the activation of individual and collective attachments – in form of desires and ideas – needs to be balanced with possibilites to collectively develop a shared sense of aesthetics, taste or humor. This then is the challenge of the making of CDT: to involve the team members - with their bodies, desires and ideas - to ensure a prolific multiplicity while sustaining a collective trajectory. This requires communication and communion, and both need time and place to happen. Something that sometimes becomes a rare good when things get hectic.

5.5.4 Conspiracy and reverence – collectively creating a space-time for improvisation

Creativity is in the end to revere this moment, eh, to retain it, to see what is now, what is happening here right now. And that, with this attentiveness, to look where is this leading us now.
(Tom, about creativity in collective improvisation)

Invention within creative improvisation is a fragile singularity and cannot be produced at will. Therefore the *ecology of the event* is decisive for our understanding of invention and creativity. From a perspective of *creatio in materia*, it is the peculiar coopetitive mode of the complicity's relationships that constitutes the crucial socio-material milieu for creativity and invention to take place. The complicit spirit of the ensemble is a prerequisite for reciprocal understanding and the capacity to be attentive and aware of the unfolding moment as well as for the ability to allow oneself to be moved. As such, in this section on "conspiracy and reverence," I shall attend once more to the complicity as an *affective milieu* enabling a "feeling" and "following" forwards. The accomplices within an ensemble are, as I propose to frame it, in this way forming part of a *con-spiration* (Latin *con-* "together with" and *spirare*

"breathe"): it is their mutual attunement, their co-presence (see 5.5.1.2), that allows them to engage in collective, improvisational processes of composition that demand a collective *reverence* of the "moment."

For the performers, collective improvisation is a refined methodology for generating material. In the following section a number of excerpts from a talk with Tom are featured in order to understand what collective improvisation can mean and how it relies on the affective milieu of the complicity. In one of my first interviews, I asked him to tell me in his own words what it is in detail they are actually doing when they are rehearsing. In the following excerpts he mainly refers to a number of rehearsals - featuring the key practice of collective improvisation - he attended on previous days:

> Well, in improvisation, when we begin, it's of course first of all about building up concentration in the group, without it being a carnival or so, so it doesn't get this "performance" character, which falls apart very fast. Then you look at it and then it actually gets boring very quickly, because there is no tension and no suspense is built up. Or short moments of suspense and then it is already gone and something new comes. Or, ehm, what often happens with improvisations is eh, many, many things happen, and you look at it from the outside and it just looks like a chaotic heap and ehm this is surely uninteresting. Well that works maybe for a few minutes or so, but then you need a contrast, then you need somehow something that ehm gets a mutual direction, becomes a togetherness. If this is not the case, if all go in different directions you can use this once, but when this is the case all the time, then it falls apart.
>
> (Tom, interview, 12.10.2010)

Tom is concerned about an improvisational process that is marked by "*a mutual direction*." This is obviously not self-evident as there is always a risk of an improvisation "*falling apart very fast*." Achieving a certain "*togetherness*" is important for Tom with regard to a potential audience. The performers seek to develop improvisations that onlookers neither find "*boring*" nor "*chaotic*" or "*uninteresting*." The central question is therefore how a common orientation, an inner consistency of action and reaction, can be achieved and sustained. The key to such a desirable improvisation - potentially capable of captivating the audience - is then the notion of suspense and its link to collective "*concentration*." For Tom, without a certain suspense and "*concentration*" , the scene "*falls apart*" into "*many things happening*" that lack a "*mutual direction*."

At the heart of collective improvisation is the event of invention - unforeseen things happening, based on an interaction of two or more performers. And collective concentration is the cornerstone of the ecology of the event of invention (see also 5.3.3):

> It needs concentration "what is happening right now in the middle," and how can I now, and every dancer, contribute so that what happens there in the middle eh will be nourished, through my attention, we are, we also can sing, we can, hence also when we are standing outside, we can also contribute, well work with the voice, make sounds and so forth. When I'm inside it is about going very clearly into a clear communication. Mostly it is , the more clear I am myself, the more clearly one can talk with me, well, movement-wise we then kind of talk, and ehm , in order to have a communication taking place, you have to like exactly see what does the other is doing, what the other is saying right now.
>
> (Tom, interview, 12.10.2010)

Tom suggests that it is attention that can actually "*nourish*" and thereby "*contribute*" to "*what is happening right now in the middle*." Then he details various ways of attending to the event and differentiates an "*outside"* and "*inside"* perspective. From the outside, the group of performers watching the improvisation are important for Tom as an affective milieu that can "*contribute*" to the unfolding process. According to Tom, the event is partly made possible not only by a certain awareness of the active performers, but also by the "attending" "audience" that can "nourish" the event, e.g. by uttering sounds, an important articulation of process acting as a modulator and catalyst.

The peculiar mediation of audience and attention was the subject of an incident involving me as the audience. Once Marie, after a rehearsal that I observed silently for two hours, came to thank me for being there with them, saying that it was a very good and concentrated session (see 5.3.3). And when it comes to the actual performances before a public audience, performers mentioned on a number of occasions how they, even if not seeing the audience, could somehow feel their interest and attention and that this often leads to a "ping pong" effect (Andrea, interview, 21.02.2011) between performers and audience.

Coming back to the situation Tom is describing, the necessary mode of attention thus pertains to all participants. He further explains that from the "inside," when engaged in interaction, "*clear communication*" and "*close observation*" are fundamental. These are both activities based on a present-centered awareness facilitating communication, enabling the improvisational play of action and reaction to unfold.

Following Tom detailing significant moments in an improvisation thus further expounds a view of creativity in collective improvisation as being contingent on particular modes of awareness:

> THERE IS A TENSION BUILDING UP IN THE ROOM that is interesting-what, what HAPPENS now, and the CREATIVITY is in the end to

> REVERE this moment, eh, to SUSTAIN it, to see WHAT is now, what is HAPPENING here right now. And THAT, with this ATTENtiveness, to LOOK where this is leading us now, the energy that is building- building UP in the room. So, eh, it has got something, like, quite SELFLESS. I mean you CAN YOURSELF of course be very active yourself, but when, when you want TOO MUCH, THEN there is again the danger of falling out.
>
> (Tom, interview, 12.10.2010)

Creativity in improvisation is contingent on a present-centered mode of awareness. For this idea, Tom resorts to the notion of "*a moment's tension*," which is akin to an "*energy*" capable of "*leading*." For Tom, the performer's creative task is to "*revere*" and "*retain*" the moment. The notion of reverence then points here at how the performers appreciate and rely on the moment as being charged with possibilities and future. The performers are asked not to try and impose forms - "*wanting too much*" performance or "*carnival*" – but to open up to the happening as it unfolds. Emphasizing the "*selflessness*" of such a process, Tom resorts to language marked by themes of "emergence" and "becoming" and syntactical structures like the passive voice assigning agency to unknown and unnamed powers or "*it*." Remaining somewhat enigmatic, Tom later describes the task of improvisation - becoming aware of the situational demand and acting accordingly - as a "*doing by non-doing*." Creativity is therefore, for Tom, to "*be at the right moment in the right place. ... Creativity is ... about being present, and thus to take up the responsibility for that which has to be done at the moment*." Revering the moment means being able to sense what a situation demands. And this situational demand is eventually also a question of an adequate knowing-how, of being prepared and skilled to let happen what needs to be done at that moment so the improvisation does not "fall apart" (see also 5.3.2).

Summing up, Tom speaks about improvisations as fragile singularities and that events cannot be produced, yet that the *ecology of the event* is decisive. In collective improvisation, the collective is thereby constitutive of this ecology in two ways: first as an *affective milieu* in the moment of improvisation, when a peculiar co-presence and mutual attunement – a *con-spiration* – enables and is fuelled by a *reverence* for the potential of "the moment" and its situational demands. Second as a *normaesthetic* milieu that has fashioned and has become fashioned through years of working together or at least within the wider community of CDT (see also 5.5.2.3). The latter is decisive for developing a repertoire of choreographic principles and adequate means of "communication;" both central factors for achieving a "mutual direction" in collective improvisation. "*To take up the responsibility for that which has to be done*" in collective improvisation then undoubtedly relies on a hinterland of sensible knowing-

how that is built up through socialization and explicit training in choreographic principles and methods (see 5.3.2).

5.6 Analytical intersection – the "Elysian" complicity

Zooming out on the milieu of practice is an important step to understand creativity as a local phenomenon and practical concern constituted by and constitutive of, in this case, a collective of performers. Far from being a mere "context," the complicity, as an affective and normaesthetic milieu, is a most important resource and carrier of the participative and coopetitive practice of making CDT and is at the same time shaped by ongoing practice. From a process-based perspective, I suggest that the collective as an affective and normaesthetic milieu must be imagined as a practice carrier, which is itself continuously performed and can be sensed and described as "the spirit of a place" (Martin, 2002). This organizational concept, referring to a form of sensible organizational knowledge, reflects a local culture and the affective ecology constituted by and constitutive of social relationships, practices and implicit understandings. Gherardi (2012) takes up this concept and further links the "spirit of the place" to the situated activity of *taste-making*:

> The spirit of the place is an efficacious expression with which to convey the type of emotional attachment, sensible knowledge and the aesthetic judgement that a collectivity expresses through the situated activity of taste-making. (p. 67)

While surely revealing the spirit of a place, I would further suggest that taste-making is also very much based on a certain spirit. And hence "the spirit of a place," entailing emotional attachments, sensible knowledge and aesthetic judgments, performs as the affective and normaesthetic milieu for any situated practice. In the case of the dance company, rather than talking about "the spirit of the place," I would suggest talking about "the spirit of the troupe".[139] As project groups, individual ensembles are transitional networks including collaborations beyond the confines of the company. Hence the restricted notion of "place" does not seem adequate for the actual network and hence community of performers which is not necessarily fixed to a certain place.

By drawing on the metaphor of the Elysian ghetto, I propose to convey the specific spirit of the troupe found within the project of "Sharp Cutz." The metaphor helps to distinguish communities of practice, such as the making of CDT, where practice, its practitioners, objects as well as its community are constantly refined through a taste-

[139] Troupe: "A group of dancers, actors, or other entertainers who tour to different venues" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

making "which works both on a sentiment of the perfectible and on repetition as tension toward a never-achieved perfection" (Gherardi, 2009, p. 545). Taste within the making of CDT always seeks for more, and even while knowing that fulfillment will never be total and lasting, it must be tried again and again. And similar to a theater performance which will always stay "beta," the Elysium is a utopian sentiment of the perfectible, which is actually an ambiguous promise. In its interweaving of individualistic, achievement and reputation-based elements ("becoming heroes/heroines") within a strong collective ("community of the contented"), the Elysium as a "heavenly ghetto" is a helpful metaphor for mapping out the significance of the attachments between performers as an affective as well as normaesthetic milieu.

In the following I present the Elysian complicity as an affective and normaesthetic milieu of creative practice. Firstly, I suggest that the significance of the Elysium as an *affective milieu* is characterized by a spirit of *curious intimacy*. Especially within improvisational processes, a collectively held curious intimacy means an aesthetics of surrender: performers revere the moment and surrender to follow its vectors and lines. All in all, analyzing the Elysian spirit as an affective milieu deepens an understanding of how a spirit of curious intimacy is the carrier of the risky practice of making CDT: enabling a productive co-presence as well as "driving" the process through a peculiar mix of excitement and apprehension.

Secondly, the organizational collective is presented as a *normaesthetic milieu*. It is the collective work on taste that characterizes the normaesthetic milieu of creative practice. Taste is a central organizational element in the making of CDT. It sustains as well as refines and extends practice and its constituents - the object of practice, the practitioner and the respective ensembles and communities.

5.6.1 The Elysian spirit of curious intimacy - the collective as an affective milieu

The Elysian spirit is detailed in the following as an important affective infrastructure for the practice of making CDT.

As I have shown in 5.5.1.2, the Elysian spirit of the troupe is not only revealed but also performed in all the informal bonding activities within and beyond the actual working time at the theater. Chatting, making jokes and laughing, mocking each other, playing games, singing together, hugging and even massaging each other as well as sharing cake and sitting together at the bonfire; all these activities speak of an involvement with one's colleagues that is normally never exalted as a recognizable source of inspiration or innovation, yet, as Gherardi (2012) argues, they define "a space of co-presence":

> Friendliness or teasing, greetings rituals, games-playing and joking not only reveal the spirit of the group but they construct it at the same time, because in circumscribing a space of co-presence, they activate it. (Gherardi, 2012, p. 38)

The effected "familiarity" is thereby more than Goffman's (1959, in Gherardi, 2012, p. 38) "intimacy without warmth." While the performers are also asked and forced to engage with each other on the basis of close and intimate physical contact in the context of a performance - here the notion of "intimacy without warmth," or professional intimacy would possibly be appropriate, the bonding activities described above rather speak of and define an *amiable intimacy*.

Looking more closely, the mentioned activities, while all familiarizing and bonding, can be distinguished as *caring* and *ludic activities*: both – chatting, seeking physical contact, singing together and sharing cake as well as mocking each other and playing games – are engaging, yet in different ways. The notion of engagement, a close relative of the idea of attachment, means pivoting between the "act of engaging" and the state of "being engaged." Caring and ludic activities are thereby engaging in different ways, on the one hand effecting a deepening of familiarity, while on the other hand exploring other ways of being together, challenging the other and seeking an uncharted relation to the world. Hence, even the informal activities of the collective(s) already speak of an incipient and ongoing entanglement of a "regime of explorative engagement" and a "familiarity regime" (Thévenot, 2008, p. 14), which, I would suggest, is at the heart of the Elysian spirit of the creative collectives in "Sharp Cutz":

> [The] regime of explorative engagement is in high tension with the familiarity engagement since it is permanently oriented towards a good which assumes to maintain an unfamiliar relation to the world. Linked to strangeness and novelty, the good of exploration is experienced in the excitement of discovering something new. There is some apparent paradox in the idea of guaranteeing a state which seems to maintain uncertainty. How could it be possible to secure this sort of uncertainty? (Thévenot, 2008, p. 14)

In the case of the investigated ensembles, I would argue that it is exactly this interweaving of caring and ludic activities that can eventually establish and reproduce a form of curious intimacy. As such it is an ambivalent orientation and atmosphere, marked by curiosity - standing for the spirit of inquiry, the interest and desire for novelty and change - and intimacy - meaning the close attachment to and familiarity with each other, knowing and trusting each other. As the Elysian spirit of the ensemble(s), curious intimacy is therefore an ambivalent and dynamic nexus of the familiarity regime and the regime of explorative engagement. I would further suggest

that the Elysian nexus of familiarity and exploration plays out in distinct ways as a defining affective milieu within the creative practice of making CDT.

As suggested before, the metaphor of the Elysium points to a community of the "contented," at "the middle of joy" and at a place "where desire forms heroes." Turning to the latter aspect then opens the view on explorative engagement as being imbued with and driven by a desire and the excitement of discovery, potentially extending and refining one's tastes. When Thévenot (2008) writes that "the good of exploration is experienced in the excitement of discovering something new" (p. 14), then he alludes to the feelings accompanying an invariably precarious creative process. And when Latour (2005) asserts that "[t]he troubling and exhilarating feeling that things *could be different*, or at least that *they could still fail*" is to be found on any "construction site" - "a feeling never so deep when faced with the final product, no matter how beautiful or impressive it may be" (p. 89, emphasis in original), then we are one step closer to understanding the affective charge of a creative process. And therein rests a specific configuration of the nexus of familiarity and exploration. Both trouble and excitement are linked to situating one's creative work within a community. It is within the co-constitutive process of the individual performer, the collective and the object of practice that curious intimacy's excitement proliferates and circulates as noticeable enthusiasm and appetite, deepening the attachments at play and propelling the process. And it is also within this assemblage that the promise or the fear of oneself and one's work eventually standing out - making one "proud" or "ashamed" - is dependent on and deepening the attachment to one's colleagues. One's peers are at the same time an "awesome troupe," needed in their support and shared excitement, and "the toughest critics," feared for their unconcealed judgment.

To come back to the figure mobilized earlier; curious intimacy is the Elysian spirit of a community of *professional amateurs*. The Elysian spirit therefore expresses the problematic but unavoidable ambivalence of the familiarity regime and the regime of explorative engagement. While agreeing with Thévenot (2008) that both regimes are in tension with each other, I however suggest that, very generally, both regimes are actually also in vital need of each other. In an understanding that accommodates (relative) stability as well as change, whilst exploring both in their constantly mediated constitution, Brown and Stenner (2009) put it this way:

> [T]o live, to act, to think and to talk one must constantly negotiate a position between two impossible extremes of unrepeatable chaos and redundant order. These two extremes form the poles of what could be called a dimension of vitality. (Brown & Stenner, 2009, p. 199)

The familiarity regime and the regime of explorative engagement can never exist solitarily, and for an analysis of organizational creativity, I therefore propose to understand creative practice very generally as an "emergent property of the relationship between order and disorder" (Montuori, 2003, p. 237). The curious intimacy developed by the creative collectives within Sharp Cutz thus serves as practice's affective milieu, vacillating between the two regimes.

And as an affective infrastructure, the Elysian spirit is not only appreciated and enacted in everyday encounters but also performed and trained in formal trainings. The institutionalized training of "Contact Improvisation" (CI) is an exemplary site for the mobilization of the Elysian spirit straddling the divide between familiar order and exploration. CI formalizes and ritualizes caring and ludic activities for training purposes. It is thereby an interesting example in order to understand how the Elysian spirit – as an affective milieu of creative practice – actually guarantees a state which maintains and seeks uncertainty. Balancing the desire for unfamiliarity and change with the need of close and trustworthy relationships, CI entails acting within a shared work- or play-space, where participation is enabled through various and distinctive "acts of presence" (Gherardi, 2012, p. 37).

Curiosity and intimacy are the two pillars of collective, improvisational processes of composition. They show in compositional situations marked on the one side by a distinctive experiential "tension," a peculiar blend of troubling and exhilarating feelings that things are uncertain, could always be different and that they could always also fail. This goes together with a process that prototypically starts with finding a common groove through repeating known and familiar (movement) patterns, and then, by "revering the moment," seeks a paradox state of being so much in tune - to the point of "becoming one body" - that the active material can take over and "lead."

In the experience of (collective) improvisation, both regimes converge and actually co-constitute each other within an *aesthetics of surrender*. A collectively held curious intimacy allows the performers to revere the moment and surrender to following its vectors and lines. In one of their few direct allusions to "improvisation," Deleuze and Guattari (1987) note that "to improvise is to join with the World, or to meld with it" (p. 311). At the point of ultimate intimacy, when the habits of distinction and division are forsaken and at the same time an intense physical presence and kinetic involvement has bodies merge and "become one," the space for surprising and opening "lines of drift" emerges:

> One launches forth, hazards an improvisation. But to improvise is to join with the World, or to meld with it. One ventures from home on the thread of

> a tune. Along sonorous, gestural, motor lines that . . . graft themselves onto or begin to bud "lines of drift" with different loops, knots, speeds, movements, gestures, and sonorities. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 311–312)

To improvise is "to venture from home on the thread of a tune." Home, this familiarity with one's colleagues and with one's material, is the base for creative practice that seeks to make events work. And the collective affective milieu is a most important part of the ecology of the event of invention. What I mean with event is "the escaping edge of any systematization" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 20), the "slight surprise of action" (see Latour, 1999c, chapter 9) that marks the full potential of a world of becomings. Fundamentally, the event marks a discontinuity that "allows the emphasis on the contingency of orders to morph into an explicit concern with the new, and with the chances of invention and creativity" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 19). According to Erin Manning (2013), choreography, with its emphasis on collective improvisation, thereby works fundamentally as a "proposition *to* the event": "[i]t asks the event how its ecology might best generate and organize the force of movement-moving" (p. 76).

In a dance of complementary charge and collaboration, the passively active or actively passive performers must therefore ceaselessly engage in distinct "modes of engagement" (see Chapter 6). "Putting oneself forward," "standing by" and "watching from outside" are acts of presence maintaining "a common orientation and a distributed collaboration structure" (Gherardi, 2012, p. 40). It is a co-presence and state of "being there" that is not just given, but eventually made possible through the Elysian spirit of curious intimacy.

> In a situation, "being there" is the fruit of individual and collective practical knowledge, not a simple datum but a learnt competence. In fact, the core feature of enactment of a cooperative activity is co-vigilance, as a working practice that unfolds through acts of presence in an environment in which attention and knowledge are distributed, that is, co-shared. (Gherardi, 2012, p. 40)

Following Gherardi, "being there" is a collective and learnt competence of co-vigilance, co-visibility and co-audibility. It is incessantly enacted and reproduced, and thus learned in caring and ludic acts of presence and ritualized in "Contact Improvisation" sessions.

Summing up, the Elysian spirit of curious intimacy means a peculiar "being there." This is the affective milieu that, as an individual and collective practical knowing-how, is constitutive of the ecology of the event and is the condition "whereby 'an individual'

becomes accessible to an entire team, constructing (and maintaining) a shared horizon for the activity in progress" (Gherardi, 2012, p. 40).

5.6.2 Peers as audience – taste and the collective as normaesthetic infrastructure

After having analyzed the Elysian spirit as an affective milieu, in the following reading, the Elysian spirit is further regarded as revealing the taste developed and expressed within a collective. I thereby take up Gherardi's (2012) assertion that "the spirit of a place" conveys "the type of emotional attachment, sensible knowledge and the aesthetic judgement that a collectivity expresses through the situated activity of taste-making" (p. 67). Thus I attend to the "normaesthetic" milieu of creative practice, which can be defined as the circulation of aesthetic evaluations and appraisals and their respective refinement in both words and bodily sensitivities.

Processes of evaluation and processes of creation are not to be separated in a conception of creative practice that does not separate the object of production from the process of production but sees them intertwined. "[E]valuation is an essential aspect of the creative process and cannot exist outside of that process" asserts Leddy (1994, p. 174) in his "pragmatist theory of artistic creativity." Therefore the central idea for understanding the collective as a normaesthetic infrastructure comes from the performers' attestation that "one's colleagues are the toughest critics."

Evaluation, in the form of taste-making, is thus inherent to collective creative practice. This is central in a pragmatist perspective on artistic creativity (Leddy, 1994), as "the creative process is the process of generating works of art and their meanings through interaction between artist and audience both before and after "completion" of the work" (p. 177). One's peers, the collective as a normaesthetic milieu, are pivotal for the emergence of a performance in a creative process of taste-making. The work in progress is constantly evaluated, not only by the performer but also by friends, teachers, co-workers, studio-mates, that all participate in the creative process by joining in the evaluation of the emerging work. Their evaluative comments form a part of the performer's evaluative experience of the work. The performer listens to them, and they color the way the performers see their work, even if only through their rejection. "*You can fool the fans - but not the players*"[140] - this aphorism points directly to the idea that the most important audience might not be the public audience:

[140] This sharp aphorism appears on a list of "rules for students and teachers" that is mainly awarded to John Cage, the famous 20th century composer, writer and artist. Yet according to various blogs (see for example Popova, n.d.), it might originate from Sister Corita Kent, a Los Angeles and Boston based artist and educator.

> The audience includes first ... the artist him or herself, second the artist's colleagues, and third, other members of the artworld. ... They are the ones who spend most time and energy looking at and thinking about the work. … The audience may also include the general public. But these people are, most likely, the least involved in the work. (Leddy, 1994, p. 177)

To understand one's community as an important normaesthetic milieu is therefore to think the object of practice as always being related to the "creative process of larger groups including the artist's immediate co-workers and friends, the artist's style group, the art-form as a whole, the culture as a whole, humanity as a whole, and so on" (p. 174). The evaluation performed through taste-making is therefore "embedded in larger wholes, including the development of a tradition, style, or school, or even in entire periods and cultures" (p. 175/176):

> Just as the artist evaluates his or her current work in relation to his or her past work and future hopes and expectations, he or she also situates it within a style, school, and culture and in relation to other styles, schools, and cultures all of which he or she views with an evaluative eye. (p. 176)

It is therefore important to think of the relationship between the individual and the normaesthetic milieu not as a static embeddedness but as a performative relationship. Within one's respective community, attachment is closely linked to individuation: the curious intimacy involved in the making of CDT is a "sharing of the pleasure of doing [which] is also the sharing of the pleasure of being" (Gherardi, 2009, p. 545). Therefore the activities of "creating" and "showing" are irrevocably associated with both, forming a sense of belonging to an aesthetic community and a personally relevant sense of being. "We are the offspring of our works" (Latour, 2013, p. 246) and we need others to reflectively form our tastes and hence to become part of and at the same time shape a specific aesthetic community also as a professional. "[T]aste, lived by each but fashioned by all, is a history of oneself permanently remade together with others," as Hennion notes (2007, p. 103). In other words, taste-making performs "identity work," "crafting identities and epistemic communities at the same time" (Gherardi, 2009, p. 543). These are the sought-after effects of putting the determinants of taste to test. And the creative process in the making of CDT is partly "driven" by the self-fashioning effects of the practice itself. In other words, taste-making at the same time fashions (professional) subjectivities and normaesthetic collectives.

The performativity of evaluation regarding the co-constitution of subject and its specific (professional) community then has an ambivalent effect on the formation of ensembles. In line with the familiarity-exploration nexus, metaphorically speaking, taste performs "magnetically": depending on the meeting of the different poles of a bi-polar magnet, shared taste can attract and/or repel.

Being able to rely on at least vaguely shared aesthetic judgments and a collective sense of taste makes it more likely that the effects are cherished and thus makes practitioners form and "hold together" (Hennion, 2007). "Taste is a most efficient 'group-maker'" notes Hennion (2004, p. 136) and thereby refers to the double movement of joint practice fashioning its practitioners' taste and thus making them more likely to form an ensemble again. But then shared taste is also feared, just as staying too long with one choreographer in one community can lead to "creative slumber" - "*you can work quicker, but you always stay in your world*" (Marie). Therefore collective creative processes in the making of CDT are constantly subject to antithetic tendencies. While shared taste is sought after and actually needed to ensure a working basis, it is also feared for its potential to arrest creative movement and development, which all performers emphasize as being important. The collective is therefore experienced as an "Elysian ghetto," challenging the company as well as the individual performers to seek external influences - collaborations or workshops with other choreographers, working with artistic friends beyond the confines of the company - and not to succumb to "just repeating themselves." Collective creative practice thrives on the multiplicity of material and proposals that different performers can contribute to the process and that might also challenge familiar notions of aesthetics.

Therefore collective creative practice appears as a coopetitive process that constantly negotiates the familiarity/exploration nexus and the inherent "matters of taste." This holds especially true for the improvisational working mode employed specifically for generating movement material. Van Eikels (2010) suggests conceiving collective improvisational practices as an "assessocratic performance" (p. 143/144, translated by author). It means that the role of the "assessor" and its practice is liberated and distributed among the performing collaborators, so that proposing and evaluating practices cannot be distinguished so clearly anymore. Van Eikels (2010) discusses properties of collective improvisational practices from a temporal perspective and argues that collective improvisation is marked by a collapse of proposing and evaluating practices. In the fast "game" of collective improvisation, one person's reaction is at the same time an evaluation of preceding actions and also a new proposition, waiting to be evaluated by the subsequent (re-) action. Evaluating performance by performance is an "*in-time*-evaluation" (p. 143, emphasis by author) and an "ad-hocracy" that mediates the course of what and how elements are related, taken up, discarded, further developed or deepened. An incessant flow of "making propositions" and "undergoing evaluation" in a subtle and mostly non-discursive way, where taste mediates the creative process in a decisive way. In such a performative "assessocracy," authority is replaced through influencing, impressing and persuading,

and "relationships shift away from their … dependence on rationality towards emotional bases such as liking and interpersonal attraction" (Hatch, 1999, p. 89). This is even more so in collectives not defined by clear and formal roles, where the generation and furthermore the consolidation of material is a coopetitive process: while sharing and agreeing on a sense of aesthetics and style, performers still compete about which idea is succeeding. The collective and improvisational development of CDT productions therefore means to persistently perform and conciliate taste within an Elysian spirit of curious intimacy.

All in all, both, the nexus of familiarity/exploration and the nexus of idea generation/idea evaluation are contained within a pragmatist understanding of taste as taste-making. Moving beyond a thinking in modernist dualisms, I therefore suggest that the notion of taste allows one to understand the seemingly paradox tendencies as convoluted and co-constitutive. Taste therefore appears as a central organizational element in the making of CDT, sustaining as well as refining and extending practice and its constituents - the object of practice, the practitioner and his or her community. As the last sections have shown, the collective is thereby, as an affective as well as a normaesthetic infrastructure, an important practice carrier. Both expressions of the Elysian spirit - curious intimacy as well as heavenly ghetto - therefore express pertinent aspects of the ecology of practice and speak of the practical challenge in the field: to find the dynamic and productive balance between maintaining a common orientation while exploring the multiplicity of trajectories and possible lines demanding to be followed. Desires, ideas and their bodies (the performers) need to be continuously enrolled into an assemblage that "stays alive and kicking" while finding a shared orientation.

5.7 Summary

In answer to the first research question, in this chapter I distinguished three different aspects of the ecology of creative CDT practice: firstly the actual material of creative practice, which consists of incorporated motion *repertoires* as well as biographical and cultural "literacy"; secondly, the various practice carriers (*plug-ins*) – from social techniques, over performative theories, devices, and the conduit of "taste talk" to the enactment of material in productive articulations – that enable creative practice through forging skilled bodies; and thirdly, the affective and "normaesthetic" *milieu* constituted by the community of practitioners.

The ecology of creative practice within CDT production showed the event of creativity to be happening *ex materia*, *per materia* and *in materia*. This *expands* the idea of

creativity in three ways: firstly, with the idea of repertoires, creativity is always related to a wider creative process over time. For instance, an "individual work" is always related to a performer's lifetime-work. Creativity follows a trajectory that stretches into the past and into the future. Secondly, and following from the first point, creativity is always related to the creative process of larger groups, including the dance company itself (as community), friends, aesthetic reference groups, art-forms as such and even societies. And thirdly, creativity is inseparably tied to vital, embodied conduct; it involves practical, ethical and aesthetic concerns that always entail instances of (e)valuation, both by practitioners and audience(s).

Creatio ex materia

In a section on creativity *ex materia* I described the key *materials* of CDT making. I suggested that creative practice, especially in its improvisatory capacity, leans on three different *repertoires*: the incorporated motion repertoire, which pertains to certain collectively negotiated styles and tastes; the influence of biographical repertoires; and the striving for cultural and artistic literacy. In general, repertoires and collaborative creative practice are thereby co-constituent. They are the dormant materials of practice and are always in need of being activated and mobilized in concrete situations. As such, repertoires are crucial as affective and hence *relational capacities* for action and reaction. Although they are not yet dance or performance, repertoires however afford a *preparedness* for the making of CDT.

In this respect, I proposed regarding repertoires as patterns-in-process that inhibit both a tendency to repeat and to transform themselves. I thereby further specified the repertoire as both actual and virtual. As *actual* potential, the repertoire offers highly structured and clearly recognizable elements – such as set movement phrases – that can be recalled and produced on the spot when asked for. As *virtual* capacity, the mix of biographical, cultural and motion repertoires constitutes a "color" or style that offers a basic "preparedness" for affection based on generic movement potentials. Taking both aspects together, the notion of repertoire suggests that the body, although bearing an inexhaustible virtual potential for movement possibilities, constitutes a limit when searching for what a body can do. Bodies as materials are patterns-in-process, they tend to become reproduced while further being refined and transformed.

Creatio per materia

In the overall section on creativity *per materia*, I attended to the socio-material and technological ecology of creative practice in terms of the various practice resources (*plug-ins*) that make for a skilled body and enable the practitioner's activity-sensibility. Firstly, I described how creative practice relies on various *tactics* (rituals, heuristics)

that seek to make use of conducive (socio-material) conditions (*affective prompts*) in order to generate the specific quality of awareness needed for creative work.

Secondly, I illustrated the key importance of a *sensible syntax*, that is, a theory-informed, sensible knowing-how. Consisting of *technologies of articulation* and *compositional heuristics*, a sensible syntax allows the performers to understand bodies as movements and patterns of motifs they can relate to in creative ways.

Thirdly, I focused on the particularity of *working inside out*, of performers switching between dancing and choreographing. Here I specified the importance of developing *bivalent vision*, that is, the capacity to watch differently as a dancer and a choreographer. I found three crucial elements for organizing for an (outside) perspective, namely the (formal) practice of adopting an instrumental outside perspective (in French *le regard extérieur*) as such and the crucial devices of *mirror* and *videographic technologies*.

Fourthly, I attended to the *conduit* of *taste talks*. Material is ongoingly evaluated and the practitioners thereby develop a collective and normative *lexicon* of aesthetic *appraisals*. Taste talks thereby crucially contribute to sustaining as well as elaborating and refining creative practice and its objects.

Lastly, I described how the creative set of skills entails different forms of *productive articulations*. CDT making thereby showed to be contingent on multiple articulations of the material within different modalities.

Creatio in materia

In the section on creativity *in materia*, I posited the *community of performers* as the *associated milieu* of creative practice. In its collaborative, *socio*-material aspects, creative practice was shown to be both constituting and constituted by the *affective, aesthetic* and *normative milieu* of a *community of professional amateurs*. Firstly, I focused on the collective as an affective and "normaesthetic" (normative regarding aesthetics) community of professional amateurs. Mobilizing the paradoxical metaphor of the *Elysian ghetto*, I described the community thereby as an exuberant and inspirational yet at the same time overbearing and confining place and state.

In a next step, I moved from the level of the (whole) community to the unit of the performance groups, which I dubbed *complicit ensembles*. Specifying the notion of community within creative practice as a form of *complicity*, I sought to highlight a specific mode of relationship that characterizes creative ensembles: they are project-based collectives of individuals, or *congregations of accomplices*, that engage in a

highly affective and charged effort to "make something work" – a work not towards the criminal (in legal terms) but the artistic event of performance and invention.

Lastly, I focused on an in-depth description of the *event* of creativity within collective improvisation as contingent on the affective milieu of the complicity. Creativity in collective improvisation requires a form of *concentration* and awareness that is decisively mediated through the *con-spiration* of performers and *audience* (as I once experienced myself as a videographing ethnographer). The event of creativity can never be traced to a singular or main origin; instead the notions of *complicity* and *conspiracy* emphasize how many "partners in crime" need to "con-spire" (from the Latin *conspirare*, meaning "breathe together" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010)) for "the work to be made."

6 Taste-making – "Zooming in" on the Process of Production

In the first empirical chapter, I "zoomed out" on the ecology of creative practice and specified its three key carriers and resources. In a first section on creatio *ex* materia, I attended to the *materials* of practice. In a second section on creatio *per* materia, I accounted for the various *plug-ins* that enable the amateur's activity-sensibility and thus the engagement of material. And in the last section on creatio *in* materia, I focused on the collective as an affective and "normaesthetic" *milieu*.

The following empirical chapter is drawing on the findings of the previous chapter[141] in order to answer to the second set of research questions: *how are the generation, formation and stabilization of the product "theater performance" affected? What modes of engagement are thereby crucial*? *And how do they interact?* Attending to this question, I will "zoom in" (see Nicolini, 2009a, 2013) on the specific practices of CDT *production*.

The wider frame for this chapter is therefore the notion of *production* as developed by Callon, Méadel and Rabeharisoa (2002) (see 3.4.4). Callon et al. formulated an idea of production that assumes the ongoing need to perform a product, from moment to moment but also across those moments along a series of stages that see the material concresce through various media and modes. In contrast to the "good," the product is hence a process and needs to be understood in terms of chains of transformations effected within production, circulation and consumption. Mobilizing the notion of production allows to "zoom in" on the specific productive mediations that make for both the invention as well as the subsistence of a product.

From such a perspective of production, artistic works are assumed to result from an itinerant process involving numerous transformations effected in and through specific, that is, "technological"[142] operations. To account for the development of a technoaesthetic being over time then means to think of creativity not only as a

[141] The logics of "zooming in" and "zooming out" (see Nicolini, 2009a, 2013) are related in that "zooming out" allows for a specification of practice resources and carriers that then allow for a detailed and complex description of the practices in question. The following vignettes, especially of the embodied and gestural aspects of key practices of making, thereby need to be read while bearing in mind the different practice carriers and resources explored in the previous chapter.

[142] Technological is here meant in a very wide sense, meaning that aesthetic work involves engaging with the material in specific ways (they can be reported) that possibly effect certain transformations. Technology does not equate controllability here. From this basic sense of "technology" I come to call the aesthetic product a "technoaesthetic being."

momentary event but as an ongoing "work to be made." This "work" is here shown to happen in ongoing trials and tests that constitute both practitioner and product.

"Zooming in" therefore entails attending to the *empirical circularity* of production. Against the conventionally upheld separation of innovation processes and outcomes (see for example Crossan & Apaydin, 2010), the empirical material of this chapter emphasises the importance of thinking the engagement of practitioner and material within problematic modes of *attachment*. Within an overall experimental process of production, "the work" is actively taking part in its own formation. On their never-ending trajectory towards concrescence and perfection, practitioners and their products thereby move through mutually constitutive modes of existence and presence. Hence, in this chapter, I seek processual accounts that can convey the mutually entwined development of the performers' and performances' lives and careers based on the nexus of experimentation and experience.

Attending to the developing relation between practitioners and their *product* along the process of production, this chapter centrally focuses on the central dynamic of creative practice between creativity and the "bounded-ness of practice" (Nicolini, 2013, p. 225). The organizational creativity of CDT production conjugates forces of conservation and innovation. While they crucially need each other, these forces often make for an uneasy tension, as the following vignettes will show. What is at stake here is the reciprocity between on the one hand the desire and drive to engage with production's practical concerns and to realize its appreciated sense, and on the other hand the boundaries imposed by the "extant conditions and criteria of accountability" (p. 226).

The dynamic, contested and provisional character of production between *poiesis* and *bounded-ness* I present as being effected within experimental as well as codifying *modes of engagement*. In answer to my research question, I pose that it is a mode of *experimentation* and a mode of *codification* that are centrally generating, assembling and consolidating the product of performance. Experimentation and codification have to be regarded as prototypical *modes of engagement* that are not mutually exclusive but rather abstract tendencies on a continuum.[143]

[143] The various modes of engagement found within the making of CDT can respectively be accounted for by their distinctive dimensions of experience and the way that material shows up more as a symptom/signal or as a symbol (see 3.3). A mode of engagement situated closer to the experimental pole thereby activates material more as signals and symptoms and effects a different compositional process than a mode of engagement situated closer to the pole of codification that approaches material on a more symbolical level.

In the following, I "zoom in" on "the work to be made" in two different parts that trace and describe the transformations, tensions and stabilizations of material into a "working performance" over time.

First, with the process story *Kill your darlings* (6.1), I zoom in on the "career" of a CDT performance. I thereby present the mutual coming-into-being of an amateur and a technoaesthetic being as an "aesthethical" process, a process marked by a close relation of aesthetics and ethics. *Kill your darlings* is a story developed through several vignettes that show the making of CDT to be characterized by a strong *attachment* of the performers to their pieces – their "baby" – and a more or less forced, "professional" *detachment* when tentatively consolidating the product into a good through a series of trials and qualifications. I finish off the *kill your darlings* story with an analytical section on the roles of attachment and detachment in the production process.

In the second and central section (6.3), I develop and specify CDT production as a process of *taste-making*. And further, that taste-making is marked through a relation of experimentation and codification. This means showing creativity "in the making" as a temporal process of experimentation and codification of material, leading to an increasing concrescence of the work. Zooming in on the process of inquiry and invention, the basic modes of engagement and their import for the creation of a CDT performance are further specified: from experimenting, playing and "researching" (e.g. in collective improvisations), through articulating, documenting and inscribing movement to assembling and modifying material to stabilizing the material and "going public." This involves a view on the tests and trials that make for more or less presence and existence of the theater performance as a technoaesthetic being.

In the finishing analytical section (6.4), I systematize the various forms and functions of taste-making within the production process around three distinctive forms of *reciprocity*. Firstly, concerning the *locus* and *dynamic* of taste-making, I propose a reciprocity of modes of engagement between *immanent* and *explicit* forms of taste-making. Secondly, the *temporality* of taste-making can be specified through the reciprocal relation between *prospective* and *retrospective* forms of taste-making. Thirdly, I show how taste-making is *effecting* the crucial nexus of conservation and innovation through a reciprocity between *inventive* and *restorative* forms of taste-making.

6.1 *Kill your darlings* – production as a process of attachment and detachment

Kill your darlings[144] is a story about processes of attachment and detachment between professional amateurs and their work within the production of CDT. The prominent adage *kill your darlings* reveals an important aspect of the attachment between the amateur and his or her revered offspring: the ambiguous logic of developing a performance along cherished ideas and parts while knowing that professionals eventually (have to) "kill their darlings."

By investigating the relation as problematic attachment – where performers not only are productive but also are the offspring of their work, this process story assumes the "work to be done" as "living labor": the lives and careers of professional amateurs and works are co-constitutive. Means and ends are thus often exchangeable within the making of CDT: it is not only important what comes on stage but what experiences the making entailed and how its affective charge was or is. In reverse, creativity and invention also rely on these specific socio-technico-material configurations and the experiences connected with them. In any way, it is the experience of one's own work that deeply matters and that is constitutive of affective and emotional attachments between amateur and performance. The performance must therefore be regarded as a technoaesthetic being, a living thing that needs to be nourished and attended to in specific ways in order to grow and concresce.

The relation between professional amateur and "work" then is ambivalent. The passionate work of production entails an aspect of "self-realization": without the desire to refine and extend their locomotive and sensual possibilities by passionately engaging with other bodies and artifacts, neither the performer nor the performance would come into existence and "advance." The relationship between amateur and performance is marked by a deeply held concern and expressed by an extensive commitment to its finalization. At the end, it is still "results" that count.

The mutual coming-into-being of amateur and technoaesthetic being therefore appears as an "aesthethical" process: a strong *attachment* of the performers to their pieces and

[144] *Kill your darlings* is a standing phrase in the world of theater, meaning the cutting out of personally cherished parts for the sake of the whole performance. It originally goes back to Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, a British writer and author critic, who in 1914 delivered a lecture "on style" at the University of Cambridge, wherein he related his personal "practical rule": "Whenever you feel an impulse to perpetrate a piece of exceptionally fine writing, obey it – wholeheartedly –and delete it before sending your manuscript to press. *Murder your darlings*" (Quiller-Couch, 1916, chap. 12, para. 6, emphasis in original). The adage consequently featured in other advices for writers, and has eventually become a standing phrase within communities of various creative practice.

darlings on the one hand and a more or less forced, "professional" *detachment* (a killing) when, through a series of trials and qualifications, tentatively consolidating the performance-as-product and turning it into a *good*, a cultural artifact that is recognizable as "a work."

6.1.1 Creating material – "self-actualization" and performative demands

It's not just that the people somehow now just FEEL GOOD, this TOO, nice side effect, but you WANT to gather MATERial, that's what it's about.
(Mark, interview, 16.03.2011)

The relation between the choreographing dancer and the product is ambiguous. As choreographer or director, the performative demands and the priority of the outcome is emphasized. As dancer or performer, means and ends are often interchangeable and both process and product are important in their own right. What Thomas, the director of the music theater section, belittled as "self-actualization" (see 5.5.2.1), is an essential aspect of creative practice in the making of CDT. Experimental, compositional activities are affectively and emotionally highly charged because they mean a constant testing and experiencing of oneself and the product. The following examples therefore feature instances of *desire* for dancing, performing and creating. Without the desire to refine and extend their locomotive and sensual possibilities by passionately engaging with other bodies and artifacts, neither the performer nor the performance would further become and concresce.

As dancers and performers, the object of creative practice is "the work to be *done*" – performance as an actual doing. When asked why he participates as a dancer in three pieces, Henry answers the following: "*I wanted to do something with my BODY. ... I wanted real- really engage with my body. I think this was also, the desire to eh, to DANCE again*" (Henry, interview, 22.02.2011). Henry is a dancer because he loves dancing – the actual, physical performance of dance. He chooses to dance simultaneously in three different pieces because he appreciates "engaging with his body." As seen before (see 5.1.1, 5.3), the performer's body has to be understood as a deeply meaningful potential for the development of vital, movement-related sensitivities and possibilities of expression.

The performer's world then intricately links personal, deeply embodied and "professional" trajectories. Marie comments on the specific quality of her "occupation," comparing her occupation with an "*office job*," she states, with some relief in her voice: "*I'm so lucky ... to somehow also connect passion with my occupation*" (interview, 09.02.2011). Marie deeply appreciates her occupation, and it is

not so much the final products that are her concern here. Rather, just like Henry, she treasures the process of meaningful engagement as such. The same holds for Laura: contentedly sitting on the floor after an intensive rehearsal where she devised a duet with a co-performer, Laura tells me about the "*nice working time*" she had with "*improvising*" and what "*fun*" it can be:

> We were just like IMprovising for a long Time, and it was SO MUCH FUN sometimes when you get INTO it and, it's like you're ONE BODY. ((Smiling)) Actually you're TWO but it feels like ONE and, and then, in the end we didn't USE so much from it, but it doesn't MATTer because you're, it was still such a NICE WORking TIME. The two hours that we were DOing it and then, sometimes THAT's … you HAVE to think like that sometimes.
>
> (Laura, conversation, 17.12.2010)

Laura beams with contentment when telling me about the pleasure of creating material through improvisation, portraying herself as being passionately engaged with the process and not worrying about the outcome. She especially values dancing with her colleague and "*feeling like being one body*," thus pointing out a specific experience involved in creating material that is marked by a high degree of passion – the active passivity of surrendering to the process of improvisation as such. In CDT, while improvisation is mainly employed as a means to the end of generating material, Laura here evidences how means and ends can become fused: it is not only important what is produced in terms of "usable" outcome, but what material and experiences get produced on the way and how "*it feels*."

While Laura, Henry and Marie express on the one side their high esteem of the process as such, and how engaging with their and other bodies is highly valuable, they yet also speak about how important it is for them "*to advance*" as an artist (Marie), "*to do something different every day*" (Henry) and "*to show [the work] to the company and be, like, proud of it*" (Laura). The extension and refinement of their movement repertoire is a vital personal and professional concern for them. They literally fear a "standstill" and are concerned about the extension of their repertoire. The making of CDT is closely linked to an individual and eventually collective interest in inquiry and learning, extending the possibilities of movement. The *object* of practice thereby appears as process and product in regard to the practitioner's *objective*: to value the vital import of the process as such and thereby develop themselves personally and professionally in terms of refined and extended possibilities of expression.

For dancing choreographers, the object of practice changes. While means and ends are acknowledged as being somewhat interchangeable, priority is given to the latter. Mark

accordingly adjusts the priorities: "*It's not just that the people somehow now just FEEL GOOD, this TOO, nice side effect, but you WANT to gather MATERial, that's what it's about*" (Mark, interview, 16.03.2011). Speaking from the perspective of the choreographing dancer, Mark acknowledges that "good feelings" are possible "side effects" of what at the end counts, namely the generation of material.

Overall, the relation between the choreographing dancer and the product is an ambivalent nexus of personal and professional concerns. Depending on what role is foregrounded, the choreographing dancer emphasizes the personal or the professional bottom-line. Important for an understanding of the attachment between professional amateur and product is its affective charge and, as I further explore in the next section, an *intimate engagement*.

6.1.2 Intimate engagements

The experimental modes of engagement that dominate the phases of creating material are characterized by an intimate relationship between practitioners and product (see also 5.3), showing in specific qualities of attention, affection and emotion. To illustrate the intimate bonding of the amateur with the object of practice, in the following I present three montages of images depicting the "emphatic" gazes of choreographers when beholding their "work." The examples illustrate aspects of the affective charge – being moved, mesmerized and captivated – and the emotional spectrum – from worry through awe to relief and delight – related to the relationship between dancing choreographer and performance.

The empirical material stems from videographing rehearsals where choreographing dancers were watching parts of their own piece-in-the-making. Be it when watching themselves on video or standing outside and seeing parts performed by their colleagues (chosen here), choreographing dancers often show expressions and gestures signaling an intimate form of attention and affection.



Visual Fieldnote 13: Ruth being "mesmerized" by a scene

Visual field note 13 is a montage of Ruth in a rehearsal approaching the premiere. She is seeing for the first time a version of a sequence, danced by her colleague, that the group has created in the minutes before.

The sequence with Ruth shows her moving through various affective states; while she first sits immobile for three minutes, holding her hand to her mouth and staring intensely at the scene, at some stage she lightens up and moves from being uncertain to openly affected, as if she sees something very precious to her. Later she tells the others how she was "*mesmerized*" and "*got goosebumps*" (Rehearsal, 26.01.2011) upon seeing this specific scene.

Visual field note 14 shows a montage of Emmanuel, watching for the first time an assembled part of the performance that the group has been working on in separate fragments for the last few days.



Visual Fieldnote 14: Emmanuel watching a rehearsal

Far from sitting still, Emmanuel moves around all the time, changing between sitting on a little stool and walking around in the room, sometimes almost mingling with the performers. His expression is tense, sometimes nervously biting his fingers or his lips and tearing his hair, often following the movements of his performers with his own body. Again and again he shouts "*yes!*" and "*more intensity!*" Later Emmanuel tells me how he is searching for a specific quality and intensity in the piece that is now coming out more and more (Rehearsal, 17.12.2010).

Visual field note 15 shows a montage of Marie watching for the first time an improvisation of her two co-performers developing a very sensual duet. In comparable poses and gestures to Ruth, Marie moves through different affective states. After standing immobile for two minutes with tightly pressed lips, she squints her eyes and places her hand on her heart.



Visual Fieldnote 15: Marie watching an improvisation of her two colleagues

She is obviously moved by the proceedings of her improvising colleagues, shifting from a rather stern expression of high concentration to a gesture of being touched and also a little relieved. After the rehearsal, Marie tells me: "*I'm very happy*" about the qualities and images that developed in this duet. And "*today I was able to see a little bit of this world that I actually want to have and what the whole thing is about*" (rehearsal, 20.01.2011).

Altogether, these three examples of the empathetic gazes of choreographers beholding their work illustrate aspects of the *affective* and *emotional* spectrum of the relationship between performer and performance. While all are acutely attentive and absorbed by the unfolding scenes, the performers show and express diverse forms of being affected by their work: from being fascinated and "*mesmerized*" (Ruth) through being captivated and thrilled (Emmanuel) to being wary and touched (Marie). Two factors are present in all these examples of "making things arrive": passionate attention and a "being affected" by the intensities and events happening. Respectively, an emotional range from worry, tension and nervousness, through awe and wonder, to relief, delight and enjoyment of one's work is palpable.

With their empathetic gazes, the three dancing choreographers express their concern for their work as something that deeply matters to them. This concern is tied to an extraordinary commitment that is deepened and brought out in an exemplary way by the project Sharp Cutz, as Marie relates. Comparing Sharp Cutz with the other projects she normally does in the company, she says:

> You invest more personally and fight more because it is something of your own. Even when dancing for somebody else, you are so much more , really into this process. Fully, with body and soul.
>
> (Marie, interview, 09.02.2011)

For Marie, ownership and its respective responsibility bring out an engagement of "*body and soul*." Investing time and energy to bring forth, through many trials, a technoaesthetic being, a "living thing," and in this way "rearing a performance," implies all the concern, responsibility, pleasure and affliction we sense when seeing the performers experiencing their performance-in-the-making. Ruth, Emmanuel and Maria experience and thus sense their work on an affective and emotional level, "moving along" with the rhythms and intensities of their performance's happenings, always heedful and wary whether and how "it works.'

As shown in the next sections, it is the metaphor of the *concerned parent* that the participants draw on to characterize the peculiar relation between them and their work. With this idea, the expressions and gestures of Ruth, Marie and Emmanuel bear a striking similarity to an engaged and concerned parent watching its child. In their tender expressions of being touched and moved, Ruth and Marie then come to resemble a *mother* beholding her child in some significant achieving, e.g. when taking their first steps, shifting between worry, awe and rapture. Emmanuel, actually wearing a football jersey, on the other hand strongly resembles a football coach or a very engaged *father* at the sideline, tuning into and sharing the thrills of an important and hard-fought match, trying to influence from the outside the events "on the field."

6.1.3 Coming out and the parent–infant attachment – fearing failure, becoming protective

It is the central trope of the parent–infant attachment that figures centrally in the choreographing dancers' own discourse on the development of the performance. This metaphor is mobilized especially in respect to situations of "coming out," of the trials and vulnerable instances of showing one's work to the critical audience of peers and colleagues that exhibit high levels of dubiety and anxiety.

If possible, the performers are very selective about who can see the material at the early stages. When asking Jeff about who else has seen the material they developed in their piece, he likens the situation to a mother with her child:

> And with this, I'm also very sensitive and don't like it at all. I would, I think, only have people look at it that won't kill my baby. You know, that is ... I always say ... it's like having a child, and if you go to the mother and

> say, "Ugh, your child is ugly," she will probably start to cry or she will punch you. And I feel this is similarly vulnerable.
>
> (Jeff, interview, 17.03.2011)

Employing the metaphor of the parent–infant attachment, Jeff conveys the strong bonds and the intensities related to one's own creations. They need to be shielded from the wrong "gazes" and people that could "kill one's baby." For Jeff, new material is "*vulnerable*," requires protection and tolerates only selective exposure to outside "gazes." Marie respectively remembers how she had to face severe criticism and developed strong feelings about her material:

> And then, of course it [the piece] is knocked and this and that and you think "Oh, no, no, my little piece I made is being torn apart.".. I believe you are very, just very very, or I'm, very vulnerable in this whole thing. Or sensitive, because it is just something that … that … that … that is very personal.
>
> (Marie, interview, 09.02.2011)

Moments of appraisal and feedback are trials, delicate situations where the intimacy of working on the material yields to a public scrutinization, revealing the vulnerable bond between performer and performance. These trials, or moments of evaluation, disclose the uncertainty about one's own work and its effects, looming large over the whole production process right up until the last hours before the premiere. As before, the parent–infant metaphor is employed to express this quandary. In a rehearsal close to the end of the production phase, Marie, for example, likens her own work to "*a newborn*," then adds, "*you never know if it is going to be a miscarriage,*" and then frowns, timidly admitting: "*I'm vulnerable*." She is feeling more and more uncertain about her work and says that she sometimes feels "haunted" by the piece and the dubiety surrounding it: "*It haunts me until late at night, having to think about it: how could I do it differently*?" (rehearsal, 26.01.2011). Ralf, the theater's dramaturg responsible for the Sharp Cutz project, also mobilizes the analogy of the "miscarriage" when expressing his worries and doubt about Marie's piece one day before the premiere. Asking him what is preoccupying him, he answers:

> Eh, I'm still puzzled, eh, by the FORM, well I'm not totally sure yet, is it SHORT ENOUGH? Em, I'm curious now about the reHEArsal now today, as if you canNOT be totally certain ((slowing down his speech word by word)) whether the child is actually NOT going to be born CRIPPled! ((laughing coarsely)).
>
> (Ralf, interview, 03.02.2011)

Both, Marie and Ralf liken the process of making CDT to "being in labor." Respectively, the products are likened to a fetus or newborn that are yet uncertain in their outcome: the possibility of them being "crippled," of not "functioning" properly, is looming large over everything. The infant–parent metaphor here then carries all the weight of the anxiety and dubiety the performers experience about their work, and which stems partly from the fact that they engage in such personal and meaningful work.

6.1.4 "Kill your darlings" – the detachment needed for assembling and "making things work"

The production of a CDT performance means not only creating material but is also centrally about assembling and "making it work." According to many participants, assembling the performance into a functioning whole is the more demanding aspect of creative practice and means a lot of work. While the generation of material is driven by the *attachment* to creating personally meaningful material ("*darlings*"), assembling the material requires the "professional" *detachment* that is expressed with the adage *kill your darlings*. This is often very difficult – like "throwing away your favorite dress" (Ruth, rehearsal, 31.01.2011). What moves center stage then is the question of what the performance as a whole requires and needs.

Dubiety and worries about the assemblage of the performance often last until very late in the process. Only in the last one or two weeks before the premiere are all the parts and media of a performance – movement, music, light, stage, costume etc. – assembled. This, then, is the time for making decisions about the connection and interplay of all the different elements. The following, longer, vignette features Marie and her co-performers Ruth and Andrea. They form one of the ensembles where, right up to the very end of the production phase, the level of uncertainty about the performance stays high.

Just a few days before the final stage rehearsal week, some colleagues are watching one of the ensemble's rehearsals and comment upon the material. Emmanuel, one of the colleagues, then raises a central issue. He starts saying: "*It's very good material, you have to just ...*" and Ruth, who was also watching, adds "*work*." Emmanuel nods approvingly. Marie and her colleagues have generated and collected ample material as Marie in particular worked a great deal to develop phrases along movement trajectories she "*always wanted to do*" (interview, 09.02.2011). Yet when trying to assemble the piece into a functioning whole, Marie realizes that the piece is not

developing further, and that the fundamental dramatic structure (story, plot, characters) is not coming together.

Slowly approaching the final rehearsal week, the group around Marie is still unclear about the connection of many elements. Uncertainty increases and mingles with fear and Marie is feeling stuck, spiralling into a personal crisis: "*Then, sometimes, when you get to a point where you sense you aren't GETTING any further, you don't know properly anymore where or how to make the turn*," she says later about that time (interview, 09.02.2011). After a "euphoric beginning," the whole process strongly exhausts her: "*I am VERY VERY exhausted from all this. It distressed me MUCH more, hm, dragged me down, than I expected in my euphoric beginning*." She has many sleepless nights and the feeling that the piece "*means the world*," yet that at the same time the whole process seems to be slipping from her hands.

On a Monday, the day of the first major stage rehearsal, I meet Peter, Mario's assistant, over lunch and he tells me that Marie "*had turned her piece upside down*" over the weekend and that they would have an extra rehearsal in the early afternoon. Upon attending the rehearsal, I realize that Marie had cut out a substantial number of phrases and rearranged the order. Later, in the retrospective interview, looking back at this process, Marie tells me how she arrived at a point where feedback from colleagues, her regained ability to make judgments and the sleeplessness altogether enabled her to "*kill her darlings*." Marie explains how eventually a certain sense of humor, of not being overly attached to the piece as a matter of life and death, also helped her to make some major changes: "*I have to take it with humor, and then I have ... suddenly just like totally let go and thought: "Hey, whatever happens it is just – it is not FATAL." And I really laughed about it!*" (interview, 09.02.2011).

As Marie remembers in the interview, before this point she was very confused and unable to make any decisions, and lay awake all night until realizing how all the "*holding on*" wouldn't work. She emphasizes how she realized that many beloved parts were touching on different themes, opening up additional trajectories that "*weren't really worked out yet*." In trying to "*find a way for us, so it's right for us*," Marie realizes that most of the dearly loved material was not yet developed into a more coherent whole and that she needed to take these parts out:

> I had to take out things that I absolutely loved dancing. But as such, ah, when the STORY, the red thread isn't right, then … then … then you can dance as much as you like but it will never convey properly what you actually want to show.
>
> (Marie, interview, 09.02.2011)

After having taken out certain elements, Marie eventually needs further external help to put things together again. She asks Peter to help her with the last major rehearsal and judge from outside what to work with and how. Looking back, Marie remembers that "*this was so close to my face and inside of me and on me that I didn't have this external eye anymore ... and therefore critique was such a huge help, just to actually get a sense again of what a spectator feels when watching this*." (interview, 09.02.2011). In the actual last rehearsal, after having decided upon the connection of certain elements, I join the performers onstage and Marie seems feverish, jumping around and loudly explaining things to her colleagues, Peter and me:

> The thing is that, you do some, you make a small change, and it can, LIKE THIS (making a swift hand movement from right to left) go in the other direction. This is, this is MADNESS (shrieking). (Marie is shouting and stamping the ground).(Directing her speech to Peter)
> It SO helped me that you were here now, for example, and actually from OUTside. I THINK I NEVER DO THIS AGAIN, a piece where you are yourself INSIDE, I-I-I don't FEEL it then.
>
> (Ensemble "Kill your darlings," rehearsal, 31.01.2011)

Then she once more performs all her cherished movements and the elements she has already decided to throw out. In between tears and laughter, she performs a number of times one of her favorite moves and emphatically remarks "*and all this is out!*" Her colleague Ruth adds: "*Yes, and you really do this one so nicely*" and then starts to account for the cuts:

> One HAS to do this, one HAS to simply, eh, say, ok I LOVE this part, but for the PIECE, it is not right it doesn't WORK. And then that is so HARD, but this is SO IMPORTANT. But this is- it is inCREDibly difficult. No, this is like … like … like throwing away your FAvorite dress.
>
> (Ensemble "Kill your darlings," rehearsal, 31.01.2011)

Marie adds hastily: "*And one had to tell ME, YOU, KILL them, or I wouldn't have MADE it, I wouldn't have succeeded in doing that*." She demonstrates another favorite move and further comments:

> With this one, for example (demonstrating a characteristic movement), I realize that SIMply for the PIECE it's better. Even if I, mh, this was one of my FAvourite parts. … This MOVEment that I LIKE DOING SO much ((laughs)). And eh, but when I see the whole thing now, the piece actually does not NEED us moving again.
>
> (Ensemble "Kill your darlings," rehearsal, 31.01.2011)

At the end of this sequence, Ruth, who has the whole time been sitting, turns to Marie, and, getting up, addresses her with her nickname and shouts: "*FANTASTIC!*

MARITOS!" Andrea joins with a marked "*YEAH*" and Ruth starts to hug Marie. Endorsing Marie's decision to cut out her favorite elements, she calls out: "*NOW YOU'VE BEEN SUPER BOLD, SUper BRAve*." Over the last three main stage rehearsals leading to the premiere, the performance then eventually finds its form and makes not an outstanding but still integral part of the overall performance.

In a retrospective interview, Marie reflects on the creative process in her ensemble and makes relevant the interplay of ideas and actual realizations. She concludes that the process might well start with an initial idea, a hunch that is important to get started. Yet being "*attached too tightly to this idea*," wanting to "*realize this idea exactly*," is a "*risk*." Marie reflects on herself, also on her role as dancing choreographer, as having been fixed on some initial ideas about the piece. The process has thereby taught her that although it is possible to generate material as the approximation to some "blueprint," there is a danger that "*then afterwards it doesn't work*."

Here lies a crucial element for understanding the creative process in the making of CDT. In the end, a theater performance is an assemblage, a joint construction of many elements. And crucial importance must be given as to how these connections are made or come about. The crucial need to "make it work" means to bring heterogeneous materials – bodies, ideas, narrative, artifacts, space and movement – together in such a way that at least the performers can make sense of the whole. Marie experienced a situation where a lot of material was generated and set side by side without working on the connection and seeing how things relate.

In contrast, Marie can now envisage an alternative process that is less about imposing and more about following and recognizing form, to "*go with the flow and look what emerges and be prepared to let go of the ideas*" and to be led somewhere else by "*what is actually offered by the process*" (interview, 09.02.2011). She thus offers a vision of the creative process as affording a contingent becoming of the piece, where material is generated in relation to what is already present. In a way, this idea is shared in the ensemble, as for example Ruth, on one occasion told me: "*Once something is there, then one can work on it, can further develop it, can connect and join things*" (conversation 08.12.2010). As dancing choreographer, the task then is to "*simply help the piece*" by seeking coherence by convergence and focusing on a general "*theme*" that then allows the heterogeneous bits and pieces to be(come) related.

6.1.5 "Going public" – despondency and readoption

When eventually "going public," the final product has gone through a variety of amendments that can make it seem alien to its creators. Did we really want this? Is this

still ours? These questions can go together with a state of despondency, quite similar to the postpartum depression which sometimes sets in after giving birth.

While Marie is thankful for the feedback and specific critique received, and finally made some major cuts herself, in another group Zoe faces the criticism of her piece being too long and somewhat "complicated." Her piece involves some difficult synchronizations between movement, speech and video projection. In the beginning of the last rehearsal week, Mario eventually asks her to cut out some parts that the group has spent a considerable amount of time and effort developing. The following days Mario and Zoe have continuing discussions and Zoe is fighting hard for every part of "her" piece. She gives in on a number of issues, taking out, for example, a whole video projection part where the native language speech of some performers would have been "subtitled" with video projection, yet holds on to a specific part in the end, which the group had developed in a series of playful rehearsals. Finally, on the very morning of the premiere, Mario requires her to also cut out this part and to accept this unquestioningly. I meet Zoe on the way out of the theater and she seems ill-tempered. Actually, she is furious and tells me that now, "*after all these cuts*," "*this is NOT MY piece anymore*" (conversation, 04.02.2011) and quickly rides off on her bicycle, shaking her head in disbelief.

A few weeks later, when bringing up this situation once more in a conversation, Zoe grins and revises her opinion, telling me that she was "*too deep into it*" (conversation, 17.03.2011) at that time and that she is now quite happy with the piece and is planning to perform it at an international theater festival.

Performances, just as other aesthetic artifacts, have careers and are involved in an ongoing process of attachment and detachment, as the story of Zoe nicely illustrates: first she fights for her beloved piece, then she aborts it, before adopting it again in order to bring it to life at an upcoming theater festival.

6.2 Analytical intersection – attachment, detachment and the "fever chart of production"

For Martha Graham, the great American modern dancer and choreographer, "[e]very dance is a kind of fever chart, a graph of the heart" (cited in Stodelle, 1962, p. 70). I propose to understand the adage *kill your darlings*, then, as expressing a typical "fever chart" of the production of CDT – the affective dynamics of creativity and invention over time. *Kill your darlings* is an ironic theater adage that condenses important know-how about creative practice within the peculiar nexus of *attachment* and *detachment*.

Kill your darlings thereby acts as a discursive device that is circulated within the community to remind each other about the need to work at the hyphen between amateurism and professionalism. In its paradoxical effect, it both promotes and liberates from idiosyncracy and forces a "professional" gaze. With the latter, it thereby asks dancing choreographers to take a spectator stance and apply dramaturgical know-how – about stories and intentions, and about space, rhythm etc. – in order to assemble all the various elements of a performance.

The fever chart of production is tied to the dynamics of attachment and detachment over the time of a developing performance. Strong attachments develop within early phases of *creating material*, where the generation of material often follows personal preferences and desires. This shows in the *intimate engagements* that, in the words of the participants, lead to an attachment between dancing choreographer and performance which is akin to a parent–infant attachment. The developing piece is vulnerable, and dubiety and anxiety reign when *coming out* and presenting one's material to colleagues. The final phase of *assembling* the piece into a working whole needs the professional detachment that is ready to hand over the piece to the audience-to-be and work in the service of attaching the piece to the future audience. This can lead, *in extremis*, to a state of *despondency*, where the performance becomes, through the many amendments and final changes that are often suggested or even forced from outside, alien to its creator(s). The performers know about this dynamic fever chart and accept it as inherent to creative practice.

Looking more closely at the adage itself, "*darlings*" then refers to cherished scenes or elements that are personally considered as especially touching, evocative or fun and that one is therefore emotionally attached to. In the context of the adage, "darlings" still denotes specifically those parts that, besides being all delightful, vivid or haunting, somehow don't belong. "Darlings" are parts that obstruct the movement of the overall story or cause other problems in the overall assemblage of the piece, sticking out and being hard to change, discard or "kill."

Attachments show when (con)tested, noted Hennion (2011), and in the same way situations of appraisal and feedback make "darlings" a pertinent issue of creative practice. Having other people watch one's work is a trial, a delicate situation where the intimacy of working on the material yields to a public scrutinization, revealing the vulnerable bond between performer and performance. These are the liminal situations where the performers resort to analogies and metaphors of the parent–infant attachment and birth, pointing at the full spectrum of their attachment to their work. "Darlings" thus expresses the affectionate bond – a sympathy or fondness – with one's

favorite scenes that allows the piece to be formed and provides the energy for the work to advance. At the same time, this form of attachment is "constraining," fixing one in the place of being anxious about changing them. "Killing them" then refers to the ruthless and professional elimination of these "darlings" for the sake of the overall piece, regardless of personal favorites.

As such, the adage *kill your darlings* wraps important knowledge about the creative process into a collectively shared form. As a piece of practical wisdom that is directing focus and energy, it is eventually legitimizing the action to cut out certain parts. Yet it can be both blinding and fixing if taken literally: of course not all "darlings" need to be killed just because they are darlings! *Kill your darlings* is surely not a prescription, to be taken literally, but more a warning or advice to assess what one's favorite parts actually add (or not) to an overall assemblage. It aids in maintaining a common orientation by reminding one to draw on external critique, as one is often blind to see the (non-)effects of one's darlings within the overall assemblage.

Within the project "Sharp Cutz," Marie had to learn this the hard way and had to be reminded that the attachment to her material, and therefore her missing distance from the piece, is eventually problematic for the editing of her material into a "functioning" whole. In this respect, the practical knowledge embodied by *kill your darlings* points to the necessity of "making things work" through a basic movement between "being inside" and "being outside" and, by and by, shifting from asking "*What do I want?*" to "*What does the piece need?*" or "*Does it work?*" Each of these questions is thereby bound to specific practices and hence constitutive of different subjects as well as of different objects. *Kill your darlings* therefore points to the somewhat "schizophrenic" relationship between practitioner and object of practice in the making of CDT, as it asks the performers to desire as amateurs and compose as professional critics.

Attachment is linked to *individuation*, and the development of the piece requires the amateurs' desire to refine and extend their locomotive and sensual possibilities by passionately engaging with other bodies and artifacts. As the process of making things arrive is indissociable from the process of making oneself appreciate, creating material and its assemblage into an artistic form therefore first occurs within an *aesthetics of capitulation*. The practice of making CDT is hence carried by the amateurs' intense desire for creating meaningful work, following a logic of desire and passion. Together with their colleagues, they refine and extend their attachments and tastes, doing what they love, almost regardless of the money.[145]

[145] CDT performers are at the bottom of the wage distribution for artists in theater houses.

On the other hand, the making of a CDT performance requires professional *critics* who, as part of an aesthetic community – a collective marked by mutually developed styles and tastes – are able to appraise the material according to specific dramaturgical and hence institutional and field-specific criteria. In this way, *kill your darlings* can be understood as an analytical device asking for the conceptual figure of the *professional amateur*. By not taking oneself too seriously, the maxim is liberating from idiosyncratic infatuation, helping to travel between inside and outside and forcing a "professional" gaze.

The vignettes I presented highlight the need of organizing modes of engagement that allow for the communication of aesthetic judgments without stifling the movement of composition. "The challenge … is to facilitate … engagement in … critical activities without compromising the spontaneity … of improvisational work," note Lavender and Predock-Linell (2001, p. 204) accordingly. In a similar way, Gherardi and Perrotta (2013) speak of the *artisan*, that, in comparison with the artist – for whom "the work of art is an end to itself" – "seeks to give distinctiveness to his/her product" (p. 230). This "professional amateurism" is also mirrored in the wider ecology of the practice, namely the institutional setup of the company as well as in the project "Sharp Cutz" as such, which, against the background of an aesthetic community and its standards, encourages the creation of personally meaningful pieces as long as they are successful. Failing is, of course, not an option, as Laura points out.

From the perspective of the performance as a product, and hence a "thing-in-the-making," which is concrescing by and by, *kill your darlings* and its call for professional amateurism then point to the *formativeness* of practice (see Gherardi & Perrotta, 2013). For the performance to be (onstage), creative practice, as a situated activity, is a process which gives form to material that has to go through various modes of existence. In a process realized through a doing that, while it does, invents "the way of doing" (p. 233), finding out what works and what doesn't, the object of practice can be either a collection of "darlings" – that is, "events" that make the performers feel in a certain way – or a "working assemblage" – that is a "collection" of events that "work," according to local semantics. Such a processual view on the object of practice means "to incorporate the work's historical instability into our understanding of it" (Becker et al., 2006, p. 4). Aesthetic products have careers and are involved in an ongoing process of attachment and detachment.

Analyzing the relation of professional amateurs and their product as a dynamic process of attachment and detachment thereby relies on the practice carriers and resources presented in Chapter 5: an aesthetics of capitulation as well as of capture, the

mobilization of commitment and engagement, the experimental set-up of rehearsals as sites of tests and trials, the installation of external views and feedback loops and an overall affective milieu of the group. Together, they suggest that the creative practice of making CDT requires both the thrust of idiosyncratic "love affairs" and the maintenance of a common orientation. This is what I propose to find expressed in the adage *kill your darlings*.

As shown in the next section, the dynamics of attachment and detachment are indissociably linked to the two central *modes of engagement* within CDT production: *experimentation* and *codification*. It is within the empirical circularity of experimentation (note its semantic connection to the notion of "experience") that the attachment to the piece both develops and is required. And it is within the various attempts of codifying and qualifying the evolving product that amateurs need to turn into professional and detached critics. Together, experimentation and codification are the central enactions that generate, assemble and consolidate the product of performance. The next section highlights how professional amateurs need to experiment and try out ideas, continually analyzing, interpreting and assessing work-in-progress and often erasing, revising, and switching directions.

6.3 Making theater work between experimentation and codification

Studying the making of a CDT performance means to study the processes by which a technoaesthetic form of life comes into being. Having learned that this is a process involving a movement from developing a close attachment to one's piece to "letting it go" and therefore detaching oneself, what is still missing is an understanding of the central *formats* and the various *methods* of production in respect of the basic *modes* of engagement found within CDT production (see 4 and 5).

In this section, I therefore "zoom in" on the individual and collective engagement with the material that I frame as an ongoing form of sensemaking, which in the case of aesthetic production I specify as a *taste-making* (see 3.4).

Taste, as denoting both the side of the product and the producer as well as their relational affects of desire and passion, is a central organizing principle. The emerging product and its qualities are "matters of taste," linked to collective sensemaking processes within various trials and tests. At the heart of the production of CDT we hence find the pragmatist nexus of experience and experimentation: professional amateur and product are not given but "(re)discover themselves" in each trial and hence experience. Taste is not a characteristic of either subject or object but only

revealed in practice, as a performance. Hence the notion of taste-making highlights the heterogeneous moments, forms and configurations of the problematic relation between professional amateur and an elusive product.

Hence, creativity and invention, from this perspective, are particular aspects of the wider practice of taste-making, which is centered around the amateur's systematic activities within the production formats (and stages) of *research* (6.3.3), *assembling* (6.3.4) and *scaffolding* (6.3.5). Taste-making thereby denotes the nexus of appreciating things and "making things arrive" within ongoing "tests of taste."

Making theater work as taste-making is situated on a continuum between *experimentation* and *codification*. These are the two abstract poles of a continuum of modes of engagement that generate, transform, manipulate and impose meaning and taste. What is at stake is the question of how meaning and taste are collectively generated and thus how the product "performance" is gradually qualified.

6.3.1 Institutional and organizational rhythms and temporalities

To begin with, a short look at the institutional and organizational rhythms and temporalities of making CDT performances sets the scene for following the development of a performance across various phases.

Mario, the head choreographer, in an interview (01.02.2011) posits the basic challenge for the company's creative work as having to do with "*rhythm*." The theater, as an institution, is credited with the necessity to "*tick*" in a certain way and to provide a "*pulse and timing*" for the work "*as an artist*." While on the one hand acknowledging the exigency that the institution forces a certain rhythm, on the other, Mario depicts it as a basic threat and as one's biggest duty to "*somehow stay an artist*" and to "*tick along this rhythm*."

Mobilizing a classical discourse on the opposition of art and bureaucracy, Mario stresses that as an artist one has to "*feel free*"; bureaucracy he thereby constructs as the opposite, "*blocking and restricting oneself*." By resorting to the expression "*the house*" and "*they*," Mario does not personify the institution and it remains anonymous; still equipped with agentic powers, the remainder of the organization is then posited as being an "*art factory*." Mario's challenge is thus to come to terms with a machine logic that heavily measures time as investment, where everything that counts is results: "*They want first of all to have the numbers here … We need to score particularly well this year, so that it becomes a good evening*."

As part of a theater institution, the making of CDT always needs to comply with schedules and plans, and is measured and counted upon. For Mario it is therefore a daily effort and a matter of training to actively create spaces free from the bureaucratic work equated with adhering to the metric rhythms and timings of the theater. Mario further describes how the dance company deals with the theatre's metric temporality marked by measurable results and fixed schedules – be it rehearsal slots or yearly programs with fixed premieres – by partly "*ignoring*" it, "*switching-off*" and sometimes "*just functioning bureaucratically*."



Visual Fieldnote 16: Tinkering with the weekly rehearsal plan

In his "*universe*" of the dance company, Mario therefore arranged for some personal division of bureaucratic and artistic realms. The former is almost 100% assigned to Thilo, Mario's assistant, who for example is in charge of compiling the duly to be delivered weekly rehearsal plans (see visual field note 16). Inside the wider system of the "theater" institution, Mario and his colleagues thus achieved the creation of "*their own universe*" with its own temporalities.

6.3.2 Starting in the middle – beginnings are continuations

No no, circus was not there, there in the beginning it was really the BEERfest
No idea what we wanted to do there, we wanted something with a TABLE.
(Jeff, about first ideas)

Production never starts out of nothing. Following the idea of *creatio ex materia*, one "starts in the middle," takes off from leftovers and "darlings" from former productions. The beginning of production is, in most of the cases of this study, a cherished, yet still vague idea or a very singular element that the performers then dwell on and elaborate. For Ruth, this seems to be almost a truism of production. Talking with her about the process of generating material, she remarks: "*Once "something" is there, then one can*

work on it, can further develop it, can connect and join things" (Conversation 08.12.2010).

The following account of the ensemble "Circus" is based on several interviews with the group members. The beginnings of the production "Circus" – a piece that eventually had a circus theme – started in May 2010, when Jeff, Andrea and Ruth heard about the possibility of doing their own piece within the "Sharp Cutz" format. Back at that time, they were rehearsing for the production of "Appassionata." With the prospect of Sharp Cutz, Jeff, Andrea and Ruth already started goofing around and were tossing ideas inspired by cherished movement material and situations in their "Appassionata" rehearsal. One more explicit starting point was then a certain scene in the rehearsal of "Appassionata" they all adored, involving …

dancing around and with a beer table.

The performers were fascinated by the beer table and the interactions and movements it enabled. Engaging with the table in these ways asked for more exploration, and from there the table scene quickly attracted associations and further images…

beerfest, revelry, wild!

tankards & beakers

The dynamic material weaving between objects, bodies and images was guided by the collectively negotiated taste, orienting the performers to more objects that could potentially take part in such a scene.

Eventually it was Jeff who then strongly affirmed these first playful associations and whose enthusiasm about the prospect led to an initial agreement among the performers to "*do THIS*" piece. Jeff concludes that from there on "*the whole shit came together*." For Jeff, once first ideas and tastes were put out, the group was able to affirm that they were on to something they all like – a beginning was made and conditions were set for a process of assembling a performance that retrospectively is presented as unfolding almost by itself.

After having decided upon the central element of the table, the group quickly agreed on the major musical element – a strong "Balkan Beat," mixing electronic and Gypsy musical styles together – they wanted to work with. It was a musical fragment that all three performers were fond of, as they had once tried to use it to no avail when working together on a different piece two years before. Over summer 2010 then, Ruth went home to Finland and saw an absurd travesty circus performance. She loved it, especially the aesthetics and the absurd circus theme, and it inspired her to think of a general circus theme for their own performance, also fitting to the music they had

already devoted themselves to. Things were falling in place, and after the summer break, Ruth recounted her experience and showed a video of the circus group to her colleagues, eventually convincing them to go along with the overall "absurd circus" theme (see visual field note 17).



Visual Fieldnote 17: The final table scene of ensemble "Circus"

Beginnings are mostly continuations. Cherished elements are taken up (again) or are further developed and, in the course, develop into something else. This process is also reflected in what the performers call "research," a phase of working with first, yet still vague ideas and developing their material from there through experimentation. This will be the subject of the next section.

6.3.3 "Research" – experimental taste-making through improvisation

We had an idea and a basic approach … and then to SEE what comes out, without expecting any results, THAT for me is REsearch.
(Mark, on the question of what "research" means for him)

Once a general theme or idea has been found, the performers engage in what they themselves call *research*. Not at all unlike academic research, through experimentation – tests and trials through many repetitions – and analysis, that is conceptualization of one's experimentations, the performers seek to transform existing or generate new material. What needs to be shown within the question of creativity and invention is that experimentation, then, does not only mean to map and assemble already existing elements, but seeks to conjure material not yet present.

Just like academic research, so CDT research needs to rely on a *methodology* and specific *methods*. Within CDT research, the methodology of *rehearsal* relies on the experimental method of *improvisation*. Improvisation practices and exercises as well as assignments and games are the specific methods employed to "re-search" the concept/motion nexus, the resonance phenomena between (kin)aesthetic forms and concepts (ideas) or conceptual personae (roles). Equipped with repertoires and a compositional syntax (see 5.1.1, 5.3.2), experimentation is carried by an ethos of bricolage and discovery. It is about "*having an idea and a basic approach*" to then see "*what comes out, without expecting any results*" (Mark, interview, 16.03.2010). Research is thereby a risky endeavor and requires a specific, favorable milieu. Especially in the beginning, the first "*two, three, four rehearsals*," "*lots of nonsense is produced*" and things are "*very vulnerable*" (Mark).

Research means "generating" and "collecting" material, as the performers call it. What is generated and collected are *motions* – including gestures, poses, etc. The goal of research is thereby to assemble motions into *phrases*.[146] In dance as well as in music, where it was first used, a phrase denotes a short passage, here a group of movements with some unity that somehow express or perform some vital dimension of the theme or task it is related to. Phrases are more or less fixed sequences of motions, lasting approximately from two to ten seconds. As the structural building blocks of a performance, phrases are characterized by their repeatability and recognition value. What differs is their degree of specification: while some phrases consist of precisely specified motions, some are more loosely characterized through dramaturgical dynamics, e.g. a certain suspense arc or motion quality.

In the following vignettes, I focus on various experimental methods of improvisation – from individual to collective, from sequential organization to free-play – and their interplay of prospective and retrospective sensemaking in order to understand how the performance, as technoaesthetic being, little by little is coming into being by generating motions and then phrases.

6.3.3.1 Individual improvisation – incremental taste-making

I start with looking at individual improvisation in a vignette on Marie who, in an early rehearsal in the overall production time, is "*generating material*," as she calls it. Watching and filming her and then also talking to her afterwards, I begin to understand

[146] A "phrase" is, in linguistic contexts, a group of words with some unity, and etymologically it derives from the Greek *phrasis*, meaning "speech, way of speaking" and *phrazein*, meaning "to express, tell" (Oxford American Writer's Thesaurus, 2008).

what Ruth means when she talks about the "*difficulty of beginnings*" (Ruth, conversation, 08.12.2010).

> I arrive at the theater in the early afternoon of this snowy day to observe the second rehearsal of the *Beta* group. As I arrive at the glass door leading into the rehearsal space, I see Marie rehearsing all by herself. She seems fully absorbed in her movements, and I'm hesitant to enter as I feel that I would interrupt her in some way. Unsure whether it would be alright to enter the room, I keep waiting at the open door. After a minute or so she notices me, smiles and asks me to come in. I ask her: "*Are you alone?*" She says, "*Yes, the other girls are busy with another piece and I'm collecting material*" and continues with her movements.
> I find a place next to the piano and the stereo rack and make myself comfortable on a little stool, at the same time setting up my video camera. Music is on, today a bit louder than usual. Marie's laptop is hooked up with the stereo and she has a playlist randomly playing very diverse songs – from slow songwriter piano pieces through French chanson to 70s disco. Yet she does not move or dance to the music as her movements are not in any observable way in sync with the rhythm or melody of the music playing. Instead, Marie is deeply immersed in her doings and the movement phrases she is working on just seem to keep coming without the music.



Visual Fieldnote 18: Marie's individual improvisation

> Red-faced, with audible, heavy breathing and the sounds of her feet and her body turning, rolling and falling onto the floor, Marie is working herself out (see visual field note 18). Hardly pausing, she relentlessly engages in sequences lasting from 3 to 20 seconds, depending on when she aborts the sequence to start over again with a similar succession. In between

sequences, she returns to the center of the room and sometimes raises her head to fix her gaze on herself in the mirror.



Visual Fieldnote 19: Refining a movement through reiteration

> By and by I start to recognize similar sequences by characteristic classes of movement that either mark the beginning of a sequence or that keep coming up in similar forms and different varieties again and again (see visual field note 19). Thus a development or refinement of some elements becomes visible.
>
> (Ensemble "Kill your darlings," Marie individually rehearsing, field note, 09.12.2010)

In an interview right after this session, Marie expounds her basic approach of how material is generated. In her case, it started with a vague topos of the "cardinal sins," and she sought to play and experiment especially with the concepts of greed, lust and anger. She then further enunciates her own theory of how the process of generating material works. For Marie, experimenting is key, through repetition and letting oneself be led.

> I just try and try and try and then repeat it very often until, finally, a combination arises that I can repeat. … In no way can I say in advance that I would want a sequence that LOOKS LIKE THIS. Because all this you cannot imagine in your head, but you really have to, it is a process of MAKING with the body and then discovering where it leads you. You can have an idea of the qualities you want, but the final movement phrase that then emerges, you have to somehow EXPLORE it and then, through repeating, somehow conceive it.
>
> (Marie, interview, 09.12.2012)

In this little vignette, exploring or researching material is a "process of making with the body" that, as elucidated in Chapter 5, relies on various *materials* – movement repertoires and cultural ideas, *plug-ins* – techniques like improvisation, trained and

skilled bodies and gazes, as well as artifacts like mirrors, and eventually a specific *milieu*, a conducive atmosphere.

The specific temporality of individual improvisation rests in the peculiar rhythm of "repetition with difference." Starting with a vague idea and quality of movement, Marie is engaging in sequences of trying out, that is, *testing* various movements and at the same time *assessing* their quality by means of both her own proprioceptive sense and through freezing and watching herself in the mirror, subjecting herself to the objectifying gaze of herself as observer. The sequences are structured through a central point, a position almost exactly in the middle of the room, that Marie returns to again and again before starting and after having finished a sequence. Sometimes the sequences last longer, up to 30 seconds, sometimes Marie aborts them after just a few seconds.

Series of movements and their varied repetitions form sequences of trials. In these trials Marie explores movements on the basis of *operatory analogies*, the relation of structurally different forms on the basis of their *operatory dimensions*, that is, sensations, their affective and aesthetic qualities. Seeking to harness the sensations of certain emotional qualities like greed, lust or anger and turn them into respective movements, poses and gestures, Marie thereby seems to be "feeling her way forwards." In a form of *incremental taste-making*, she follows the urges of her tropisms and the appeal structures of her material – ideas and movements. She seeks to "be led," thereby not immediately realizing full "objects" or forms but rather tentative formations along *vectors of appetition*.

The series of poses illustrated in visual field note 19 developed over the course of 15 minutes. Based on the principle of operatory analogy, improvisation here effects a peculiar serial relationship and hence continuity between forms that make for this specific morphogenesis. Each pose, within such a series of movements, thereby relates to its direct antecedent movement as well as to the previous realization of a similar pose, which might have occurred not only in this rehearsal but in anytime in the past (e.g. a former rehearsal). But they also relate, in this example, to a certain virtuality of lust that, far from being fixed, changes through its actualizations. Marie emphasizes how she might well have a certain idea of wished for qualities, but the "final movement" must be conceived through repetitive explorations.

Zooming in on the specifics of the seriality of Marie's method of improvisation then highlights the peculiar temporality of operatory analogies. We find here relationships between actual movement formations and virtual aspects that constitute an interplay of past and future in the very present of improvisation. As she says, Marie cannot

articulate in the beginning what she is after. She rather proceeds through trial-and-error, gradually making sense of the gestural and conceptual material. For Marie the combination "*arises*," it emerges incrementally, by contingent variation of existing material and its exploration. The invention of new material starts from the known shores of one's material, in this case Marie's movement repertoire.

6.3.3.2 Collective improvisation I – the vectorial sensemaking of structured improvisation

While individual research is an integral part of the making of CDT, research is often done in collective settings, relying on interaction and requiring coordination. Various forms of experimentation thereby effect different forms of sensemaking. I will focus on two typical forms of experimentation found within the different distributions of choreographic positions in the ensembles studied: first an assisted, *structured improvisation* where Ingrid is generating material in response to a specific task or question, and where Mark, as choreographer, watches and intervenes from outside. Secondly, I present a collective, *improvisational play*. The first form is marked by a distinct coordination between "inside" and "outside," the second by a peculiar coordination "inside" and a collective weaving of inside and outside perspectives.

Mark describes the process of moving from collecting material to obtaining phrases first in general terms, and then through the example of a sequence of assisted improvisation:

> Very clearly, in the beginning there is a collection of material. Motion, phrase material. And either you then say "FASTEN SOMETHING," meaning that they improvise in the beginning, orient themselves and, if I have the feeling that they can somehow extract something REPEATABLE or so, then "FIX something, FASTEN what you can repeat," a PHRASE then … .
> If INGRID improvises and I say "FASTEN something," she EXTRACTS and obtains material FROM the improvisation. When I SEE something, meaning when I say, "OH, do THIS again," then she might INcorporate this part. … while at the same time it surely comes party from them, well it is a COllaboration. You say, "OKAY, like THIS and change THAT," so directly in the process of origination, I somehow tried to hang ON and then, to pursue what I have seen in the beginning, the DIRECTION.
>
> (Mark, interview, 16.03.2011)

Employing metaphors of chemical experimentation ("fastening," "fixing") or mining ("extracting," "obtaining"), Mark emphasizes how elements have to be discriminated and stabilized, that is, created out of and obtained from a viable flow of motion-in-movement. In the peculiar setting of an assisted improvisation process, the positions of

inside (dancer) and outside (choreographer) thereby rely on each other in a "*collaboration*." Mark here characterizes an ambulant process of "*directly*" working in and on the "*process of origination*," giving and following impulses ("*OH*") and pursuing a "*feeling*" and "*direction*." The interaction between the dancer and the choreographer is thereby based on basic experimental activities, e.g. repeating certain traces ("*do this again*") and coaxing them ("*like this and change that*").

Improvisation is an effective machine for an ongoing generation of performative spillover, of swings, shimmies and adornment from a rich background of repertoires. The singling out and making recognizable of certain motions can be assisted and guided from "outside." Here the questions of how to fix flowing motions and follow hardly discernible traces so they become visible and manifested are central. The interaction between choreographer from the "outside" and the dancer from the "inside" thereby revolves around specific experimental interventions such as "repetition" and "coaxing." "Inside" is the generative source of material, which is formed through interactions where both sides inspire each other, following the sensible lines and directions emerging from the engagement with the material.

In the case of assisted improvisations, collective experimentation then effects a specific kind of *vectorial sensemaking*. Out of a flow of immanent improvisation, the generation of recognizable motion, and eventually phrases, means a sensemaking of both dancer and choreographer along *vectors of appetition*. To say that sensemaking is vectorial, I here emphasize, in addition to the retrospective aspect, its prospective part. Sensemaking from the "outside" is retrospective in watching and then creatively re-enacting certain parts of the improvisational flow. It is prospective in following directions, that is, vectors. Sensemaking from the "inside" is retrospective in drawing on repertoires to start and maintain the flow of improvisation. It is prospective in following and seeking to anticipate the jointly developed vectors.

In vectorial sensemaking, retrospective and prospective aspects of sensemaking enable each other. Vectorial sensemaking means to launch and at the same time follow a trajectory, a vector that is relating future and past in the present. The peculiar continuity of past and future in the present I thereby see as follows: while it seems as if the past allows for the present, it is the present that makes one live the past, yet coaxed by an anticipation of what is to come.

6.3.3.3 Collective improvisation II – the rhythmic and inciteful sensemaking of play

I don't like working with mirrors. People concentrate more on form then
I'm more interested in working with energies.
(Zoe, commenting on her covering the mirrors in the ballet hall)

Collective forms of play within experimental games, exercises or tasks are pervasive methods when it comes to generating material. Play can generally be considered a social activity, which is not goal-directed but is pleasurable exactly because rather it allows the generation of goals, rules and objectives in light of fluid significances. Play, and especially a highly improvisatory play, which can be thought of as an intensification of play, is, then, a machine for generating differences and carrying ideas forwards. It is therefore marked by immanent and prospective aspects of sensemaking.

The following vignette features a rehearsal of the "Green sofa" group around Zoe, Emmanuel, Ingrid and Henry. Zoe is the choreographing dancer who is officially responsible for this piece. She is Spanish, and her colleagues are German, French and Argentinian, hence they communicate in English. It is the third rehearsal of this group in general and the first one I attend.

At this point in the production process, Zoe and her colleagues still only have a vague idea of what they actually want to develop. They do research and experiment with a few basic points: they want to develop a scene that is vaguely inspired by the famous intro of the *Simpsons* TV series, where all the members of the Simpson family come running into the living room and all at once seek to find a place on the sofa in front of their television. In the rehearsal, the performers' practical concern is therefore to work with a sofa and the Simpson scene's inherent game element of "musical chairs" to see what they can develop from this.

Main rehearsal room. It is late afternoon and the winter light already so low that inside lighting is on. Laughter fills the room, which feels quite different today. Curtains are drawn in front of the mirrors and some ambient elevator music sounds in the background, hardly discernible. I ask Zoe about the curtains being drawn and she answers:

"*I don't like working with mirrors. People concentrate more on form then. I'm more interested in working with energies*."

As this rehearsal takes place at the beginning of my fieldwork, I'm quite uncertain about my presence as alternative kind of "mirror," especially being equipped with a video camera. Yet, when watching Zoe, Henry, Ingrid and Emmanuel, they don't seem to give any observable attention to their appearance or my presence at this moment and seem highly absorbed in their doings.



Visual Fieldnote 20: "Green sofa" I: collective improvisation

The rehearsal starts and we see four bodies squeezed together on a green three-person sofa in the middle of the rehearsal space. The group experiments with the task of jamming four people in a three-person sofa. One of the performers, Zoe, is lying on top of the others, trying to secure a seat. She is rolling and rocking on top of them. Eventually, she pulls Emmanuel off the sofa, grabbing his pants and partly undressing him (top right picture). Collective chuckling and then a wild running and jumping to and from the sofa develops (bottom left picture). With increasing intensity and speed, the performers jump on and off the sofa in different groupings, grabbing, pulling and pushing each other in a childlike frenzy. Bodily actions are sometimes accompanied by laughing and other sounds, adding to the liveliness of the scene. Like magnets, bodies are pulled to and

repelled from the sofa. In what resembles the game of musical chairs, they repeat the basic pattern of "one doesn't get a seat" in various configurations, trying out various options. I'm fascinated by the speed and the intensity of this sequence and I don't dare to disturb them, for now staying put next to the piano on the non-dancing side of the space.
After four rounds of on and off, always with someone else ending up without a seat, the pace is getting slower, collective panting audible. The scene ends with Emmanuel standing on one side of the sofa and, trying to sit down on the armrest, doing a clown-like movement of sliding off it. Zoe extends her arm and touches him on the back, drawing him closer. Emmanuel caresses Zoe's head and sits down on the armrest. She guides him to lie down and so he ends up lying exhausted on top of the others. A short moment later his body is being jolted up by a jerking movement of first Zoe, then Ingrid, then Henry and Ingrid again (bottom right picture). Collective smiles and approving giggles. Then Zoe says "*alright*," marking the end of the sequence, and adding: "*It doesn't have to be too spectacular,*" while doing a fast circular hand movement. "*Mhm,*" adds Henry approvingly.

(Ensemble "Green sofa," rehearsal, 14.12.2010)

The vignette is an example of generating material through play as a form of collective improvisation. As a form of basic "research," the focus is, in this case, on the affective level of organization and the *operatory* dimension of forms.

Being interested in "*working with energies*," Zoe had the curtains drawn to cover the mirrors. Constraining the performers' outside perspective enables them to concentrate on what is going on and coordinate with each other. Overall, the sequence, then, is marked by an intensity of flow resembling an inverted U-shape. Slow at the beginning, the action develops into a climactic frenzy of pushing, pulling, jumping and running to and from the sofa. The performers are totally absorbed in their actions. Driven by the fun of the affordances and constraints of the game and their respective, self-chosen task, they engage in a number of turns of going on and off the sofa. Finally the action calms down with fading reverberations into a pose resembling the beginning.

Looking more closely, the sequences of going on and off the sofa are themselves marked by a micro *rhythm* of *coordination*. In improvisational play, coordination is an ongoing process of negotiating intentional and affective contingencies and of coping with unexpectedly changing regularities. We find here instances of attunement that are seen in seemingly synchronous movements of jumping up and running back. In playing the way seen here – a frenzied back and forth, the performers show a remarkable aptness for swift coordination of movements and impulses. Being acutely aware of each other and collectively modulating the variations of going off and on the sofa, the performers thereby take turns in initiating and following impulses. Further,

the coordination between the performers is crucially relying on nonverbal and paraverbal means of communication – affirmative pragmatic interjections ("*hm*," "*yes*" etc.), shouting, screaming and laughing – and *onomatopoeia* (see 5.3.6). Together, these means serve to maintain connections and further fuel the high-intensity interactions.

All in all, the performers can be said to exhibit a remarkable proficiency in self–other contingencies, ceaselessly coordinating their interactions – establishing, maintaining and closing them – so as to achieve a collective unfolding. Nobody in particular can thereby be said to be in charge of the process of interaction. It is rather that the interactions of play in this form need to be studied as a whole.

The focus on "energies" shows in the intense interactions and the *operatory analogies* at play. In the last part of this sequence, where Emmanuel is lying on top of the others and Zoe, underneath him, makes a jerking movement of stretching her sitting body to make Emmanuel's body jolt, we can thereby see a specific instance of *operatory analogy* at play. This movement and effect is taken up by the others, one after the other, approving it with affirming smiles and chuckles. Later in a talk, Zoe explains about the idea of having a popcorn machine on stage, popping out popcorn in the last sequence of the piece. Through the specific movement quality here, the performers enact an operatory analogy, cross-modally articulating the basic sensations and affects of "popping" corn through the jerking, explosive movement of suddenly stretching their sitting bodies so as to have Emmanuel's body jolt.

An overall operatory focus on "energies," or intensity, is also highlighted once more at the very end of the sequence. Zoe is the dancing choreographer in this group and she is here seen as determining the end of this session by switching modes and commenting on the action. Employing the common marker "*alright*," she not only initiates a turn-taking but also signals the end of the sequence as of now, and a coming evaluation of events. She frames what has been happening in terms of operatory dimensions. Significantly, she does this first nonverbally. Adding to a gesture of a fast circular hand movement, Zoe then verbally articulates the affective characteristics of the past sequences ("*too spectacular*"). Henry immediately reacts with the approving interjection "*hm*" that, as pragmatic marker, shows his affirmation of Zoe's operatory appraisal.

To understand the play of and around the green sofa as an example of *immanent and prospective sensemaking*, I propose to focus on the novel meaning that is actively generated through material (the sofa) and bodily (self and other) interaction. This situates creativity and invention within the intense and absorbing interactions between

the performers and the sofa, all along framed by the game-like setup as a practice carrier.

The flow of actions and reactions within the immanent sensemaking in this vignette is *inciteful*.[147] The performers are mutually firing each other up. The characteristic intensity curve of this sequence – an inverted U-shape – is thereby expressing a peculiar dynamic of inciting play. The beginning is marked by a mutual firing and ratcheting oneself up into a collective frenzy. This is expressing not the structure of a problem in need of being solved, but a *positive feedback-loop* of a collectively fueled urge to engage in playful sensemaking.

The mutual incitement within play I thereby propose to understand as a question of *valuation*. Play is an experimental mode of engagement, where ongoing valuation, the (micro)appraisal of a developing situation within its very experience, is at the basis of taking up or continuing certain impulses. It is through attending to significant affects that play, as viable conduct, develops.

We find here not a sensemaking that is retrospectively restoring order to a disturbed, that is, problem-ridden situation, but an immanent and prospective sensemaking that follows relational impulses and vectors emerging from embodied engagements with co-performers and the sofa. The performers can be said to develop a mutual, protean understanding of the situation and each other through the process of constantly coordinating the actions and reactions involved in sensemaking. The interactions enabled in this sequence thereby interlock bodily, intersubjective and cultural processes that I understand as situated before the subject/object divide.

To study the interactions of this sequence of play as a whole, then, necessitates to be further accounting for the function of the game of "musical chairs," the *Simpsons* TV scene and the sofa as the central practice carriers.

Interactions always have a history, and here the game of "musical chairs" is a decisive actant that is important to understand. Resorting first of all to collective folk knowledge, the game is means and end in itself. As game, which is specified by a few rules and the important constraint of "one seat missing," it is generative, allowing for different ways to perform the game. As practice carrier, the game hence provides a simple setup, productive of a myriad encounters, events and associations.

[147] "Incitement," in its archaic sense, means a directed arousal or ratcheting up (see New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010), a positive feedback-loop of self-enforcement. Its negative connotation – as persuasion to act in a violent or unlawful way – I reappraise within a context of creativity as pointing at the affect of improvisation, which possibly encourages its participants to "go beyond" a threshold and overstep some (confining) boundary.

The collective knowledge of the popular cultural product *The Simpsons* is further active in providing orientation to the unfolding action. Especially as the specific sofa scene in the series' intro is itself marked by the dynamic of repetition, or routine, and difference, or novelty; each time, the sequence of the cartoon family "landing" on the sofa is slightly different. Thus, knowing the Simpsons characters and the specific sofa scene becomes active in stirring the imagination and trying out different versions of engaging with the sofa.

This brings us to the materialities involved. Obviously, the scene unfolds around the pivotal artifact of the sofa. As resource and practice carrier, the sofa affords specific interactions. Some of them are prefigured through actual properties (size, shape, height) which are clearly allowing and constraining specific movements and relations. Others yet have to be understood as *virtual affordances* that are relationally emergent from an encounter of two affective bodies (performer, sofa) and that cannot be predicted. They rely on skilled bodies. Here another aspect of repertoire comes in, as all performers have been working with furniture before, dancing and moving with and around chairs, couches, tables etc. As basic repertoire, the performers can thus rely on and activate previous experience of what their body can do in relation to furniture, while experimenting and situationally discovering new possibilities.

6.3.3.4 Collective experimentation – playful prototyping through pragmatic conceptualizations

The prospective and immanent sensemaking of play is often the basis for a second-order sensemaking – forms of *making sense* of the *sensemaking* effected within play. Making sense in this way is characterized by entwining retrospective and prospective aspects.

The following vignette presents the rehearsal sequence that follows the previous vignette. What is at stake for the performers is the kind of "game" they were playing just before and want to be playing in the future. The gestural and conceptual enactment and negotiation of a multiple past thereby becomes active in paving the way for testing out persuasive futures.

> The sequence begins with three performers sitting on the sofa, and Zoe in front of it. Addressing Zoe, Henry starts trying to understand and recognize "*what is happening now*." He answers his own question not by merely describing or explaining the course of events, but by creatively re-enacting, through gesture and short performances, specific parts of the previous sequence of play. From the incessant flow of experience, he thereby discriminates and articulates the unforeseen and therefore significant moment where "*two people were trying to throw another person out*" so

that "*at one point there were two seats free*." To conceptualize this unexpected happening he draws on the original game's (musical chairs) dramaturgy and feeling of "*danger*."

Then, at one point, Henry in speaking changes the tense from past to present, and the sensemaking changes from being retrospective, describing the past happenings, to being present-centered. Henry then in parallel explains in short sentences and also actively demonstrates the possible consequences of this situation: standing up, he marks the movement of a person who is thrown out from the sofa, is panicking and rushing back towards it. He ends his little creative re-enactment with an evaluation that alludes to the aesthetic implications of this particular situation: Henry is approving of the dynamic this specific situation generates by saying "*it's giving*" (in terms of "adding") and making a dynamic gesture of rapid circular movements with his arms and snapping a beat with his fingers.

After a short attestation by his colleague Emmanuel, who emphatically remarks "*this is good*," Zoe asks a clarifying question about the exact number of people on the sofa. Henry answers quickly and makes clear that this is a new situation, "*independent from your story*." In Zoe's "story," there were either all persons off the sofa or three were sitting on it; the new situation revolves around a new dynamic of the three sitting persons throwing one person off so that two people are off, leaving one place free.

Emmanuel then instantly offers the dramaturgical idea of this new game being more about "*taking risk*," which Henry excitedly approves of and further takes up as an element in his account of the unfolding dynamic. Zoe signals her understanding. and over the course of the next interactions, the trajectory launched by the dramaturgical conceptualizations of "*putting oneself in danger*" and "*taking more risk*" is followed up by all performers. Following this trajectory then leads to various small enactments (top right picture) and reformulations that all introduce a little difference or variation of the new situation of two people being on and two people being off the sofa. Zoe conceptualizes the new situation as a question of creating "*teams*."

Although the performers are now more engaging with each other on a verbal level, I'm surprised that they somehow keep the intensity of the previous sequence. I experience the qualities of the interactions as changing between playful, mocking and challenging, competing and intimate. For the most part of the sequence I again stay still with my camera, not daring to disturb them. Yet, as they still seem to be fully absorbed with their own action, not taking any visible notice of me at all, at the end I dare to move with the camera into the rehearsal space and behind the sofa, taking up their perspective of looking out from the sofa (to an imaginary TV screen).



Visual Fieldnote 21: "Green sofa" II: sensemaking

"*Okay, lets do it,*" says Zoe, heralding the beginning of a new sequence of trying out the new "*thing*." Before actually moving into action, Zoe however reframes the new ideas in her own words once more, marking the most important elements and actively inviting attesting comments from her colleagues (bottom left picture). They go through different constellations of people being on and off the sofa. Building on the newly developed scenario of two people being off and on, Emmanuel then steps in and demonstrates another variation, which is about allowing the two persons seated to decide whom to let on by blocking the other. As before, the idea is immediately realized and the others vividly attest to his propositions and play in line with his directions.

Instantly performing this variation, Zoe is eventually able to take a seat while Ingrid is blocked off. Zoe smiles and articulates her experience of being allowed to take a seat as "*being the king*" and "*number one*," introducing a new story element. This provokes Ingrid to playfully question Zoe's desire of "*wanting to be the king*." Zoe negates this and takes up a "king-like" posture she ascribes to Emmanuel, imitating Emmanuel's way of taking a lot of space by extending her arms and slightly arching back. In a sort of subtle political demonstration, this framing is mockingly taken up first by Ingrid and then by Henry, first questioning her claim and then throwing her off the sofa, over the backrest (bottom right picture). Zoe gives a high-pitch scream and saves herself elegantly with a backward handstand and onto her feet, then standing behind the sofa. Ingrid

immediately takes the vacant space and all three turn expectantly towards Zoe, who walks around the sofa.
Thus the game starts again, and Henry mocks Zoe with questioning her about what kind of queen she is. Ingrid giggles. All three sitting on the sofa are now poised, as Zoe turns smirkingly towards them. "*Elizabeth*," Zoe states with a reassuring tone. Henry chuckles in a low tone. Then Zoe takes two confident steps towards the sofa and launches herself with an elegant half turn horizontally into the arms of her co-performers. Being slightly surprised by this unexpected move, they just manage to catch her. Emmanuel laughs and Henry groans. Emmanuel addresses Zoe with a rhetorical, "*Te gusta este*" ("*You like that*") and Zoe answers decisively, "*Yes, me encanta*!" ("*Yes, I love it!*"). Henry and Ingrid, who were still holding on to Zoe's legs and body, get up and thus pull her off, then immediately get back onto the sofa. Henry further mocks Zoe by intonating an obviously ironical, "*AHHH, que lastima*!" ("*Ohh, how sad!*"). So now it is again Zoe outside, trying to secure herself a seat.
And so starts a next sequence of pushing and pulling, this time charged with the ideas and experiences from a round of collective sensemaking. And when, towards the end, one of the new elements – two persons blocking one to allow another person in – is put to the test, Emmanuel shouts, "*ESO*" (an approving Spanish marker), as he sees the idea he introduced before being affirmed in action.
Zoe suddenly commands all to gett off the sofa and then immediately to race back towards it for three persons to find a place. With Zoe's commands, they all run and jump back and forth, collapsing upon each other on the sofa, pushing and pulling, on and off until they are out of breath. With screams and laughter they all end up on the sofa for a last time. Panting, gasping, chuckling. "*Alright,*" says Zoe, looking down to Emmanuel who is looking up to her. "*This we repeat,*" she says and Emmanuel, with an audible exhale of "*oooh*" lets his head fall to the right, coming to rest on Ingrid's left shoulder. Ingrid nods. Henry drily remarks, "*We're some Simpsons,*" and Zoe, laughing out loud, places her left hand on Henry's upper-right arm, patting him.

(Ensemble "Green sofa," rehearsal, 14.12.2010)

Overall, the performers in this vignette stay wedded to their practical concern of interweaving the generation and the sensemaking of material. Therefore, the material of the previous improvisation is now the basis for collective sensemaking processes. The performers are concerned not with imposing certain ideas or meanings, but to creatively re-enact what they were doing in order to find out ways of how to proceed. As sensemaking, Henry's descriptions and all the following articulations and conceptualizations answer the basic questions of "What has been happening?" and "What else could happen around the sofa?" These, I propose, are questions not of interpretation but of experimentation: the performers do not ask "what does it mean?" but "how does it work?" (see 3.2.7).

In terms of rhythms and intensities, while the sequence starts slowly with Henry's conceptualizations, it is characterized by a similar high intensity and flow of verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal enactions than the previous sequence. The overall mode of engagement stays playful; the line between conceptual sensemaking and playing is fluid, the small enactments of possible future versions of the game are "played out." There is passionate engagement; there is a rhythm of flowing and pausing, changes of mere physical and then more conceptual play; there are skillful players that leave no impulse unattended; sudden events and unanticipated turns surprise.

The dynamic picks up with the increasing involvement of Emmanuel, Zoe and Ingrid, acting and instantly reacting to one another on a verbal as well as para- and nonverbal level. The entwinement of practices of articulating, conceptualizing, enacting, vivid marking and mimicking, (ad)joining, attuning and attesting perform a seesaw rhythm of give and take, inciting each other. The performers keep on pulling and pushing each other. In particular, the lively attestations and the taking up of the others' propositions keep up the flow. Giggles abound and towards the end, with the affectionate mocking between Zoe, Henry and Emmanuel, the sequence moves again into a phase of mere "playing." Again very similar to the previous sequence, the play part climaxes into a frantic running to and from the sofa – the excitement of crazy play up to physical exhaustion – and a final, collective gathering on the sofa. Panting, gasping, chuckling, and some final remarks characterize the end.

As a whole, the sequence shows a similar rhythm to the previous one: a slow build-up, then more and more vivid interactions – now more verbally – then a playing phase with climax, exhaustion and rest. The qualities of the interactions – playful, mocking and challenging, competing and intimate – mark a form of "coordinated coopetiveness."

Zoe, as dancing choreographer, does her part to keep the intensity high and the process developing. While she is clearly addressed, especially by Henry and Emmanuel, at the beginning, she is not overtly leading the process. Particularly when Henry and Emmanuel propose new ideas "independent" from her "story," she is mainly listening. Zoe further actively attests or questions certain ideas, thereby contributing to the flow, and then also summarizing in her own words what she heard from the others. She thereby produces a slightly different version that is again inciting more sensemaking from the others, leading to a specified idea of how to play the game. Nevertheless, Zoe is the only one explicitly calling the turns, starting the game again, commanding a certain sequence at the end and, most importantly, finally evaluating what has been happening and deciding on the status of the material generated.

In play, meaning is fluid. The sensemaking in this vignette therefore revolves around the re-enactment, negotiation and "manipulation" of a multiple past as a stepping stone for an enactment of appealing futures. We find therein a peculiar nexus of retrospective and prospective sensemaking. The ongoing sensemaking here thus means negotiating the future ("what could happen") by negotiating certain versions of a multiple past ("what has been happening").

It is crucial for an understanding of sensemaking within this sequence to note that the retrospective sensemaking, here initiated by Henry, is not primarily done in terms of restoring order, but in terms of enabling change and creativity.

Henry discriminates an event of the previous sequence of play – two persons being off and two persons being on the sofa – that occurred in the heat of the moment, was unexpected and not according to the game's (implicit) "rules," which allow either all persons off or three persons on the sofa. This serves as a starting point for firstly conceptualizing the unexpected event in particular ways, and then constructing new rules, and hence constraints. Henry, for example, conceptualizes the situation as being about "*danger*." And as "danger" is part of the original emotional frame of the "musical chairs" game, Henry thereby accounts for the novelty of the situation as being in line with the existing theme. The same then goes for the notion of "*risk*." Drawing on the notions of "*danger*" and "*risk*," both Henry and Emmanuel then make a case for the modification of the game bearing behavioral as well as emotional consequences, changing the scene's rhythm and dynamic. Following this trajectory then leads to various small enactments and reformulations that each introduce a slight difference or variation on the new situation of two people being on and two people being off the sofa. Although Henry claims this to be a development independent from the original "*story*," there is continuity established by conceptualizing the new situation within the existing game frame. By drawing on these two emotionally contingent conceptualizations, the new scenario is legitimated as continuing on a trajectory launched in the past. Thus the development of the piece happens both on an aesthetic and a conceptual, or narrative level. I suggest that this is possible because the conceptualizations are addressing the operatory dimensions of the sequences.

The nexus of retrospective and prospective sensemaking means a *collective rapid prototyping*, effected through a coordinated interweaving of impulses. The immediacy of action and reaction is astonishing when it comes to sensemaking as a concomitant weaving of movement in its dynamic qualities, story elements, music and props. And it is especially this forging of associations that affords a contingent movement of ideas.

As such, situations develop that are propositions to the event. So, for example, in the middle of the sequence, Zoe creates the experience of "*being allowed*" onto the sofa. She subsequently frames this as "*being the king*," and, doing a king-like gesture, instigates Henry and then the others to immediately throw her off the sofa again.[148] That Zoe is flipped over the back is an event resulting from an ecology of story elements, leadership mocking, friendship and intimacy, aesthetic concerns, material affordances, modes of conduct and skilled bodies.

It is the distinctive characteristic of play that enables the highly affective process of collective rapid prototyping. Sensemaking in this vignette has to be understood within play's characteristic nexus of similarity and difference: the connection of a concrete embodied situation and an alienated virtual meaning. Together, both aspects constitute a form and way of life, once we fully engage in and commit to play. This requires the capacity to both alienate meaning – through enactive (re)creations by gestural or conceptual means – and then to submit oneself to the new reality. "The player is the lawgiver and the rule-follower, the question maker and the responder" (Di Paolo, Rohde, & De Jaegher, 2011, p. 78). It is the player's capacity to detach meaning from a situation and to attach new meaning that bears the "value-generating properties of play" (p. 77), the exhilaration of bringing to life what is not there. The virtual meaning coming with the game of "musical chairs" and the *Simpsons* TV scene allows for a specific way of being alive, within the constraints of the game's rules and its emotional frame of danger, risk and excitement. Changing the meaning of the game means creating a new form of life with new constraints. Problem creation, not problem-solving is the freedom of play.

The series of micro attachments and detachments effected through playful improvisation and conceptualization, little by little qualify an evolving scene. In this case, playing sent the performers on an itinerant movement, starting with the *Simpsons* scene and ending with the construction of narrative fragments revolving around a theme of monarch ("*king*," "*queen*," "*Elizabeth*") and revolt (throwing Zoe off the sofa and not allowing her back on). This scenario thereby mocks and plays with the actual hierarchies in the group (Zoe, as responsible choreographing dancer, is the *primus inter pares* within the group). To understand the energy and intensity of play and its potential of combining retrospective and prospective sensemaking in order to become and evolve (revolt), it has to be acknowledged as a highly significant and affective activity of transforming one's world.

[148] The singular event of flipping someone over the back of the sofa was eventually taken up and included in the final performance, where two people performed a synchronous flip.

6.3.4 Assembling – the "laboratory work" of joining and testing material

Once something is there, then you can work on it, develop, change and join it.
(Ruth, on the importance of having material)

(How) does it work?
(One of the most overheard questions in rehearsal)[149]

While and after material has been researched, collected and first sequences have been constructed on the spot, material is further assembled into phrases or scenes and "tested." This is not necessarily a complete new stage. Often improvisation, pragmatic conceptualization and assembling are coextensive, as in the two following vignettes, where assembling means a particular "connecting to" of already existing material.

Nevertheless, I present *assembling* here as a distinctive activity of collective sensemaking, where new possibilities and challenges lurk for invention and creativity. In contrast to the open generation of material through improvisatory play, exercises and tasks, assembling is a work of composition that is connected to existing material and seeks to join elements, sequence them and fill in the blanks. Often developing along the ubiquitous question of "*(how) does it work*?," the laboratory work of assembling thereby also unfolds along the nexus of experimentation and conceptualization (see 6.3.3.4) while seeking to *join* and *test* material. In a short conversation, when Ruth talked about the "*difficulty of beginnings*," she continued asserting that "*once something is there, then you can work on it, develop, change and join it*" (Ruth, conversation, 08.12.2010); such is the scope of assembling. Cconstitutive aspects of assembling are thereby the various forms of testing material.

The process of generating motions and assembling them into phrases is done in a number of activities that we know from the experimental work in a laboratory: dissecting (making identifiable parts visible), selecting and doubling or repeating, magnifying, manipulating and eliciting. Just as in a microbiology laboratory, elusive and fleeting phenomena are sought to be made visible. In the laboratory a number of capturing or recording devices are employed for this. Similarly, the performers often employ video or install an outside viewer to capture the unfolding events (see 5.3.4).

6.3.4.1 Blanks, collective probing and a minimal structure – the green carpet

In the case of ensemble "Circus", the making of a CDT performance is often akin to a work of *filling in blanks*. Just like the poet who is searching for the right words to

[149] In German often as *Funktioniert es*?, "does it function?" or the evaluative *das funtioniert (nicht)*, "this does (not) function." Both "work" and "function" I understand as targeting the operatory dimensions of materials (see 3.2.5).

finish a line or fill in a transition, the production of performances also bears blanks, that is, spaces left to be filled within an already partially existing assemblage. Filling in blanks is an activity of *collective probing*,[150] a manual testing, relying on the instrument of the body and its capacity for gestural and narrative enactment. Probing the possible elements that could be filling a blank thereby is a work of connecting elements, of finding adequate material for filling and thus bridging a gap.

In the following vignette, ensemble "Circus" – consisting of the dancing choreographers Ruth, Andrea and Jeff and the dancer Laura – is working on a sequence that includes the collective crossing of a green carpet of artificial turf (about 2.5m x 2.5m in size) (see visual field note 22).



Visual Fieldnote 22: The "green carpet" task

Andrea, Ruth and Jeff have early on decided on a minimal structure – concerning a basic theme (circus) and a number of props: a table, the green carpet of artificial turf, a wagon, etc. – for their piece. The respective stage design was then constructed like a "*circuit training*," which meant that there were different "*stations*" and their respective props that formed lines of action that were pursued in the course of the production. The question was to "*bring them to life and to determine what happens where*" (Jeff,

[150] "To probe," meaning to "physically explore or examine (something) with the hands or an instrument" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010), comes from Latin *probare* "to test."

interview 17.03.2011). The production has been going well and the sequences before and after the "*green carpet*" have already been devised. The sequence with the artificial turf is also already partly prefigured through the narrative of the piece. The three characters that are performed by Andrea, Ruth and Jeff are running a small circus which is haunted by the ghostly character of Laura. Her role is not 100% clear yet, but she is supposed to be invisible to the others. This turns the sequence on the artificial turf into a question of how the interaction and dynamic between the three living and the ghost should unfold.

In a rapid succession of performing, proposing and watching, assembling here means an ongoing probing of possible variations. The performers thereby rely on the collective rotation of *le regard extérieur* (see 5.3.3) when testing selected scenarios and possibilities.

> "*Tomorrow, we'll deal with the green carpet*," Andrea told me yesterday, pointing at the mat of green artificial turf that has been lying in the corner of the rehearsal space. Today, appearing as an island of green in the midst of the grey floor, the performers then take to it.
> Over the course of five minutes, the four performers thereby test different scenarios. After a first round of going all together, they take turns in watching while performing and intermittently discussing their ideas. While the motion of Ruth, Andrea and Jeff has already been decided – they run over the mat as if it was hot coals – the search for Laura's part brings up many different propositions. First, the ghostly character of Laura is proposed to sway across the carpet (top left picture), maybe additionally holding up her skirt. These propositions, like the following ones, are mainly accompanied by small narrative enactments. Thus, for example, Ruth proposes Laura to "*mimic the judge of a sports competition and blow an imaginary whistle*," or wait on the other side of the carpet and beguile the others to cross the carpet. All these variations are mostly introduced through uncertainty markers ("*maybe*," "*I don't know, but…*") and are then shortly enacted. They are never met with direct disapproval. Only once does Jeff comment on a variation of Laura falling on the carpet: "*This looks too much like modern expressive dance*."



Visual Fieldnote 23: Collective probing on the green carpet

After this comment, Andrea steps up, saying "*wouldn't it be nice if*" and stretches her arms wide and marks a falling backwards on the carpet with extended arms (top middle picture). Her colleagues nod and Andrea gets up to join them. She once more stretches her arms and Jeff joins her, enacting the same gesture. "*Like this would be really nice*," Andrea says once more (top right picture) but then concludes that "*it is not possible, it would really hurt to fall like this!*" and laughs. Laura, who has been watching her colleagues, addresses Andrea and asks "*how*" exactly she means the falling should be like. Andrea marks the falling now with her hand: once slowly, then a second time more dynamically; she has her right hand "fall" into the palm of her left hand. "*Wooosh!*" Andrea accompanies the movement and the clapping of her hands with her voice. Laura mirrors the dynamic enactment with her right hand, also performing a downward movement with the hand (bottom left picture). Three seconds of silence, before Ruth sets off and, while going to the end of the mat, says "*Could you not come with us here and, while we walk off, just fall forwards like this*," then falls forwards straight-bodied and, while only in the last moment absorbing the shock with her arms, audibly *thumps* onto the mat (bottom middle picture). "*Yes*," "*mhm*," comment her colleagues who instantly affirm her enactment. Then they go through three runs with the new element, first having Andrea, then Ruth, then Jeff watching from outside. Andrea still formulates a careful comment, saying "*I believe this is better*." In the next round, Ruth is more assured, saying, "*Oh, yeah, this works*," while Jeff, the last one watching, affirms "*That's it*," laughs and then finally says "*This is bought*" (bottom right picture).

> In the next minutes, the performers co-create a narrative that links the specific quality of this sequence to the ghostly character of Laura and the specific dramaturgical significance of the green carpet within the overall narrative of the circus family. At the end, Laura's character has become a bit more "*mysterious*" and the green carpet has turned into a "*danger zone*" for her ghost character.
>
> (Ensemble "Circus," rehearsal, 17.12.2010)

In this vignette, *collective probing* means the fast-paced succession of ideas and their enactments. Several ideas about the way Laura – as the ghostly character – is to cross the artificial turf are thereby articulated in different *media* and *modalities*. As such, collective probing is an embodied sensemaking and thinking through the nonverbal media of gesture and motion, the paraverbal medium of pragmatic interjections ("*mhm*") and the verbal medium of (micro) narratives. Ideas are hence collectively developed on the basis of embodied articulation and sensemaking.

As a specific activity of production, collective probing is an interplay of *modes* of experimentation and of conceptualization. "Ideas" and "enactments" are moving all the time, stabilizing and destabilizing each other in a progressively refined manner through a collectively enacted rhythm of direct performances (with someone watching) and collective, discursive exchanges. Through this, the various elements of this sequence – the green carpet and the character of Laura and her way of traversing the mat in relation to the other characters – are slowly concrescing into a provisionally conclusive assemblage.

The creativity of collective probing is enabled through the peculiar insistence of a virtual *blank*, asking for collective modes of engagement and coordination that focus on the *operatory* dimension of forms.

Blanks have to be considered as virtually insistent. The green carpet is an element within a wider assemblage that so far stands as a proxy for a specific sequence within the overall performance. As such, while the blank is an actual empty space, I propose to understand it as virtually insistent. The creativity of collective probing can thereby be said to be a form of *problem-solving* or solution-finding. The blank insists on and motivates the generation of material that solves a yet unsolved "problematic" situation. Not a problem and a situation, but a trying, perplexed situation.

The blank is a problematic situation due to it being a *relative blank*, a space related to its *associated milieu*, which is, among many other things, constituted through the antecedent and subsequent performance elements, the ghost character of Laura and its relation to the other characters and the developing dramaturgy and narrative of the

performance. Hence the green carpet, as a blank, is awaiting actualization against a background of differential relations. It is only through direct engagement that this generative configuration comes to life. The development of ideas is an attempt to finding a solution to a problem that is only fully understood in the moment of its solution.

The virtual insistence of blanks is situated on the *operatory* dimension of forms. The vector-quality inherent in an engagement with blanks can be sensed, and made sense of, by attending to the operatory, that is (kin)aesthetic and affective dimension of the various elements. Especially through their nonverbal enactments, the performers relate various elements according to their affective contours, including their rhythm and dynamic. The final form – Laura falling forwards with a straight body – is the endpoint of an ambulant movement through a series of *operatory analogies* and transpositions. Starting with Andrea's proposition to have Laura fall backwards with her arms stretched, through her enactment of the fall's dynamic using a hand gesture and a characteristic sound ("*wooosh*") to Ruth's performance of falling forwards and thumping onto the ground, the development of ideas is happening on the operatory dimension of forms. "*Oh yeah, this works*," says Ruth at the end. What works, I suggest, is the contrast of the affective dynamics between the motion of Laura's character (slowly falling forwards, straight-bodied, thumping into the floor) and that of the others (as if running over hot coals).

In terms of the *minimal structure*, the nexus of experimentation and conceptualization means that the meaning of the various elements can only emerge from a concrete engagement with them. The green carpet, as the other "stations," constitutes an enabling constraint for the improvisation-based generation of material around and with them. The stations are still not totally fixed and are always open for revision when the improvisational work around them suggests so. In this case, the development of Laura's specific motion led to a discussion about the meaning of the green carpet, finally turning it into a "danger zone" for Laura as ghost.

The *collective dimension* of probing lies in the peculiar method of association made possible through embodied imaginations within a group. This becomes clear when looking, for example, at how the group arrived at the final form. As such, there was no open decision made. Rather, reaching the final form has to be understood as a collective, incremental and itinerant development through *association* and *imitation*. Ideas are never directly disapproved of. They are either not further answered to by one's colleagues (e.g. Ruth's idea of having Laura beguile the others from the opposite side of the mat), are maintained and supported through imitation (Jeff is doubling

Andrea's gesture of stretching her arms; Laura is mirroring Andrea's particular hand movement marking the dynamic of the fall), or are further developed (Ruth enacting the basic dynamic of the fall, transposing it from a "*wooosh*" into a "*thump*"). Ideas build on each other, they form a trajectory and vector that are at the same time constituted through the various enactments and followed by the participants. In this way, embodied ideas can be looked at as life forms, living an organic life, needing allies and further enactments to subsist and come to a more concrete existence.

6.3.4.2 Imaginative assembling – inventorying and sequencing material within tentative scenes

Assembling means enacting relations between various materials and elements. In the following vignette, we learn about assembling as an activity of *inventorying* and *sequencing* material through imaginative means. As seen before, within the making of CDT, motion, artifacts, sound and narrative (plot) are thereby sequenced and assembled through *operatory analogies*. It is on their operatory level of aesthetics and affect that material can be edited and tentatively stabilized into imaginative assemblages of heterogeneous elements.

The following vignette is the last part of the "green sofa" rehearsal as featured in 6.3.3.3. After having played and generated ample material, the rehearsal finishes with a *debriefing* led by Zoe. In close coordination with her colleagues, she is *assembling*, that is, inventorying and sequencing the material into various possible future scenes. Zoe thereby seeks to relate the motion material with the elements of music and popping popcorn. The latter is a central element, as the overall scene with the sofa foresees a popcorn machine, which, amplified through a microphone, is audibly spluttering out popcorn.

> After the second round, and towards the end of their rehearsal, all four performers are sitting on the sofa. Henry on the right-side rest, next to him Zoe on the back rest. Emmanuel and Ingrid are seated normally.



Visual Fieldnote 24: "Green sofa" III: debriefing

Zoe, still panting, begins with depicting her ideas and images of how all the different elements of the piece – movement, music and props, especially the popcorn – could be brought together into a sequence. She thereby alternatingly faces mainly Emmanuel and Henry.

First she brings into play the "*popping popcorn*" through gestural, mimic and vocal means. Zoe articulates the spluttering sound and movement dynamic by onomatopoeia and gesture (top left picture) and further links this to the music they will be playing, which she also marks through a short onomatopoeic sequence. Then Zoe introduces the notion of "*picture*" to depict and distinguish different variations of the sofa game as they have emerged from the rehearsal so far.

In the first picture Zoe describes as "*three persons, with one coming, pretty relaxed, trying to get on the sofa and trying to pull the other two slowly out*" and at the same time mimics and marks the quality of doing this (top right picture). Then Zoe lists the interactional "*possibilities*" for the sitting persons: "*going out*," thereby pushing an imaginary someone away from her, "*starting again or giving resistance*."

Then Zoe comes to the final phase, "*with the popcorn like really going PO-PO-P-PO-PO-P-PO-PO*." She at once performs fast, almost frantic movements with her upper body while shadow boxing, and shows her colleagues how "*everybody, we start like*" going in and out. Again she enacts corresponding movements with her upper body and arms, swaying back and forth (bottom left picture). After a number of rounds, Zoe specifies a last modification of the game with "*one being out*" (bottom right

picture). Zoe finishes her depiction of the unfolding sequence with saying "*until the last popcorn is*," letting herself fall onto the seat, "*done,*" and ends her turn with saying "*let's see*."

(Ensemble "Green sofa," rehearsal, 14.12.2010)

At the end of the rehearsal, Zoe, as the dancing choreographer, assumes responsibility for a debriefing of the previous sequences of prospective and retrospective sensemaking in playful improvisations and talk. Taking the different elements as they have been collectively developed and created in the previous rounds, she then depicts a sequential assemblage for the sofa scene. Zoe therefore imagines a couple of "*pictures*": sequences that integrate the various materials – movement, music, popcorn – into a scene, characterized through specific aesthetic qualities and corresponding movement dynamics.

The rich use of gesturing, marking and onomatopoeia in enacting the various elements allows for an *embodied thinking* on the operatory, that is, (kin)aesthetic and affective dimension of the material. It is not on a level of actual and discontinuous story elements or motion, but through *operatory analogies*, a thinking in and through *movement*, that the popping popcorn, the music and the motion[151] are here related on the basis of their affective contours, their operatory dimension.

By voicing the various assemblages (pictures) in the presence of her colleagues, Zoe is immanently testing them. By closely attending to her colleagues and their reactions, Zoe checks for the value of her propositions. Luckily, nodding and attesting interjections abound. Emmanuel, as central idea generator, is often explicitly addressed through eye contact, and at one point Zoe even asks him for approval. Emmanuel further assents by taking part in Zoe's enactment, repeating Zoe's articulations and accompanying her.

Assembling the material through gesturing, marking and narrative tentatively arranges a new form of life. Ending with "*let's see*," Zoe frames the various pictures not as definite but as possibly going through further tests. The process of incremental testing will continue, and her remark signals this openness to change and adaptation through the course of things.

A central capacity for the making of CDT is to advance the production process while acknowledging the tentative nature of ongoing qualifications. Sometimes, things are therefore deliberately kept open, as when for example overt judgments are suspended and closure is therefore deferred. Deferring decisions is done with the hope of the

[151] For the difference between movement and motion see 3.2.5.

future bringing clarity as to what will be possible with and along certain elements (e.g. objects, ideas, movements, character aspects).

> Ruth is discussing with her colleagues how to continue: "I mean, once the scene is done, we will then see what – what needs to be there … We definitely keep the shoes for now and then see what we can do with them."
>
> (Ensemble "Circus," rehearsal, 17.12.2010)

In a discussion with her colleagues, Ruth argues that a certain element of the performance (here: shoes) cannot be decided upon at that moment. The performers learn that their judgments change alongside the elaboration of an assemblage of ideas and objects. Each element, like the shoes, needs to be seen and hence appreciated in relation to all the other elements developed. Instead of imposing forms or forcing decisions, the performers thereby trust subsequent probings to bring about clarity.

6.3.4.3 Running test assemblies – the rehearsal as laboratory

While the previous section already featured the immanent testing of assemblages, at times the rehearsal turns into a proper laboratory where different *test assemblies* are *run*. Here again the parlance of the CDT world is disclosive: performing material for reasons of testing and fastening assemblages is called a *run*.

> Sometimes at the end of a rehearsal, I have just put and thrown together different elements. "Do this, and then that comes and you maybe wait," such a small test assembly, also for me to see. And at some stage, when I said, "Okay, we now have too much material," meaning that everybody has two, three or four building blocks, then I gave them another question, adding another element. Then these test assemblies became increasingly bigger. And then, with the different collections of material, we first of all did a run. … [And] this was clear from the very beginning, that this now is a decisive issue in the whole thing: how do I assemble the entirety, and how do I tinker with the overall structure? And then, well, just tried it out, and then, I would say, very intuitively, "Okay, this somehow works for me: the suspense in this sequence, the dramaturgy in this piece." And then, I somehow rearranged things, definitely a few times, and then I just said things like, "Okay, these transitions, from these single elements I like; this we can more or less maintain."
>
> (Mark, interview, 16.03.2011)

In the course of generating material and assembling it into increasingly growing phrases and eventually scenes, Mark uses the end of the rehearsal for assembling the generated material into "*small test assemblies*" and then making a "*run*." Assembling here means arranging ("*do this, and then that comes and you maybe wait*") and repeatedly ("*definitely a few times*") "*rearranging*" material. As such, assembling

follows the trial-and-error logic of a pragmatic sensemaking. It is through trying out various arrangements, read assemblages, that Mark can develop a sense for what is fitting and "what works." Assembling is, for Mark, a crucial task, "*a decisive issue in the whole thing*," and relies on testing his motley arrangements against his *sense of coherence*.

The sensemaking in this *trial-and-error* approach of aesthetic experimentation is guided by a seemingly highly subjective "*intuition*" and "*liking*," a sense of coherence or *consistency* regarding the fit of various elements.

6.3.5 Scaffolding – consolidating material through the work of codification

The performers clearly distinguish between a phase of experimentation, which Mark calls "*having a fling in the improv-spheres*" (interview, 16.03.2011), and the "*real work*" (Ruth, interview, 21.02.2011) of forming, fixing and finalizing the material. This work of consolidating the material is what I call scaffolding. Having generated material is the "*preparation*" (Ruth, interview, 21.02.2011) for then turning it into a more or less fixed "*scaffold*" (Marie, 28.01.2011). This, the performers emphasize repeatedly, means work:

> Marie, Ruth and Jasmin have just shown some of their material to Emmanuel. Afterwards all four sit together, and Emmanuel comments on what he has seen: "*This is good, it's very good material, now you just have to*," he pauses, and Ruth adds "*work*." Emmanuel nods.
>
> (Ensemble "Kill your darlings," rehearsal feedback from Emmanuel, field note, 18.01.2011)

For Marie, the work of scaffolding requires a "*bird's eye view*" to step out from being so much "*inside*" the piece. "*I was so inside, I didn't see a thing anymore, nothing from my piece*," she notes when looking back (talk, 31.02.2011). The outside perspective is still needed in order to work on "*small details*" that clarify the "*intentions*" on stage that allow the performers to "*tell*" a story. For Ruth, this means a task of "*shaping*" (interview, 21.02.2011) things and making them more "*compact*." For Mario, scaffolding has to do with "*timing*," with getting rid of "*superfluous statements*," with "*strengthening the tendency of the piece*," and with "*accomplishing a clarity*." This further involves to "*not lead people on the wrong track*," to "*notice what works and what not*" as well as to "*realize what you want to say and what you want to avoid saying*," and to "*find the means to do this in a simple way*" (interview, 01.02.2011).

The work of scaffolding is accomplished through three main techniques and means of *codification*. First, it requires cleaning up and fixing the material by counting and reiterating specific phrases or sequences. Next the material is further consolidated through an ongoing and, at the end, explicit form of *plotting*. *Evaluating* the material is then the third way in which the material is scaffolded.

6.3.5.1 Cleaning up and fixing material by counting and reiterating motion elements

A number of times I heard the performers talk about the importance of "*cleaning up*" the raw version of a piece. For Mark (interview, 16.03.2011), cleaning up means craft work; a manual work of correcting timings that requires "*repeating, repeating, repeating*" and "*technical precision.*" "*It is another form of concentration, this five-six-seven-eight-and-one-and-two. There you just have to function*," as he explains it. The focus of cleaning up he thereby sees in "*execution*," rather than "*creation*." For Henry (interview, 22.02.2011), an important part of cleaning up is then to generate some "*routine*," which he appreciates as it "*yields tranquility and also control, duk duk duk duk duk*." The staccato of his verbalization is accompanied by rhythmic movements of his hand.

Both Mark and Henry point at the central technique of *calculating* movement by counting it out from one to eight.

> At the start of today's rehearsal, Mark briefs his colleagues on this morning's schedule. "*Today we have to pound the choreo into our body memory*," he orients his colleagues. Then he asks about parts of the motion phrases that are still difficult or unclear, and whether some parts need to be changed before starting to "*pound them in*." After clearing smaller elements, the remaining 1½ hours consist of going through the developed motion phrases and counting them out. Every motion is assigned to a beat between one and eight. Mark and the performers thereby alternate in performing the metrum by pronouncing over and over the eight beats: "*One-and-two-and-three-and-four-and-five-and-six-and-seven-and-eight-and-one*" and so forth. At first this is done without music. The last third of the rehearsal then combines loud counting, performing and music. Over time, the motions of the performers become coordinated in respect to each other and to the music – sometimes synchronized, sometimes contrasting each other.
>
> ("Ensemble "Voltage," rehearsal one week before the premiere, field note, 24.01.2011)

Counting out the motion sequences and phrases goes hand in hand with numerous reiterations. The phrases, which become attached to the metrum of the eight-beat count, need to be performed over and over again so as to achieve the wanted

coordination of motions between performers and between motion and music. "Pounding the motions into the body memory" is physically demanding work:

> Mario drops in and oversees a rehearsal where the ensemble "Voltage" is engaged in fixing certain motion phrases by reiterating them on the basis of the eight-count metrum. He sits next to me in the third row. While the performers are working on a difficult phrase, Mario shouts across the stage: "*Ben, you are too slow in this phrase*." Ben barks back: "*Yes, Mario, I'm on the edge! My body is done, I still want to do the premiere!*"
>
> (Ensemble "Voltage," rehearsal with Mario watching, field note, 24.01.2011)

Overall, cleaning up and fixing the motion material through counting it out is a process of disciplining bodies and codifying materials in regard to the rigid metrum of the eight-beat count. It is a socio-material technique that relies on the reiteration of motions to the point of physical exhaustion. In this way material can be memorized and incorporated, so that the performers are able to reliably perform regulated phrases or whole sequences when needed.

6.3.5.2 Plotting – forming through narratives

In the development of a performance, the formation of material means a co-development of motion material and smaller or bigger narratives that ask and allow the performers to tell a story. Hence plotting, or the codification of material through narrative means, is another form of scaffolding that helps to consolidate and *sequence* the material. While the motion material is often developed without direct reference to any sort of grander narrative structure of the piece, it surely elicits and is created in reference to smaller narratives (see above, the example of the Green Sofa vignette and the narratives of *The Simpsons* and *Queen Elizabeth*).

For Marie, plotting is about working on the "intention" of the piece. It is about working on:

> small, small details. Why I go here, and with whom, this whole thing of intention. Before, everything was very physical. I, or we, produced motions, and so forth. Now comes the very, very important level that carries the whole piece. Because if you only see motion, then you get bored. It's about really wanting to tell something with it and that you really know what you want to convey. That's what it is about.
>
> (Marie, after she received her first external feedback, conversation, 27.01.2011)

The Green carpet vignette of ensemble "Circus" (see 6.3.4.1), illustrates how the consolidation of ideas is tied to cladding them in narrative forms and

conceptualizations that relate to the wider narrative structure of the performance's dramaturgy. This especially happens towards the end of the described sequence, when the solution that was found is the impetus for further narrative sensemaking around the role of Laura's character, the meaning of the green carpet and the overall story of the circus family. Plotting hence serves to *clarify relations* between different performers and allows a sequence of events to be devised.

> The ensemble "Circus" invited two actor colleagues to watch a run of the whole performance. Now, after the run, we all sit together at the local theater bar. A wild discussion unfolds about the different characters in the piece and their relations. Especially Laura's character is questioned. The two actors say that they can't understand why her character would change within the performance. "*Maybe she inherited the circus and cannot let go of it*," "*she was young once and was laughing and playing a lot*." Some minutes later a slightly adopted narrative develops that can account for some of the characteristics of the piece but that also further demands bringing them out more clearly. Laura eventually remarks: "*Now it's much clearer, before I wasn't so sure, now I know what you are doing and how I can relate to this*."
>
> ("Ensemble "Circus," feedback round with colleagues after a run, field note, 20.01.2011)

It was within explicit collective processes of sensemaking towards the end of the production process that the plot of the performance was revised and that roles and their relations were further specified. For the ensemble "Circus," this was a decisive moment in their production: once the plot and the roles had been specified only little amendments were needed to eventually draw things together.

Plotting and performing are mutually constitutive enactments and thereby reveal a basic dramaturgic dynamic of theater production processes: a "role" depends on the plot that it enacts, while a "plot" only exists in its actualizations in the form of roles. However, roles only come alive when performed, and their situated performances suggest changes within the understanding of each role and therefore also the overall plot.

Plotting is also important in terms of external communication. Two weeks before the premiere, the groups have to hand in a short description of the piece to Ralf, who is compiling the program brochure.

> Upon entering the rehearsal space, I see and hear Jeff ranting about the task of fixing a description of the performance for the program brochure. He complains to Ruth that "*these program brochures give too much away. The audience should be able to develop its own understanding!*"
>
> (Ensemble "Circus," rehearsal, field note, 26.01.2011)

The plot summary required for the program brochure means a pressure to decide on an account that, through its public release, becomes somewhat binding for the performers.

In summary, plotting means devising a sequence of events and an order of relations through symbolizing the material within a narrative and dramaturgical grid. It is an ongoing and collective activity that comes to the fore especially in the late phase of production.

6.3.5.3 Evaluation and the politics of what counts as "good" CDT – *de gustibus dispudandum*

Scaffolding is further affected within the *conduit* of *taste talk* (see 5.3.5), where material is evaluated[152] along a collectively developed lexicon of taste and aesthetic *standards*. As suggested before, the constant employment and testing of aesthetic appraisals and qualifications of material means a collective negotiation of the material and is pivotal for its formation as well as subsistence. Unfolding around the central and problematic question of "what is good CDT," taste here is shown to be a disputatious affair: *de gustibus dispudandum*.

In Chapter 5, for instance (see 5.3.2), we saw how assessments such as "*This is not clean enough for a 'Posentanz'*" or "*No, this looks too much like modern expressive dance*" (Ensemble "Circus," fieldnote 17.12.2010) convey a sense of the implicit or explicit boundaries of taste-making and therefore of the politics of what counts as "good" CDT. These assessments serve to establish clear limits conerning what is seen as "proper" CDT within the various styles of CDT.

Explicit evaluations take part in the scaffolding of material in different ways. In the case of external feedback, they for example allow *realizing one's own position*.

> Smoke break with Jeff and Andrea. They talk about the feedback session with their actor colleagues the other day. Jeff smirks: "*Their comments made us realize what we don't want, by all means!*"
>
> (Ensemble "Circus," smoking break, field note, 26.01.2011)

Evaluations are often *power*-ful statements, especially when made by superiors such as Mario, the company director. In such cases, one's freedom to choose how to react to external evaluations is more restricted.

> Mark sits on a chair and is breathing audibly, then he groans. He looks very tired, worn out, sporting dark circles around his eyes and the hint of a

[152] As noted before, I distinguish the notions of *valuation* and *evaluation* as follows: valuation refers to an immanent mode of valuation, concerning the sensitivity to (un)pleasurable intensities and affects within an experience, while evaluation is the retrospective judgment and interpretation of an experience.

> mustache. I approach him, nodding his way. "*Hey?*" "*Tired and stressed out*," he replies. "*It got late yesterday*." Then he tells me about a feedback talk with Mario, who questioned the intro of his piece. "*It is something from me, something personal, I just like it a lot*." He appears hesitant and asks Ingrid, Ben and me for our opinions. He tells us that Mario and Ralf think the intro passage to hinder the needed concentration for what follows and that it is an unnecessary detour. Ingrid rises to speak with a decided tone: "*A matter of taste. Don't let yourself be influenced. This is their liking*." Then Ben, who had his own quarrel with Mario the day before, mimics speaking to Mario as if he were here right now: "*Mario, don't say it is wrong, say that you don't want it in*!", before further venting his anger, telling us that Mario should make clear statements and wishing for a clear ruling.
>
> (Ensemble "Voltage," rehearsal, field note, 01.02.2011)

Evaluation is tied to questions of power, hierarchy and expertise. Mario, for example, legitimizes his stance by referring to his duty and obligation to represent the institutional standards ("house politics") as well as his "*25 years of theater experience*" (interview, Mario, 01.02.2011). The latter is in particular mobilized at a number of occasions, when Mario is claiming to embody and represent the "*audience perspective*."

Overall then, evaluation is a socio-material technique of scaffolding the material that operates centrally through mobilizing two criteria: the collectively developed disciplinary norms and standards of CDT and the audience perspective. It means signifying the material and judging it in relation to this grid of pre-existing criteria.

6.3.5.4 The creativity of and after scaffolding

The work of scaffolding is but one phase in an overall experimental process. It follows from the ample generation of material and leads to more creative unfolding, albeit within stricter boundaries. Having good material is the prerequisite for scaffolding, which the performers regard as crucial phase in sight of the need to then be able to "play" again with the material. It grants the trust and freedom to engage once more with the material in a playful way, as Marie notes in a conversation with Julia between rehearsals:

> Once the scaffolding is up and you trust the motion you are doing, this yields the freedom to play [again]. This is the nice thing about it.
>
> (Marie, talking to Julia, fieldnote 28.01.2011)

Or, as Laura notes in an interview when I ask her for the creative parts of the process:

> In the end! Actually. It's weird, it shouldn't be in the end, shouldn't, but maybe not what you think, but because in the end when things are set you can start to really … add more and more of different layers to it or like

> emotions and character. The more you start to understand your character, the more layers you can put in, the more you can actually be creative and change small stuff. And this feels then very creative because this you can do in every performance a little bit also and so in this way it's really in the performance.
>
> (Laura, interview, 07.04.2011)

For Laura, when "*things are set*," when the characters have formed and most things are fixed, then another "*layer*" of creative engagement opens up. Then, she remarks, one can become "*creative*" in the "*small things*" that can de done from performance to performance. As Marie remarks: "*The first show will not be like the last. For me this is something that develops over the course of time*" (conversation, 31.01.2011).

6.4 Analytical intersection – the productive dynamics of taste-making

Research, *assembling* and *scaffolding* are three formats[153] of CDT production that operate through the different methods illustrated in the previous vignettes. Together, I propose to link methods and formats to the abstract modes of engagement of *experimentation* and *codification*. In table 3, I construct a typology of the different enactions occurring in the CDT production processes studied. These enactions, as Chapters five and six have shown, vary in terms of the *format* in which they occur, the basic *method* underlying their production, their *modality* and their *medium*. In terms of *modality*, the basic distinction is between *full performance* or *marking*. The material is either fully performed or is enacted through embodied marking, that is, discursive or gestural proxies for full-blown performance elements. Finally, enactions can be differentiated according to their basic *medium*, being either *incorporated* (movement, gesture or sound) or *inscribed* (recordings, narrations, written sketches, visualizations, etc.).

[153] The notion of "formats" I chose over the troublesome idea of "stages" or "phases." *Research*, *assembling* and *scaffolding* are analytically abstracted formats that, while also depicting a prototypical production process, must be understood as recurring activities all along the process: for example, *research*, while being typical of the early stages of production, can continue until late into the production process or even continue through the public performance, and at the same time *scaffolding* can occur early in the process as well.

	Format	Method	Modality	Medium
Experimentation	**Research (6.3.3)**	*Individual* (6.3.3.1) *or collective improvisation*: 1) *Structured improvisation* (6.3.3.2); 2) *Improvisational play* (6.3.3.3).	*Full performance* and/or *marking*	*Incorporated* (motion, gesture or sound) and/or *inscribed* (recording, narration, written sketch and visualization)
		Pragmatic conceptualization (6.3.3.4)	*Marking* or *full performance*	*Inscribed* (recording, narration, written sketch and visualization)
	Assembling (6.3.4)	*Collective probing* (6.3.4.1); *Imaginative assembling* (6.3.4.2); *Running test assemblies* (6.3.4.3).	*Full performance and/or marking*	*Inscribed* (recording, narration, written sketch and visualization) and/or *incorporated* (motion, gesture or sound)
Codification	**Scaffolding (6.3.5)**	*Calculation & reiteration* (6.3.5.1). *Plotting* (6.3.5.2); *Evaluation (0)*;	*Marking* or *full performance*	*Inscription* (recording, narration, written sketch and visualization)

Table 3: Format, method, modality and medium of enactions within CDT production

Table 3 shows that certain formats and methods already imply specific modalities and media: a run, for example, mostly encompasses a full enactment of already rehearsed material. In contrast, a group discussion within a research process may include (video) playback, visual sketches and metaphorical allusions on the basis of gestural markings; within informal conversations with friends and families, the performance again exists in discursive marking through narrative stubs, etc. The overall typology must be considered as presenting analytical categories that in practice are not always sharply distinguishable and also merge into each other. As Chapter five has shown, the production of CDT, for example, evinces a typical rhythm of working "inside-out" (see 5.3.3), that is, of switching between research and (test) runs.

Answering the central question of how sense and taste can be generated and transformed in coordinated processes of interaction, the previous vignettes further teach us about the specific aspects of taste-making that modes of engagement evince in their formats and methods. For the mode of experimentation and the mode of codification, table 4 and table 5 summarize the empirical findings of 6.3 in respect of the characteristic aspects of taste-making.

Mode	Format	Method	Sense-/taste-making[154]
Experimentation	**"Research" (6.3.3)**	***Individual*** (6.3.3.1) ***or collective improvisation***: 1) ***Structured improvisation*** (6.3.3.2); 2) ***Play*** (6.3.3.3; 6.3.3.4).	*Incremental*: born from repetition with difference (6.3.3.1); *Vectorial*: along "vectors of appetition" (6.3.3.2); *Participatory*: ambulation of sense/taste made possible through associations along different bodies (human and non-human). Taste/sense is always co-constituted within collectively coordinated interaction (6.3.3.3; 6.3.4.1); *Rhythmic*: ceaselessly coordinated (micro) interactions of "give and take" constitute specific turn-taking rhythms (6.3.3.3); *Embodied*: coordination is relying on non- and paraverbal means of communication (6.3.3.3); *Inciteful*: amplification through the positive feedback-loops of valuation (6.3.3.3); *Playful*: the connection of a concrete embodied situation and an alienated virtual meaning and the capacity to *detach* meaning from a situation and to *attach* new meaning (*associative / dissociative*) (*6.3.3.3*; 6.3.3.4); *Propositional*: within the course of playful experimentation develop socio-material configurations that are propositions to the event (*6.3.3.3*; 6.3.3.4); *Problem-creative*: play is not problem-solving but thrives on the possibility of problem-creation (*6.3.3.3*; 6.3.3.4).
		Pragmatic conceptualization (6.3.3.4).	*Episodic*: sense-making confined to the episode of restoring/generating sense of what has happened; *Meta*: making sense of the immanent sensemaking of play; *Cross-media*: based on articulations of material in various media; *Attesting*: the generation and transformation of sense / taste is contingent on inviting and granting attestations as well as taking up propositions; *Prototypical*: enacting multiple pasts in pragmatic conceptualizations in order to find out ways of how to proceed; *Looped* (*prospective & retrospective*): negotiating the future ("what could happen") by negotiating certain versions of a multiple past ("what has been happening").
	Assembling (6.3.4)	1) ***Collective probing*** (6.3.4.1); 2) ***Imaginative assembling*** (6.3.4.2); 3) ***Running test assemblies*** (6.3.4.3).	*Inventive* & *associative*: filling in blanks through inventing and probing prototypes (6.3.4.1); *Responsive*: prototypes are actualizations of virtually insistent possibilities (6.3.4.1); *Imaginative*: enacting imaginative test assemblies that *inventory* and *sequence* heterogeneous elements (6.3.4.2); *Tentative* or *shelved*: assemblages are marked as tentative or explicitly not appraised until later (6.3.4.2); *Explicit*: assembling generated material into explicit test assemblies (6.3.4.3); *Trial and error*: finding the proper assemblage through trying out (6.3.4.3).

Table 4: Formats and methods of experimentation and their characteristic forms of taste-making

[154] For all the characteristics of taste-making listed, it is valid that one method implies different aspects of taste-making and vice versa. The references in brackets are only exemplary.

Mode	Format	Method	Sense- / taste-making
Codification	**Scaffolding (6.3.5)**	*Calculation & reiteration* (6.3.5.1). *Plotting* (6.3.5.2); *Evaluation (6.3.5.3)*;	*Disciplining / incorporating*: forming material and bodies to the rigid metrum of the eight beat count, memorizing and incorporating material (6.3.5.1); *Reiterative*: controling and pacifying material through repetition (6.3.5.1); *Coordinative*: coordinating motions as well as motions and music (6.3.5.1); *Clarifying*: clarifying roles and their relations (6.3.5.2); *Sequencing*: devising a sequence of events (6.3.5.2); *Narrative*: dramaturgic co-development of motion, role and plot (6.3.5.2); *Normative*: evaluations revolving around standards and norms (6.3.5.3); *Political*: evaluations as power-ful statements (6.3.5.3); *Audience-related*: evaluations on the ground of the audience perspective (6.3.5.3);

Table 5: Formats and methods of codification and their characteristic forms of taste-making.

In a next step, I propose to systematize the empirically devised characteristics of taste-making by relating them to the different constituents of sensemaking as introduced by Sandberg and Tsoukas (2014): *events* that trigger taste-making, its specific *processes* as well as *outcomes* and the various *factors* influencing taste-making. While the various factors of taste-making have been featured in Chapter 5, I here focus on the three former constituents (see table 6).

The *events* that trigger taste-making are hybrid: within the *major planned event* of production as such, we find *minor planned events* like improvisation-based "research" sessions or "runs" as well as a host of *minor unplanned events* – all the little problems and challenges of a production process that occur within and beyond minor planned events.

The specific *processes* of taste-making within research, assembling and scaffolding must all be appraised against the basic assumption that creative practice and production, in all its formats and methods, is a question of *enaction* (see Chapter 3, especially 3.2.7).

To think of taste-making as a modality of enaction is, as I suggest in the following, an alternative to the classical Weickian *representationalist* approach to sensemaking.[155] The latter, be it within a cognitive (1979) or interpretive, language-based (e.g. 1995) frame, distinguishes the three sensemaking processes of *creation*, *interpretation* and *enactment* (see also Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). For Weick, sensemaking is thereby

[155] As shown in late reviews (see Holt & Cornelissen, 2013; Maitlis & Christianson, 2013; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014), Karl E. Weick's development of the notion of sensemaking stands as exemplary for the dominant sensemaking perspective within organization studies.

always a process partly taking place *outside* of experience, as it is retrospectively giving meaning *to* experience. Weickian sensemaking is therefore limited to the production of (narrative) accounts *of* the world and is therefore based on *signification* – the linguisticality of experience allowing for *meaning*. For Weick, it is through representationalist processes of language and cognition alone that we can interpret and thus make sense of the world. Sensemaking is thereby seen in the service of the restoration of sense or action. It is accounting *for* a past experience in order to organize experience, control and predict events. As suggested by Sandberg and Tsoukas (2014), this is a limited account of sensemaking as primarily retrospective, representational, interpretive and concerned with preserving identity. If drawing on such a notion of sensemaking for developing an account of creativity, there is little leeway for thinking of creativity as being beyond a hylomorphic mode, where language-based ideas are lastly imposed on passive matter.

As an alternative, the notion of taste-making as developed within this thesis, is based on the concept of *enaction*. The notion of enaction does not make analytical distinctions that perpetuate longstanding dualisms, but emphasizes the holistic nature of sensemaking and therefore also taste-making as a form of viable conduct *within* experience: an environment becomes meaningful and significant through enaction; "sense," "action," "perception" and "creation" constitute a holistic, dynamic and self-producing "intra-action" (see Barad, 2003). Enaction thereby assumes a pragmatic concept of meaning as *significance*. What is *significant* is determined through engaging with a world-in-the-making where, modifying the pragmatic definition of "a bit of information" by Gregory Bateson (1972, pp. 271–272), any difference can make a *meaningful* difference. Creativity is here a question of invention, the conjugation of material, bodily flows (of subject and object in-the-making) and their relational operations and affects.

The following specification of taste-making as moving between experimentation and codification – through research, assembling and scaffolding – complements Weick's understanding of sensemaking by describing and theorizing creative taste-making processes that are primarily prospective, affective and concerned with the incremental development of taste/sense through perpetually producing and appreciating difference. I thereby do not seek to replace the Weickian understanding of sensemaking but illustrate the reciprocity of prospective and retrospective forms of taste-making within experimental and codifying modes of engagement. Enactivism, as an alternative to the representationalist epistemology underlying classical accounts of sensemaking, allows the conception of prospective and retrospective forms of sense and taste-making as a question of enaction. The contribution of this study is to suggest that, while taste-

making is always enaction, we can find different forms of enaction and specific effects within the various methods of research, assembling and scaffolding.

As proposed in table 6 (below), the processes of taste-making within research, assembling and scaffolding can be distinguished according to their *locus* and *dynamic*, their *temporality* and their *effectiveness*. This means a systematization of the various characteristics of taste-making as described in the previous vignettes and as listed in tables 4 and 5 (above).

		Taste- / sensemaking processes		
Format	**Method**	**Locus / dynamic**	**Temporality**	**Effectiveness**
'Research'	Individual or collective ***improvisation***: 1) ***Structured improvisation*** 2) ***Play***	***Immanent*** Embodied, participatory / relational, rhythmic, inciteful / self-reinforcing	***Prospective*** Vectorial, incremental	***Inventive*** Generative and transformative of sense/taste through its propositionality, playfulness and capacity to create problems.
	Pragmatic conceptualization	***Immanent*** (see above) ***Explicit*** Episodic, meta & cross-medial	***Prospective*** and ***retrospective*** looped	***Inventive / restorative*** Of sense/taste and action through prototypicality and attestation.
Assembling	1) ***Collective probing*** 2) ***Imaginative assembling*** 3) ***Running test assemblies***	***Explicit*** and ***immanent***	***Retrospective*** and ***prospective*** tentative	***Restorative*** Through imaginative assembling and engaging in trial and error testing. ***Inventive*** Through being associative, responsive.
Scaffolding	1) ***Evaluation*** 2) ***Plotting*** 3) ***Calculation***	***Explicit*** Intentional, normative, political	***Retrospective*** Narrative, sequencing, clarifying	***Restorative*** Consolidating sense/action through disciplining bodies and materials. Effecting a reliable reproduction.

Immanent >>>>>>>>>> Explicit | ***Prospective >>>>>>>>>> Retrospective*** | ***Inventive >>>>>>>>>> Restorative***

Table 6: Taste-making processes in respect to production method and format

6.4.1 Experimentation – taste-making within research and assembling

I propose to understand taste-making within the formats of research and assembling as being experimental and therefore being primarily inventive.

6.4.1.1 Research's immanent taste-making – the inventive character of improvisation and pragmatic conceptualization

Within research's method of *improvisation* (6.3.3), it is through the collectively coordinated interaction that taste/sense is constituted. Taste-making here is *immanent*: it is not a deliberate attempt to come to terms with a past material encounter, but a mode of engagement characterized by "absorbed coping" (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011, p. 344). Ongoing and ubiquitous, immanent taste-making is situated *within* experience, and therefore within the mundanity of practice and its routine (micro) activities and events. "It takes place simultaneously with actors' responses to a situation as it unfolds" (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014, n. p.).

As such, immanent taste-making is, for all ways, an *embodied* taste-making. It is with and through bodies and their capacities to affect and be affected, e.g. in non- and paraverbal ways of communication, that taste is collectively constituted (6.3.3.3).

Within collective improvisation, immanent taste-making is further characterized through its *participative relationality* and its *rhythmic* dynamic of *self-reinforcement* (6.3.3.3). The generation and transformation of taste is made possible through associations across different bodies within collectively coordinated interactions following specific turn-taking rhythms. Immanent taste-making thereby relies on ongoing and situated valuations[156] that, as positive feedback-loops of mutual incitement, effect an amplification of specific taste characteristics.

In terms of temporality, the immanent taste-making of improvisation is primarily *prospective*. Immersion into practice is accompanied by a sense of how it will unfold. Immanent taste-making is future-oriented, seeking to actualize a taste which yet always stays "in-the-making." As such, the prospectiveness of immanent taste-making is *vectorial* (6.3.3.2) and *incremental* (6.3.3.1). It unfolds along "vectors of appetition" and constitutes socio-material configurations that are propositions to the event of taste.

The effectiveness of immanent taste-making, tied to its *inventive* capacity, is in generating and transforming sense/taste. Its inventiveness rests in its general *propositionality* and its *playful* character (6.3.3.3). Generating propositions to the event of creativity and taste, immanent taste-making seeks to "make things happen." Being playful, immanent taste-making combines a concrete embodied situation and an alienated virtual sense/taste and the capacity to *detach* meaning from a situation and to *attach* new meaning. As such, it is both *associative* and *dissociative*. In particular,

[156] See 3.4.3 for the distinction between *valuation* and *evaluation*.

improvisational play is thereby not an activity of problem-solving but thrives on the possibility of "problem-creation," the enaction of productive constraints.

Research's method of *pragmatic conceptualization* (6.3.3.4) combines the immanent taste-making of improvisation with an *explicit taste-making*. Research involves the episodic attempts to make sense of the immanent sense-making of improvisation. Taste-making occurs here on a meta level and is based on articulations of material across various media, or bodily modalities.

The basis for the explicit yet embodied taste-making in pragmatic conceptualization is *marking*. The product "performance" only exists in its enactments and performances. And it is through marking – by means of gesturing and mimicking, onomatopoeia and mostly narrative ways of conceptualization – that collective embodied thinking and the negotiation of past and future become possible in the here and now of rehearsal.

The explicit taste-making of pragmatic conceptualization therefore combines, within a "looped temporality," a prospective and retrospective vector. Collectively negotiating specific versions of a multiple past ("what has been happening") is thereby in service to an anticipated future ("what could happen"). Taste-making means to launch and at the same time follow a trajectory, a vector that is relating future and past in the present. The peculiar continuity of past and future in the present I thereby posit as follows: while it seems as if the past allows for the present, it is the present that makes one live the past, yet coaxed by an anticipation of what is to come.

In terms of effect and outcome, pragmatic conceptualization is both restorative and inventive. It restores action and sense through an inventive, prototypical conceptualization of the preceding events that is collectively attested to.

6.4.1.2 Assembling as inventive and restorative taste-making

Within *assembling* and its methods, taste-making is about working with the existing material. Through processes of composition and editing, material is assembled and dissected, joined in new ways and explicitly tested. Single movements are thereby assembled into a phrase, and phrases might be assembled into a whole scene, for example a duet. On every "level" of assemblage, the question of "*How does it work*?" has to be posed again, as any new composition is a new *agencement*. While single movements might be "working" by themselves, they might not work when being put together into a phrase. A phrase might work by itself, but it might fail when adding a certain kind of music or light, etc.

The locus and dynamic of taste-making in assembling is explicit. As becoming clear in the case of running test assemblies (6.3.4.3), the existing material is assembled into

tentative test configurations and explicitly tested in a way of trial and error. The other two methods of assembling also mean an explicit attempt to either make sense of the existing material (6.3.4.2) or invent a way of filling a blank in between existing material (6.3.4.1). Working with or seeking to join to existing material, the temporality of assembling is retrospective and prospective. Assembling material means constructing more and more encompassing structures. Knowing that with each added element the overall assemblage changes, the assembled formations are often marked as tentative, or plans to work with certain elements are shelved until a point later in time (6.3.4.2).

Assembling effects a specific kind of outcome, both restoring and inventing sense/taste. It is restorative in enacting imaginative test assemblies that *inventory* and *sequence* heterogeneous elements (6.3.4.2) and in testing explicit test assemblies (6.3.4.3). In increasingly bigger assemblages of heterogeneous elements, assembling seeks to find out "what works" and what else might be needed to make an assemblage "work." This is not about taking explicit decisions. Decisions are in this sense rarely "made," rather trajectories develop through situated valuations in the form of attesting interjections or the active taking up of elements and their slight modifications.

Assembling is inventive in that "making an assemblage work" necessitates the transformation of existing, or the generation of connecting material, for example when associatively filling in blanks through inventing and probing prototypes (6.3.4.1). Especially when collectively probing the possible connections or fillings of a blank, the associative character of taste-making comes to the fore. Experimenting with future possibilities takes flight from existing assemblages. Within experimentation, the possible is therefore always a *nearby unknown*[157] that is found through joining associatively, incrementally. The blank is sought to be filled through probing different enactions that are contingent on the already existing material. Depending on the medium of enaction, different possibilities for joining open up based on operatory analogies. Taste-making is here emphazised in its responsive character.

6.4.1.3 The bounded creativity of taste-making within collective experimentation

Experimentation exhibits an interplay of immanent and explicit forms of taste-making. Effected within the different formats of experimentation, immanent and explicit forms of sensemaking thereby interweave prospective and retrospective approaches. While analytically distinct, the various forms of taste-making are very much related and

[157] Salaverría (2007) translates Dewey's (1922/2002) notion of the *special unknown* as *das naheliegende Unbekannte* (the *nearby unknown*). In light of the credo of *creatio ex materia*, I therefore propose to talk about the *nearby unknown*.

interwoven. For example, play and its enactive re-creation and negotiation – through various embodied and narrative means – flow in and out of each other. Doing is active imagination and embodied thinking, which is understood through the reactions of others and active sensemaking, which already again entails imagination of further trajectories, and so forth.

All the different aspects of taste-making are effected within a *milieu of experimentation*. As also shown in Chapter 5, the playful mode and mood of the performers, for example, is contingent on cultural savvy, story elements, mocking, friendship, intimacy, aesthetic concerns, material affordances, skilled bodies and many things more (see for example 6.3.3.3).

The practical concern of experimentation within CDT is thereby, on the one hand to develop generative situations that are propositions to the event (see Manning, 2013, p. 76) and on the other to qualify and take up the resulting material in order to assemble it into tentative scenes.

Experimentation is *the* mode of engagement of *creatio ex materia*. It allows for the collective generating and live assembling of material *with* and along existing material. The collective proliferation of material thereby happens primarily through the articulation of movement – e.g. through gesture, sound, conceptualization, which allows for further interaction and exploration. While each articulation is always an actualization of one of many possible renderings and thus potentially constraining, the practitioners capitalize on the performative or connective aspects of articulations as affording new and alternative feelings, thoughts and actions.

In this process of morphogenesis, a "working repertoire" serendipitously and incrementally emerges from relating various elements on an operatory level of symptoms and signals. As exemplified in the "green sofa" vignettes (6.3.3.3, 6.3.3.4, 6.3.4.2), the morphogenesis of material starts from a vague idea in the form of a generative game (musical chairs), an inspiring scene (the *Simpsons*" sofa scene) and the operatory dynamics of a prop (popcorn machine and spluttering popcorn). It then goes through a playful generation of first material, the recurrence of certain elements in variation, eventually another round of playing and testing and then a final verification of the material as "working" and further to be worked with. Constant tests and trials lead to an immanent and incremental qualification of the product. Through a series of micro attachments and detachments of the sense of the situation, little by little the scene is qualified and singularized. Within the collective, "decisions" are thereby not made by any particular person but are an effect of actions and reactions that develop along vectors of appetition, where enthusing the others and collective

attestation (likes) are the waystations for an ambulant movement – e.g. from a narrative of *The Simpsons* to one of "*Queen Elizabeth*" (6.3.3.4).

Overall, I propose to understand collective experimentation as a process of *intervening* into and *following* the movement that emerges from an intensive engagement with the practical concerns. This is the basis for collectively recognizing what "works" and what not and thus generating a "working repertoire," which will be put to the test again and again. All the while taste-making is driving as well as channeling the process. Through affirmative bodily doings (re-enactment) and sayings (affirmative interjections and laughter) the "flow" of improvisation as communication is kept up. Taste plays a central role as being able to "lubricate" and "navigate" the process while holding things and performers together. As "lubricant," taste allows for the performers to interact freely within the shared aesthetic boundaries. Taste further works as ongoing navigational device, where through (para-)verbal attestations the different propositions are accounted for. Taste is also an adhesive, forming groups and holding things together. In order to hold the ensemble together, it seems paramount to ensure that taste is articulated and negotiated on the level of sensations. Frequent appropriateness markers thus perform the boundedness of practice.

Showing the oriented and concerned nature of practice, these vignettes thus tell us about the *bounded creativity* of collective improvisation and how creativity is located in all the interstices of this collective weaving of human and non-human actants.

6.4.2 The restorative taste-making of scaffolding

Scaffolding (6.3.5) is the work of consolidating the material through the means and methods of *calculation & reiteration* (6.3.5.1), *plotting* (6.3.5.2) and *evaluation* (6.3.5.3). In the following section I detail the specific forms and effects of sense/taste-making (see table 5).

It is when cleaning up and consolidating material that *calculation*, that is, the counting out of motion, becomes a central method of scaffolding. Calculation is thereby inextricably bound to the subsequent *reiteration* of the material. The central scaffold of calculation is the rigid *metrum* of the *eight-beat count*. With its defined units of the steady eight beats, the metrum introduces a clear code, which performs as a system of measurement and standardization. This system is extremely effective in codifying and adjusting motions in respect to the grid of the metrum. It *disciplines* materials and bodies, the latter by *incorporating* the former. It is reiterative, controlling and pacifying material through repetition. And it is *coordinative*, matching the motions of

different performers (as in synchronized duets or group choreographies) as well as motions and music.

Plotting is the dramaturgical work that centrally affects the co-formation of motion, role and plot. Plotting relies on the scaffold of the *narrative* and its organizational properties. The codifying work of plotting is the symbolization of the material within a narrative grid. It is a collective work of *clarifying* roles and their relations and of *sequencing* events.

In this thesis I develop the argument that all modes of engagement are marked by an instance of (e)valuation. While experimentation is shown to be characterized by an immanent form of valuation, scaffolding is particularly affected through the explicit taste-making of *evaluation* as a form of judgment. Evaluation is the most obvious *normative* mode of engagement, centrally revolving around firstly disciplinary norms and standards of CDT and secondly the perspective of the anticipated public *audience*. These are the pre-existing criteria that form the scaffold and grid of evaluation. Evaluation is thereby shown to be an inherently *political* endeavor.

All in all, I propose scaffolding to be primarily a *restorative* form of sense- and taste-making. The methods of calculation & reiteration, plotting and evaluation *retrospectively* and *explicitly* employ and *impose* specific codes (such as the eight-beat count, the narrative and the standards and norms of CDT as well as the audience perspective). In this way, past events and experience can be retrospectively accounted for and hence organized into a reproducible scaffold. Bodies and materials thereby become tentatively disciplined, sequenced and normalized. Through this combined force of consolidation, scaffolding seeks to *restore* sense and action in the present and future and to control as well as predict events (see table 6, bottom row).

Attempting to not fall back into dualisms, I propose that scaffolding only ever tentatively achieves consolidation. Codification is an abstract category that marks an extreme on a continuum of modes of engagement that in reality is never reached. Within CDT produciton, scaffolding is not separated from experimentation. Scaffolding is a needed force for an overall creative process of concrescence. It tightens the boundaries that might only intensify subsequent creative play.

6.5 Summary

In answer to the second research question, in this chapter I attended to the *morphogenesis* of CDT performances with a special sensitivity to the *empirical circularity* of making CDT. Within *production*, which is a never-ending trajectory

towards concrescence and perfection, practitioners and their products move through mutually constitutive modes of existence and presence. As such, I proposed that answering the question of the generation, formation and stabilization of the product "theater performance" requires first of all thinking the engagement of practitioner and material within problematic modes of *attachment*. Production is affected within a dynamic stretching between forces of conservation and innovation. Overall, I therefore directed my attention towards the uneasy relation between creativity and the boundaries inherent in all practice.

***Kill your darlings* – production as a process of attachment and detachment**

In a first section, I described production as an "*aesthethical*" process, or a process that is marked by a close relation of aesthetics and ethics and that follows a distinctive "fever chart." The generation and subsistence of a product, here thought of as a *technoaesthetic being*, showed as an intensive process marked through forces of *attachment* and *detachment*. Described within a story of "*kill your darlings*," a famous adage in the world of theater making, I focused on how the performers develop an emotional *attachment* to their piece (their "baby," as they call it), while needing a more or less forced "professional" *detachment* when tentatively consolidating the product into a good through a series of trials and qualifications. From the perspective of the evolving product, I suggested that the fever chart of production points to the *formativeness* of practice (see Gherardi & Perrotta, 2013). Aesthetic and artistic products have careers and are involved in an ongoing process of attachment and detachment. Overall, I suggested that *kill your darlings* denotes the somewhat "schizophrenic" relationship between practitioner and object of practice in the making of CDT. Suggesting that the performers are asked to desire as *amateurs* and compose as *professional critics*, I introduced the conceptual figure of the *professional amateur*. Unfolding the "fever chart" of *kill your darlings* showed that the creative practice of making CDT requires both the thrust of idiosyncratic "love affairs" and the maintenance of a common orientation. This, I suggested, holds both for situational dynamics of attachment and detachment within a rehearsal as well as for the more general phases of CDT production.

Making theater work between experimentation and codification – production as taste-making

In the second part of this chapter, I focused on the two central *modes of engagement* within CDT production (namely *experimentation* and *codification*), which I thereby suggested are indissociably linked to the dynamics of attachment and detachment. It is within the empirical circularity of experimentation (note its semantic connection to the

notion of "experience") that the attachment to the piece both develops and is required. And it is within the various attempts of codifying and qualifying the evolving product that amateurs need to turn into professional and detached critics.

I proposed understanding these modes of engagement as ways of *taste-making*. CDT production, as shown in the previous section on attachment and detachment, proceeds within the nexus of experience and experimentation. Taste is a problematic modality of attachment, and the focus on taste-making allowed to highlight the heterogeneous moments, forms and configurations of the intensive relation between professional amateur and an elusive product. For this I proposed framing the experimental and codifying modes of engagement within CDT production as ways of *taste-making*: they generate, transform, manipulate and impose meaning and taste.

I then differentiated and specified the abstract modes of engagement in respect to their *format*, *method*, *modality* and *medium*. *Research*, *assembling* and *scaffolding* were three analytically abstracted formats that, while depicting a prototypical production phase, must be understood as recurring activities all throughout the process. Within these formats I distinguished different methods: from different forms of improvisation and assembling to explicit attempts of evaluating and fixing the material. Together, these methods revealed how sense and taste could be generated and transformed in coordinated processes of interaction. As a result, I explicated various characteristics of taste-making that I afterwards systematized as seen in table 6. Drawing on Sandberg's and Tsoukas (2014) explication of central sensemaking characteristics, I differentiated the specific modes of taste-making according to their *locus* and *dynamic*, their *temporality* and lastly their *effectiveness*. I thereby concentrated on describing and theorizing creative taste-making processes that are primarily prospective, affective and concerned with the incremental development of taste/sense through perpetually producing and appreciating difference.

Answering the question of the relation between the different modes of engagement, the tentative typology (table 6) of taste-making was suggested to revolve around three *reciprocal characteristics* of taste-making within the making of CDT. Concerning the *locus* and *dynamic* of taste-making, I proposed a reciprocity of modes of engagement between *immanent* and *explicit* forms of taste-making. Concerning the *temporality* of taste-making, I proposed a reciprocity between *prospective* and *retrospective* forms of taste-making. Concerning the *effectiveness* of taste-making, I proposed a reciprocity between *inventive* and *restorative* forms of taste-making.

While analytically distinct, the various forms of taste-making were shown to be very much related and interwoven. Modes of *experimentation*, while overall representing

inventive forms of taste-making, were marked by an interplay of immanent and explicit as well as prospective and retrospective forms of taste-making. Taste-making thereby meant launching and at the same time following a trajectory, that is, a vector that relates future and past in the present. Overall, the different modes of *experimentation* were shown to allow for collective forms of generating and live assembling of a performance *with* and along existing material. The taste-making of experimental modes of engagement was suggested to proceed through constant tests and trials that lead to an immanent and incremental qualification of the product. Little by little, through a series of micro attachments to and detachments from the sense and taste of the situation, the material is thereby qualified and singularized within collective experimentation.

I then distinguished three modes of codification: *calculation*, *plotting* and *evaluation*. All three I suggested to be characterized by an *explicit*, *retrospective* and *restorative* form of taste-making. Together, these different modes of codification were presented as key agencies for turning the material into a reproducible and semi-stable performance.

Overall, the specification of taste-making along the three reciprocal relations allowed me to detail how the creative practice of making CDT is marked by the intertwining forces of conservation and innovation. The performance is a pattern-in-process that, while concrescing overall, goes through different consistencies. Sometimes it needs to be liquefied and at other times it needs to be consolidated. Experimentation thereby meant a process of *intervening* into and *following* the movement that emerges from an intensive engagement with practical, aesthetic and ethical concerns. Codification, on the other hand, meant a process of employing and *imposing* specific codes (such as the eight-beat count, the narrative and the standards and norms of CDT as well as the audience perspective) that could tentatively discipline, sequence and normalize bodies and materials.

Against a dualist fallback that would plot experimentation against codification, I proposed that both modes of engagement are mutually constitutive. Codification only ever tentatively achieves consolidation, and experimentation would be lost without consolidating forces. One needs the other within the overall process of CDT production.

7 Discussion & Propositions – Prospects of a Poetic Praxeology of Production

Following my initial research questions, in the preceding two empirical chapters I first "zoomed out" on the ecology of creative *practice* and then "zoomed in" on the specific activities and events involved in the *production*, that is, morphogenesis of a Contemporary Dance and Theater (CDT) performance. By undertaking these dual analyses, focusing on the deeply mediated, socio-material nature of the becoming of a CDT performance, I sought to go beyond classical "input-output models" of (organizational) creativity (see Chapter 2). I did not seek to understand creativity through "reading creativity backwards" from its outcome alone, but to follow and read creativity forwards in both the actions and events that generate, transform and make materials subsist. After having detailed the ecology of creative practice through "zooming out," the analytical foci on the micro processes between input and output opened up to an understanding of creativity along the laborious process of "making dance theater work."

I suggest that the various findings converge within a *poetic praxeology of production*. They help to specify the interrelated concepts of creative *practice* and production. Creative practice is thus detailed as thoroughly mediated, inventive, skilled, improvisatory, concerned, oriented and collective. *Production* is coming to mean an incremental qualification of a performance effected within the various modes of engagement that make up creative practice.

I propose understanding creative practice and production together as a process of *taste-making*. Taste-making moves in-between more experimental or interpretative modes of engagement with the material. In both cases, taste-making never means merely observing qualities or properties of materials. Rather, they need to be enacted and disclosed within the *tests* and *trials* of experimental as well as interpretative taste-making. Bearing in mind that these modes are analytical abstracts, they are not to be considered as mutually exclusive. For instance, the concrete mode of improvisation features specific instances of experimentation (acting out, trying, following appetitions) as well as interpretation (trying to make sense of what has been happening).

In this chapter I then discuss and develop a propositional, tentative framework that integrates the findings concerning creative practice and production.[158] For this, I firstly discuss the existing sociocognitive and sociocultural frameworks of creativity in respect to a processual and relational framework (P2A4) of creative practice (7.1). In what follows, I begin by detailing the specifics of CDT production (7.2). Then I attend to the experimental logic of production within CDT and focus on taste-making as an overall mode of aesthetic and affective experimentation (7.3). Thereafter, I turn to the *organizational skills* of taste-making that revolve around the capability of amateurs to mobilize the material semiotics (see Chapter 3) of their materials and its blend of actual and virtual aspects (7.4). In the final section of this chapter I then once more take up the empirical findings of Chapter 6 on the different modes of taste-making on a continuum in-between experimentation and interpretation. I thereby propose different dimensional models of taste-making as affecting both a transformation and stratification of the product CDT performance (7.5).

7.1 Towards a processual and relational framework of creative practice

To talk of creative practice means emphasizing that "the work to be done" is not a doing *to* but a working *with* "live" material (see Bunn, 1999), while seeking to produce a technoaesthetic being. The organizational creative practice of making CDT is thereby embedded in habitual work that requires substantial practical experience and sensible expertise. It involves a specific "activity-sensibility" (Hennion, 2011) that, considered as a skill of *taste*, includes domain- and task-specific representations and concepts yet clearly extends beyond their direct denotative function. The actions and events within the various forms of experimentation within rehearsal are not completely derived from directly observable, actual properties and conditions but rely on and emerge from anticipatory engagement with weak, virtual symptoms and signals. The taste- and sensemaking of creative practice is therefore marked by an interplay of two semantical systems that are active within a continuum of respective modes of engagement: the "more-than-representational" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010), affective sphere of *experimentation* and the representational sphere of *interpretation*.

[158] This chapter draws on the empirical findings and the first and close analytical readings and conceptual developments found throughout Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. As such, this chapter has the status of a meta-discussion that further develops the "theory narrative" (Bansal & Corley, 2012) started within Chapter 3 through formulating a number of conceptual propositions and tentative frameworks.

In the previous empirical chapters, I mostly concentrated on the "more-than-representational" aspects of practice. This allowed me to comprehend organizational creativity as practice in its relational and processual as well as aesthetic and affective aspects. Reading organizational creativity "forwards" (see Ingold, 2010a) in this way meant specifically focusing on the affective nature of relationality in-between persons and materials within creative practice. I situated the intimate engagement of practitioners with themselves and their materials within experimental modes of engagement within an "interobjective" (Latour, 1996) space of affection.[159] It is within this affective space, I suggest, that self and material, self and other as well as self and collective are mediated within rehearsal activities of experimentation.

Affection is primary for understanding the relations between skilled practitioners and materials. This is the fundamental conceptual move that in the following sections, along selected findings, I discuss in comparison to the *representationalism* that is found both in *sociocognitive* (within organizational creativity research, see Crossan & Apaydin, 2010; or group creativity research, see Paulus & Yang, 2000) and *sociocultural* creativity frameworks (within collaborative creativity research, see Littleton, Rojas-Drummond, & Miell, 2008). Aiming at a discussion on paradigmatic levels, I therefore especially discuss my findings in light of both the classical "4P" framework of Mel Rhodes (1961) and the recent work of Vlad Petre Glăveanu, who thoroughly considered the differences between the sociocognitive and the sociocultural approaches (2011) while promoting a tentative framework (2013) based on the "cultural psychology of creativity" (2010). Through this discussion, I propose a provisional, practice-based framework of creativity (see 7.1.2) as an alternative to the cognitivist framework of Rhodes (1961) and as a complement to the sociocultural framework of Glăveanu (2013).

7.1.1 Limitations of entitative approaches

To formulate a *poetic praxeology of production* means to question paradigmatic assumptions about the nature and function of the *relation* both in-between practitioners as well as in-between practitioner and product. I will discuss the differences specifically regarding the understanding of *action* and *representation* within creative endeavors. This is the basis for understanding the specific contribution of my process-relational framework.

[159] "Affection" is here understood in its archaic meaning as "the act or process of affecting or being affected" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). See also Chapter 3.

As suggested within this thesis, I consider creativity to take place within a fundamental *relationality* that connects the virtual realm of the preindividual and the relative reality of the individual. I propose that "in the making" (James, 1909/1996), the relationality between person, product, process and press – the various strands of creativity research (M. Rhodes, 1961) – has to be situated on a continuum that, while ending with the relative reality of the subject-object divide, is emerging from and always staying connected to a preindividual realm of virtual relation (Simondon, 2009). The "4Ps" are not *strands* that are *interacting* but constituents of *creative practice*; as such they are *transactional* and have to be understood in their "interobjectivity" (Latour, 1996).

From the proposed viewpoint of relationality, the conventional sociocognitive and sociocultural approaches to (organizational) creativity, if adhering to methodological individualism, are *entitative* frameworks that construe groups as sums of individual, self-contained and self-determining entities. The hallmark of entitative frameworks is to divide the world into active entities (humans) operating with representations of ontologically distinct objects.[160]

Sociocognitive approaches

The ontological and methodological individualism of positivist, sociocognitive creativity models situates creativity in the individual mind, or brain. Cognitivism's central creative principle of problem-solving posits creativity to be found within the manipulation of discrete, internal mental states (representations) according to certain rules or algorithms. This basic assumption holds sway both within research on *group creativity* (e.g., Paulus & Yang, 2000) as well as wide parts of *organizational creativity* (e.g., Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). Collectives – that is, groups or organizations – are here thought to be mere arithmetical combinations of individual capacities of information processing (see for example Nijstad, Diehl, & Stroebe, 2003). In accounts of problem-solving, representation and imposition thereby go together in the following way: after an adequate representation of the "problem," a solution is "cognized" and imposed. In accordance with Anderson and Harrison (2010), the positivist thinking within sociocognitive approaches can therefore be understood as a "naïve representationalism" that commonly views text, images, dialogue or even emotional thought as reflective, objective representations of "reality."

[160] See Anderson and Harrison (2010) on representationalism within positivist and social constructionist theory and methodology.

Sociocultural approaches

Mirroring the wider development of a social constructionist, cultural psychology (e.g., Gergen, 1985), the small research stream of *collaborative creativity* (Littleton et al., 2008; Miell & Littleton, 2004; Sonnenburg, 2004) has developed a sociocultural psychology of creativity (see also R. K. Sawyer & DeZutter, 2009). Cognitivism's central positivist notion of "information" is here superseded by the concept of "meaning." Furthermore, the "naïve representationalism" of positivist metaphysics gives way to the "critical representationalism" of social constructionism (Anderson & Harrison, 2010). In the following sections, I mainly refer to Glăveanu's (2010, 2011, 2013) recently developed "cultural psychology of creativity" framework, which draws on and synthesizes the existing research.

Glăveanu's (2011, 2013) confluence of sociocultural psychology, theories of distributed cognition and ecological psychology draws on non-dualist ontologies yet does not follow through its "more-than-representational" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010) implications. While claiming a relational, dialogical ontology (Glăveanu, 2011, p. 480) and citing Dewey's pragmatist account of the making of art (2013, p. 5), the focus of Glăveanu's approach is on symbolic action (2013, pp. 3–4; see figure 2) and communication within a "representational space": "The fundamental assertion of the framework proposed here is that creativity, including collaborative creativity, takes place in a *representational space*" (2011, p. 483, emphasis in original). A related position can be found in Atkinson's (2010) recent work on the making of opera, where the creativity of "cultural bricolage" is effected within "a particular kind of interpretative work" (p. 13). For Glăveanu, who draws heavily on Winnicott, the central creative principle therefore is symbolic action:

> [I]n a collaborative situation, individuals use symbolic resources intrinsic to their particular system of knowledge and, through communication, generate new and useful artefacts (the creative outcome) within a representational space of the group. (Glăveanu, 2011, p. 483, emphasis in original)

Within a representational space, the various resources (from informational to procedural to material elements) of creativity are understood as "symbols" or "representations." From a cultural psychological perspective, the relation between self and other is always mediated through an act of signification, that is an imposition of meaning:

> [I]deas, procedures, and objects alike are always defined by a certain *meaning*, they "represent" something for each of the participants and the group as a whole and it is this *signification* that *mediates the relationship*

> *between self and other* in the creative activity, making resources become shared, communicated, negotiated, contested, accepted, or rejected and, at times, effectively used by the group. (p. 483, emphasis in original)

The sociocultural representationalism introduces a distinction between "the world and its meanings" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 9). Facing a creative task, it is the individual who, as active agent, firstly needs to construe meaning:

> Each individual, when confronted with a creative task (whether alone or in a group), first starts from representing the situation s/he is in and framing this representation in the wider system of cultural models that are activated by the specific creative task. (Glăveanu, 2011, p. 483)

It is as such that the representationalism of Glăveanu's sociocultural creativity framework, notwithstanding claims of "(t)he social as intrinsic to creativity" and "creativity embedded in [symbolic] interaction" (p. 475), must be considered an entitative framework. As problematized in Chapter 2, an entitative framework assumes creativity to take place on the level of the individual who, as a separate entity, has to be already prefigured before representation gives meaning to an "external" world. To assert that creativity takes place in a representational space means to operate with a classical Cartesian divide: "On one side, over there, the world, the really real, all 'things coarse and subtle,' and on the other, in here, the really made-up, the representations and signs which give meaning and value" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 6). The critical *representationalism* of entitative approaches assumes an ontological distinction between representations and what they appear to be representing. The representational space is an (inter)subjective realm, with full import, values, tendencies, motivation, desire and ideas, or forms. The formless material world, in contrast, is only granted importance and value through the former.

The critical representationalism of constructivist approaches implicates a thought- and language-based epistemology of *signification*. It follows from the introduction of an ontological gap between representation and the represented. This has tremendous implications, as therefore:

> [creative; BM] "action" is not in the bodies, habits, practices of the individual or the collective (and even less in their surroundings), but rather in the ideas and meanings cited by and projected onto those bodies, habits, practices and behaviours (and surroundings). Indeed the decisive analytic gesture of social constructivism is to make the latter an expression of the former. (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 5)

According to Glăveanu, collaborative creativity therefore necessitates the building of "a common *representational space* … where the group's creative dynamic takes place

and it is here where different thinking styles collide and by this spark the creative process" (p. 483, emphasis in original).

Summing up, I claim that representational approaches to creativity operate – within both sociocognitive and sociocultural frameworks – according to a logic of *imposition*. They maintain the idea that creativity means a vectored *action* with a definite origin within the individual, a "doing *to*" something, imposing prefigured ideas onto passive materials in order to make an object. As such, both frameworks are based on *hylomorphic* models of creativity (see Chapter 2 and 3). In both approaches, the individual is thought as being *vis-à-vis* a situation with distinct others (entities). Creativity here involves facing or construing and then solving a problem through either computing with internal, individual representations or intersubjectively negotiating the meaning of passive materials through language-based communication.

While both approaches allow us to understand a certain aspect of creative making, I suggest that they miss out on three central aspects of creativity as found within this project: first, by staying wedded to a basic theory of *action*, creativity is not appreciated so much in its *performative*, that is, uncertain and event-*ful* nature. Second, by thinking of creativity as basically *disembodied*, the central role of embodied, affective engagements with colleagues and materials is not accounted for properly. Third, and following from the ontological and epistemological premises of entitative frameworks, to conceive of collective creativity as either an arithmetic formation of individual problem-solvers or an inter-subjectively negotiated meaning of materials and resources misses out on the fundamental *preindividual relationality* of actual practice and making.

7.1.2 The "P2A4" framework of creative practice

As part of the problematization of current creativity research (see Chapter 2), I explicated the paradigmatic assumptions of Rhodes' (1961) classical and guiding "4Ps" framework for studying creativity and Glăveanu's (2011) recent alternative of the "5As." While I join Glăveanu's criticism of Rhodes' overly cognitivist and positivist framework, I still propose another alternative, possibly complementary framework ("P2A4")[161] based on a process-relational perspective of creative practice (see figure 3).

[161] Please read "P2A4" with a wink. In light of my scepticism towards explanatory creativity models, the acronym of "P2A4" should not convey another grand creativity framework. I have chosen to call it that way so that it could "communicate" better with the discussed "4P" and "5A" frameworks.

This framework answers directly to the three points raised above. At the heart of this framework lies an alternative understanding of the *relationality* of the various aspects (beyond the idea of interaction within both the "4P" and the "5A" frameworks) that together form an *ecology* of creative practice. As an alternative to a focus on *action* alone, I draw on the idea of *embodied enaction* (see Chapter 3), or performance, to account for the generative *mediations* that follow from a nexus of action and event. And as a complement to the *representationalism* of both the "4P" and "5A" frameworks, I propose adding a differentiated understanding of *affection* that is situated within a relational reality preceding the binary oppositon of subject and object.

The conceptual shift I propose can be understood along recent developments both in cognitive research as well as in social and cultural theory. The "new paradigm" of enaction (Stewart et al., 2011) within cognitive science developed an understanding of cognition as thoroughly embodied, embedded, extended, enactive and affective (the "4EA" approach, see Protevi (2010)).[162] An *enactivist* framework of *sensemaking* (see Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014; Stewart et al., 2011; Varela et al., 1991) then posits creativity no longer as an action of an individual mind, but situates it within an ongoing, embodied and immanent sensemaking (see Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). Creative practice is here thought of within the richness of the moment-to-moment, affective engagement of experienced bodies with culturally meaningful materials (see for example Hutchins, 2011).

The enactive approach in cognitive science is mirrored in more recent developments in cultural and social theory, including organization studies. These approaches, while themselves partly drawing on the developments of distributed and embodied cognition, propose a non-dualist understanding of the relationality of subject and object. Exemplary waypoints are Latour's (2005) process-relational notion of assemblage and its translation within work on creativity (see Bartels & Bencherki, 2013; Passoth, 2012), Manning's (2013) concept of the "ecology of the event" and Steyaert and van Looy's (2010) framework of relational practices within participative organizing. As they formulate relational alternatives to all forms of "atomism",[163] these approaches help to develop an understanding of creative practice as a thoroughly relational activity and event of sensemaking. Sensemaking is here equally located in transaction, that is

[162] According to Protevi (2011), various "4EA" approaches share a certain family resemblance by drawing from philosophical and scientific resources ranging from dynamical systems theory in mathematical modeling over an enactive view within biology and developmental systems theory and ecological thinking within psychology to phenomenology (p. 417).

[163] See the discussion on the shift from atomism to contextualism (Gherardi, 2012; Pepper, 1942).

the manifold of action and event, rather than in a discursive or symbolic dimension dissociated from the "real world."

As an alternative to the framework for studying creativity of Rhodes (1961) and a complement to that of Glăveanu (2012), I put up for discussion the so-called "P2A4" framework, which revolves around the central idea of *creative practice*. This tentative framework serves to cluster and connect the various findings – both theoretical and empirical – of this thesis. As such, the following conceptualizations have to be regarded as conceptual propositions.

Figure 3 illustrates the central aspects of creative *P*ractice as developed within this thesis: *A*mateurs, *P*roducts, *A*udience, *A*ttachments,[164] and *A*ppraisal lexicon (P2A4). This list is neither exhaustive nor stable. The focus of this framework rather concerns the *status* of its elements. As the central unit of analysis in this framework I posit creative practice, which is the process of creative making entailing various activities and events that assemble and transform materials. The spatial arrangement of the figure is thought to convey the pragmatist understanding of the relation of subject and object, where practice is primary. "In the making," that is, in practice, subject and object as well as all the other elements of this framework mutually constitute each other. None of them is to be thought as natural or as given. It is only through the amateurs' experimentations and experiences that products, attachments, audience and appraisal lexicon are gradually revealed and clarified (see also Hennion, 2004, p. 141).

[164] "Attachment" here stands as a proxy for the various practice carriers that allow for and mediate creative practice: from materials over "plug-ins" and techniques to socio-material conditions (see 3.4.2).

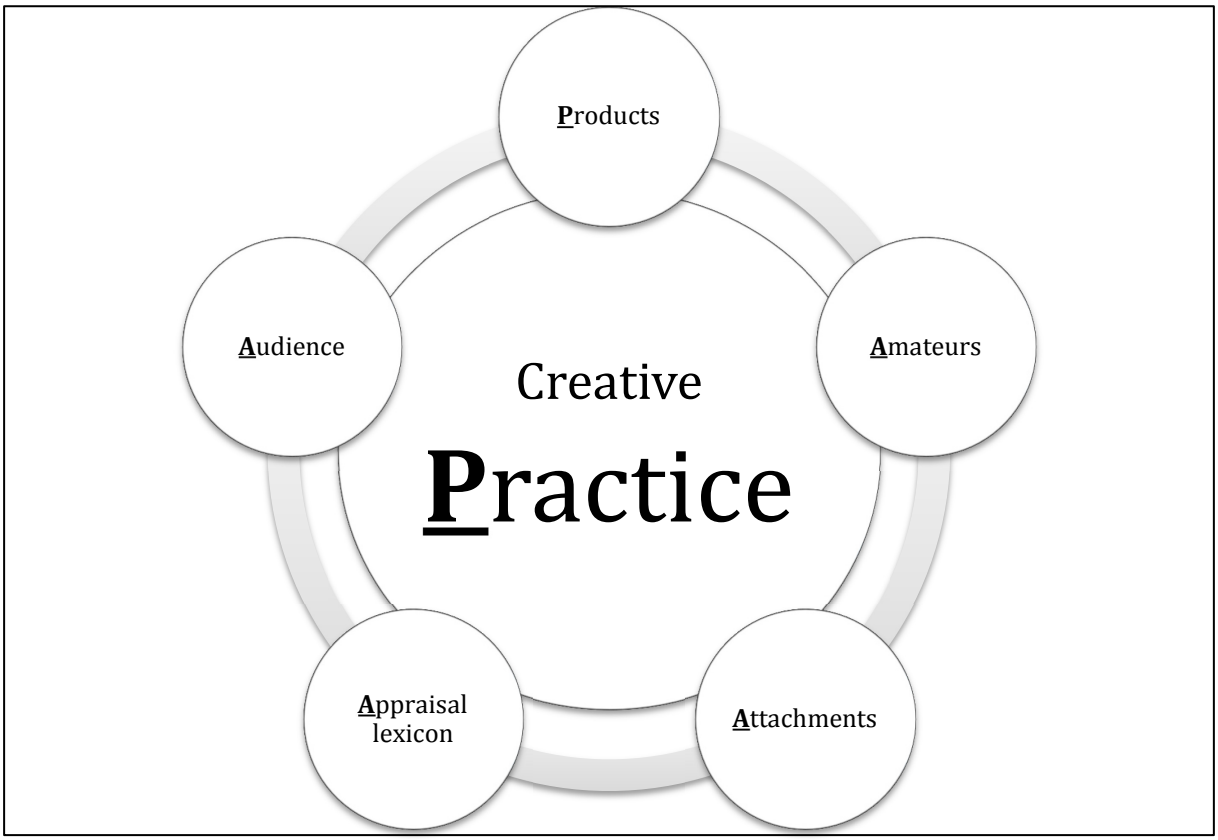


Figure 3: The "P2A4" framework of creative practice

The relationality of the various aspects I posit to be based on *affection*. An affective membrane, rather than representation (cf. Glăveanu, 2011), forms the fundamental "liaison between the relation of the individual to itself and its relation to the world" (Combes, 2013, p. 31). Affectivity is the kinaesthetic tissue that links practitioners and their work within their wider milieu. It thereby contains a "share of not-yet-individuated preindividual reality that any individual carries with it" (p. 31). Spatial terms (as in "*representational space*" (Glăveanu, 2013)) are thereby possibly misleading as the relation of the individual in-the-making to its milieu "is an affective attunement more than a space, a field more than a form" (Manning, 2009, p. 26). This allows to account for the generative and transitive relationality both in-between practitioners and in-between practitioner and material.

Creative practice is an *affective sensemaking* that cannot be reduced to *representational* processes of problem-solving, divergent thinking or socially constructed meaning-making. While Gherardi (2009) conceives of the aesthetic sensemaking of practice foremost as discursive activity (p. 545), my findings in contrast hint at the power of an affective sensemaking where discourse is just one type of performance. What mediates the relationship between self and other within the

making of CDT is the interplay of affective significance and discursive yet pragmatic signification.[165] "[T]he meaning of things comes less from their place in a structuring symbolic order and more from their enactment [enaction] in contingent practical contexts" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 7). As introduced in Chapter 3, I propose that the semiotics of representationalist understandings of the symbol need to be extended and complemented through the "material-semiotics" (compare Law, 2009) of the triad of symptom, signal and symbol. The processual relation between self and other not only happens through symbolic action, but it fundamentally entails encounters of affective symptoms and signals.

The focus on material semiotics helps to account for creative practice as being oriented toward and contingent on the associated milieu's *valence* and *significance*. "In the making," the CDT performers and choreographers are immersed in a meaningful, significant world. They do not encounter a situation *and* a problem or meaning, but a "troubled, perplexed, trying situation, where the difficulty is, as it were, spread throughout the entire situation, infecting it as a whole" (Dewey, 1933/1998, p. 140). Within the "heat of the moment" of experimentation "there is no 'elsewhere' …. All there is, is what happens in contact with things, in objects, and in the tests and devices which hold them together" (Hennion, 2014, p. 167). This idea comes in various guises. Styhre (2011) characterizes practice as centrally involving "intuitive thinking derived from weak, at times barely recognizable signals" (p. 110). Even Fishers' and Amabile's (2009) recent sociocognitive contribution to creativity and improvisation within organization speaks of an important "responsiveness to temporally proximate stimuli" (p. 19). As such, affective sensemaking allows for the development of a "*sens pratique"* (Bourdieu, 1990), which refers to the practical sense for a situation and its possibilities and demands. As an example of this kind of practical sense, Bourdieu takes to the game of soccer:

> A player who is involved and caught up in the game adjusts not to what he sees but to what he fore-sees, sees in advance in the directly perceived present; he passes the ball not to the spot where his team-mate is but to the spot he will reach a moment later, anticipating the anticipations of the others. He decides in terms of objective probabilities, that is, in response to an overall, instantaneous assessment of the whole set of his opponents and the whole set of his team-mates, seen not as they are but in their impending positions. And he does so "on the spot," "in the twinkling of an eye," "in the heat of the moment," that is, in conditions which exclude distance, perspective, detachment, and reflexion. (pp. 81-2)

[165] See De Landa (2012) for the insightful differentiation of linguistic and pragmatic approaches to meaning. The former is wedded to the idea of "signification," while the latter emphasizes a more basic idea of "significance."

The “feel for the game” (p. 66) is an “immediate,” affectively mediated and anticipatory awareness of the momentary happening.

To be competent in “playing the game” of creative practice (as illustrated in the various accounts of experimentation in Chapter 6), affective sensemaking is contingent on various generative *attachments* (see Chapter 3). From materials, “plug-ins” and nuances to know-how and repertoire, criteria, techniques and socio-material conditions, to common histories and contested evolutions – these are all the carriers of practice that co-constitute the amateur’s competence of “activity-sensibility” (see Hennion, 2011). From within Antoine Hennion’s pragmatism, the analytical concept of attachment therefore opens up a view on the various practice carriers that constitute the domain of creative practice. Hennion’s work on the amateur’s activity sketches the ecology of creative practice as a tissue, a fabric of tight linkages that form and enable the central activity-sensibility “competence” of the amateur.

The *amateur*’s activity-sensibility is a thoroughly *embodied* matter that develops from and relies on the urge of learning to affect and being affected by the world. It is within (creative) experimentation that as amateurs the dancers and choreographers of CDT probe their corporeal sensibilities and that they through kinaesthetics develop and rely on their practical *sense* of the situation. Creative practice is thereby characterized through enaction. We find here the specific nexus of “doing and undergoing” (see Dewey, 1934/1980), which is the combination of practices of preparation and actively attending to the seismograph of one’s own body. The amateur’s body is thereby enfolding and unfolding “the complexity of immanent collectivity …. [It is] more assemblage than form, more associated milieu than being” (Manning, 2010, p. 118). As an assemblage and a main mediator, the body is understood according to its capacity to affect and be affected, which is bound to diverse forms of experimentation and training of the corporeal sensibilities that are taking place in the career of CDT amateurs.

Amateur and *product* are ongoingly related. Creative practice is a thoroughly *processual* matter. The developing product mediates the collaboration between the other participants of production. Far from passive, the developing product is the generative hub of creative practice. The becoming of the product (*morphogenesis*), which moves through various *modes of existence*, thereby always also affects the maker. Opposing the classical division between innovation processes and outcomes (e.g., Crossan & Apaydin, 2010), I object to the epistemological and ontological separation of person and product (as classically in M. Rhodes, 1961). To the contrary, I suggest that a processual view on the “work to be made” needs not to exclude but to

account for the *empirical circularity* found in processes of morphogenesis, where "the work" is actively taking part in its own formation. As "living labor" (see Negri, 2008), the "work to be made" is productive, both affecting the generation of novel forms as much as the becoming subject's capacities to sense and to act. Becoming skilled within creative practice relies on the amateur's embodied co-individuation with his or her material and products.

From the perspective of the evolving product, the suggested "P2A4" framework implies creative practice to be a question of *production*, that is a process of incrementally qualifying an artifact through ongoing "experiments of taste." Creative practice in this respect thereby further relies on two central aspects, namely *audience* and a lexicon of *appraisals*. Products ambulate; they circulate and transform within joint regimes of production and consumption. It is a movement past many eyes and commented on through immanent appraisals and external judgments. I therefore propose understanding creative practice and production together as a process of *taste-making*.

In the following sections, after detailing the basic idea of production within CDT as the incremental qualification of a performance I suggest that taste-making is a question of experimentation.

Within my attempt to formulate a relational and processual framework of organizational *creatio ex materia*, the P2A4 framework of creative practice thereby appears as an experimental apparatus, or, as formulated elsewhere (see 3.2.4), an ecology of the event. Experimentation, I propose, is the basic principle of creativity *ex materia*. The organization of taste-making therefore needs to be understood as the ongoing enaction of an experimental set-tup. It is in this way that the P24A framework illustrates the collective set-up of an event ecology. Amateurs, the product, the various attachments and plug-ins, an audience and the appraisal lexicon jointly constitute the ecology that harbours the activities and events of creative taste-making.

7.2 Production I – the incremental qualification of a performance

The processual and relational perspective on creativity, as proposed so far, can be merged into a focus on creativity within an experimental logic of *production*. Production is an ongoing process of concrescence where the product moves through various *modes of existence* and is reliant on a network of "allies" that brings it to life and makes it subsist (Akrich et al., 2002a; Callon et al., 2002; Latour, 2008a). A chain

of activities, happenings and transformations thereby generates, concretizes and ongoingly refines the product-in-the-making.

In the following sections, I then propose that, within a double movement of divergence and convergence, the making of a CDT performance equals a process of incremental qualification and "in-formation" (7.2.1). From vague ideas, little by little, in an itinerant movement, the performance takes on a recognizable form. I thereby propose to understand in-formation to be effected through a mode of *aesthetic composition* that seeks to assemble material in such a way that it bears a "sensation" (7.2.2). The product "performance" I suggest to think as a *consistency of forces* that, in their composition, seek to instill a sense of *dynamic tension* and *unresolved possibility* within its audience (7.2.3).

7.2.1 Production as a process of increasing "in-formation"

From a production perspective, the development of a CDT performance is an ambulant movement of contingent enactions with increasing "in-formation." To understand production as a process of increasing "in-formation," Latour (2005) offers an understanding of in-formation as a "material description of formalism" (p. 226): he urges us to attend to the various material entities that circulate "from site to site." Latour calls these entities *forms* (p. 226). Form is for Latour not to be taken in a formal but in a material sense. Remembering the lesson of mediation, namely that any interaction is mediated, form "becomes one of the most important types of translations" (p. 223). As such, for Latour "a form is simply something which allows something else to be transported from one site to another" (p. 223).
Form therefore is another concept for understanding that a CDT performance must be considered a multiplicity. It "only" exists in its various enactions. *P*erformance (with capital P) must be materialized, embodied or even incarnated in *p*erformances, that is, tokens of movement, gesture, talk and inscriptions in order for it to be (re)produced, refined, sustained and translated from one point to another. These enactions, as Chapters 5 and 6 have shown, vary in terms of the *format* in which they occur, the basic *method* underlying their production, their *modality* and their *medium* (see table 6, p. 345). The combination of format, method, modality and medium constitutes the specific form, that is, *mode of existence* of the product on its movement towards more concreteness.

7.2.2 The CDT performance as consistency of forces

Within CDT, production means the incremental and itinerant "in-formation" of a technoaesthetic being. While creative practice is accordingly a question of both technical and aesthetic composition, it is the latter that is key for our understanding of production. The aesthetic composition of a CDT performance requires the assembling of heterogeneous forms (elements) in such a way as to compose a "sensation" (see 3.2.5). As a sensation is never a property of an aesthetic object but of its encounter as a *symptom* and *signal*, the essential question of the amateur is therefore time and again "how does it work?" How can the material used (motion, gesture, sound, light, talk) be assembled in such a way so it becomes capable of bearing a sensation? For Smith (1996), writing on Deleuze's theory of sensation, the artist has to ask:

> How will the sensation be able to turn in upon itself, extend or contract itself sufficiently, in order to capture, in what is given to us, forces that are not given, in order to make us sense these unsensible forces, *and elevate itself to its own conditions*? (p. 42, emphasis in original)

The basic principles of sensation constitute the principles of the creative composition of artistic works, which respectively reveals these conditions. When sensations have to be regarded as themselves being composed of molecular and protean forces (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 176), the production of CDT implies a work of composing forces and assembling them into larger *consistencies*.

The specific way an assemblage is both made and held together is what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call *consistency* – a mode of composition not in the sense of harmony or homogeneity, but in the sense of how heterogeneous elements hang together and strike a balance between mutability and immutability. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the elements of a consistency are "block[s] of sensation" (1994, p. 166). Consistencies, as sensations, are not solid or fixed block-like entities, but assemblages of vital rhythms, tensions and thus affects.[166] A consistency therefore constitutes a relational whole of specific (kin)aesthetic capacities that are distinctively being actualized in each assemblage and mediated by the "tastes" of its respective aesthetic community. Massumi (1987) likens the notion of consistency in this regard to an idea of "style," "as a dynamic holding together … of disparate elements" (p. x).

The consistency, that is, the "style" of an assemblage of heterogeneous elements, is its affective sense. When practitioners have (and/or formulate) a certain "feel" for something or sense that a certain performance part "does (not) work," I propose that

[166] See Smith (1996) for a lucid summary of Deleuze's theory of sensation, including his exemplary analysis of the works of Francis Bacon.

they refer to an assemblage's sense of consistency. Consistency, from the Latin *con-* "together" and *sistere* "stand," denotes the way the elements of an assemblage "work together" to make for the event of taste. In a similar way, Deleuze and Guattari do not employ the term consistency in its logical sense, but in the sense of thickness or viscosity, "the way in which a substance, typically a liquid, holds together" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). Consistency, as the affective sense of a technoaesthetic being, is therefore the how of the event of performance in its unfolding in respect to its constitutive elements.

The question of consistency was for instance especially crucial in the end phases of the studied productions. Especially in the last week before the premiere, which was the time of stage rehearsals where all the elements of a performance were assembled for the first time, questions of consistency abounded: "How does it work?" "How does a small change of light, timing or costume, etc. affect the experience of (a part of) the piece?"

I propose that it is only with a certain *degree of consistency* that the performance affects a sought-after sensation. The synthesis and composition of disparate blocks of sensation must lead to a specific degree and quality of consistency, else "it would be impossible to distinguish the elements that constitute the sensation" (Smith, 1996, p. 44). If elements are not attached in such a "consistent" way, the performance might "not work," as the CDT practitioners used to say. Just think of Laura and the production process of the ensemble "Kill your darlings" (see 6.1). She realized almost too late that she well developed her "darlings" but forgot to make things work as a whole.

> If one multiplies the lines, if one elaborates too rich and complex a material, the claim is that one is opening oneself up to all events, to all irruptions of force, but in fact one can merely wind up producing nothing but a scribble that effaces all lines, a "sloppiness" that in fact effaces the sensation. (Smith, 1996, p. 44)

Production means an incremental compositional process that seeks to form a consistent assemblage. To produce such a consistency is a difficult process, uncertain and potentially subject to failure. The example of "Kill your darlings" is again instructive in this case: assembling just "spectacular" parts or "darlings" risked to produce a non-consistent assemblage that would consist of "good material" but lacked the "work" needed to "make it work" (see 6.1).

7.2.3 Seeking a consistency of rhythms and unresolved tensions

Depending on the style of CDT and the genre a performance is set in, "what works" can be very different things: what is evaluated is the *operatory* dimension of the assemblage (see 3.2.5), for example bearing dynamic tensions or unresolved potentials that make a certain phrase or scene "interesting," that is captivating, seductive, enthralling etc, for an audience. Artistic works cannot be described in terms of sufficient and necessary attributes and they cannot produce any definite emotional qualities. They can however still be specified in terms of characteristics that, while not directly causing, at least are prone to facilitate sought after kinaesthetic experiences. Out of the four different "characteristics of art" proposed by Sandelands and Buckner (1989), two are noteworthy also for the purpose of this project: "dynamic tension" and "unresolved possibility." The former assumes that artistic objects are seductive and enthrall the perceiver by means of the impression of dynamic tensions of opposing forces. A major form of creating dynamic tensions thereby is to work with *rhythmic* blocks of sensation – for example, measures in music and dance, patterning on the painting's surface or meter poetry (p. 112). For Langer (1953), rhythm is primary in relating to artistic works as living forms and guaranteeing their consistency. Sandelands and Buckner (1989) conclude that tension is pivotal for two reasons:

> First, it gives the artwork an arresting vitality. … Second, it calls the perceiver to action and brings to aesthetic thinking a purpose of its own – something it would not have otherwise. Tension cries to be resolved. (p. 113)

Tension entices the perceiver to engage with the artistic object and can produce unforeseeable "intensities," especially when the work "asserts the prospect of resolving its created tension. Yet the artwork itself does not provide resolution" (p. 113). This is left to the beholder, who is allured into co-creating and finding all the possibilities of resolution: "Art is all about possibility. It is about tension and the possibilities of its resolution. … The work is not a finality. It promises more" (p. 114). Overall, I suggest that a performance "promises more" if it has reached a respective consistency, that is an assemblage of elements that achieves this difficult composition and that holds to the ever-important question "whether it works."

Within the CDT productions studied, dynamic tension and unresolved possibility were achieved on different dramaturgical levels (performance, role, plot) and within different modalities (motion, narrative, etc) and their interplay. Pointing out just one example, the "Voltage" production for instance achieved a dynamic sense of suspension through placing performers into different compartments so that the audience could see all of them but the performers could not see each other. The

choreography thereby foresaw a partial coordination of the dancers in terms of contrasting or synchronized parts. This was done in a way that the audience well sensed a connection without realizing a possible underlying "code."

7.3 Production II – taste-making through aesthetic and affective experimentation

Composing a consistency of forces and thereby forging a performance's affective sense I propose to be a matter of taste-making. In the following I thereby specify taste-making as a mode of aesthetic and affective composition that crucially rests on the idea of *experimentation*.

Taste-making moves in-between more experimental or interpretative modes of engagement with the material. In both cases, taste-making never means merely observing qualities or properties of materials. Rather, they need to be enacted and disclosed within the *tests* and *trials* of experimental as well as interpretative taste-making. Bearing in mind that these modes are analytical abstracts, they are not to be considered as mutually exclusive. Within my attempt to formulate a relational and processual framework of organizational *creatio ex materia*, the P2A4 framework of creative practice thereby appears as an experimental apparatus, or, as formulated before, as an ecology of the event. Experimentation, I propose, is the basic principle of creativity *ex materia*. The organization of taste-making therefore needs to be understood as the ongoing enaction of an experimental set-up. It is in this way that the P24A framework illustrates the collective set-up of an event ecology. Amateurs, the product, the various attachments and plug-ins, an audience and the appraisal lexicon jointly constitute the ecology that harbours the activities and events of creative taste-making.

Before starting my propositions about experimentation, I suggest it is important to discern *experimentation* as an abstract (as such only analytically existing) mode, or practice, of engagement from the general *experimental* character of creative practice within the making of CDT. Experimentation is what I choose to call a deliberate mode of engagement with the material that is aiming at generating material from and testing material in its operatory dimension (see 3.2.5). The specific practice of experimentation as such then is for example dominant within the "research" phase (see 6.3.3) of production. Overall, I suggest that this is still nothing but an intensification of the basic experimental ethos of creative practice within CDT as such. A CDT performance only exists in its performances. Each performance thereby must be seen

as a risky endeavor hinging on the possibility of unintended consequences in-between what retrospectively would be called failure or success. I therefore suggest that every enaction, or performance, must be thought as experimental.

"*(How) does it work*?," one of the central questions within the production process (see Chapter 5 & 6), is the basic question of creative practice's principle of *experimentation*. The evolving product, as an assemblage and consistency of heterogeneous elements, is the experimental test assembly that is tried again and again. "Does the consistency work? Does it make *sense*[167]?" asks the aesthetic and affective sensemaking of experimentation. These questions are only ever answered through the empirical nexus of experience and experiment. Topologically stretched between an actual and a virtual pole, experience is therefore the currency of experimentation. Experimentation and experience are themselves part of an economy of aesthetics, affect and desire. Unceasing, experimentation seeks to produce, appreciate and articulate differences within subjects and objects in-the-making. As such, experimentation means the serial and ceaseless performance and testing of an evolving assemblage. The product evolves through ongoing tests and trials within different enactions (see 7.2).

Within this kind of experimentation, I propose that *testing* is best understood as *tasting*. As worked out in the analysis, both amateur and material are infused with vector-like "appetites." The basic experimental set-up of creative practice within the making of CDT therefore foresees a conjunction of "vectors of appetition." Taste, which always has to be considered a performance of *taste-making* (see Gherardi, 2009; Hennion, 2004, 2007), I therefore propose as the basic machine both for generating and appreciating differences by following these "vectors of appetition." Creative practice and production are a matter of taste, as taste is a key element both in sustaining and refining practice and therefore also the products and producers.

Taste is a felicitous expression, denoting at the same time characteristics of subject and object in the making (as in expressing a taste for something that is considered to exhibit a certain taste) as well as pointing at the specific, preindividual relationality of the mutually constitutive subject and object. Beyond turning taste into little more than the effect and expression of arbitrary social distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984), I consider taste thereby to refer to the (kin)aesthetic and affective *affordance* of material; the material's aesthetic and affective capacity to make us sense, feel, think and act in a specific way. In contrast to both sociocognitive and sociocultural creativity

[167] Sense here denotes the sense of (non-)coherence or consistency that often guides the practitioners on their way through and alongside the materials.

frameworks (see 7.1.1), I propose that the specific relationality of taste thereby extends beyond the actual and symbolical relation of amateur and material. Taste-making offers a non-dualistic alternative to both frameworks. The emphasis on symbolical action (see for example Glăveanu, 2013, p. 5) is thereby superseded by an aesthetic and affective nexus of performance and event (see Gomart & Hennion, 1999). To involve the event of taste, I propose to frame the creativity of production not so much as a question of (inter)action but of transaction.

Overall, within my interest of theorizing production and the qualification of an aesthetic artifact, the focus on taste allows for further accounting for the intimate relation of amateur and material, or product. I hence further zoom in on the mechanisms and incremental morphogenesis of production, or the how of the becoming of a CDT performance.

In the following, I detail how creative practice within the making of CDT means an aesthetic and affective experimentation. Production is thereby highlighted in its radically empirical testing and tasting of material. Taste always has to be read as "taste-making," a processual and relational engagement and work that unlocks the material semiotics of material and products. As form of experimentation, I propose that taste-making means "con-testing." It accounts for the experimenter as part of the experimental set-up, bearing witness and being on trial herself with all of her aesthetic and affective sensibilities.

7.3.1 Experimentation and the event of taste

Understanding taste-making as experimentation, I wish to detail creative practice and production as an ongoing inquiry into empirical material. I thereby seek to establish experimentation as the mediated *enaction* of an experimental ecology that allows for the encounter of subject and object in-the-making, and therefore the event of taste, an aesthetic and affective phenomenon, to happen. Experimentation is the basic principle of *creatio ex materia*, as it is contingent on a situated materiality and mediality. I eventually put forward that the specific mediality of experimental ecologies is the basis for possible futures. Possibilities do not exist but *insist* on the basis of encounters, that is, conjugations of flows that evince a vector-like quality.

To start with, I suggest approaching the notion of experimentation by mapping the conjecture of "experience" (or expertise), "experiment," the "empirical"[168] and "performance." Creative practice and production can hardly be accounted for in

[168] Via Latin, all of these notions derive from the same Greek root **"***empeiria "experience,"* from *empeiros "skilled"* (based on *peira "trial, experiment*") (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

reductionist terms. It is a nexus of the situated actions and events that rely on, constantly test and seek to refine the skilled practitioner's, that is expert's, experience and expertise through performative experiments. Experts become experienced through engaging with their materials; a process of "doing and undergoing" (Dewey, 1934/1980) that mutually constitutes subjects and objects by ongoing qualifications and (e)valuations. Over time, the objects of practice as well as the practitioners become more refined; the encounter of both generates differences that enrich the expert's sensitivities and embodied skills and differentiates the object of practice. Hence, experts, in the etymological sense, are practitioners who have become experienced, that is have acquired an acute sense of the properties, potentials and needs of their material. As such, practice encompasses not only a *knowing-that* but a *knowing-how*.

Linguistically, all five terms (experience, expertise, experiment, empirical and performance) are linked through the mutual component of "*per*," which, in its basic meaning, denotes a *passage*, a going-through or over (Alloa, 2014b, p. 46). It is a *transitive* concept that hints at the double exposition of amateur to material and material to amateur within an uncertain and risky engagement. As such, "making an experience" entails "going through an experience" and emerging on "the other side" as slightly changed.[169] "Experience" stems from *experiri*, the root of which is *periri* (meaning trial or experiment). This nexus of experience, experiment and performance is still strongly present within the French term *éprouver*, meaning both to test and to feel, or to put it even more strongly, to put to the test and to be afflicted (Hennion, 2011, fn. 11). Against any objectivist methodology of the experiment, testing in this regard always means "con-testing"[170] and entails a sense of *tasting*. The experimenter is part of the experimental set-up, bears witness and is on trial herself with all of her aesthetic and affective sensibilities.

The basic nexus of experience, experiment and performance opens up our understanding of creativity within production as being a question of taste-making: the various experimental set-ups of the making of CDT constitute ongoing trials that put both amateurs and products to test. Within rehearsals, whether having someone watch from outside, or having a video camera recording, or watching a recorded fragment, or talking about the piece with one's colleagues, everywhere the piece needs to be

[169] See in this regard also Hennion (2014) on the makeshift expression "performation" as denoting the nexus of "performance" and "performativity" (see also 3.4.1).

[170] Thinking of "testing" as "contesting" (Latin *contestari*, from *con-* "together" and *testare* "to witness" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010)) highlights the mutual (*con-*) and active involvement both of tester and tested in an unsettled situation that awaits valuation and/or action.

performed and thus put to the test. As such, taste-making depends on the experimental assemblage that includes an audience (and his or her mode of perception) and the assemblage that is performing. Taste-making relies on the organization of an experimental apparatus. It is in this way that the P24A framework illustrates the collective set-up of an event ecology. Amateurs, the product, attachments, an audience and the appraisal lexicon jointly constitute the ecology that harbors the activities and events of creative taste-making.

To think of creative practice and production in terms of taste-making stresses the "mediality of experimentation" (Alloa, 2014b, p. 48, translated by BM). Adding, for example, costumes and light to a movement phrase might change the whole consistency of the performance assemblage. Test assemblies therefore gain an epistemological status of "factishness" (see Latour, 1999c): they are neither an independent reality discovered after an effective experiment according to Popperian standards, nor are they the mere imposition of human beliefs onto a passive object. Test assemblies rather have to be considered as matters of concern or "attachments" (see Latour, 2005, fn. 298). As such they are disclosed through the avid engagement of skilled practitioners who have developed the sensibilities to appreciate and follow the crucial differences of their attachments.

With this idea of experimentation, how can we understand the "research" activity of CDT (see 6.3.3)? From an objectivist perspective on research and methodology, which is seeking and appreciating objectivity and reproducability, using the term research for the practical trial-and-error sequences of making CDT seems a heresy. Yet the kind of research that is involved in the production of CDT is not just un-scientific in terms of being particular, accidental or not repeatable. The kind of research in CDT, such as for instance within the different forms of (collective) improvisation, is not an alternative to the two classical adversaries of objectivism and subjectivism, but it veritably questions their basic assumptions. CDT research does not seek or start with an objective methodology, but it embraces the transitive nature of the experiment that includes the experimenter and his or her experience. Research and its experimental modes of engagement are decisively contingent on their social, material and technical constituents. The various mediators involved, including for example me as the researcher (see 5.3.3), constitute the operativity of assemblages (as *agencement*).

Attempting to make a "new" CDT performance involves research that seeks lightly trodden paths and often implies not knowing exactly what to look for and only recognizing it when found. The kind of "research" we find in the production of CDT is close to what Dewey (1997) calls *inquiry*, that is, the pragmatic process of open-ended

search that situates problems and challenges within the mutual becoming of subjects and objects. Inquiry means a search not for the already known and without neatly formulated problems and clear solutions, but rather a challenging situation in which the most interesting problems do not appear already formulated but are only understood through the tests and trials that eventually solve them. Inquiry neither bears objective and repeatable results nor, as its adversary, means to experience a singular event. The experimentation of inquiry rather means the serial and ceaseless testing of an evolving assemblage. The CDT productions studied all evolved incrementally through numerous rounds of (e)valuations. These were either immantly, within for example the process of collective improvisation, or explicitly within collective discussions and narrative enactions of the performance. Alloa (2014b) in this respect relates that Cézanne would need to go to his motif (*aller sur motif*) every day as if for the first time, in order to test his evolving pictures. If something works can only be stated after it, as material or product, has been tested and tried.

Experimentation and experience denote an empirical passage for all involved participants (both human and non-human) because testing and tasting are *events*. For Latour (1999c), "an experiment is an event which offers slightly more than its inputs. … [N]o one, and nothing at all, is in command, not even an anonymous field of force" (p. 298). Framing experimentation as an event, Latour thereby draws from Whitehead's employment of the term within the attempt to replace the ahistorical nature of objects within accounts of "discovery." What is at stake for Latour when defining an experiment as an event is that the "event has consequences for the historicity of all the ingredients, including nonhumans, that are the circumstances of that experiment" (p. 306). Experimentation takes off from and at the same time constitutes the vector-quality of experience. It is only through the amateur's trying engagement with materials that she can sense their joint trajectories and potentials. Taste-making, and hence production, are as such indeterminable yet follow a trajectory that, in hindsight, is often regarded as inevitable (see Menger, 2006). It is in this way that production, as taste-making, can be understood as an incremental refinement of practices and materials along aesthetic and affective trajectories.

It is within the event of experimentation – "offering more than its inputs" – that I propose situating the creativity of production. The forms of experimentation within CDT production encompass instances of testing existing assemblages (see 6.3.4.3), as well as probing the *not-yet* (6.3.4.1, 7.3.5). It is here that the social, material and technical contingencies of creativity lead to a peculiar facticity of possible futures. How the possible shows is contingent on its material test assembly, which is articulating its specific possibilities (see Alloa, 2014b, p. 49). The trial-and-error

experimentation within CDT production can thus be understood as a "medial scenariology" (p. 49). It is only through articulating scenarios within differing media (see table 4, p. 342) that possible futures can be tested (see for example 6.3.3.4). For instance, in the Green Sofa vignette, it was underlined that the multiple enactions of the performance within different modalities (motion, various markings, narratives, etc.) proved to be indispensable for the incremental and itinerant development of the performance. The specific medium thereby needs to be understood not as a passive intermediary of an idea, but as a material mediator.

Creative brainstorming, which is thought of as taste-making, is bound to its media. Ideas (and their "tastes") do not exist apart from their specific forms of articulation (stories, gestures, images, etc.). It is only through articulation and hence performance that an arrangement that can make possible the possible is put in place (see Alloa, 2014b, p. 49). The possibilities do not already *exist* (as in some transcendental realm) but rather *insist*, as sensed through the amateur as a living organism that is following lines and ushering them into actuality. Experimenting with future possibilities takes flight from existing assemblages by incremental operations of seeking to "fill blanks" (see 6.3.4.1), and thereby follows vectors stretching from past into future. The materiality of production thereby implicates that the possible is always a *nearby unknown* (7.3.5). The incremental development of CDT performances always meant working with and along already existing material. Associatively and incrementally connecting and joining to actual material was the way performances were developed. This showed especially within the peculiar way of working on *blanks* within the "Circus" ensemble. Searching for a way over the "green grass," it was through contingent and synergetic enactions of possibilities that were enabled and constrained through the materiality of the artificial grass mat, standards and norms of "proper CDT" as well as the already existing ideas about plot and character, that the conclusive form was generated. I propose that it is especially in the case of seeking to fill blanks that the peculiar *semiology* (7.3.2) and *temporality* (7.3.3) of experimenting with the unknown is revealed.

7.3.2 The material semiotics of taste

The experimental, performative and hence experiential nature of taste can be further detailed through accounting for the material semiotics (see 3.2) of the taste assemblies that are ongoingly put to test. When "art is the language of sensations" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 176), then taste-making comes to mean the experimental and communicative collaboration that can articulate and compose such a "language" along the material semiotics of production. I thereby propose that experimentation and its

creativity lie in the collectively mediated capacity to engage with materials in such a way that they are unlocked in their material semiotics, not only appearing as symbols, but centrally as symptoms and signals.

The peculiar processual relationality of taste-making is understood through the *material semiotic* relationship between amateur and material. In contrast to hylomorphic creativity models (see 2.2.3), a focus on the material semiotics of taste means a radical concern for the materials and products themselves and the work that goes into them. Semiotics is in this regard taken "less as a resource for the analyst than as an effect of the work" (Hennion, 2014, p. 172) and the work's "empirical circularity." Beyond turning taste into little more than the effect and expression of arbitrary social distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984), I propose that taste and its material semiotics must be considered "a problematical modality of attachment to the world" (Hennion, 2004, p. 131). The material semiotics of taste – materials shining forth as symptoms, signals or symbols – are tied to the intimate engagement with and concern for materials.

Taste is a controversial mode of attachment; it is an effect of a meaningful material engagement. The semiotics of artistic material are thereby "not so much an external grammar reducing art to an enquiry into signifying and communicative acts, than it is itself a process materializing an *expression* devoid of an object, which the movement of the work activates" (p. 131, emphasis added). Creative practice surely relies on social processes of signification that articulate symbolic representations (see Becker, 1974; Bourdieu, 1984). Hennion (2004) yet stresses that significations must also be understood as pragmatic and generative mediations that in one way or another allow for the movement of the work itself, and which in the end serve the work's performance. Developing taste and being able to sense the respective, crucial differences of material is accompanied by verbalizations and significations; attachments have to be made and experienced as they are articulated as symptoms, signals and symbols. Yet articulations are always enactions; they themselves serve the material's performance in transformative or consolidating ways (see 7.5).

Within the experimentation of taste-making then, attachment needs to be thought of as a verb, or an engagement,[171] that activates the material not only as symbol, but also as symptom and signal. The intimate engagement between material and amateur not only gives rise to or is resultant from *functional* or *symbolic* forms of relation, but it is centrally a question of *expression* (symptom) and *affection* (signal). In dealing with

[171] Similar to the notion of taste, "engagement" denotes a mutual involvement of subject and object.

events in a state of becoming, the experimental set-ups of taste-making allow for an encounter with material that evinces "weak"[172] symptoms and signals, expressing its vectorial-quality and respectively *insisting* to be felt, thought or acted along or upon (see 3.2.3). The experimental set-up of collectively watching oneself on a newly recorded video within the rehearsal space, for instance offered the opportunity to instantly react to the seen and directly generate new propositions.

7.3.3 The temporality of taste-making

The work to be made is an affective nexus spanning future and past within the present. It is here that taste-making evinces the peculiar temporality of production: while seeking to make oneself appreciate cherished and savored tastes, taste is indissociable from making things arrive (and *vice versa*). As such, while aiming to return to and follow the trajectories of prized sensations, taste is "best described as a machine for generating differences" (Hennion, 2015, p. 50). Taste-making's specific temporality is found in the key movement affected by an experimental set-up: a conjugation of flows evinces symptoms and signals – "vectors of appetition" (see 3.2.3) – that can be followed into the unknown yet nearby future.

The vectorial characteristic of taste-making is tied to an overall "aesthetics of im/perfection" within creative practice and production (see also Becker et al., 2006). As shown for example in the repetitive movement within individual improvisation (see 6.3.3.1), taste-making can be said to be seeking the practically unattainable completion of a sensation and taste while returning time and again to unfinished material that asks to be followed into the promise of perfection. Gherardi (2009) writes:

> [P]ractices [and its products; BM] are constantly refined through the taste-making process, which works both on a sentiment of the perfectible and on repetition as tension toward a never-achieved perfection. Artistic practices easily illustrate this dynamic. (p. 545)

The production of making CDT follows this double agenda: CDT production is at the same time seeking to form a reproducible piece while knowing that the piece will never be complete. CDT performances are always tentative "beta versions"; they forever remain "work-in-progress" (see 6.3.4.2). As shown in the "Kill your darlings" vignettes, professional amateurs have to find their way with this aesthetics of im/perfection. While on the one hand being intimately attached to material that they

[172] The notion of "weak signal," originally developed by Ansoff (1975), is a popular concept within "future studies" (see Holopainen & Toivonen, 2012; Mendonça, Cunha, Kaivo-oja, & Ruff, 2004). The concept is theoretically little elaborated and has a cognitive undertone I avoid. It yet points at a phenomenon that I seek to understand through the material semiotics of symptoms and signals.

would like to see being perfected, it takes a pragmatic sense (ensemble "Circus"), or *chutzpah* (Emmanuel and ensemble "Buried alive"), or a certain low-brow attitude (Mark and ensemble "Voltage"), or humor (Marie) to eventually bring the performance on stage.

Making a performance is not about imposing forms. Rather than fulfilling a step-by-step plan, which would be already conceived, experimentation means following, in a world always-in-the-making, the opening-up of movements and lines (Ingold, 2010a). Forms are thereby invented through various "tests of taste" in a continual meshing of making and attending.

> A resonance emerges slowly – significance discovered rather than chosen. An initial starting image presents itself; its development depends on receptive attention, listening, watching. (Tufnell & Crickmay, 1990, p. 193)

In the making of CDT, time loops. Engaging with materials means working on material flows that evince a vector-quality, and it is in anticipation of the future that the present makes amateurs live the past. The novelty of the "nearby unknown" is never a denial of the past, as it is a qualitative difference that follows from the excess of the past that is projecting into the future. The beginnings of most productions, for instance, were jumpstarted through fragments of material ("something with a table," ensemble "Circus") or long-held wishes ("working on the idea of the mortal sins," ensemble "Kill your darlings") from previous productions and external workshops.

7.3.4 Taste-making as alchemy

The compositional mode of taste-making is in the following further specified through an allusion to *alchemy*.

Taste-making resembles, as Jeff suggested, a process of baking or *cooking* (see 1.3.3). Cooking I propose to be an apt analogy for the transformational processes of materials within an account of taste-making. If the basic rule of thumb of taste-making is to "follow the materials" (see 3.2.4), then, as Ingold (2010b, n. p.) asserts,

> to apply this rule is to intervene in a world that is continually "on the boil." Perhaps it could be compared to a huge kitchen. In the kitchen, stuff is mixed in various combinations, generating new materials in the process, which will, in turn, become mixed with other ingredients in an endless process of transformation. (n. p.)

Engaging with and following materials, practitioners seek the right mixture of heterogeneous elements to bring to life a technoaesthetic being, a cultural artifact which has to be considered a life unto itself. Along my interest in creative practice, the

metaphor of cooking might be misleading if taken to connote the following of recipes and the cooking of already known and fully anticipated dishes.

In light of the experimental character and the idea of "research" within creative practice, I therefore propose that an even more apt analogy for the taste-making process within creative practice is the idea of *alchemy*. This is also because creative practice seeks to conjure up material not yet present. Alchemy "is the old science of struggling with materials, and not quite understanding what is happening" (Elkins, 2000 in Ingold, 2010a, p. 94). When experimenting with ingredients, what is at stake is "not so much imposing form on matter as bringing together diverse materials and combining or redirecting their flow in the anticipation of what might emerge" (Ingold, 2010a, p. 94). Within the laboratory of rehearsal, the "work to be done" resembles an alchemic process of gathering, combining, transposing, solidifying, dissolving, and transforming heterogeneous ingredients.

While the analogy of alchemy for once helps to elucidate the anticipatory yet uncertain work of composition and its "aesthetics of im/perfection" (see 7.3.3), it also points at the similarities between laboratory work and the making of CDT on the level of technical operations: in both we find instances of dissecting (that is, making identifiable parts visible), selecting and doubling or repeating, magnifying, manipulating and elicitating material. And similar to a microbiology laboratory, elusive and fleeting phenomena are sought to be made visible through a number of capturing or recording devices. Instead of the microscope or some medical imaging device, the "alchemic reactions" of CDT experiments are captured on video.

The analogy of cooking and alchemy might be misleading if thinking of an endproduct as just exhibiting a certain "taste" based on a fixed consistency. Within the making of a performance, it is not that a consistency is once and for all achieved; it rather needs to be produced anew with each performance.[173] To come to an affirmation that a performance "works," its elements have to be put to the test. The decisive questions is: "Does the consistency of performance elements have the power to make one feel, think or act?" A consistency, or the sense that "it works," is only achieved through thinking with and creating alongside the materials and attending to their virtual and actual capacities. As such, the ideas of taste-making and alchemy expand the notion of authorship by including the performative and inventive powers of (nonhuman) materials.

[173] Within Hennion's accounts of taste (e.g., 2001), all cultural artifacts have to be performed, be they concern art in general or for example music or wine. This holds for actual performances as much as for seemingly static and stable consistencies such as statues or wine (Hennion, 2014, see 2015).

7.3.5 The nearby unknown – alchemic experimentation and the virtual

In this last section on the experimental characteristic of taste-making, I turn more explicitly to the question of how taste-making effects novelty. Already alluded to before (6.3.4.1), this means to develop an understanding of the nature of the *nearby unknown*.

To understand the generative force of materials, the role of the *blank* within *collective probing* (*6.3.4.1*) illustrates how taste-making means a search for the *nearby unknown*. Taste-making means a working *with* materials and their *affordances* of reaching a not-yet. Complementing Glăveanu's (2013) instrumental understanding of affordance as "extensive" property, which is tied to the "distributed cognition" tradition, I here draw on Posteraro's (2014) and Protevi's (2010) Deleuzian concept of *virtual affordance* that emphasizes the affective and "intensive" dimension of affordances. In taste-making, it is only within the encounter of amateur and material, which is itself set within an affective milieu, that the capacities of materials can be invented. In the style of Spinoza and Deleuze, we could say that "we never know what a material can do."

Collective probing is the embodied generation and testing of material that is enacted in respect to a *blank*, or a missing part within the growing assemblage of performance. As such, the idea of a blank is not to be associated with a sense of emptiness. The blank is rather a relative blank; it is a space of connection, of association, where something will emerge in relation to something that already exists. It is a not-yet, a possibility that is not yet existing, but, through its associated milieu of elements – antecedent and subsequent elements, overall narratives, etc. – it poses a space of virtual insistence. As much as the blank is a relative blank, its novel actualization is a relative novelty. It is in this sense that I propose to talk of the *nearby unknown*.

The prototypes that the performers are enacting when seeking to fill a blank are actualizations of virtually *insistent* affordances. Affordances "do not *exist* (actually) so much as they *insist* (virtually); it is the organism that guides them into actuality" notes Posteraro (2014, p. 363, emphasis in original) as part of his reappraisal of the idea of affordance through a Deleuzian lens of "virtuality." Affordances are not possibilities that exist as such before they are actualized; they rather constitute problematic differential fields of potential that are resolved in an actualization. The amateur, within an encounter with material, can sense the intensive differentials and, by following the jointly constituted vector of appetition, actualize a solution to an insistent problem. The ontological status of "virtual" is thereby required to think the capacities of the blank as a not-yet without resorting to "two classical concepts …, that of possibility

awaiting realization and that of teleologically oriented potentiality" (Protevi, 2010, p. 428).

The virtual insistence of affordances is an emerging property of the encounter of material and amateur, of actual formations and the amateur's "activity-sensibility." As illustrated in the vignette on collective probing, taste-making and its experimentation, probing various elements for their fit and consistency, are thereby not primarily retrospective but *prospective*. Beyond the Weickian idea that all future-oriented activity is eventually based on a form of "future perfect" thought (see Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014) – an idea that posits that "prospective sensemaking is seen as being derivative from retrospective sensemaking" (n. p.) – I propose that retrospective sensemaking is derived from prospective sensemaking (see also Jacobs, Steyaert, & Ueberbacher, 2013). The amateur's work of assembling, that is joining material and filling in blanks, is thereby akin to the work of the poet that, when seeking to complete her poem, reads her lines over and over, sensing what they need and rejecting line after line that she generates:

> The poet reads the written lines over and over, listens, and senses what these lines need (want, demand, imply, ….). Now the poet's hand rotates in the air. The gesture says *that*. Many good lines offer themselves; they try to say, but do not say – *that*.
> The blank is *more precise*. Although some are good lines, the poet rejects them. That …. seems to lack words, but no. It knows the language, since it understands – and rejects – these lines that came. So it is not pre-verbal; rather, it knows what must be said, and knows that these lines don't precisely say that. It knows like a gnawing knows what was forgotten, but it is new in the poet, and perhaps new in the history of the world. … Isn't that how it is? This …. must be directly referred to (felt, experienced, sensed, had, …). Therefore, whatever term we use for such a blank, that term also needs our direct reference. The blank brings something new. That function is not performed by the linguistic forms alone. Rather, it functions *between* two sets of linguistic forms. The blank is not just the already written lines, but rather the *felt sense* from re-reading them, and *that* performs a function needed to lead to the next lines. (Gendlin, 1991, in Johnson, 2007, pp. 80–81, emphasis in original)

Gendlin describes an (everyday) experience of searching for the "right words." We first generate a number of candidates and then test them "by monitoring how *these words* feel in our present situation" (Johnson, 2007, p. 81). Eventually, Gendlin proposes that the anticipation and sense of what is needed is retrospectively validated, but the prospective sense was there in the first place. The blank, be it in a poem or within an evolving performance, seems to be a place of lack. But, as Gendlin suggests, it must be thought as a place of insistence that is contingent on the "felt sense" that

emerges from the encounter between amateur and material. If so, then the relative blank can be productive of relative novelty.

How is novelty, and hence creativity, possible in an account of *creatio ex materia*? As Mark Johnson asserts in his pragmatist account of embodied sensemaking, this "may be one of the most difficult problems in all of philosophy, psychology, and science" (p. 13). For Johnson,

> *[i]magination is tied to our bodily processes and can also be creative and transformative of experience*. Our ability to make new meaning, to enlarge our concepts, and to arrive at new ways of making sense of things must be explained without reference to miracles, irrational leaps of thought, or blind impulse. We have to explain how our experience can grow and how the new can emerge from the old, yet without merely replicating what has gone before. … The problem is that if we try to give a causal explanation of novel experience or novel thought, these come out looking causally determined, rather than creative and imaginative. An embodied theory of meaning will suggest only that new meaning is not a miracle but rather arises from, and remains connected to, preexisting patterns, qualities, and feelings. (p. 13, emphasis in original)

7.4 Production III – the organizational skills of taste-making

After having detailed taste-making in its aesthetic and affective aspects of experimentation, I now turn to regard it from the perspective of skill. In contrast to the central notion of competence in entitative approaches (see Chapter 2), taste-making skills revolve around the capability of amateurs to mobilize and handle the material semiotics of creative practice and its blend of actual and virtual aspects. Taste-making thereby has to thought as a thoroughly social, material and technical, actively-sensible skill. The following section then accounts for taste-making as an immanent organizational skill of enaction. In the second section, I frame taste-making as a form of editorial work.

7.4.1 Taste-making as an immanent organizational skill of enaction

Taste-making is first of all a *relational skill* of encountering material in such a way that the conjugation discloses its symptomatic, signaling and symbolic aspects. In contrast to the notion of creativity as individual competence (see 2.2.4), which is still present especially in sociocognitive frameworks (see for example Crossan & Apaydin, 2010), and which is indissociably linked to a hylomorphic model of creativity and its logic of

imposition, I propose that experimental skills have to be considered as *collective* (or distributed), *embodied* and, above all, as a question of *enaction*.[174]

Taste-making is not strictly an individual but always already a *collective* and organizational capacity. I propose that the specific experimental capacity to register the symptomatic and signaling characteristics of materials has to be understood as an *agencement*, which is an ability emerging from an organized collectivity – a social, material and technical assemblage. This has also been shown in other cases of skilled practice, such as scientific research and surgical practice (Styhre, 2011, p. 121). As I have shown in various vignettes that focus on the ecology of creative practice (Chapter 5), the material semiotics of taste are contingent on a skilled engagement which itself is mediated through a variety of other attachments. A simple example is Zoe, who had the curtains in the ballet hall drawn as she sought to work with "energies." Or think of the description of Jeff, who, when seeking to generate material, had to organize for a precise arrangement of enabling constraints (time, place, ambiance, etc.) in order to raise the chances of a productive improvisation session. Overall, to think taste-making as an organizational skill is to underline that it requires various domains of expertise (e.g., the sensible knowledge of movement vocabularies and styles), a lexicon of taste and a respective organization of attention (see Chapter 5) to be able to refine, transform and assemble material so as to affect a consistency of sensations.

As I have proposed throughout, taste-making within CDT making is a thoroughly *embodied* affair. It revolves around learning to become (kin)aesthetically affected and affect. It is through *and for* their embodied sensitivities, in short, their taste, that amateurs engage in experimentation. Understanding taste-making to be operating within the material semiology of symptom and signal emphasizes creative practice to be oriented toward and contingent on the associated milieu's *valence* and *significance*. "In the making," the CDT performers and choreographers do not encounter a situation *and* a problem or meaning. As embodied, living beings, they are rather immersed in a meaningful, significant world, finding themselves within trying situations. Experimentation thereby asks for immanent skills that deal with and emerge from the intimate and embodied engagement with colleagues, materials and techniques. When it comes to processes of socio-material ideation, what is at stake is a practical sense of anticipation that is emerging with the amateur trying and testing, that is, intervening into and following unfolding trajectories.

[174] While sociocultural frameworks (see especially Glăveanu, 2011, 2013) also posit that creative competences need to be understood as thoroughly distributed, the specific contribution I seek is to posit that, as skill, creativity has to be emphasized as being fundamentally embodied and bound to concrete enactions.

Thus I differentiate *two aspects of skill* within creative practice and production: first an *organizational meta-aspect*, where the skillfulness of practice is to create and organize experimental set-ups and therefore an ecology of the event. Second, and following from the first, the *experimental capacity* to encounter, intervene into and follow materials and their flows.

Together, I propose that skill within CDT production is therefore to be thought of as a question of *enaction*: it is through enacting, that is, putting in place and preparing certain conditions (a first step of which is itself mediated and contingent on other aspects), that taste-making and the actual skill of experimentation is realized. Both aspects thereby move from a logic of imposition to a logic of intervening and following.

All in all, I propose replacing the idea of an individual competence with the concept of situated and embodied organizational skills,[175] as emerging from and co-constituting concrete enactions.

7.4.2 Taste-making – a skill of editing from within

Problem-solving and *decision-making* are the central creative competences in sociocognitive creativity frameworks (see for example Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). Following a logic of *imposition*, they are formulated according to the hylomorphic model of creativity (see 2.2.3) that assumes passive and un-formatted matter. In contrast to these competences, the skill set of taste-making revolves around following and intervening into material flows in order to incrementally qualify and singularize a product. Taste-making I thereby propose to be a skill of "editing from within."

Thinking taste-making as central skill of production, I propose to frame its various aspects as *editorial work*.[176] Editing is a core activity of assembling and forming a "publication" or performance, be it in literature, film or theater. The central idea of editing as skill that I put forth thereby draws on Tarkowsky's notion of "editing from within" as introduced by Erin Manning (2013, pp. 216–217). Editing is here not so much a practice of imposing ideas yet of working alongside and with the material (see also Bunn, 1999), appreciating, following and intervening into the affective dynamics of consistencies. For Manning (2013), editing is hence crucially a work of prehending and working with the work's "rhythm" (also see 7.2.3):

[175] See Ingold (2001) for the difference between the cognitivist and essentialist concept of "competence" and the processual and relational idea that "skill" is always tied to a concrete performance, or enaction.

[176] "To edit," meaning to "prepare … material for publication by correcting, condensing, or otherwise modifying it" is a back formation from the Latin *edere*, meaning "produce, put forth" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). Production can therefore be said to be effected through editorial work.

> Editing is not something you impose onto the work: it is a prehension of the rhythms already virtually present in the work. Editing foregrounds the backgrounded rhythm of the work. (p. 216)

Editing relies on the amateur's "activity-sensibility" (Hennion, 2011), which does not only attend to directly observable, actual properties and conditions, but pivotally enables and emerges from an anticipatory engagement with weak, virtual symptoms and signals (see 7.3.2).

> If … dealing with "things-in-the-making," events in a state of becoming, then the actor's capacity to identify early … signals … that call for action … is a highly valuable competence. (Styhre, 2011, p. 121)

It is through sensible knowledge, or the embodied capacity to detect subtle differences and aesthetically appraise or contest them, that amateurs edit their material, sensing virtual trajectories and following hunches.

Editing is in this regard a skill of activating forms. "Forms are passive insofar as they represent actuality," notes Simondon (1958/2010, p. 33), who then concludes that "they become active when they are organized in relation to their ground, thus introducing earlier potentialities to actuality" (p. 33) (see 3.2.4). The organization of forms in relation to their ground is a basic question of enaction, of engaging with materials in such a way and within a conducive ecology so that the amateur's activity-sensibility can operate on the verge of the virtual and actual.

> The passage from the plane of sensation to the plane of articulation, a movement toward the actual from the virtual stratum, depends on thought's capacity to extract from the virtual quasi chaos of experience's potential unfolding. This extraction is a kind of editing of the nexus. (Manning, 2013, p. 216)

Within CDT production, to edit from within is therefore to work and compose with the more-than of movement's *actual* articulation – be it in motion,[177] gesture or language. It means to work with movement's "prearticulated virtual force, directing enunciation such that its virtual effects are felt within actual expression" (p. 217).

Editing and "feelings of work'

Editing can be seen as relying on the amateur's "feelings of work" (Sandelands & Buckner, 1989). Sandelands and Buckner's work on "the psychology of work feelings" allows for differentiating the practical engagement of amateurs and the respective affects, or feelings, in respect to the work object's "form" or "process."

[177] For the distinction between "movement" and "motion," see 3.2.5. Here I use "motion" as denoting an articulation and actualization of the work's basic "movement."

"Feelings *about* work" are individual emotions that are linked to a specific and actual "form" of the object. In contrast, "feelings *of* work" emerge from "aesthetic experience" and are hence linked to the "processual dimension" of practical engagement. Drawing, among others, on pragmatism (William James and John Dewey) and phenomenological process philosophy (Susanne Langer), Sandelands and Buckner (1989) assert that aesthetic experience must be regarded a specific kind of thinking process, "a play of the mind at the fringe of awareness" (p. 120). The feeling of an aesthetic experience is thereby thought to exist "as an emergent property of this process. Aesthetic feeling is *of* work, not *about* work" (p. 125). Sandelands and Buckner define "feelings of work" therefore as a "noncognitive affect" that "emerges as a quality of ongoing activity – as a feeling *of*" (p. 126). To distinguish feelings of work from feelings about work, it is warranted to notice that aesthetic products can well form around unpleasurable issues (e.g., terror or despair), and yet we seem to almost enjoy feeling the actor's agony if it is "well made." There is a basic pleasure connected with a kinaesthetic experience that is not connected to the form but to experiencing the dynamics of an artistic object.

Editing from within engages primarily with this processual, that is "operatory dimension" (see 3.2.5) of material. On the basis of operatory analogies, to edit from within means to assemble heterogeneous forms in such a way as to compose a "consistency" (7.2.2). This centrally relies on the skill of attending to the (kin)aesthetic experience of material that is "a life unto itself. This is the key to its pleasure. … What is felt is *a* life – a life having its own dynamics and form" (Sandelands & Buckner, 1989, p. 110, emphasis in original).

Situated within the relation of amateur to material itself, editing relies on the rapture[178] of the amateur who is "celebrating" (see 3.2.5) and co-creating the compositional dynamics of any tasted object, from wine and food to football to architecture, literature, film, theatre or dance. Editing therefore relies on a "direct experience" (Manning, 2013, p. 3), which, in being "lifelike" (Sandelands & Buckner, 1989, p. 110), is about apprehending symptoms and signals (see 7.3.2) and their vectorial qualities – that is, the affective tonalities and indications of a consistency. The basic affective criterion of this kind of editorial work is not a "sense of coherence" but a "sense of consistency" (see 7.2.2). It is not harmonious coherence as such but the dynamic interplay of heterogeneous elements that is sought and appreciated within the making of CDT – be it for "harmonious" or "disharmonious" ends.

[178] In its archaic sense of "being seized and carried off" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

Overall then, be it when considering taste-making as organizational skill of enaction, or more specifically as editorial work, I focused on the import of taste-making for production, that is the incremental qualification of a performance. The following sections maintain this impetus yet invite the reader to once more attend to the work that taste-making is doing from the perspective of the developing performance. I therefore present a number of tentative framings that revolve around the idea that taste-making can be productively looked at as a communicative and thus participatory process effecting both a transformation and stratification of materials.

7.5 Production IV: transformation and stratification

In the following sections, I make a last proposition that further details the organizational process of CDT production as a question of *taste-making*. For this, I focus on the *communicative* and thus participatory aspects of taste-making, and how these aspects effect the *transformation* and *stratification* of the evolving product.

The challenge of creative practice and production within CDT is to collectively devise a sensible, that is, sensuous and meaningful[179] performance. CDT production aims at an assemblage of heterogeneous formations, or a consistency of sensations that "works" (see 7.2.3.) and is reproducible. The process of production is thereby characterized through a double movement of transformation and consolidation. It is a work of "opening up and paring down material, at each stage deciding what major or minor change will move the work on" (Tufnell & Crickmay, 1990, p. 194). Formations are emerging and transformed within the immanent taste-making of collective improvisation, and then also need to be seized and consolidated within more explicit taste-making practices. Against the background of regarding material as flow, exhibiting actual properties and bearing virtual, vector-like forces, in this section I then propose that the work of consolidation can be specified when understanding it as a form of *stratification* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 40–41). Within experimental and codifiying modes of engagement (as developed in Chapter 6), the performance is gradually in-formed, that is transformed and stratified.

While framing movement and dance as communication is a common trope in the practitioner literature (see for example Blom & Chaplin, 2000, p. 5), the contribution proposed in the following framework distinguishes itself based on an understanding of communication as *enaction* (see especially 3.2.7), that is a pragmatic performance through embodied, para-verbal and verbal means. The communication of taste-making

[179] Meaningful in terms of "significance."

is not about the neutral flow of information, whereby taste is something that is first made and subsequently given to somebody else. I rather situate the generation and refinement of taste, and therefore the creativity of collective creative practice, within a socio-material process of *participatory sense- and taste-making* (see Di Paolo et al., 2011). I further assume that the human and non-human participants within participatory taste-making *intra-act* (see Barad, 2003; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014) to mutually generate and transform taste.

The specification and comparison of taste-making episodes in Chapter 6 are the basis for refining, within the limits of this study on the production of a CDT performance, our understanding of how different events and processes of taste-making work together. This is a contribution to lasting questions within current developments of the sensemaking concept (see Jacobs et al., 2013; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014). Through my interest in the creative process of making in-between "input" and "output," the question I posed and that further guides the following framework is therefore: *how do the various forms of taste-making, and their articulations of the performance-in-the-making* (see table 6, p. 345) *within its production, contribute to the gradual concrescence of the work?*

Seeking to answer this question starts with reasserting that taste, that is, the virtual (kin)aesthetic properties of materials, is only "revealed through tests or trials which involve interactions between agents (teams) and the goods to be qualified" (Callon et al., 2002, p. 198). Production's ongoing qualifications and therefore the gradual "singularization" (p. 198)," of the product hinge on these "tests of taste." In the following I flesh out the basic idea that these tests of taste involve both experimenting with and "following" materials as well as further interpreting, signifying and representing material as an actual and independent entity in relation to exterior criteria of meaning.

The material semiotics of taste-making are crucial in order to understand how the CDT performance develops through different modes of existence (see table 6, p. 345) depending on *experimental* and *codifying* modes of engagement (see 3.2.7). Both modes are needed to open up material for the collective and communicative work of making material pass into sensation and circulating it within differing modes of existence. While taste-making within experimentation means a "doing *with*" that follows significant traces, codifying modes of engagement involve processes of signification and representation *of* material so it can be evaluated, quantified as well as communicated to the public (see 6.3.5). Within both experimental and codifying modes of engagement, sensation, as a basic "building block" of aesthetic ideas and

tastes (see 7.2.2), does not exist outside its multidimensional articulation.[180] It is through acting out, sounding, marking, gesturing, narrating, describing, imagining, writing or drawing sensation that sensation is actualized and hence opened up for editing work on sensible, audible, visible and imaginative planes (see 7.4.2). Taste-making within experimental modes of engagement therefore involves articulating, that is, performing ideas within these media and appreciating their performativity and undergoing their effects. Overall, the various articulations of the CDT performance form the *multiplicity* of the work as existing simultaneously or subsequently as actual performance, gesture-based marking, (dramaturgical) narration, disciplinary contribution, text, sketch, advertisement, etc.

In the following, I detail how taste-making within experimental and codifying modes of engagement effects an in-formation of the performance in regard to its mobility and mutability.

7.5.1 Operative analogies and the mobility and mutability of forms

So far I have proposed that within production, it is within trials and "tests of taste" that the product "CDT performance" is multiplied through the various articulations that seek to make the material amenable to communicative processes of creation and editing. In the following I then specify how different articulations have a pragmatic effect in terms of allowing for or constraining creative transformations.[181] The composition of a consistency and thus the overall sensemaking of production crucially hinge on how and when the material is engaged with and how it is articulated. Through experimental and codifying engagements and their respective articulations, material is in varying degrees opened up or closed for more or less transformative *associations* and *analogies*. As such, I propose that the very medium of articulation affects various types and grades of *mutability* and *mobility*.

The various modes of existence of a CDT performance can be differentiated according to their *mobility* and their *mutability*. For understanding the concrescence of a technoaesthetic being like a CDT performance, which, similar to other types of performances, is "about nailing things while keeping the piece alive!" (songwriter Errollyn Wallen in Bannerman et al., 2006, p. 36), it is pivotal to specify the work that

[180] Within the immanent naturalism proposed in this thesis, I assume that sensation does not exist as such and outside of specific actualizations. Notions such as "articulation" or "expression" would be misleading if implying an independence of sensation as transcendent principle.

[181] Conceptually, I here draw on the differentiation between the mutability and mobility of forms within late ANT (see Latour, 2005; Mol & Law, 2001; Moser & Law, 2006). Moser and Law (2006) provide illuminating accounts of how the development of forms and their subsistence depend both on forms topologically turning into *flows* (immutable mobiles) and *fluids* (mutable mobiles).

various forms do. Within the making of CDT, forms effect *in*-formation while allowing more or less creative transformation. Analytically, I thus propose to differentiate between articulations in regard to their mobility and their mutability (see Moser & Law, 2006): the articulation of a performance through the form of a performer's body in this respect shows different properties compared to, for instance, the articulation of a performance through the form of a video playback or a narration. We can here learn from Moser and Law's study of informational processes within medical practice, where "immutable mobiles" that allow for a movement of "flow" achieve the transportation of information without deformation, while "mutable mobiles" make for a topology of "fluid;" they carry information while creatively transforming it.

While Moser and Law are interested in understanding the constancy of forms through their mutability, I propose that *vice versa* the mutability of forms must also be understood through the efforts of making a form subsist (see 3.2.2). The contingent or abrupt discontinuity of a form must be understood as part of a *consistent* morphogenesis along *operatory analogies* (3.2.5; 7.5.2). It is the basic principle of operatory analogy that, as a form of consistent relation between differing but resonating formations, allows for the simultaneous perpetuation and transformation of operational dynamics without the need for material continuity or danger of interfusion (see Barthélémy, 2012; Simondon, 2012a). Hence it is through attempts of composing *consistencies* (see 7.2.2) along operatory analogies, that a CDT performance develops and changes. Looking back for instance at the process of ensemble "Circus," we could see how the initial interest in "doing something with a table" contingently developed on the level of operatory analogies into the Circus theme.

Bearing in mind the striking quote of Errollyn Wallen, I suggest that the production of CDT seeks a *semi-mutable* and *mobile* performance. What is aimed for is a performance that, while it can be reproduced, stays open to change and further development from *première* to *derniere*. Production is therefore the work of generating and stabilizing forms into an assemblage that allows for a *semi-fluid consistency*. This work requires articulations that allow for mobility as well as both for mutability and immutability – the creative process asks for creative transformation as well as consolidation.

7.5.2 Experimentation – transformative taste-making through transposition and metathesis

I suggest that both the mutability and mobility of material are tied to the basic associative mechanism of *experimentation*, which generates and refines material on

the basis of *operatory analogies* (see 3.2.5 and 6.3.3). Operatory analogies allow structurally distinct formations to be related and brought into "qualitative proximity with each other" (Massumi, 2003, p. 5) on the basis of their dynamic ground and its sensations. Within experimentation, it is hence through operatory analogies that material is turned into "mutable mobiles," allowing for the generation as well as continuous refinement and transformation of material. For instance, as seen in the vignettes on the "green carpet" (6.3.4.1) and the "green sofa" (6.3.3.2, 6.3.3.3, 6.3.3.4), the articulation of performance elements within different modalities (sound, gesture or narrative) allowed for various prolific associations.

Overall, I propose to distinguish two kinds of operatory analogies within experimentation: *within* and *across* a specific medium of articulation (see table 7 and figure 4). Therefore I suggest differentiating the *diachronic* principle of *metathesis* from the *synchronic* principle of *transposition*[182] (see table 7).

Drawing on the empirical vignettes and the analysis in 5.3.6, I suggest that creative practice and production pivotally rely on the *transposition*[183] of formations. Specifying the principle of operatory analogy, transposition denotes the synchronic, cross-modal displacement of a formation's operational characteristics – its forces and rhythms – into a different mode of existence – motion, gesture, narrative, metaphor, image, sound, color, diagram, fantasy, sketch etc. Table 7 exemplifies this operation along its y-axis: the affective contours of a circular arm motion can for example be cross-modally transposed into a different sound ("*TshouUUooo*"), a metaphor ("*windmill*") or a narrative ("*it's like you running away*"). Sounding or narrating a previously motion-based sensation constitutes a generative differential relation. Transposing the affective contours of a certain articulation, for example motion, into the metaphor of a windmill hence means a generative mediation. Transposition is thereby a two-way movement, where sounds for example can also turn into motion etc.

[182] This distinction is inspired by Lacan's differentiation of a *metonymic* and a *metaphorical* principle of sensemaking within poetic language as mobilized within Leikert's (2012) psychoanalytical aesthetic theory.

[183] "Transposition," from the Old French *transposer* (*trans-* "across" and *poser* "to place"), literally a "placing across," means the transfer to a different place or context. Within music, transposition means the performance of a certain musical voice or phrase in a different key from the original.

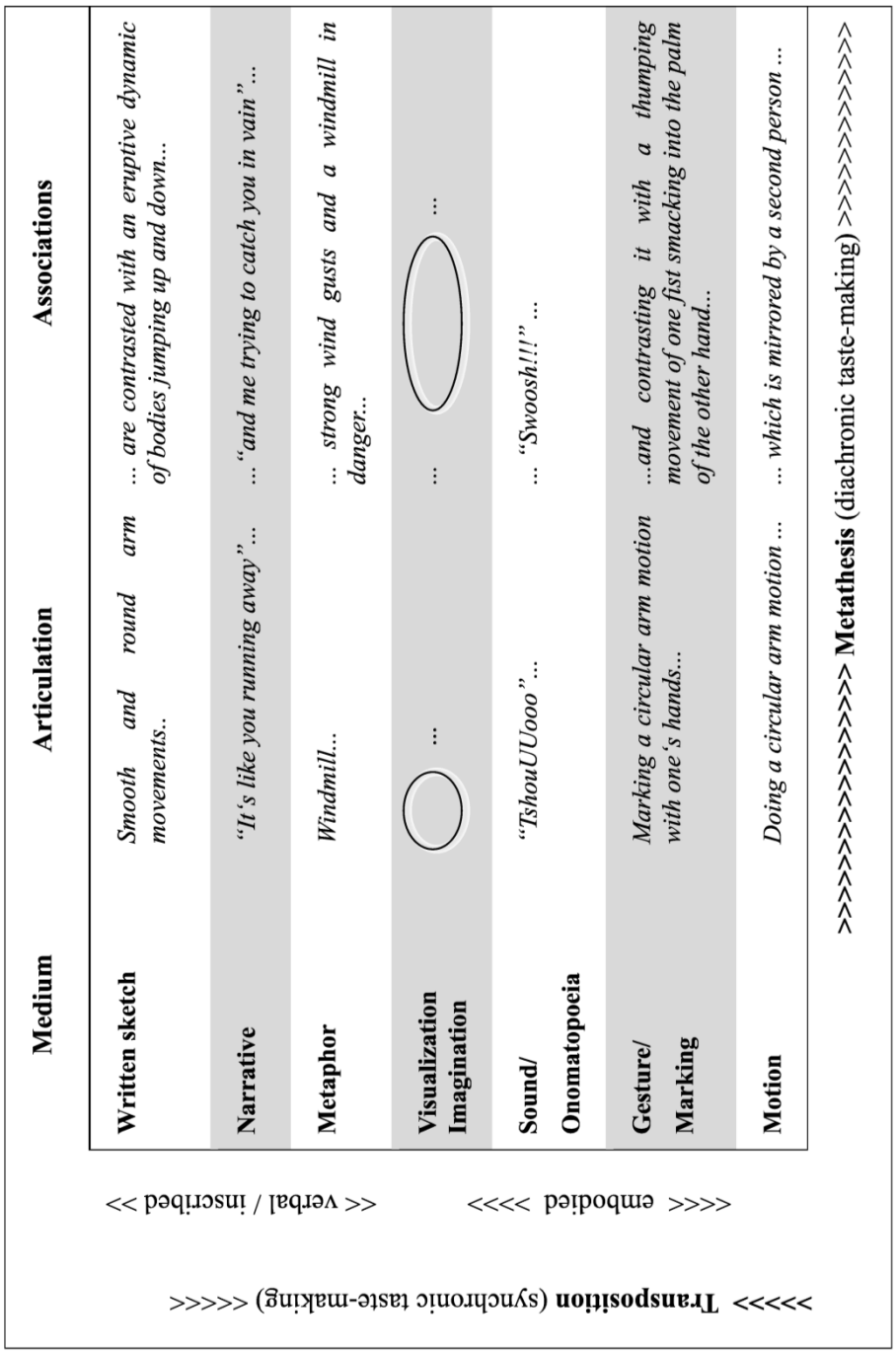


Table 7: Experimentation: synchronic and diachronic sensemaking through transposition and metathesis

The diachronic principle of *metathesis*[184] means a lateral movement, where the analogical association and hence mutability of sense(ation) happens *within* a certain medium – motion, sound, words, etc. Table 7 contains examples of articulations (formations) and their associations along the x-axis: a circular arm motion leads to another circular arm motion from another person; the metaphor of a "windmill" is further developed into a little scene of a windmill in danger because of strong wind

[184] From the Greek *metatithenai,* meaning "change the position of" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

gusts etc. As diachronic, operatory analogy, metathesis thereby does not relate formations on the basis of their structural resemblance, but on the basis of their operatory fit.

As shown in table 7, the analog associations sometimes involve contrasting but complementary dynamics (e.g., when a gestural marking of a slow and circular motion is contrasted with a thumping motion of one fist smacking into the palm of the other hand). The notion of metathesis is similar to the principle of metonymy, literally meaning the "substitution of word for word," within poetic language (see Leikert, 2012, pp. 200–207). Metathesis I therefore propose to be the generative, material-semiotic mechanism of seeking to make sense(ation) through ongoing associations that keep on displacing "sense" within narrative-like structures. This means that the principle of metathesis both perpetuates and transforms a formation's affective contours – it affects a diachronic movement of sense(ation).

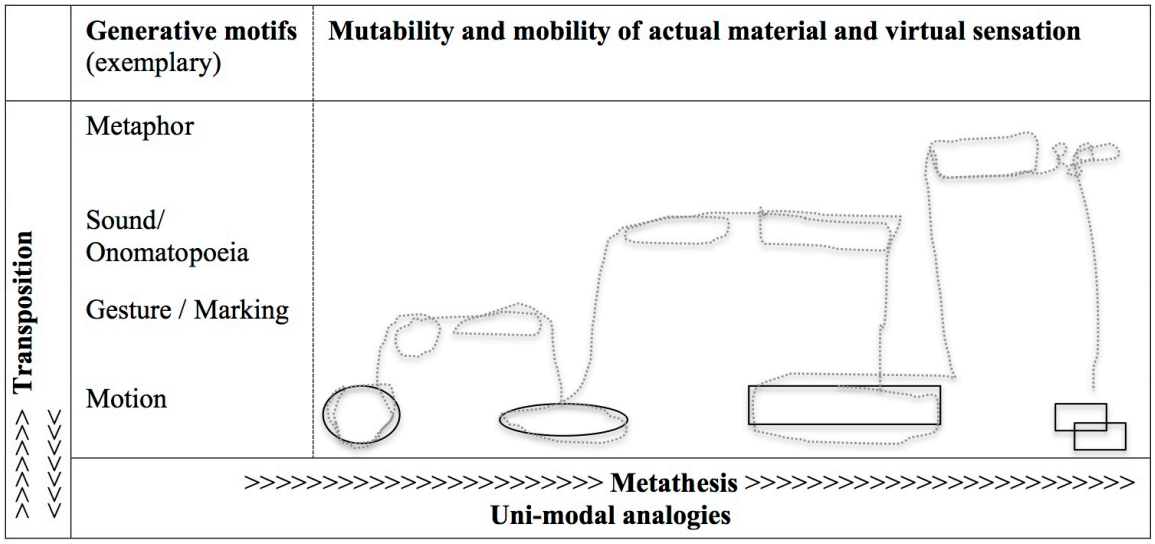


Figure 4: Exemplary illustration of material's ongoing mutability through cross-modal (transposition) and uni-modal (metathesis) taste-making

The interplay of transposition and metathesis allows for both the mobility and mutability of sensation. Transposing a motion's affective dynamics into narratives and written sketches, for example, allows both for their perpetuation and transformation. On the basis of four different media (motion, gesture, sound and metaphorical language), figure 4 illustrates the cross-modal (transposition) and uni-modal (metathesis) mobility and mutability of actual material and virtual sensation.

The resulting articulation of a transposition, which is always the possible starting point for a process of metathesis, I thereby understand as generative *motif*.[185] To understand these articulations as *motif* is to highlight that they are meant as and encountered as symptoms and signals, thus allowing for the mobility, the movement of sensation through and along various articulations. A motif then is generative in constituting a productive differential relation and allowing for the continuous transformation – through metathesis – of actual material and virtual sensation.

The articulation and actualization of sensation into generative motifs means a prolific form of "reverse alchemy." Originally a term coined by Aldous Huxley (cited in Blom & Chaplin, 2000, p. ix) to denote the problem of gold turning to lead upon being touched, I propose that touching and then turning the "pure lyrics of experience" into motion, sound or discursive analogies does not amount to "tripe and hogwash" (p. ix) but is a rather performative act of taste-making. Each transposition offers the generative potential of a mediation that at the same time continues a trajectory while slightly changing it. Transpositions conserve, extend and transform the material's rhythms and affects through its articulation within different media. Motifs, as I suggest, therefore act as propositions, tentatively channeling and constraining but also allowing for new ways of joining and associating on the basis of operatory analogies. Looking back, especially the micro-analysis of the "green sofa" vignettes unearthed the work of motifs: for instance, the emerging mini-narrative of "Queen Elizabeth."

The articulation of motifs within experimentation means a movement that amplifies difference by means of positive feedback loops. As distinctive operations of the "machine"[186] of experimentation, transposition and metathesis are therefore mechanisms of multiplication and magnification. In Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) parlance, transposition and metathesis can be said to be "deterritorializing," or constituting an ambulant and itinerant movement of sense(ation). Seeking a consistency of heterogeneous materials and forces, metathesis and transposition are therefore at the heart of experimentation's continuous and synthetic "thinking-feeling-making."

Transposition and metathesis are the basic and uncertain creativity mechanisms that generate, transform and refine material by allowing amateurs to "feel" their way forwards towards the "nearby unknown" (7.3.5). Situated within the "immanent" taste-

[185] From the Old French *motif*, from the late Latin *motivus*, from *movere* "to move" (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010).

[186] Machine, in its archaic sense, and as used for example by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), denotes a contrivance, a skillfully created *agencement*, that is, a socio-material and technical assemblage able to affect and transmit forces.

making (see also Cull, 2013) of experimentation, both mechanisms are thereby contingent on the presentification and valuation of materials that characterize experimental modes of engagement. Transposition and metathesis are not impositions but articulations that follow the vectors of appetition of "encountered signs." They are synchronically and diachronically perpetuating and transforming, and therefore constituting these vectors. As such, both mechanisms are integral parts of experimentation's taste-making, which gradually develops material through ongoing tests of taste. The various articulations of material are always test assemblies that are becoming further valued through their following operatory analogies.

Transposition and metathesis are both contingent on a "boundary work" that is holding at bay tendencies to fix the material as well as the attainment of expertise and, therefore, "sensible knowledge" (Strati, 2007) (see Chapters 5 and 6). Both mechanisms require that material is encountered with attentive co-presence, and that an incorporated movement repertoire and syntax (see 5.1.1, 5.3.2) allow for both perceiving and articulating motifs as symptoms and signals.

Summing up, I suggest that the generative potential of performative communication crucially rests within both the diachronic, uni-modal metathesis of formations and the synchronic, cross-modal transposition of formations. Creative practice, as "a dynamic material exchange … between objects, bodies and images" (Bolt, 2004, p. 8), is thereby specified as a question of sensation and material ambulating through various modes of existence along operatory analogies within the taste-making activities of transposition and metathesis. As effect, the proceeding "in-formation" of material takes on a "fluid" (see Moser & Law, 2006), itinerant dynamic.

I further suggest that the notions of transposition and metathesis can specify the generative function of mediation (see 3.4.1). Transposition and metathesis effect articulations that perform as mediators and constitute a nexus of consistency and mutability. The different articulations of a sensation or idea are not representations of some transcendent sense or idea, but each in their own way they are all operatory analogies that perform as "mutable mobiles," which allows for both the transportation and transformation of material and sensation within experimentation.

The danger of experimentation is to get lost, to spiral into chaos, or, even more dramatically, to suffer a "suicidal collapse" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 161). This is thanks to experimentation's capacity of "deterritorialization." Transposition and metathesis, when propelled forward through positive feedback loops, can lead into the vertigo of the non-stop proliferation of analogies and associations, turning in circles and not finding any "ground" or structure. This is why production crucially rests not

only on experimentation but also on acts of codification and representation that signify, stratify and hence singularize the product and consolidate it into a semi-substantive "good."

7.5.3 Codification – stratifying taste through evaluation, plotting and calculation

[A] very important, inevitable phenomenon that is beneficial in many respects and unfortunate in many others: stratification.
(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 40)

Staying stratified – organized, signified, subjected – is not the worst that can happen; the worst that can happen is if you throw the strata into demented or suicidal collapse, which brings them back down on us heavier than ever.
(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 161)

As mentioned above, what is sought in CDT production is a performance that can be said to be partly fluid and partly substantive. It should be reproducible while still being allowed to "mutate" and develop. What then are the mechanisms that allow this partial immutability to be achieved, and how do they do it?

After the continuous, synthetic and "deterritorializing" modes of immanent engagement within experimentation, I propose that the consolidation of the work into a partially immutable form is a question of *stratification* (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 40–41). Deleuze and Guattari draw on geological examples to think of morphogenesis as a dynamic involving the consolidation of material and its movement into *strata*, that is more or less functional and fixed structures. Stratification thereby has to be understood as a movement towards "phenomena of centering, unification, totalization, integration, hierarchization, and finalization" (p. 41) while never reaching them fully.[187]

Within the production of CDT, I propose that the stratification of material is effected through different modes and methods of *coding*. Coding is a specific form of articulation that seeks to construct steady forms. A code means an "act of capture" that is "imprisoning intensities" (p. 40) and immobilizes the excessive capacity of materials. A code can be many things, from the DNA of an organism to a sacred text that is followed literally and without deviation. What these examples have in common is that a code implies a certain degree of prescription.

[187] The opposition between experimentation and codification is that between two abstract poles on a continuum (see 3.2.7). In practice, we never find pure instances of either mode; both modes rather imply and incite each other (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 270). Stratification will always be eluded by its deterritorializing and decoding complement of experimentation (and *vice versa*).

The basic principle of coding is thereby what I propose calling *scaffolding* (see figure 5). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to coding when an articulation "establishes functional, compact, stable structures (forms), and constructs the molar compounds in which these structures are simultaneously actualized" (p. 41). The code is the molar, organized compound that allows molecular material to be situated and fixed therein. The code therefore acts as a scaffolding for the material.

Within the making of CDT, different codes are active (see figure 5 and below). In Chapter 6, the codes now presented were introduced as *scaffolds* (see 6.3.5). Firstly, the *metrum of the eight beat count* is the basic code that allows for codifying, that is standardizing and therefore disciplining the material and its bodies. Secondly, the discursive form of the *narrative* is another central code. It allows for a sequencing of events and a dramaturgical co-development of motion, role and plot. Lastly, the *aesthetic norms and standards* of CDT and the anticipated reaction of the public *audience* together form a code of pre-existing criteria that are taken to codify and therefore evaluate and judge the material.

A codifying form of taste-making thereby assumes a "transcendent" (see Cull, 2013) mode of relation between bodies and materials and, as such, between practitioners and the primary process of creation. Transcendence is here not to be understood as a mode of existence that is beyond the material universe, but as a mode of relation that, while it is external to experience, still revolves around enaction in contingent practical contexts. It is "transcendent" because it approaches subjects and objects as already made and retrospectively applies pre-existing criteria (code) in different forms of qualification (see Callon & Law, 2005). As such, I propose framing it as a representational mode of relation between individual and substantive entities within the subject-object dualism.

As with experimentation, so is codification an achievement. It is a mode of engagement that needs to be understood as thoroughly mediated. In Chapter 5, I illustrated how codification is, among others, contingent on the organization of an outside perspective and the mobilization and employment of code. Codification is made possible through the use of video, mirrors or observation, a collective lexicon of appraisals, a sense of field criteria, a coding algorithm (as in a calculation) and the established legitimacy or authority to code (as when for example Mario mobilizes his 25 years of theater experience in order to legitimize his evaluations (see 6.3.5.3).

The central mechanism of codification is to relate formations on a basis of structural and instrumental, that is, *substantive analogies* (see 3.2.7). Substantive analogies symbolize, that is, codify and represent, material and its "taste" in service of

establishing the product as a "good" (Callon et al., 2002). The performance as "good" is the production's outcome, having attained a separate and independent existence that can be reproduced without stark transformation (that is, a semi-mutable mobile). Codification hence means a process of representation that involves instances of signification, thereby representing things as discontinuous, symbolic entities that can be formally judged and ordered (see Callon & Law, 2005; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Moser & Law, 2006).

On the basis of the empirical sections, I propose three different mechanisms of codification: *calculation & reiteration, plotting* and *evaluation* (see figure 5).

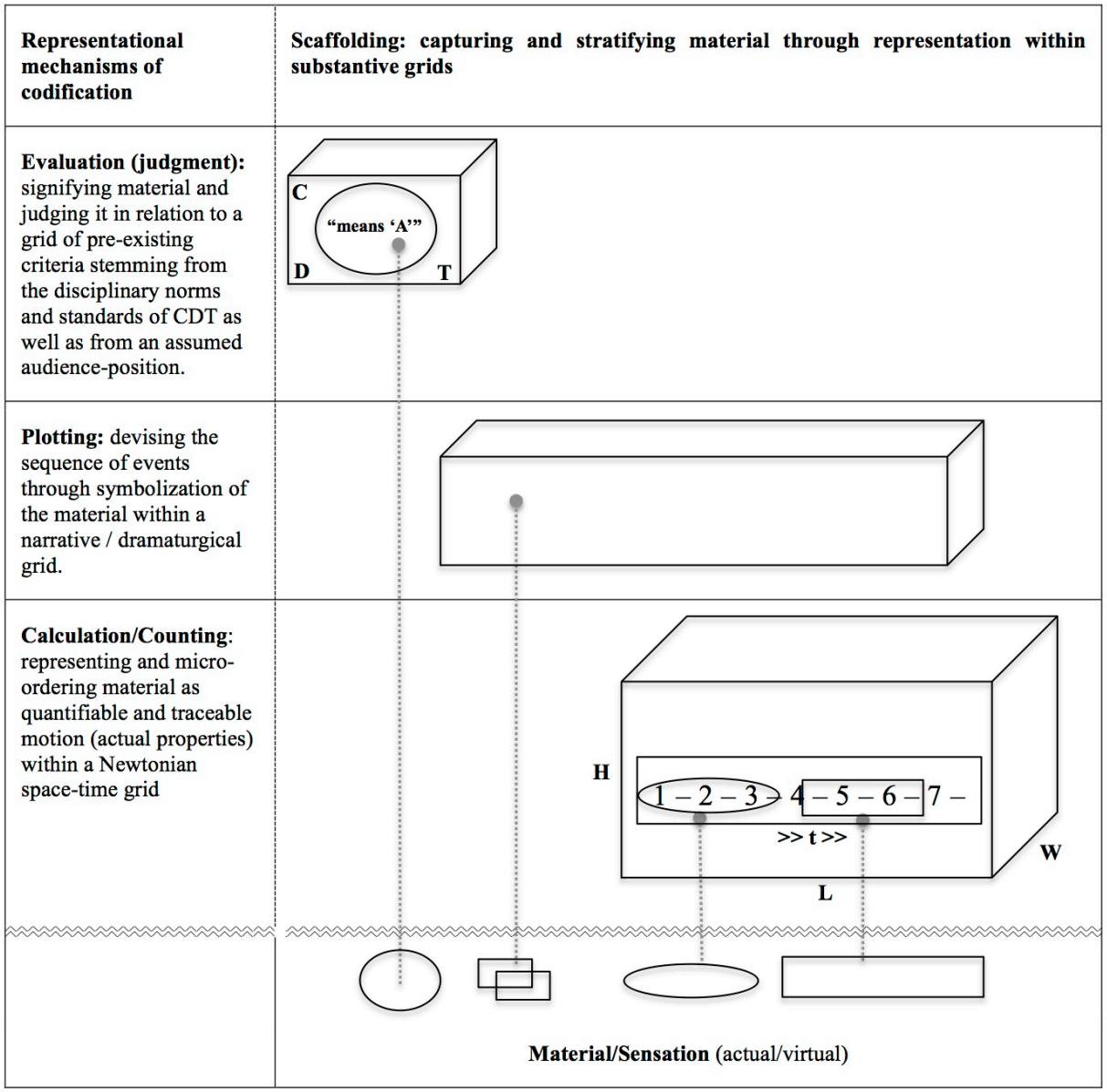


Figure 5: Scaffolding: representational mechanisms of codification

The strongest mechanism to ensure the immutability and reproducibility especially of motion material is the combination of *calculation* and *reiteration*. It is through

"counting out" the material, as the practitioners in this study call it (see 6.3.5.1), that motion is ordered, sequenced and thus made immutable and mobile. This ensures that the material can be reliably reproduced. Calculation therefore is the representation of material as quantifiable and traceable motion in order to ensure its micro-ordering. Through calculation the material is reduced to actual structural characteristics that are compatible to and can be inserted into a Newtonian space-time grid of eight counts. It is a process of disciplining bodies and codifying materials in respect to the rigid metrum of the eight beat count (the code) through reiterating motions to the point of physical exhaustion. Calculation is then a prerequisite for achieving the coordination of motion between performers (for example in group choreographies) or between motion and music in phrases where more than one performer dances.

The second codifying mechanism, which most often arises in conjunction with evaluation, is *plotting*. Along the production process, it is through symbolization of the material within a narrative or dramaturgical grid that the sequence of events is devised and ordered. While the extent and role of plotting is different depending on the genre of the performance, "dramatic" performances with a clear story are more in need of plotting than "non-dramatic" performances; there is always the need of retrospectively coding the material and articulating it in a communicable form. Plotting, just as evaluation, thereby is mostly also reliant on pre-existing criteria of what makes for a "good story."

In contrast to the situated appraisal of *valuation* that, internal to experience, is occurring over the course of testing (see Cull, 2013; Hennion, 2011), I propose that *evaluation* denotes the retrospective, language-based and analytic judgment of material outside of experience. Evaluation is a most common and important mechanism of creative practice that includes signifying material and judging it in relation to a grid of pre-existing criteria that stem from the disciplinary norms and standards of CDT as well as an assumed position of the public audience (see 6.3.5.3). Asking "*what does it mean*" or commanding "*this is what it means*," it is through signification and hence symbolization that material is made amenable to both disciplinary evaluations and collective narrativization.

As a form of "transcendent taste-making," the discrete and analytic thinking (see Styhre, 2011) of *evaluation*, *plotting* and *calculation* affect a "territorialization" and "stratification" (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) of the material. In contrast to the positive feedback dynamics of experimentation, the three coding mechanisms consolidate material through homeostatic processes. Representing and articulating material within the "substantive grids" (see Latour, 2005; Moser & Law, 2006) of code

installs negative feedback loops that dampen the "machine of experimentation." Through coding and signification, material and taste are situated within a scaffolding of disciplinary, narrative, spatial or temporal "substantive grids",[188] thus effecting that material and taste is sedimented and consolidated into less mutable arrangements that are easier to reproduce. Through articulating material within the different "substantive grids," it is turned into more or less "immutable mobiles," or formations that can be communicated and that can travel between different sites. Overall, the different mechanisms of stratification capture and consolidate material and its volatile sensation, hence potentially effecting an *organization*, here meaning an integration, singularization, hierarchization and finalization of the material.

The danger of coding material and taste, as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) warn us (see also 6.3.5.3), is a restrictive "territorialization" of the material. Codification, especially when it entails "overcoding" (p. 41), can halt the creative movement of material-in-the-making. In its extreme form, codification is an imposition, or an absolute verdict and order that needs to be followed. This can turn the performance into a *stratum*, that is a fully foreseeable, complicated *collection* of parts with discernable input and output. The goal of CDT production yet is a semi-mutable mobile, or an assemblage of heterogeneous elements that turns into a *consistency* of heterogeneous sensations (and its materials) that stays "alive".[189] As such, within creative practice, instances of codification and experimentation need to be properly balanced.

7.5.4 Dimensional models of taste-making within CDT production

Against the background of the danger of excessive experimentation ("creative vertigo") or codification ("imprisonment") (see 7.5.2 and 7.5.3), creative practice within the production of CDT is marked by an interplay of inventive and stratifying modes of engagement. The participating practitioners in this study thereby developed pragmatic tactics that combine the power of experimentation and codification.

The practitioners in this study persistently stressed the overall tentativeness of the many stratifying appraisals and positionings. Material was interpreted and tentatively put into a certain, substantive and collectively shared frame and form. The generative open-endedness of creative practice does not eliminate the need to establish temporary agreements and "bases." "Kill your darlings," a standing phrase for creative practice within the world of theater and its respective vignettes in Chapter 6, probably best

[188] Latour (2005) in this respect talks about "forms" (pp. 222-232).
[189] See Delanda (2006) for a lucid theoretical rendering of the relation and distinction of "stratum" and "assemblage" as network-like structures within Deleuze and Guattari (1987).

illustrates the targeted relation between experimentation and codification: knowing that the external judgment might be lethal for some very beloved developments, it is nevertheless mandatory. And while this is known, the production process still follows a fever curve of attachment and detachment (see 6.1). Creative practice is vital labor; it is productive of both material and the amateur subjects. The latter are deeply attached to their "darlings," their material and in the end need to cut themselves free from this. Still, there are dramatic processes of detachment taking place (see 6.1.5), that are later and with some distance commented upon with a winking eye. The performers know that production and its ongoing taste-making unfold along the affective trajectories of experimentation and codification, and they learn how to deal with the productive and averse sides of both.

A continuum model of taste-making

The making of CDT relies on a productive interplay of experimental and codifying modes of taste-making.[190] As noted before, in practice neither mode ever exists by itself; they instead need to be understood as abstract poles on a continuum. From this perspective, creative practice is a sequence of activities and events that invent and transform as well as stratify and consolidate the material. I propose mapping the relation of experimentation and codification within a continuum model of taste-making (see figure 6). The continuum stretches between experimentation and its basic associative mechanisms of transposition and metathesis that relate and invent material along operatory analogies on the one side, and codification, which includes the scaffolding of material through the substantive analogies within evaluation, plotting and calculation that stratify the material, on the other. Both modes of engagement have to be understood as polarities. What distinguishes them is their capacity to see, follow and instigate or fix movement.

[190] See Sandberg and Tsoukas (2014) for a differentiation between different forms of sensemaking and a call for research into the interplay of immanent, prospective and embodied forms of sensemaking (what I dub "experimentation") and the "transcendent," retrospective forms of sensemaking (what I call "codification").

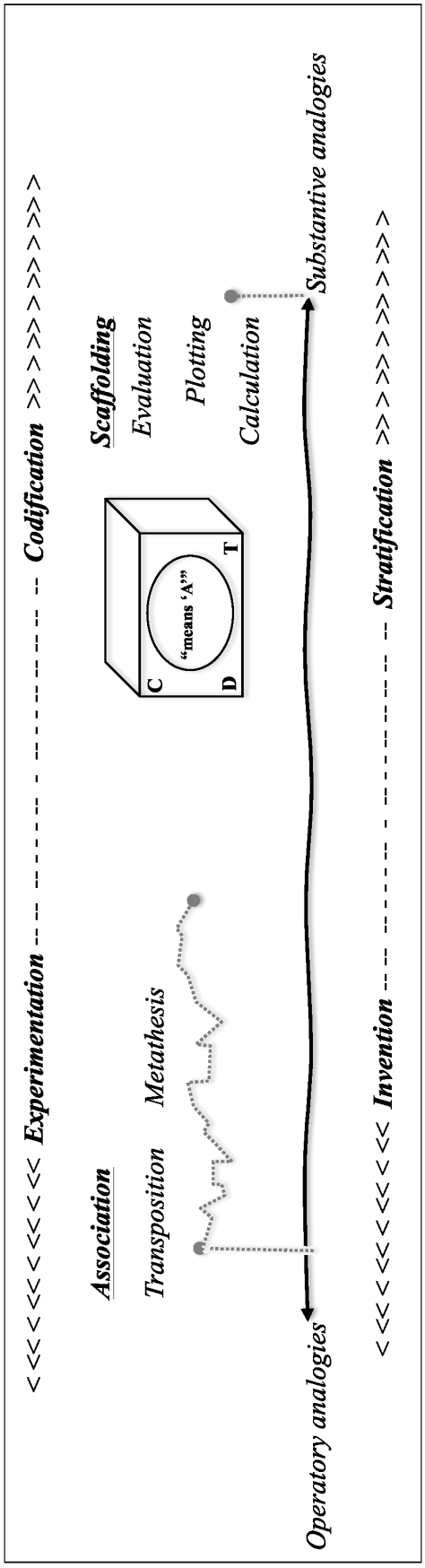


Figure 6: A continuum model of taste-making in-between experimentation and codification as well as invention and stratification

A parametric model

This continuum model can be further refined by differentiating two dimensions that, in their magnitude, characterize the form and function of taste-making. The following *parametric model* of taste-making therefore maps the relation of the two factors *signification* and *representation* in order to specify the distribution of production's modes of engagement.

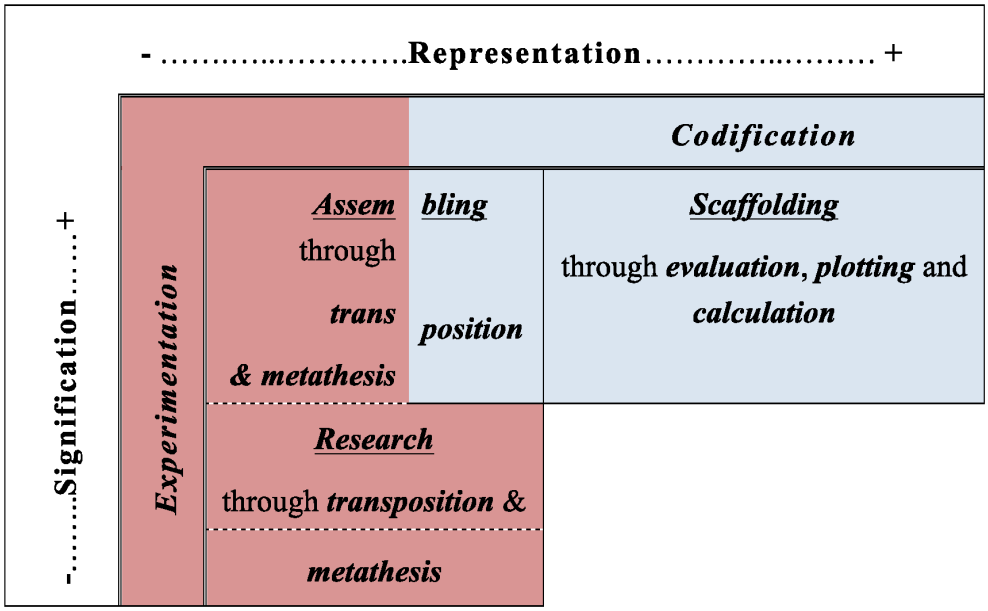


Table 8: A parametric model of taste-making within CDT production

First, taste-making can be differentiated according to its degree of *signification*. Signification I use here as a term that denotes the extent to which material is transposed into language or engaged with on a linguistic level. As illustrated in the sections on experimentation within *research* (6.3.3) and *assembling* (6.3.4), taste-making differs in terms of how much it engages with and articulates material within language. Within *assembling* then, there are more instances of transposition into discursive (narrative, description) modes of existence as in research that, for example in improvisation, stays on a sensible level and associates motion to motion. The distinctive characteristic of experimental taste-making is that it mostly associates heterogeneous elements along their operatory dimensions.

I propose that assembling can be seen as a mode of production that is characterized through its continuity between experimentation and codification. For example, it often involves instances of evaluation and plotting. What is characteristic about assembling is that while it might involve a higher degree of signification it also is constituted by a certain degree of *representation*.

Representation is the second dimension that I use to specify the various forms of taste-making within CDT production. Moving towards codifying modes of engagement, the magnitude of representation increases, that is, taste-making engages with and articulates material more and more as a substantive form that can be adequately represented. A higher degree of representation means a "doing *to*" materials in contrast to the "making *with*" we find with lesser degrees of representation. On the experimental side of the continuum, taste-making engages with the operatory dimension of signs as symptoms and signals, while more representation means that the material is turned into a part of a code. Through the mechanisms of evaluation, plotting and calculation, material turns into a representational symbol within a substantive grid, or "scaffolding," as called in Chapter 6.

Together, the dimensions of signification and representation constitute an idealized parametric model of taste-making within CDT. I propose understanding the dimensions as parameters that, depending on their magnitude, are factors that define "a system or set the conditions of its operation" (see the definition of "parameter" within the New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). Signification and representation are the parameters that characterize the specific function and form of taste-making within CDT production. They allow us to specify the relation between experimentation and codification as the basic modes of engagement within creative practice and production.

8 Conclusion

Over the last four years, I have embarked on a wide range of conceptual ventures into organizational, sociological and philosophical writings following my overall interest in developing taste-making as a conceptual framework for creative practice. My investigations have been based on a general interest in how fundamental ontological and epistemological assumptions impact the way we conceive of, talk about and practice "creativity." The way we conceive of creation, and the role of humans and materials therein, fundamentally orients creative endeavors and hence also their outcomes. In this study I then suggested that both the traditional, (socio)cognitive framing as well as the sociocultural models of creativity bear a number of problematic assumptions. These assumptions first of all lead to conceptual and methodological quandaries, especially when seeking to account for "organizational creativity" and the question of how novelty and change are possible. I further argued that especially the entitative assumptions of sociocognitive approaches are at the heart of creativity as a highly charged ideological complex. Most creativity research is deeply tied into modernist narratives and values of mastery, emancipation and progress. Therefore, in this thesis I sought to "reclaim creativity" as a prolific concept for social and organizational analysis by introducing nascent theoretical perspectives. Following an emerging interest in discussing ontological and epistemological issues within organizational creativity research, I explored theoretical perspectives from across the humanities and social sciences that offer new or forgotten concepts and values that can account for a collective creative practice where creativity is assumed to happen *ex materia*. I developed this understanding along with an ethnographic study of the making of Contemporary Dance Theater (CDT).

Studying CDT production proved to be a fortunate choice for conceptual and methodological as well as personal and pragmatic reasons. Concerning the former, CDT making offered the possibility to focus on: (a) the role of *affect* and *embodiment* in creative processes; (b) the *collectivity* and *temporality* of collaborative creative practice and how it is continuously sustained, refined and transformed within activities that oscillate between *performative* and *representational* modes of engagement; and (c) the relation between the *actual* (the lived) and the *virtual* (the abstract). Choreography (the making of CDT) is an artistic practice that engages the unknown where experience and insight, the sensual and the intelligible, doing and undergoing coincide.

In this study, I then sought to contribute to organizational creativity research by studying the *production of Contemporary Dance Theater* (CDT) and developing a *practice*-based understanding of *organizational creativity* within CDT as a matter of *taste-making*. For the empirical analysis, I posed two central questions: (a) *What are the central materials of practice and how do various practice resources enable the creative engagement of practitioner and material*? And (b): *How are the generation, formation and stabilization of the product "theater performance" affected? What modes of engagement are thereby crucial? And how do these modes interact within CDT production?*

Seeking to answer these questions through an empirical study of CDT, I developed a methodology that could follow the creative process from *inside-out* and that adhered to a principle of *description*.

I started this thesis with problematizing the *retrospective* input-output methodologies of entitative approaches, which were shown to mainly "read creativity backwards," from an outsider perspective. Seeking a processual study of creativity "in the making," this study therefore was based on an *inside-out* approach that sought an involved and immersed position *within* the creative process. I proposed that following a process from inside asks researchers to attend to and "engage in the world-making activities of those they study" (Latour, 2005, p. 57). In the case of creative practice, this meant attending to the molecular forces and exchanges of dynamic forms that would creatively constitute macrophysics (Simondon, 2005, p. 46). I thus sought a methodology that would allow me to link up the micro dynamics of experience, within a reality in the making, with the more solid and organized forms of social existence.

For this, I chose a research design based on a multi-sited and focused organizational video-ethnography that followed a comparative, embedded case design. Practically, I attended five different CDT production processes during six months of fieldwork in 2010/11. I spent three months within a middle-sized Swiss theater house where I followed in parallel four smaller production processes. I spent another three months with a small dance theater company in Argentina, Buenos Aires. Altogether, my fieldwork produced around fifty field notes that ranged from 200 to 1500 words and more than 10 hours of audio-visual material. In addition to observations, I conducted seventeen ethnographic interviews within or around the rehearsal process, had informal discussions with the organizational members in different situations and collected various organizational documents and media material. Twenty-one retrospective narrative interviews were conducted with key research participants after the production processes.

By “following,” “reading” and analyzing creativity “forwards,” this study therefore accounted for the mediating activities and events of CDT production between input and output.

In comparison to a broadly explanatory science of organizational creativity, I adopted an alternative perspective based on a “negative” view of creativity, assuming that we will never be able to know creativity as such. Most (organizational) creativity research seeks to represent and explain creativity in ever more accurate models in order to produce definite knowledge about creativity. Unlike the more conventional approaches, in this study I tried not to dissect the messy richness of the empirical material into neat variables, theory-driven deductions or structural, social, cultural or other “outside” explanations. Instead, the study explored the organization of a “becoming” performance at the level of practices and associations. The main methodological direction was therefore to produce rich and performative descriptions of actual creative practice and its processes and to develop theoretical propositions alongside the empirical material.

8.1 Summary of findings and theoretical development

In answer to *research question (a)*, I suggested that the central materials of practice have to be understood as an ecology of creative practice and the event of creativity. Creative practice assembles heterogeneous actants into practical configurations that act as propositions to the event of creativity. I distinguished three different aspects of the ecology of creative CDT practice: firstly, the actual material of creative practice, which consists of incorporated motion *repertoires* as well as biographical and cultural “literacy.” Secondly, the various practice carriers (*plug-ins*) – from social techniques, over performative theories, devices, and the conduit of “taste talk” to the enactment of material in productive articulations – that enable creative practice through forging skilled bodies. And thirdly, the affective and “normaesthetic” *milieu* constituted by the community of practitioners. Taken together, I proposed that creative practice relies on a variety of repertoires that, as patterns in process, are continuously performed and refined within the experimental set-up of rehearsals that, as sites of tests and trials, function as propositions to the event of creativity.

The methodological move of “zooming out” thereby meant *distributing creativity* not in terms of vertical distance, but in terms of horizontal range across space, materials and collectives as well as time. Firstly, through focusing on the notion of *repertoires*, creativity was shown to be related to a wider creative process over time and space. Creative practice is contingent on a performer’s life-work, which is a trajectory

stretching into the past and into the future. Secondly, creative practice was suggested to be contingent on the creative process of larger groups, including the dance company, friends, reference groups, art-forms as such and even society. And thirdly, creativity was shown to be inseparably related to practical, aesthetic and ethical concerns that involve (e)valuative instances of taste-making.

In answer to *research question (b)*, I attended to the *formation* of CDT performances while focusing on the *empirical circularity* of making CDT. Within *production*, which I describe as a never-ending trajectory towards concrescence and perfection, practitioners and their products move through mutually constitutive modes of existence and presence. As such, I proposed that answering the question of the generation, formation and stabilization of the product "theater performance" requires first thinking about the engagement of practitioner and material within problematic modes of *attachment*. Production is affected within a dynamic stretching between forces of conservation and of innovation. Overall, I therefore directed my attention towards the uneasy relation between creativity and the boundaries inherent in all practice.

To track the relation between creativity and practice, I described the creative practice of CDT making as requiring first the thrust and desire of idiosyncratic "love affairs." I suggested that CDT production at the same time however required the consolidating limitation of a common professionalism that is accounting for and evaluating practice. My account therefore unfolded an intensive process of emotional and affective *attachment* and *detachment* along a distinctive "fever chart" of production that I proposed to frame with the famous theater adage of "*kill your darlings*" (see 6.1). From this perspective, I developed the conceptual *personae* of the *professional amateur*. It is the professional amateur that desires engaging with the practical concerns and realizing practice's appreciated sense, while on the other hand being "disciplined" by the performative criteria and conditions of accountability.

Then I proposed that the dynamics of attachment and detachment are inseparably linked to the two central *modes of engagement* within CDT production: *experimentation* and *codification*. Experimentation and codification are the abstract poles on a continuum of the modes of engagement that are centrally involved in the production of a CDT performance. Understanding these modes of engagement as ways of *taste-making* allowed detailing their central contribution of generating, transforming, manipulating and imposing meaning and taste as central to the development of a CDT performance. I eventually differentiated various characteristics of taste-making according to their *locus* and *dynamic*, their *temporality* and lastly their

effectiveness. Answering the question of the relation between the different modes of engagement, I developed a tentative typology (see table 6, p. 345) that revolves around three *reciprocal characteristics* of taste-making within the making of CDT. Concerning the *locus* and *dynamic* of taste-making, I proposed a reciprocity of modes of engagement between *immanent* and *explicit* forms of taste-making. Concerning the *temporality* of taste-making, I proposed a reciprocity between *prospective* and *retrospective* forms of taste-making. Concerning the *effectiveness* of taste-making, I proposed a reciprocity between *inventive* and *restorative* forms of taste-making.

Overall, the specification of taste-making along the three reciprocal relations allowed me to detail how (a) creativity is part of a dynamic, contested and provisional practice of CDT production, and how (b) the product of a CDT performance is generated, assembled and consolidated within experimental and codifying modes of engagement that each in their own way bear forces of conservation and innovation.

Theoretical development

The empirical findings helped to form a concept first of all of creative *practice* as thoroughly mediated, inventive, skilled, improvisatory, concerned, oriented and collective. Secondly, they turned *production* into a process that consists of a series of transformations affected within the various modes of engagement that make up creative practice. I therefore proposed understanding creative practice and production together as a poetic process of *taste-making*.

Within Chapter 7, I then discussed and attempted to systematize the previous findings within a *poetic praxeology of production*. Over the course of five sections, I therefore developed a provisional, practice-based framework of creativity as taste-making ("P2A4"). Alluding to the widely discussed frameworks of Rhodes (1961) ("4Ps") and Glăveanu (2013) ("5As"), this framework was dubbed the "P24A" framework. It listed the main carriers of creative *P*ractice within CDT production: *A*mateurs, *P*roducts, *A*udience, *A*ttachments, and *A*ppraisal lexicon. The emphasis of the framework was thereby suggested to rest not in its list of elements but in their *status*. As a practice based-framework grounded in a pragmatic conception of taste-making, none of the five elements should be considered as given or natural. This framework rather emphasized the importance of the various "tests of taste" (Hennion, 2004, p. 141), that is, the experimentations and trials that gradually reveal and clarify the capacities and properties of amateurs, products, audience, attachments and appraisals.

Therefore I firstly specified CDT production as a process of increasing in-*formation* and consistency of heterogeneous materials and their affects. Then I attended to the

experimental logic of production within CDT and focused on taste-making as an overall mode of aesthetic and affective experimentation. Thereafter, I turned to the organizational skills of taste-making that revolve around the capability of amateurs to mobilize the material semiotics of materials and its blend of actual and virtual aspects. In the final section of Chapter 7, I then proposed different dimensional models of taste-making as affecting both a transformation and stratification of the product CDT performance.

The central conceptual work was eventually to devise a *parametric* model of *taste-making*. This was done in order to further follow up on the second research question, which asked for the principal modes of engagement and their interrelation. Therefore I suggested that the making of CDT relies on a productive interplay of *experimental* and *codifying* modes of taste-making that invent and transform as well as stratify and consolidate the material. The two major parameters within this model were the dimensions of *signification* and *representation*. I proposed that depending on their magnitude, these parameters characterize the specific function and form of taste-making within CDT production. These parameters allowed me to specify the relation between experimentation and codification as the basic modes of engagement within creative practice and production.

8.2 Limitations

The main limitations of this study pertain to the case of Contemporary Dance Theater as such, the specific context chosen, the conceptual challenge I have taken on as well as wider methodological questions.

Firstly, the choice of doing fieldwork on cultural production within the CDT company of a Swiss theater house can raise questions concerning any attempt of translating this study's findings to other contexts. Can we learn anything about creative practice outside of CDT and outside of the dance company studied? While I never claimed the generalizability of my findings as in an explanatory science of creativity (see above), these are nevertheless pertinent questions. The production processes studied are highly specific cases of cultural production. First of all, the theater house studied, a middle-sized public performing arts organization, must be considered a specific context involving and exhibiting particular regional and institutional processes and products. Secondly, the cases studied were set within the exceptional organizational format of "Sharp Cutz," where ensembles of three to six performers were given great artistic freedom to produce shorter pieces. The processes were characterized by a high degree of autonomy and constellations that would involve low hierarchies between

choreographing dancers and dancing choreographers. My field trip to Buenos Aires, while calibrating my findings in support of the initial reading developed, in this respect did not provide a vastly different setting.

Overall, the study of CDT production within this thesis must therefore be regarded as a radical case of group-based creative practice that, while making some aspects of creative practice very visible, surely blended out others. The cases were specific in that they lacked a more formal organizational setup and structured processes. And it is questionable that, for example, every CDT production is characterized by such high degrees of personal involvement and concern. Coming back to the questions posed in the preceding paragraph, I still suggest that these cases offered the opportunity to observe important aspects of creative practice that could be found in varying degrees in other processes of (cultural) production. The cases allowed me to develop a conceptual framework for studying creativity as a specific kind of practice and process of taste-making. The question of generalizability should in this regard be reposed. The contributions of this study are not directly applicable findings but sensitizing concepts and ways of framing that allow a different perspective on creative practice that should be further developed, refined and transformed through other studies.

The second main limitation of this work is the conceptual challenge itself that I have taken on. Writing about organizational creativity developed into a theoretical quest touching upon fundamental ontological and epistemological questions. The focus on sensemaking and, in this thesis taste-making, as a complex relation between symptoms, signals and symbols especially pertained to fundamental questions of how language and (kin)aesthetics are related within processes of subsistence and transformation. After 430 pages and four years of research, I would still argue that the present study at best scratched the surface of what could become a fuller research agenda that would need to be pursued through further inquiries.

Finally, this study is surely limited through "the experimental process of conducting research on experimentation." As suggested in this study, mainstream social science mostly fails to acknowledge or account for a range of phenomena that are nonetheless crucial to how we engage in creative endeavors. Studying creative practice and its experimental modes of engagement asked for research that could engage with and account for various kinds of affective phenomena, from desires, concerns and passions to taste. Yet we "cannot just add emotions, beliefs, passions, and desires to conventional approaches without profoundly rethinking what it is that we expect our accounts to *do*" (Latham & Conradson, 2003, p. 1903, emphasis in original).

In this study, I therefore sought an *inside-out* approach, an immersive style of research that, with an ethos of experimentation and pluralism, takes the productiveness and event-fullness of practice seriously. Easier said than done. This proved to be the source of immense pleasure and pain for me as researcher. It offered the chance to engage fully with my research partners and subject of study, yet it required adopting a radical openness in terms of methods, ways of thinking and ways of writing. It asked me to learn and develop a new vocabulary and new perspectives that are not easily articulated, especially when being originally trained within the representational setup of traditional social science research. This study therefore asks both the researcher and reader for a critical benevolence when engaging with the "risky accounts" (Latour, 2005) of this dissertation. The accounts offered here are risky because they can easily fail in terms of not doing as much as they claim, of not extending the *event*-fullness of creative practice to the event of the reading. They are risky because they tend to lose themselves in the molecular dynamics of experience, becoming too evasive or alien. Making sense of the accounts in this study requires a certain effort and a generous openness to the study's objectives. Without this, much of the purpose of the performative approach in this thesis would be lost. Regardless, I hope that the effort that went into forging the accounts even allows one to say that failure can be as insightful as success.

8.3 Contributions and implications

In the following sections I focus on the contributions and implications of this study and thus on the question of why it was important to do this research. An outlook on what further research might be done as a result of this work follows this discussion. An overview of the relation between this study's findings as well as its contributions and implications can be seen in the following table. Table 9 features an overview of findings, contributions and implications of this study across theory and methodology as well as education, policy and practice.

	Theory	Methodology	Education, policy and practice
Entitative logics	Interactional Impositional	Retrospective Explanatory	Masterful Liminal
Logics of creative practice as taste-making (the P2A4 framework)	Relational Enactive	Inside-Out Descriptive	Concerned & skillful Propositional
Contributions	Expanding creativity across: Space, materials and the collective Time and process Affect Politics and ethics "The nearby unknown"	Processualization Non-teleological narratives of creative practice	
Implications	"Reclaiming creativity" as prolific category of organizational analysis Calling for practice-based studies of organizational creativity		An alternative vocabulary and different values and forms of creativity

Table 9: Overview of findings, contributions and implications of this study within theory, methodology and education

The first row once more lists the logics of entitative creativity approaches as discussed and problematized in Chapter 2. The second row summarizes the corresponding logics of the relational taste-making approach developed in this thesis. The following rows point out the contributions and implications of this study's findings.

Overall, this study potentially contributes to the theory, methodology as well as education, or practice, of organizational creativity (research) by providing an empirically developed framework of creative practice as taste-making. The general framework, exemplified in the "2P4A" model, yields not so much an accurate and objective model that could faithfully represent creativity. This possibility was ruled out in the beginning of this study. The framework rather seeks to be faithful to the event of creativity and provide an "infra-language" (see 4.2.3) of organizational creativity. That is, an alternative conceptual vocabulary that reappraises well-known terms (e.g., skill, affect, aesthetics or taste) and introduces new ones (e.g., enaction, attachment or appetition) in order to enable thinking, studying and talking about creativity as a processual, collective, affective and uncertain event that is however materially mediated. This study contributes a way of thinking and speaking about creativity *ex materia* without taking recourse to transcendental elusions or immanent tautologies.

Creativity thereby always stays something "to be made", a tentative event emerging from a suggestive ecology.

Theoretically and *methodologically* this study then contributes to two sets of literature. Overall, this study adds to the general literature domain of *organizational creativity* and its mostly sociocognitive studies (see the classical works of Amabile, 1988; Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996; George, 2007; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Woodman et al., 1993) as well as the emerging perspectives on creativity as a "sociocultural" and "distributed" affair (Glăveanu, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014; Miettinen, 2006; R. K. Sawyer & DeZutter, 2009). It does so by suggesting a relational and enactive logic of creative practice and production that challenges the established assumptions of both sociocognitive and sociocultural approaches. Following in the footsteps of the minor tradition of affect- and practice-based work on organizational and entrepreneurial creativity (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2006; Miettinen, 1999; Nayak, 2008; Sørensen, 2006; Styhre, 2006; Vilén, 2009), this study thereby seeks to complement and amend sociocultural creativity frameworks in particular. On a general conceptual and methodological level, this study contributes to the literature on process- and practice-based theories of organization (see Gherardi, 2012; Nicolini, 2013; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Steyaert & van Looy, 2010) and sensemaking (see Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014) as well as to the discussion on visual methodologies (Steyaert et al., 2012).

In terms of *education*, *policy* and *practice*, this study could be of interest to practitioners of CDT and the creative industries as such, and for project-based creative teamwork in more general. The implications of the findings in this study could be worrying to educators and policy makers who are wedded to a functionalistic narrative of creativity.

The following sections then present the contributions and implications across theory and methodology as well as across education, policy and practice.

8.3.1 Theory

The theoretical contributions and implications of this study on Contemporary Dance Theater production are centrally based on the *relational* and *enactive* logics of creative practice as *taste-making* as developed within the study itself. These logics formulate the contributions of this study in a nutshell and call for an expanded understanding of creativity as creative practice. I thereby argue that this study of CDT can usefully provide new insight into thinking about organizational creativity and about

organization as process by providing a conceptual framework that reaches beyond dance into the "choreography of organization."

Below I first summarize these logics and then point out how situating creativity in practice, and understanding practice as a matter of taste, expands our understanding of creativity in four directions. These expansions are then suggested as a way to challenge the traditional distinction between research on creativity and research on innovation. Eventually I frame the more general contribution of this study in respect to the wider discussion of process- and practice-based theories of organization. This implicates a call for practice-based theorizing of organizational creativity.

As an alternative to the entitative logic of *(inter-)action*, with this study I suggest a *relational* logic of creative practice (see table 9). (Socio)cognitive and sociocultural creativity frameworks conceive of collective creativity either as the sum of individual problem-solvers or as an inter-subjectively negotiated meaning of materials and resources. This, as I suggest, misses out on the fundamental *preindividual relationality* of creative practice, where creativity is antecedent to the subject-object dualism of fully blown individual entities. Relationality thereby means taking seriously the ongoing need for mutual *performance*, where practitioner and material mutually constitute themselves within practice and its various modes of engagement. Moving beyond teleological theories of (inter)*action*, the relational logic of *taste-making* therefore underlines creativity's *performative*, that is, uncertain and *event*-full nature. Appreciating relationality in its own right means positing that the fundamental connecting tissue linking practitioners and their work within their joint milieu is therefore not representation (as in sociocognitive and sociocultural frameworks) but *affect*.

Contrasting the central idea of *imposition* within entitative, and therefore hylomorphic, models of creation, I suggest that relational creative practice follows an *enactive* logic. I therefore propose creative practice to be a socio-material process of participatory sense- and taste-making within experimental and codifying modes of engagement. It is an enactive process of *intervening* into and *following* the movement that emerges from an intensive engagement with materials along practical, aesthetic and ethical concerns. This means positing an alternative to the *disembodied* theories of imposition within both sociocognitive and sociocultural by underlining the central role of embodied, affective engagements with colleagues and materials.

Expanding our understanding of organizational creativity

On the basis of research on CDT production, the relational and enactive logics of this study constitute a sociomaterial and affective perspective on how to approach as well as account for *organizational creativity*. An organizational understanding of creativity as proposed within this study thereby places creativity as the effect of a *practice*. Practice here means a situated performance, or a collective achievement that is accomplished within a network of cultural, organizational and personal relations. Creative practice thereby assembles materials, people, technologies and know-how in response to the demand of "making" a "new" (cultural) product – in my case a Contemporary Dance Theater performance. Reframing creativity as a practice of taste-making thereby expands our understanding of creativity in four ways (see also Leddy, 1994).

Firstly, creativity is *temporalized* and creation is *processualized*. By focusing on materials and repertoires, creativity is shown to be contingent on a practitioner's life-work and a product's "career'; a conjugation of two temporal vectors stretching into the past and the future. Practitioner and product are both "technoaesthetic beings" that become and subsist because they are ongoingly performed. Creation is thereby shown to be a pervasive and ordinary event that is central in the momentary production of existence and presence. The point made by this study is thereby that creation is unavoidable, which is centrally tied to the second expansion, as discussed below.

Secondly, creation is *spatialized* and *collectivized*. Creative practice is always already collective: first, the emerging product is part of its own making. It is shown as "insisting" on ways to proceed. Second, creative practice relies on collectively developed methods, techniques and devices. Third, creative practice is suggested to be contingent on the creative process of larger groups, including the peers of the dance company, friends, stylistic reference communities, whole (artistic) movements and even society. As such, creation is pervasive because it is distributed across a whole range of bodies that are never neutral channels but productive mediators that carry creative potential of their own. As it is taking place in all of the interstices between the heterogeneous mediators that are involved in producing and appreciating a product, creation is thus becoming widely distributed.

Thirdly, creativity is thoroughly grounded in *affect*. The fundamental connecting tissue linking practitioners and their work within their joint milieu is not representation but *affect*. The intimate engagements of practitioners with themselves and their materials are fundamentally processes of affecting and/or being affected. It is within this

affective space, I suggest, that self and material, self and other as well as self and collective are mediated within rehearsal activities of experimentation.

Fourthly, creativity is *politicized*. Creative practice does not separate the creative generation of material from its (e)valuation. Creative practice is a matter of concern that is propelled by a movement of expansive desire and contractive enjoyment. As such it is inseparably related to practical, aesthetic and ethical concerns within (e)valuative modes of engagement.

Expanding the notion of creativity in the way described above *challenges* research that either narrowly focuses on (organizational) creativity as a well-defined phenomenon that is demarcated from processes of innovation and production (see Crossan & Apaydin, 2010), or research that depreciates creativity as the "fuzzy front end of innovation" (see Boeddrich, 2004). The analytical gap between creativity and innovation research is that while the former mainly attends to the generation of ideas, the latter mainly focuses on evaluating and implementing ideas (Kijkuit & Van Den Ende, 2007).

Situating creativity in practice as done in this study challenges the analytical distinction between creativity and innovation by demonstrating that creative practice is a matter of *concern* that, from an organizational perspective, interweaves biographical, collective and material trajectories. Situating creativity in practice thereby suggests that we might have to rethink the relation of the generation and the (e)valuation of material (ideas) (Kijkuit & Van Den Ende, 2007). Focusing on taste opens up to a view where the process of making things arrive is indissociable from the process of making oneself appreciate. The notion of taste, as developed in this thesis, allows accounting for the entanglement of affective, aesthetic, performative, normative and material aspects of creative practice and the creative process. As a problematic modality of attachment, taste enables drawing together creative practice as a dynamic and "strange combination of conservation and innovation" (Latour, 2008a, p. 11), or boundedness and *poiesis*, without falling back to dualistic frameworks. The focus on creative practice connects the ambitions of creativity and innovation research by opening up to an understanding of organization as pattern-in-process. Taste is thereby the organizational factor that sustains as well as refines and transforms practice, its practitioners and its products.

Towards practice-based organizational creativity research

> *Practice … articulates the image that knowledge does not reside in the heads of the people, nor is it a commodity; rather, it is a* collective, situated activity*.… In everyday organizational life, working, learning,* innovating*, communication, negotiation, conflict over goals, their interpretation, and history, are co-present in practice. … The contribution made by practice-based theorizing is its methodological insight that, within a practice, knowing is not separate from doing. (Gherardi, 2012, pp. 199–200, emphasis added)*

Beyond mentalist or commoditized approaches to (creativity-as-)knowledge, the notion of practice refers to the situatedness of creating/knowing within collective, local activities, where knowing and doing are inseparably entwined. Gherardi (2012, pp. 199–200) thereby suggested that creation and innovation also take place within practices and are therefore part of a much wider idea of situated work. Judging from the rising popularity of practice-based theorizing in organization studies (see Geiger, 2009; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Schatzki, 2006) and Gherardi's assertion that practice entails aspects of creativity and innovation, one would suspect a growing number of works on *creativity-as-practice*. Yet it might seem surprising to learn that the discussion on organizational creativity has, apart from the minor tradition of affect- and practice-based approaches (Elkjaer & Simpson, 2006; Gherardi & Perrotta, 2013; Miettinen, 1999; Nayak, 2008; Sørensen, 2006; Styhre, 2006; Vilén, 2009), so far not programmatically taken up the notion of practice[191].

I suggest that the idea of practice has so far not been taken up on a bigger scale within organizational creativity research because, notwithstanding Gherardi's assertion (see above), practice-based theorizing has tended to study ordering effects (Law, 1999, p. 4), while overemphasizing the "grammar and category of action and doing" (Harrison, 2009, p. 996; see also Gomart & Hennion, 1999). These philosophical and methodological makeups hinder the uptake of practice-based theory into organizational creativity research.

This study still demonstrates the prolificacy of developing a conceptual framework of *creative practice* – that is, a poetic praxeology of production – for organizational creativity research. It does so by extending the ontological and conceptual makeup of practice theory so that it can account for creativity as being at the basis of patterns-in-process, which are phenomena (products, practitioners, practices) that always entail both change and stability.

[191] Research on organizational creativity has never made a programmatic turn towards practice as observed for example with other organizational themes such as entrepreneurship (Johannisson, 2009; Steyaert, 2007), strategy (Chia, 2004; Chia & MacKay, 2007; Whittington, 2006) or learning and education (Gherardi, 2000, 2006; Raelin, 2007).

This study then suggests that the relation of conservation and innovation in practice necessitates expanding our understanding of practice to encompass not only "doings" but also "undergoings" (Dewey, 1934/1980). This view takes seriously the active passivities and "negative capacities" (Harrison, 2009, p. 996) of passionate amateurs that mobilize various attachments to perform propositions to the event of creativity and taste (see also Gomart & Hennion, 1999; Hennion, 2001, 2014). As shown in this study on CDT production, the process of making things arrive is indissociable from the process of making oneself appreciate.

To think of practice as creative, this work suggests that the basic conception of practice needs to entail an understanding of its *event*-fullness. The notion of event is "the escaping edge of any systematization" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 20) that marks the full potential of a world of becomings. Fundamentally, the event marks a discontinuity that "allows the emphasis on the contingency of orders to morph into an explicit concern with the new, and with the chances of invention and creativity" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 19). Thinking about practice and the event together thereby opens up for a central question: how might practice be attending to its own mutability and its potential of the "not yet'?

To answer this question, any framework of creative practice needs to be able to account for creation and novelty *ex materia*. Having developed an understanding of creative practice that takes on the question of the ontological status of *novelty* is then another central contribution. This contribution thereby adds to practice-based theories of organizing as such (see also Gherardi, 2009), where the question is hardly discussed. And it also (re)introduces the question of novelty into the discussion on (organizational) creativity (see also Jeanes, 2006; Osborne, 2003; Rehn, 2009; Rehn et al., 2006; Sørensen, 2006), where questions like "what is novelty?" and "how does it come to be" are not posed or their answers are already accepted as evident (Rehn et al., 2006, p. 123). I propose that the question of novelty is important as it directly relates to the basic models of creativity that govern our theory-building.

This study then suggests that creative practice can account for creativity if thought of as an ordinary and pervasive event that bears the capacity for novelty as (within) the *nearby unknown*. To think of novelty within the *nearby unknown* offers an oblique alternative to creativity and innovation research that accepts the question of the origin of novelty as already being settled. In contrast to either transcendent or immanent but tautological conceptions of the origin of novelty (see Sørensen, 2006), the notion of the nearby unknown is central for an immanent model of *creatio ex materia*. As argued within this study, an immanent account of creativity is not possible on the ground of

the hylomorphic scheme of possibilism. As an alternative, this study offers an account of creativity as a pre-individual *activity of relation* (Combes, 2013) that makes things and bodies gain, sustain or refine their existence and presence. The account of *creatio ex materia* in this study posits immanent relations as bearing *virtual* affordances (see also Posteraro, 2014), which are the creative capacities that emerge from the conjugation of material flows within lived experience that "takes place not in the subject or in the object, but in the relation itself" (Manning, 2009, p. 3). Novelty is thereby thought to emerge through the affective relation between virtual ground and actual form.

Taste-making and sensemaking

The conceptual framework and the findings of this study contribute an understanding of taste-making as situated within the richness of the moment-to-moment engagement of experienced bodies with culturally meaningful materials (see Bartels & Bencherki, 2013; Hutchins, 2011; Passoth, 2012). In regard to the task of CDT production, the incremental qualification of a product, the findings thereby suggest reciprocal relationships between immanent and explicit, prospective and retrospective as well as inventive and restorative modes of taste-making (see Table 6).

This distinction of specific forms of taste-making contributes to current discussions within process-based organization studies on the matter of sensemaking. Recent publications (see Holt & Cornelissen, 2013; Jacobs et al., 2013; Maitlis & Christianson, 2013; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014) asked for a differentiation between specific forms of sensemaking and especially research into the interplay of immanent, prospective and embodied forms of sensemaking. This study then answers to this call by contributing a differentiation of taste-making modes and formats and their effects as well as relations. It further provides tentative dimensional models of taste-making (see table 8 and figure 6) that could provide stimulating discussions.

A central proposition of this study is thereby that *creativity* is tied to our dispositional embodied being and to sense, or taste-making, as viable conduct. Within CDT production, sense and taste were developing immanently, from within existing socio-material assemblages that exhibit virtual affordances for the transformation and generation of taste and meaning. Therefore this study developed an enactive understanding of taste-making. Beyond the existing references to "distributed cognition" within socio-cultural creativity research (as for example in Glăveanu, 2013), this study thereby drew on the enactivism of the "4EA" – embodied-embedded-extended-enactive-affective – approach to cognitive science as demonstrated by Posteraro (2014) and Protevi (2010). While the proponents of enactivism within

organization science so far mainly draw on existential phenomenology (see for example Holt & Cornelissen, 2013; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2014; Tsoukas, 2008), this study proposes a pragmatic conception of enaction that posits that sensory experience[192] is contingent upon embodied and skilled tests and trials, that is, experiments that engage with matters of concern.

8.3.2 Methodology

With this work I followed the pertinent call for more processual and more complex studies of organizational creativity. The methodological contributions and implications of this study are therefore centrally based on methodological logics of an *inside-out* approach and the central principle of *description* (see above). Overall, this study thereby demonstrates the feasibility of studying the process of CDT production between in- and output through a video-ethnographic approach. The following reflections on the use of video within ethnographic studies of a creative process sketch the possible contributions of this study for methodologies within organizational creativity research (and beyond) that seek to study process and practice.

Working with video graphic methods appears to be a prolific approach that allows the pertinent embodied dimensions of creative practice to be collected, analyzed and presented. When it comes to collecting data, the video camera can become a methodological device that enables a specific kind of immersive movement and positioning within the field. Within this study, the video camera allowed me to "come close," literally or through zooming, while at the same time shielding me, affording me an inside-out position. Moving around with the video camera turned me into a "cyborg," or a researcher who is known through his technical device. On the one hand, this communicated to the outside my status and position and legitimized my movement in the field. On the other hand, it granted me a certain distance that allowed me to "hide" behind the camera and retreat to an observational position while being immersed in the field.

In terms of analysis, the video data must be considered as raw data that allows for the analysis of social situations through understanding one's own moves or zooms therein (Mohn, 2008). When one as a researcher immerses oneself in the dynamics and happenings of ongoing practice, the retrospective view of the way one moved or zoomed at a particular moment is valuable material for trying to understand what is going on at that moment.

[192] Experience is etymologically related to the notion of experiment via Old French from Latin experientia, from experiri 'try.' Experience, experiment, expert and expertise form a semantic nexus.

In terms of the strategy of presentation, this study illustrates the possibilities but also the difficulties of working with a narrative approach that is based on rich descriptions. Within as well as across singular vignettes, the challenge was to construct narratives that could meticulously trace and present a non-teleological process while focusing on the entanglement of social, material, technological and discursive agencies. While having "followed" and "read creativity forwards," the final account stays a renarration that still needs to convey the successive and emergent development of materials and forms that was at no time intentional. The central challenge was to forge accounts that could convey a development where every step would become visible as an indeterminate occasion for further steps.

In order to meet the challenge just described, this study proposes that ethnographic accounts need to be considered as performative "montages" (see Schmidt, 2012) that include video graphic data. The video graphic "raw" data proves to be a valuable asset for forging field notes that assemble, as a montage, written and visual data. Working with video has the advantage that one can extract single frames, so-called stills, from the video material to include in the text. Especially when zooming in on locally situated dynamics, this way one can present "significant moments" (see Van Manen, 1990) in their social, material and technological entanglement. Not being interested in "objective representations" of actual people and situations, this study suggests transforming the stills through digital image processing into pencil-like sketches. Foregrounding bodies, their affects and their configurations with other bodies, the alienated stills then emphasize the embodied and affective aspects of practice. This way, the visual elements convey a sense of the materialities and affects of creative practice that are posited as crucial in the contingent development of a product such as a CDT performance.

Overall then, this study contributes a set of methodological sensitivities and techniques to organizational creativity research interested in empirical studies of creative processes that seek to "follow", "read" and "present" creativity "forwards".

8.3.3 Education, policy & practice

The findings of this study challenge the traditional logics of creativity discourses as found within educational settings as well as policy contexts. This study thereby contrasts the *masterful* and *liminal* view on creativity by offering a different vocabulary that partly reappraises existing concepts (creativity, skill, expertise) as well as introducing new terms (event, taste) and forms (professional amateurs, complicities) that altogether propose alternative perspectives on creativity.

In the beginning of this study I problematized the *masterful* and *liminal* logic of creativity as an inexhaustible human desire, need, competence and resource (see Chapter 2). Sociocognitive perspectives were especially shown to be based on the basic impositional matrix of hylomorphic models of creation, thereby perpetuating modernity's engrained dualism. I suggested that the discourse on creativity revolves around a normative and ideal model of creativity that elevates the human realm of ideas above passive matter. This *masterful* idea of creativity was further suggested to be part of the late modern semantic of the emancipated subject, which is associated with cultural values of autonomy, individuality and authenticity. The psychological, resource-based view of creativity as an inexhaustible human desire, need and competence thereby was proposed to posit a liminal state of mastery that will never be reached. As such, the resource-based view produces a *liminal* logic of permanent insistence as well as permanent insufficiency. This, as suggested, goes together with a narrow, functional focus on novelty and novel products.

In contrast to the masterful and liminal logic of creativity as ideology, this study describes creativity as a practice that is *concerned* as well as *propositional*. Within this study, I suggest that creative practice is based on attachments. It follows practical, aesthetic and ethical concerns within a nexus of conservation and innovation. "In the making," subject and object mutually constitute themselves. Creating is thereby guided through situated modes of (e)valuation. While I suggest that creativity is a pervasive, ordinary and inevitable event, I still propose that it cannot be predicted or manufactured. What can be done is to develop ecologies that perform as propositions to the event of creativity.

This different view on creativity bears a number of implications. Firstly, acknowledging creativity as an "ordinary event" abandons "this odd idea of mastery that refused to include the mystery of unintended consequences" (Latour, 2008, p. 6). It reintroduces the "mystery" of the "slight surprise of action" (Latour, 1999c, p. 281). I therefore reclaim wonder as a central aspect of creativity. Creativity is, after all, a *wonder*-ful event that we might prepare for but never engineer. This again emphasizes the need for appreciating creative constraints while asking for humility, patience, care, hope and good humor.

When it comes to the question of competence, this study suggests that creativity is not an individual property; instead it must be regarded as an attainment and emergent accomplishment from a careful and intimate engagement with materials within an affording milieu. This brings the human on par with "the Other." Creativity emerges

from the right combination of materials and attachments that are all granted creative agency in themselves.

(Creative) freedom and emancipation are the result of being well attached, which, in the best of cases, makes for a liberating sense of incompleteness. Our creative endeavors (be they a CDT performance or this thesis) are never finished, as Goethe noted so succinctly on March, 16, 1787 during his Italian journey in Caserta: "Properly speaking, such work is never finished; one must declare it so when, according to time and circumstances, one has done one's best." We might as well declare things finished, hand them in and trust in the work to continue in some other time and space and also by other people.

Lastly, this study calls for accounts of creativity that generate new forms (see Sørensen, 2008) and conceptual *personae*. As alternatives to both the form of the genius and the form of the competent creative problem-solver, this study offers the forms of the *professional amateur* and *technoaesthetic being* and the collective form of the *complicity*. All these forms hinge on the peculiar nature of taste-making. All these forms are (mani-)folds, organisms never to be separated from their milieu, that create through tasting and taste through creating.

"Taste is the feminine of genius," wrote Edward Fitzgerald in the 19th century (in Elliott & Wallace, 1994, p. 94), thereby epitomizing a modernist and gendered adoration for genius and the idea of creation as *creatio ex nihilo*. In this study I sought to study and then put forth organizational creativity as a question of *creatio ex materia*. Framing organizational creativity as taste-making, I therefore propose an alternative to the gendered and ideologically problematic account of hylomorphism that is at the heart of most entitative creativity approaches. Taste is not the feminine of genius, because creation is in practice never a question of mastery. Drawing once more on the inspiring work of Antoine Hennion, with this study I rather propose that taste-making is a "machine" "that reveals difference" (2004, p. 142) and "generates differences" (2015, p. 50). What the focus on taste allows us is to reclaim creativity as a fundamentally meaningful mode of engaging with the world. Understanding creativity as taste-making thereby opens up creativity to all the techniques, devices and conduits that "enable us to produce and continuously to adjust a creative relationship with objects, with others, with ourselves and with our bodies; in other words, a pragmatic presence vis-à-vis the world that makes us and that we make" (Hennion, 2004, p. 142).

8.4 Outlook

Overall, this study suggests the prolificacy of a *practice*-based approach to creativity derived from a pragmatic conception of taste-making. Situating creativity within the creative practice of taste-making I thereby propose as one possible way to "*reclaim creativity*" as a productive category for social and organizational analysis (see introduction). Especially when it comes to studying creativity as process, as is so often called for (see for example Hargadon & Bechky, 2006; Kallio et al., 2011; Nayak, 2008; Rehn et al., 2006; Styhre, 2006; Styhre & Sundgren, 2005; Woodman et al., 1993), this study therefore offers an exemplary approach that is based on a practice-based framework and an ethnographic methodology. The findings of this study and the approach taken could therefore be specifically of interest to organizational (and) creativity scholars who seek to ground creativity research within sociocultural and sociomaterial frameworks and processual approaches.

As a result of my study, additional research might well be conducted in order to further engage with and develop praxeographic approaches to studying creativity. Creativity-as-practice is a neglected field of organizational theory and could open up a stimulating research agenda. Based on ethnographic research of Contemporary Dance Theater, this study suggests an expansion of the notion of creativity as a sociomaterial and affective matter of taste. It remains to be seen within further research whether the focus on aesthetic and affective taste-making is a convincing call for more practice-based research on organizational creativity.

8.5 The last curtain?

Invisible dust: still singing, still dancing.
(Thrift, 2000, p. 214)

> I stand alone in the ballet hall. The soft afternoon light of a sunny winter day fills the room. The first rehearsal of the day finished some minutes ago and I'm waiting for the next rehearsal to start. I start walking around in the empty room which however does not feel empty at all. Having attended rehearsals for over six weeks now, this space is brimming with "e-motions" and affects, palpably reverberating as I move around. All the sudden I feel tempted, invited to take a bigger step, to risk an unusual movement. It feels awkward first and exciting at the same time. Seeing myself in the mirror, I have to smile. A dancer, did I not always dream of becoming a dancer? The other day, when having attended a training, Mark called out to me and challenged me to swap sides and start moving with them. These are the moments I realize my frustation with attempting to put into words something so simple as the joy and wonder of being alive within dance.

By now, it took me more than four years to finish this PhD project. It has been an incredibly challenging task, often difficult and discouraging and then again extremely rewarding. I engaged in an inquiry, learning from and with my teachers, the men and women in this study, who are *still singing*, *still dancing* through these pages. Overall, this was a collective process of honing my sensibilities and finding words to share them which would then again allow for new experiences and so forth; a true process of taste-making itself! In the course of this research (as taste-making), I acquired a taste for collective processes of making and what it takes and means to put them into academic prose. For now, I realize that I needed (too) many words to describe what seems so simple and fundamental yet proves time and again to be elusive. As such I started a journey that will surely not end with this "last curtain." The road is made by walking, and I wonder what the next steps will be. In any way, let's dance.

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RESEARCH	Organizational Creativity & Innovation, Pragmatist Psychology, Practice Theory, Affect Theory, Sociology of Attachment, Qualitative Methodology, Ethnography
EDUCATION	PhD Graduate Program "Organisation and Culture," Universität St. Gallen (HSG) (2009-2015)
	Diploma Studies in Psychology, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (2004-2008)
	Diploma Studies in Psychology, Carl von Ossietzky Universität, Oldenburg (2001-2004)
ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES	Stream convenor with Christoph Michels and Sara Malou Strandvad, Art of Management and Organisation Conference, Copenhagen, 2014
	Organization of panel, "Creativity! An impossible imperative?", Conference "The future of content is context", University of St. Gallen (HSG), 2013
	Organization of conference, "Performing ANT: Socio-Material Practices of organizing" Conference, University of St. Gallen (HSG), 2012
ACADEMIC GRANTS	Travel grant, Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2014
	Research workshop stay, Bauhaus University Weimar (Germany), invited by Prof. Antoine Hennion, 2013
	Travel grant, Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2012
LECTURING	BA Course on "Organizational Creativity," University of St. Gallen, Spring 2015
	Workshop "Performance & Authenticity," University of St. Gallen, Autumn 2014
	MA Course "Organizational Behavior and Change," University of St. Gallen, 2009-2014 (Assistance)
	MA Course "Entrepreneurship & Creativity," University of St. Gallen, 2013 (Assistance)
SUPERVISING	Supervision of two master's theses

Work Experience

Head of Psychological Counseling, Psychological Counseling Service, University of St. Gallen, 2014-2015

Psychological Counselor, Psychological Counseling Service, University of St. Gallen, 2009-2013

Research Assistant, Research Institute for Organizational Psychology, University of St. Gallen, 2009-2015

Consulting / Organizational Development, Research Institute for Organizational Psychology, University of St. Gallen, 2009, 2014-2016

Publications / Presentations

Müller, B. (2014). *Creatio ex materia - pragmatic attachments in the making of contemporary dance theatre*. 7. Art of Management and Organisation Conference Creativity & Design. Copenhagen

Müller, B (2014). *The Production of Contemporary Dance Theatre - an interplay of kinesthetic and transpositional sense making*. 7. Art of Management and Organisation Conference Creativity & Design. Copenhagen

Resch, D., & Müller, B. (2012). Die Herausforderung von Beratungsarbeit als ständigem Balanceakt. In *Entwicklungslinien der Beratung an Hochschulen*. Presented at the Fachtagung der Psychologischen Beratungsstellen Schweizerischer Universitäten, Zürich.

Müller, B. (2012). *Organizational creativity's flavor – taste-making as central practice in crafting contemporary dance and movement theatre*. Presented at the EGOS Conference 2012 Sub-theme 47: From Designing Organizational Creativity to Creativity for Organizational Design, Helsinki.

Müller, B. (2012). *Organizational Creativity Revisited - An audio-visual ethnography of the production of contemporary movement and dance theater as "making events work."* Presented at the "Performing ANT: Socio-Material Practices of organizing" Conference, University of St. Gallen (HSG).

Schulz, F., & Müller, B. (2010, September 18). *Voicing the Unheard – Narrative Reflexive Practices and Innovation*. Presented at the Narrative & Innovation Konferenz, Karlshochschule, Karlsruhe.